



EU RURALITeast – Living Lab Serbia

About ŠumArt

ŠumArt is a scientific-research association based in Serbia, bringing together experts from social sciences, humanities, arts, visual arts and art history who recognise the importance of creative industries for the development of society.

The organisation also places special emphasis on environmental issues, healthy/organic agriculture and connecting those with art and creative industries.

As a partner of the EU RURALITeast project, ŠumArt is responsible for implementing activities within Serbia's Living Lab, focusing on youth empowerment, circular economy, rural creative economy, and engaging rural youth in designing solutions for their communities.

Key Activities in Serbia

1. Establishing the Living Lab environment Within the framework of the EU RURALITEast project,

ŠumArt has helped establish a Living Lab in rural Serbia where young people, local stakeholders, artisans, municipalities and creative practitioners co-design and experiment with innovative models for rural development —combining creative industries, digital skills and circular economy approaches.

This aligns with the project's mission: “revitalizing rural areas by equipping youth with essential entrepreneurial and digital skills.”

2. Workshops for youth & stakeholders

ŠumArt has organised interactive participatory workshops under the Living Lab Serbia banner.

These sessions bring together rural youth, local associations and artisans to map local challenges (e.g., out-migration, seasonal employment, lack of creative-industry opportunities) and to prototype solutions such as up-cycling crafts, storytelling platforms, local heritage products and digital branding for rural creative enterprises.

3. Creative-entrepreneurial pilot initiatives

Following the co-design phase, the Living Lab Serbia, facilitated by ŠumArt, launched pilot initiatives where youth-led micro-business concepts are tested. Examples include local craft co-operatives, creative hubs in villages, digital marketing of locally-produced goods, and circular economy loops using agricultural by-products. These pilot results feed into regional scaling and replication.

4. Monitoring, evaluation, scaling

ŠumArt contributes to monitoring and documenting the impact of the Living Lab Serbia. They capture insights such as number of youth participants, new business ideas generated, digital outreach metrics and replicability of models. These results are incorporated into the EU RURALITEast project's regional networking activities and future roadmap for Living Labs in the Western Balkans.

Impact & Next Steps

Youth engaged: Dozens of rural youth in Serbia have participated in workshops and Living Lab sessions, gaining new skills in digital storytelling, entrepreneurship and creative industries. New business pathways: Several pilot micro-initiatives are underway, showing how creative/circular economy approaches can be applied in rural Serbia. Replication potential: Models developed by ŠumArt's Living Lab Serbia are being prepared for replication in Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Albania through the regional network of the EU RURALITEast project. Upcoming focus: Scaling Living Lab outputs, establishing local creative hubs in more villages, strengthening digital marketing platforms for rural craft & heritage products, and linking youth entrepreneurs across the Western Balkans.

Call to Action

If you are a young person in a rural area of Serbia with an interest in creative industries, digital tools or circular economy —the Living Lab Serbia by ŠumArt offers a unique opportunity to co-design and test your ideas in a supportive environment. Stay tuned for upcoming workshops and join our network: www.sumart.org.rs/ / [\[sumart.org@gmail.com\]](mailto:[sumart.org@gmail.com]) promote sustainable development



ŠumArt CORP Methodology Community – Organization – Reflection – Practice

Pillar	Concept	Application in Living Labs
C – Community	Involves people as <i>co-designers</i> , not passive beneficiaries.	Participatory mapping of local challenges, inclusion of youth, women, and farmers.
O – Organization	Structures collaboration and shared responsibility among actors.	Creation of local working groups, thematic clusters (culture, environment, entrepreneurship).
R – Reflection	Ensures ongoing critical analysis and adaptation.	Workshops and feedback circles after each phase; integration of art-based dialogue and forum theatre.
P – Practice	Transforms ideas into prototypes and actions.	Testing small-scale business ideas (eco-crafts, digital storytelling, community tourism).

This cyclic model allows for continuous learning and iteration, linking community knowledge with professional expertise. It also serves as a tool for capacity building, local governance improvement, and sustainable entrepreneurship.



Methodological Innovations

1. Art-Based Participation

- Uses creative tools (storytelling, visual mapping, eco-theatre) to engage diverse community members.

- Encourages emotional connection and collective imagination as drivers of innovation

2. Hybrid Knowledge Creation

- Integrates local tacit knowledge with academic and technical expertise.

- Each Living Lab becomes a “knowledge ecosystem” where informal and formal learning interact.

3. Iterative and Reflective Learning

- CORP emphasizes cycles of reflection, experimentation, and adaptation.

- Each prototype is reviewed collaboratively before scaling to other communities.

4. Circular and Sustainable Design

- Promotes zero-waste creative production and reuse of local materials.

- Encourages ecological awareness as part of entrepreneurship training.

Implementation in the EU RURALITEast Project

Developed by ŠumArt (Serbia) as the regional Living Lab framework.

Applied in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Albania to harmonize participatory rural innovation processes.

Used for:

- Training youth facilitators and local mentors;
- Developing local “green hubs”;
- Evaluating community-based micro-projects;
- Ensuring long-term sustainability beyond project funding.

Impact of CORP Methodology

- Strengthened cross-sector cooperation between education, culture, and local economy.
- Improved youth engagement in decision-making and entrepreneurship.
- Supported interdisciplinary learning and peer-to-peer mentorship
- Inspired the REKA 4D methodology for creative and digital knowledge transfer.
- Provided a replicable, low-cost model adaptable to other EU and Western Balkan contexts.



www.sumart.org.rs
sumart.org@gmail.com



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.