RAIN - A Living Lab Concept for Circular Economy, Cooperation and Innovation in Rural Regions

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“Living Lab Research Concept in Rural Areas” (LIVERUR) is an EU-H2020 programme funded project, running from 2018 to 2021. The LIVERUR consortium consists of 23 partners from 13 countries, coordinated by Universida Catolica de Murcia (Spain), see https://liverur.eu.

The project aims at modernising small and medium rural businesses in the EU and its neighbouring countries by introducing the Rural Living Lab research methodology. It will identify, analyse and test various specific rural business model approaches. It drafts a new Regional Circular Living Lab Business Model Concept (RAIN) – integrating living lab-, circular economy- and multi-actor approaches as well as open innovation, ecologic, economic and social sustainability with support of innovative ICT solutions. The RAIN concept helps enterprises and organisations to design their sustainable, innovative and contemporary business models.

Based on theoretical and empirical analyses the RAIN concept is structured according to three different layers:

- The **Core Elements** describe the business model with respect to the topics vision/business idea, people, resources, implementation/development, management/organization, financial aspects, product/service/process, research/innovation, marketing/distribution;
- In order to enrich the business model the so called **RAIN Principles** (Ecologic, economic and social sustainability, circular economy, open innovation, stakeholder involvement, openness, ICT) should be taken into consideration in each Core Element;
- Last but not least, external influences on the project or activity – the **Real Life Setting** – has to be reflected and included in the business model (environment and climate, economic and societal context, legal and institutional framework, technical and social infrastructure, food security and safety).

In LIVERUR 20 projects in 13 pilot regions will be developed based on the RAIN concept. The topics are widespread but all are of high importance in rural regions, e.g. regional food sovereignty, utilization of organic waste, local online-marketing, agriculture-tourism cooperation, sustainable milk-production, energy-production.

The contribution will focus on the development and description of the RAIN concept and its steps of application.

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