



**SHERPA**  
Rural Science-Society-Policy  
Interfaces

**D6.1**  
**SYNTHESIS REPORT OF THE**  
**INITIAL DYNAMIC ACTION**  
**PLANS FOR 20 MULTI-ACTOR**  
**PLATFORMS**

**28 FEBRUARY 2020**



# Synthesis report of the initial Dynamic Action Plans for 20 Multi-Actor Platforms

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<b>Authors</b>	UNIFI: Giampiero Mazzocchi, Paolo Prospero, Silvia Rolandi, Gianluca Brunori WUR: Jorieke Potters
<b>Work Package Leader</b>	WUR
<b>Project Coordinator</b>	ECORYS

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction to SHERPA and the Multi-Actor Platforms

The overall objective of SHERPA is to gather relevant knowledge and opinions that contribute to the formulation of recommendations for future policies relevant to rural areas in the European Union. More specifically, the threefold objective of SHERPA is to:

- provide inputs for the design of future research policies, with a focus on preparation of work programmes under Horizon Europe;
- support the implementation of policies relevant to rural areas in the 2021-2027 programming period;
- support the setting of the direction of rural policy in the next programming period (after 2027).

SHERPA will capture and use results of on-going and past research projects (from FP6, FP7, H2020 and other EU funding streams) to engage civil society, policy-makers and scientists in the joint development of strategic thinking and practical recommendations for the formulation of modern rural policies.

The main tools through which the knowledge and opinions of stakeholders will be collected are Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs). The Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs) in SHERPA are defined in deliverable D1.2<sup>1</sup> as “the forum for two-way exchanges of ideas for co-learning and co-creation of knowledge with actors at European and regional levels”. MAPs are the primary mechanism for gathering knowledge and opinions from regional to EU levels to contribute to the formulation of recommendations for future policies relevant to rural areas in the European Union. Each SHERPA MAP represents a local/regional or national network made by key stakeholders interested in the main subject area such as local citizens and businesses (representatives from the civil society, NGOs, business and farmer organizations), researchers, and policy-makers. The final composition of stakeholder will vary in every MAP. In each country a MAP team consisting of a Facilitator and a Monitor are in charge of running the MAPs and documenting the lessons learned.

Forty regional MAPs will be established in 20 EU Member States (20 in Phase 1 in 2019-2020, and another 20 in Phase 2 in 2022-2023), and one at the EU level. The platforms will be established within, or closely aligned with, existing structures and engage a mix of actors from three target communities (society, policy-makers and researchers). Their objective is to engage citizens, researchers and policy-makers at local and EU levels in debates about future policies. Recommendations for developing modern rural policies at European, national and regional levels, and concrete proposals for future research agendas will be produced from the discussions within the MAPs.

