



Empowering the **FUT**ure through innovative Smart Solutions for **rURAL** areas



2nd EU Rural Innovation Forum

**From Smart Villages to Smart Rural Futures:
experiences from the Baltic region**

5-6 May 2026

[Jonava Cultural Centre \(Žeimių g. 15, LT-55158\)](#)

[Jonava, Lithuania](#)

 **MAŽOJI SALĖ**



Co-funded by
the European Union

5 MAY 2026 - 2nd EU Rural Innovation Forum

Time	Session	
11.00 am	Welcome	<p>Ari Lomis, FUTURAL Project Manager, Agricultural University of Athens</p> <p>Guoda Burokienė, Vice-Minister of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania</p> <p>Povilas Beišys, Jonava District Municipality Vice Mayor</p>
11.15 am	Objectives of the EU Rural Innovation Forum and purpose of the day	Ari Lomis , FUTURAL Project Manager, Agricultural University of Athens
11.20 am	FUTURAL Smart Solutions “flash” presentation	<i>Online platform delivering open courses</i> , Zoe Johns , Agricultural University of Athens
11.25 am	FUTURAL Smart Solutions “flash” presentation	<i>Citizen engagement platform + Hiking trail maintenance Platform</i> , Annalisa Addis , Lisbon Council
11.30 am	<p>Understanding Smart Villages: From concept to practice</p> <p>What Smart Villages are, why they matter, and how local authorities can implement them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to session. Carlo Giua and Brigida Marovelli, UNIPI. • Keynote: State of play, concept and practice. Introduction to rural local and place-based innovation and examples. Kim Smedslund, PREPARE • Speakers panel: <p>Innovation in Kėdainiai municipality, start-up example. Renata Rudnicka, Agrifood Lithuania</p> <p>LEADER and innovation. Auksė Lebeckienė, Kaišiadorys District LAG</p> <p>Innovative actions in the villages. Virginija Šetkienė, Lithuanian Rural Communities Union</p> • Commenting panel: <p>Guoda Burokienė, Vice-Minister of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania</p>

		Vilma Atkočiūnienė , Vytautas Magnus University
1.00 pm	Lunch Break	
2.15 pm	What does it mean to be “smart”? Co-creation experiences, innovations and challenges from rural communities	Workshop Carlo Giua and Brigida Marovelli, UNIPI
4.15 pm	FUTURAL Smart Solutions “flash” presentation	<i>Online circular bioeconomy platform</i> , Panos Petridis , Alchemia
4.20 pm	Smart solutions “flash” presentation	<i>Digital assessment tool: “Biodiversity Score” and Wildlife monitoring tool</i> , Sonata Adomaviciute-Grabusove , Betavia
4.25 pm	Smart solutions “flash” presentation	<i>Online crowdsensing platform for infrastructure health monitoring</i> , Ivan Arakistain , TECNALIA
4.30 pm	Tea & Coffee Break	
5.00 pm	Tools for Smart Villages and other rural innovators	<i>FUTURAL Metasearch platform and other smart tools</i> Dan-Matei Popovici , POLITEHNICA Bucharest <i>Valdichiana4Green Smart Solution</i> Elena Viani , Acta
5.40 pm	Smart solutions “flash” presentation	<i>Accessibility analysis platform and Quality of life desktop application</i> , Manuel Koberl , DLR
5.45 pm	Smart solutions “flash” presentation	<i>Online platform for delivery of hydrological models</i> , Cristiane Fragata Dos Santos , IHE Delft
5.50 pm	Wrap-up & closing	
6:30 pm	(Optional) networking dinner  Arma Restaurant	À la carte dinner at participants' own expense

6 MAY 2026 - 2nd EU Rural Innovation Forum

Time	Session	Presenter
9.00 am	Purpose of the day	Ari Lomis , FUTURAL Project Manager, Agricultural University of Athens
9.15 am	Enabling smart rural futures: capacities, conditions and contexts To explore the competences, enabling conditions, barriers and interpretations needed to implement Smart Villages across different contexts	Capacity building workshop Carlo Giua and Brigida Marovelli , UNIPI.
10.45 am	Tea & Coffee Break	
11.15 am	Sustainable business models for rural innovation	Business models validation workshop Pantelis Kanellopoulos , Natasa Koufaki and Giannis Fyrogennis , REFRAME.FOOD
12.15 am	How can policies integrate Smart Villages in the future? Governance frameworks for smart rural communities	Debate with panel. Panellists: Mindaugas Maciulevičius , Lithuanian Rural Innovation Network Juha-Matti Markkola , Network Expert Rural Network Support Unit of Finland, Finnish Food Authority Aiva Apša-Ķišeniece , Latvian Rural Forum, Sustainability and Resilience Specialist Moderation: María Alonso-Roldán , AEIDL (European Association for Innovation in Local Development)
1.00 pm	Conclusion and next steps	Ari Lomis , FUTURAL Project Manager, Agricultural University of Athens
1.00 pm	Lunch Break	