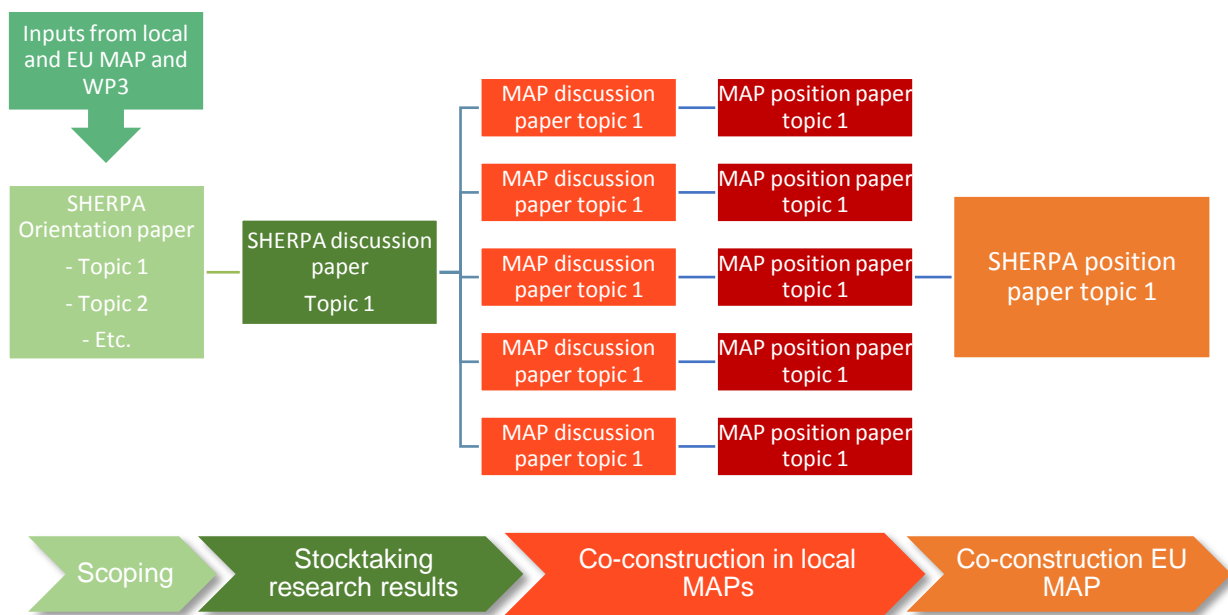
The position of the MAPs in the process of developing recommendations is shown in Figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> SHERPA Deliverable D1.2: Working principles of the Multi-Actor Platforms



Figure 1. The process to which the Multi-Actor Platforms contribute to the preparation of the policy recommendations within SHERPA.



The MAPs will conduct a common set of activities. To do this in a structured way, each year the MAPs develop a Dynamic Action Plan (DAP) guiding the MAP activities. The DAP illustrates the objectives, composition, activities, and time plan of the MAP for that year. According to the principles adopted in SHERPA, the DAPs will be characterised by a *flexible* programming for both content and timing; it will be *co-constructed* within each MAP through actions conducted to maintain discussion and dialogue with representatives of society, policy and research; it will involve *multi-level interactions* as EU level policy issues will be discussed to formulate specific recommendations for future EU research agendas and rural policies; it will be an *impartial and transparent* document.

## 1.2. Purpose of this document

The aim of this document is to provide an overview and a systematic synthesis of key information from the Dynamic Action Plans of the first 20 MAPs (Phase 1 of SHERPA). This synthesis gathers the main elements related to the objectives, topics, activities, and impacts that are targeted by the MAPs. Based upon each of the initial DAPs of the 20 MAPs, the current synthesis represents a snapshot of the on-going establishment and planning processes. Thus, at month 5 (February 2020), MAPs are at different degrees of development in terms of advancement. The completion of the invitation of potential members, the balance between the three groups to be involved (society-science-policy) and, to a lesser extent, the definition of objectives and expected impacts, vary between MAPs.

The flexibility adopted by the SHERPA project will allow a better definition of the characteristics and strategies of MAPs when their activities commence. The document aims to provide an overall understanding of how the role of the MAPs in the SHERPA project are contributing towards achieving the aims of the project. It aims to track and compare the general process of activities of the MAPs to valorise the project findings from a wider perspective.

## 2. Overview of SHERPA's 20 MAPs

The MAPs of SHERPA are platforms working on policy issues relating to rural areas and are characterised by a strong diversity of members, defined aims and actions planned around a broad range of topics. Table 1 displays the distribution of the MAP across the partner countries, as well as the specific geographical regions, participating in the SHERPA project. A synthesis analysis of the composition, objectives, activities, topics and impacts of the MAPs is developed in the following sections.

On average, a MAP is composed of 15 members. The list in Table 1 presents and illustrates each SHERPA MAP, with short descriptions according to their specific characteristics, challenges, objectives, topics and level of development. While analysing the key facts from short descriptions, it is apparent that the MAPs are platforms which are, or will, work on policy issues relevant to rural area and are characterised by diversity in membership, with defined aims and actions planned for a broad range of topics.

Table 1. List of the 20 MAPs, including country, name, geographical area and number of MAP's members (in alphabetical order per country).

Country	Name of the DAP	Geographical area	Origin
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Rural Mapping Bulgaria	Bulgaria	New
<b>Czech Republic</b>	VENUS	Moravian-Silesian Region), MAS Opavsko (LAG Opavsko)	Existing
<b>Denmark</b>	The Danish multi-actor platform on EU rural policy	Denmark	New
<b>Finland</b>	Multi-Actor Platform Suomi-Finland	Finland	New
<b>France</b>	MAP PACA sud	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	New
<b>Germany</b>	MAP Rural Policy for Environment	Schleswig Holstein	New
<b>Greece</b>	Syros, Region of South Aegean	Region of South Aegean, Syros	New
<b>Hungary</b>	Hungarian AKIS Multi Actor Platform	Hungary	Build on
<b>Italy</b>	Development of rural areas in Tuscany	Rural areas of Tuscany	New
<b>Italy</b>	Regione Emilia Romagna	Emilia Romagna region	Build on
<b>Lithuania</b>	Circular Bio-economy – Lithuania (CBioLit)	Lithuania	New
<b>Netherlands</b>	Greenport Gelderland	River area of the province of Gelderland in The Netherlands	Existing
<b>Poland</b>	Zielone Sądztwo	Mazowieckie region	Build on
<b>Portugal</b>	MAP Alqueva	Alentejo	New
<b>Romania</b>	Eco Ruralis	Regions – West, Nord-West, Center	Existing
<b>Slovenia</b>	SVARUN - SloVenian Agricultural and Rural Network for Dialogue	Slovenia	Build on
<b>Spain</b>	IDRA (Innovación en Desarrollo Rural de Aragón)	Aragon	Build on
<b>Spain</b>	Galician Rural Interfaces	Galicia	New
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Dee Catchment Partnership MAP	basin of River Dee, Scotland, United Kingdom	Existing
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Rural Scotland MAP	Scotland ,United Kingdom	New



## 2.1. Getting to know the Multi-Actor Platforms

In this section each Multi-Actor Platform is introduced in detail. A dashboard indicates the origin of the platform, the degree of MAP establishment, and the first MAP activity. Figure 2 summarises the wording and colour codes used.

Figure 2. Wording and colour coding used for describing the MAPs under the headings of Origin of the MAP, Map establishment and First MAP Activity

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP Activity
Existing group	Complete	First activity held
Building on existing group	Confirming members	Activity planned
Newly established platform	Inviting members	Planning activities

The objective of these indicators is to illustrate the diverse starting conditions of the MAPs, and to provide insights to, and understanding of, the current status of the 20 MAPs. It is not intended as an evaluation or ranking of the MAPs.

The format of the dashboard presents:

- i. The origins of the MAPs (whether exiting, building on an existing group or newly established);
- ii. The stage of their establishment (from inviting membership through to membership being complete).

The status of the first activity of the MAP (from being in the planning stage through to an activity having been held). The dashboard is provided for each MAP, after which details are provided of the coordinating partner and the name and location of the MAP.

The level of operation as national or regional is indicated, the main challenges in this area are characterised and the topics of interest are stated. Each introductory paragraph includes with the contact details of the MAP Facilitator to whom enquiries can be addressed for further information about the MAP.

These short descriptions for each MAP are reported in the sections below and presented in alphabetical order according to the country where the MAP is located.

### Bulgaria

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Newly established platform	Confirming Members	Planning activities

In Bulgaria, the Institute for Agricultural Economics (IAU) coordinates the Multi-Actor Platform 'Rural Mapping Bulgaria'. This platform is newly established and operates at the national level. The core members are identified through a National Rural Network. In Bulgaria, depopulation is a major issue, related mostly to the topics of the provision of social services, diversification and economic development of rural areas, and young people in rural areas. The platform aims to slow down depopulation by improving coordination between relevant stakeholders, to generate knowledge and create networks as a basis for decision-making and seeks to strengthen synergies between future policies concerning rural areas.

For more information contact facilitator: Petko Simeonov [petko.simeonoff@gmail.com](mailto:petko.simeonoff@gmail.com)





### Czech Republic

Origin of the MAP	Map Establishment	First MAP activity
Existing group	Confirming members	Planned April 2020

In Czech Republic, the European Rural Development Network (ERDN) coordinates the Multi-Actor Platform 'VENUS'. This platform is based on the existing Local Action Group (LAG) Opavsko, operating in the Moravia and Silesia regions. A high-level steering committee with representation of four different ministries provides guidance to the MAP. The Chairman and Director of the LAG play a central role in organising the platform. The topic of energy saving has been identified as a theme with significant potential in the rural areas. The MAP will develop a conceptual basis for energy-saving strategies and develop new projects in cooperation with involvement of the public and young people. Through its actions, the MAP aims to save energy for society and costs for consumers.

For more information contact facilitator: Jiří Krist [krist.jiri@gmail.com](mailto:krist.jiri@gmail.com)

### Denmark

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Build on existing group	Confirming members	Planned February 2020

In Denmark, NordRegio coordinates the 'Danish Multi-Actor Platform on EU Rural Policy'. As the name suggests, the platform operates at the national level. This platform is based on the Rural Joint Council of Denmark with members from national organisations, municipalities and civic society. Possible topics to be addressed are: population, settlements, business, employment, (digital) infrastructure, education, and health. The MAP aims to formulate clear feedback and positions on the themes it discussed in the MAP; qualifying the EU understanding of the situation in the Danish rural areas as well as the needs for policy regulation, support and research.

For more information contact facilitator: Karen Refsgaard [karen.refsgaard@nordregio.org](mailto:karen.refsgaard@nordregio.org)

### Finland

Origin of MAP	MAP Establishment	First Map activity
Newly established group	Confirming members	Planned March 2020

In Finland, NordRegio coordinates 'Multi-Actor Platform Suomi Finland'. The platform operates at the national level. The Finnish Rural Policy Council is the central actor of the MAP. It involves members of the Council: ministries, regional governments, R&D, organisations for rural businesses, environmental and interest groups. Relevant topics identified are participatory democracy, housing and services, infrastructure and land use, business and expertise, and ecosystem services. The objectives will be developed during the first MAP meeting.

For more information contact facilitator: Michael Kull [michael.kull@nordregio.org](mailto:michael.kull@nordregio.org)



**France**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Newly established group	Inviting members	Meeting planned March 2020

In the south of France, the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier (IAMM), which is one of the four institutes of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), coordinates the Multi-Actor Platform in the South region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, 'PACA Sud'. The region is characterised by a small, isolated, yet active rural population, and inequality in access to services. The main economic activities are tourism and agriculture. There is a high exposure to natural and technical risks. The Multi-Actor Platform is newly established in SHERPA. The core members of the platform are identified and invited with the support of the Rural Network of PACA and the mobilisation of local action groups. The platform aims to identify the needs and topics for rural areas in the context of preparing for the next round of the Common Agricultural Policy strategic planning and the European Regional Development Fund. The platform will focus on sharing existing knowledge, identifying the measures and seek synergies that enable responding to the main challenges in the region. The specific topics to focus on will be determined within the platform.

For more information contact facilitator: Jean-Pierre Rolland [rolland@iamm.fr](mailto:rolland@iamm.fr)

**Germany**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Newly established group	Inviting members	Meeting February 2020

In Germany, the Thünen Institute coordinates the first German Multi-Actor Platform, the name is yet to be determined by its members. The platform operates in the region of Schleswig-Holstein and is in the initial stage of establishment. The main challenges in the region are: eutrophication of water bodies and climate change, intensive agriculture and structural change in agriculture, and the role and image of farming in rural communities. Inefficient policy measures is another issue that requires attention. During the first meeting, members will specify and prioritise the topics. The objectives of the platform are defined in general terms: to engage agricultural, environmental and rural policy actors, to co-construct recommendations for the implementation of the Rural Development Programme in Schleswig-Holstein in the coming programming period, for further reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy at national and EU levels, and on priorities for future research agendas in the context of the themes agreed with the MAP members.

For more information contact facilitator: Gerald Schwarz [gerald.schwarz@thuenen.de](mailto:gerald.schwarz@thuenen.de)

**Greece**

Origin of MAP	MAP Establishment	First Map activity
Newly established group	Inviting members	planning

In Greece, the University of Athens (UA) coordinates the 'South Aegean Multi-Actor Platform' which operates at the regional level. This region can be characterised by its traditional economy, low levels of education and high degree of unemployment and depopulation. The Region of South Aegean will be the central actor in the platform, other members are currently being invited and the first meeting is being planned. The Greek MAP will focus on the development of sustainable policies in the region's specific sectors, the adoption of technology adoption and



innovative environmentally friendly policies. The objective of the MAP is to promote innovation and digital transformation, and foster socio-economic rural development.

For more information contact facilitator: Nicoleta Tadarra [nicoletadarra@aua.gr](mailto:nicoletadarra@aua.gr)

**Hungary**

Origin of MAP	MAP Establishment	First Map activity
Building on existing group	Inviting members	First meeting held

In Hungary, the Research Institute of Agricultural Economics coordinates the 'Hungarian AKIS Multi-Actor Platform'. The platform operates at the national level since this is most appropriate for the topic of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS). The MAP's core group is the AKIS sub-working group established by the Ministry of Agriculture to facilitate the Common Agricultural Policy strategic planning process. It is strongly connected to an AKIS group in the Chamber and the Ministry of Agriculture. Since the platform is linked to an ongoing process, the meetings are easily planned, and concurrently simultaneously more members are invited. The platform plans to carry out: situation analysis, SWOT analysis, needs assessment regarding knowledge transfer, digitalisation and research & innovation, and it will develop policy toolkits and propose suitable policy solutions on these topics.

For more information contact facilitator: Kis Máté [kis.mate@aki.naik.hu](mailto:kis.mate@aki.naik.hu)

**Italy - Tuscany**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Newly established platform	Inviting members	Meeting February 2020

In Italy, the University of Pisa coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Development of Rural Areas' in Tuscany. The platform is being established and operates at the regional level. The main challenges in the region are depopulation, extreme climatic events and service provision. Digitalisation and agro-tourism present opportunities for the development of the region. The MAP aims to assess existing initiatives to evaluate the potential role of digitalisation in the development of rural areas. The specific topical focus within these challenges will be determined by the core members of the platform. The MAP activities result in recommendations for the operationalisation of the Rural Development Programme in Tuscany in the next programming period, for further reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy at national and EU levels and for forthcoming research agendas.

For more information contact facilitator: Giampiero Mazzocchi [giampiero.mazzocchi@agr.unipi.it](mailto:giampiero.mazzocchi@agr.unipi.it)

**Italy - Bologna**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Build existing group	Complete	Meeting February 2020

In Italy, the University of Bologna coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Emilia-Romagna'. This platform operates at regional level, specifically in the plain part of Emilia-Romagna. In comparison to the mountainous



part, this flatter part of the region is characterised by farm concentration and intensification. This brings challenges such as land-use competition with urban and industrial/commercial areas and homogenisation of agricultural landscape structure and composition. The first topic of the platform is the relationship between agriculture and biodiversity. The identification of trade-offs and potential synergies. The MAP was initiated by the network of University of Bologna in the region. It will engage consumers and other stakeholders as active members. The MAP aims to identify innovative policy solutions for the promotion of farmland biodiversity in Emilia-Romagna.

For more information contact facilitator: Stefano Targetti [stefano.targetti@unibo.it](mailto:stefano.targetti@unibo.it)

### Lithuania

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Newly established platform	Inviting Members	Meeting April 2020

In Lithuania, the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics (LAEI) coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Circular Bioeconomy' (CBioLit), operating at a national level. The National Research and Innovation Strategy (RIS3) strategy for Lithuania 2014–2020 provides the context for identifying priorities and members. Three broad topics were defined, these are agro-innovation and food-technologies, inclusive and creative society, energy and sustainable environment. During the first meeting, these will be further specified by the active members. Selection of the topics was based upon their power, urgency and legitimacy. Members will be guided to formulate recommendations for policy on agriculture, innovation and energy. The intended impact is safer food and sustainable use of biomaterials; development and encouragement of creative and pro-active individuals; energy and fuel production based on waste and renewable sources.

For more information contact facilitator: Zivile Raudone [zivile.gedminaite@laei.lt](mailto:zivile.gedminaite@laei.lt)

### The Netherlands

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Existing group	Confirming members	Meeting February 2020

In The Netherlands, Wageningen Research facilitates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Greenport Gelderland'. This is an existing public-private network organisation aimed at stimulating innovation, sustainable development and growth of the horticultural sectors. This platform operates at the regional level, in the province of Gelderland. The existing platform will be enriched by engaging civil society actors in the discussions. The connection between the horticultural sector and inhabitants of the area is the main focus of the platform. These are stakeholders who often have different and sometimes conflicting perspectives on the development of the area. A scenario study might help develop a common vision for citizens and horticultural entrepreneurs about the future developments and the impact for the rural area. This forms the basis for coordinated action with several stakeholders. It is expected that topics and challenges will become clear in the scenario study. One topic of interest is how to create options for good housing for temporary workers without creating problems for the local citizens.

For more information contact facilitator: Marianne Groot [marianne.groot@wur.nl](mailto:marianne.groot@wur.nl)



**Poland**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Build on existing group	Complete	Meeting April 2020

In Poland, the European Rural Development Network (ERDN) coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Zielone Sąsiedztwo'. This platform operates at the regional level and is based on an existing Local Action Group (LAG) complemented by research actors. The rural areas close to Warsaw have specific development problems such as loss of the agricultural function and development of city-like functions, conservation of the landscapes and biodiversity, and loosening social cohesion. In this context the platform will focus on the identification of problems in rural development, the analysis of policy tools supporting biodiversity and rural landscapes and policy instruments that contribute to vibrant rural areas. On these topics, the platform will enable stakeholders to contribute to the debate and propose policy measures and instruments.

For more information contact facilitator: Paweł Chmieliński [pawel.chmielinski@gmail.com](mailto:pawel.chmielinski@gmail.com)

**Portugal**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Newly established platform	Confirming members	Planned March 2020

In Portugal, CONSULAI coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Alqueva'. This is a newly established platform focusing on rural development in the Alqueva region. This region has gone through several transformation processes since the Alqueva water reservoir and infrastructure was built. This has created a considerable opportunity for agriculture in the region, allowing farmers to cultivate new crops and substantially increase their incomes, attracting external investors, and promoting the development of different types of new business ventures. However, this clashes with the more traditional and conservative farmers, who are in the majority of land managers. Further to this, the Alqueva project has raised many environmental concerns. The platform provides a unique opportunity for stakeholders to engage, discuss the main issues and find ways forward in a comprehensive manner. The platform will analyse research and policy initiatives that have been developed in the last two decades, develop foresight exercises, propose new tools and rural research policies and promoting the engagement of regional and national institutions with shared common objectives. The first topic for the platform will be biodiversity and landscape features.

For more information contact facilitator: Pedro Santos [psantos@consulai.com](mailto:psantos@consulai.com)

**Romania**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Existing group	Inviting members	Meeting June 2020

In Romania, the European Rural Development Network (ERDN) coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Eco Ruralis'. This platform operates at a national level and is based on a national association of peasants and agro-ecological food producers in Romania. The Romanian Institute of Agricultural Economics will facilitate the activities of the platform. Some of the challenges in rural Romania are the high number of small farms. Almost 90% of farms are subsistence and semi-subsistence farms, operating on areas of less than 5 ha. Half



of farm managers are more than 65 years old and the younger generations are leaving the rural areas, so farm transition and farm succession is an important topic in Romania. The platform aims to support access to the land especially for younger generations, socio-ecological transition of small-scale agriculture, and to increase the role of small farming systems in rural communities/economies as main pillar for their food sovereignty.

For more information contact facilitator: Monica Tudor [monik\\_sena@yahoo.com](mailto:monik_sena@yahoo.com)

**Slovenia**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Building on existing group	Complete	Meeting held February 2020

In Slovenia, the Biotechnical faculty of the University of Ljubljana coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform SVARUN'. The platform operates at a national level, building on previous cooperation with national stakeholders and engagement in the advisory council of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. Additional stakeholders will be engaged as appropriate for specific themes based on their roles in the agricultural policy-making process. The challenges in the Slovenian rural areas are depopulation, climate change, conservation of natural resources, animal welfare and nutritional trends, and food waste. The platform will work on these challenges by the developing rural value chains, digitalisation, rural cooperation, innovation in agriculture, sustainable animal husbandry and strengthening the knowledge and innovation system. The platform will take stock of relevant evidence for current and future developments in the fields of agriculture, natural resources and rural society relevant to national agricultural policy in the frame of the CAP. The aim is to establish the practice of combining scientific research and stakeholder views to form evidence-based policy in a mature policy cycle. The first topic to be discussed in the platform is biodiversity and landscape features as part of the pilot.

For more information contact facilitator: Ilona Rac [Ilona.Rac@bf.uni-lj.si](mailto:Ilona.Rac@bf.uni-lj.si)

**Spain - Aragon**

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Newly established group	Inviting members	Planning for May 2020

In north-eastern Spain, the Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM) and the Research Centre for the Management of Agricultural and Environmental Risks (CEIGRAM-UPM) coordinate the 'Multi-Actor Platform Innovation in rural development in Aragon' (INDRA). This regional platform is newly established, based on information from the Regional Network for Rural Development in Aragon (RADR) and CEIGRAM. The MAP aims to have a good representation of all stakeholders and interests. The Aragon region is characterised by low population density and depopulation, unemployment, poor infrastructure and services, and an increasing proportion of men in rural areas because of the outmigration of women. This leads to the prioritisation of the following challenges: service provision for all rural people (transport, healthcare, education, housing), gender balance and opportunities for young people in rural areas, and improving the quality of life. The objective of the platform is to generate knowledge and create networks seeking synergies between various policy areas in order to contribute to vibrant rural areas.

For more information contact facilitator: Carina Folkesson Lillo [carina.folkesson@gmail.com](mailto:carina.folkesson@gmail.com)



### Spain - Galicia

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Build on existing group	Confirming members	Meeting March 2020

In north-western Spain, the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC) facilitates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Galician Rural Interfaces'. This is a regional platform that uses the Galician Association of Local Action Groups (GALAG) as support and a starting point. The region faces typical challenges of peripheral regions in Europe, such as rural depopulation and aging, and the abandonment of farmland. Its bioclimatic conditions characterise Galicia as prone to forest fire risk and scenarios of climate change indicate that the situation will worsen. The platform will focus on the following topics: employment and income generation, provision of infrastructures and services, and sustainable and inclusive land management. On these topics the platform aims to improve policy design by using a better identification of rural needs and better engagement of rural actors in collaborative policy-making. Thus, the platform aims to contribute to finding solutions to tackle climate change and demographic trends, as well as improving rural living conditions.

For more information contact facilitator: Beatriz Guimarey Fernandez [beatriz.guimarey@usc.es](mailto:beatriz.guimarey@usc.es)

### United Kingdom – Dee catchment

Origin of the MAP	MAP Establishment	First MAP activity
Existing group	Complete	Meeting March 2020

In north-eastern Scotland, United Kingdom, the James Hutton Institute coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Dee Catchment Partnership'. The platform has a local focus covering the catchment of the River Dee. This area is defined by a biophysical unit and does not correspond to any socio-economic geographical units. The Dee catchment area is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Birds and Habitats Directive of the European Commission. Furthermore, it is the source of drinking water for Aberdeen, the habitat of Atlantic salmon, and other species of high ecological significance and has an international reputation for its cultural heritage. The area faces challenges relating to extreme events and flood risk and socio-economic and environmental impacts of the expansion of the City of Aberdeen. Further challenges relate to access to high-speed internet connectivity, and gaps in the provision of public services. The platform focuses on reviewing the most important influences on the management of the area, implementing natural flood management, and supporting responsible access to land and tourism. This will contribute to the aim of the Dee Catchment Partnership to protect, enhance and restore the natural processes that maintain the health of the river system.

For more information contact facilitator: Susan Cooksley [susan.cooksley@hutton.ac.uk](mailto:susan.cooksley@hutton.ac.uk)

### United Kingdom – Scotland

Origin of the MAP	MAP establishment	First MAP activity
Newly established platform	Inviting members	Meeting planned May 2020

In the United Kingdom, the James Hutton Institute coordinates the 'Multi-Actor Platform Rural Scotland'. This has a regional focus covering the whole of Scotland. The platform will be newly established, selecting



members on the basis of existing regional development initiatives and the representation of all rural interests. The platform will operate in alignment with the Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutes Gateway (SEFARI Gateway). This will aid in linking similar lines of policy evolution between national and European scales. The platform will focus on both the environment and the people of rural Scotland. The aim is to improve the flow of research, knowledge and expertise to and from policy, industry and the public.

The expected impact is to understand emerging trends affecting rural areas and so inform thinking in public policy, private sector and civil society of the future of rural Scotland. Outcomes sought are improvements in the resilience of rural communities, and delivery of public policy on tackling climate change together with safeguarding and restoring biodiversity. Specific topics will be updated following the first meeting of the platform.

For more information contact facilitator: David Miller [David.Miller@hutton.ac.uk](mailto:David.Miller@hutton.ac.uk)

### 3. Composition of the MAPs

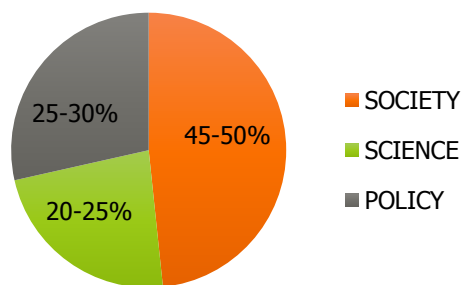
In the design, each MAP must include a balanced representation of “active members” representing the three communities (Chartier *et al.*, 2020; D1.2):

- i) Science: researchers with national or regional knowledge of rural areas. The researchers should have expertise in rural development, agriculture or the bioeconomy or other rural topics of relevance to the regional MAP. Researchers identified should be credible, with established track record in the topic;
- ii) Society: representatives from the civil society, NGOs, business and farmer organisations, local citizens;
- iii) Policy: elected politicians or officials in public authorities at national, regional or local level.

Each MAP should aim to involve at least 10 active members, as well as a Facilitator and a Monitor from the SHERPA national partner. External stakeholders will be invited to participate in activities on an ad-hoc basis.

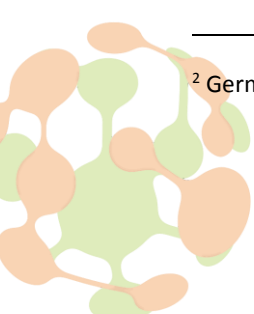
The composition of the SHERPA MAPs in terms of the three target communities is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The indicative composition of the MAP’s from the target communities of “Society”, “Society” and “Policy” sectors.



In total, approximately 250 actors are expected to be involved in the MAPs, from those being identified, selected, invited or already confirmed. From the analysis of the composition of the MAPs drawn from the Dynamic Action Plans<sup>2</sup>, 45% to 50% of members come from the “society” sector (c.120), 25-30% from

<sup>2</sup> German and Greek DAPs have not indicated membership of their MAPs.





“science” (c.60) and 25-30% from “policy” (c.70)<sup>3</sup>, indicating a balance in favour of the civil society representatives.

An indication of the proportions of actors from each type of target communities per Multi-Actor Platform is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Proportions of members of Multi-Actor Platforms per target community of actor (society, science and policy). Green box: appropriate proportion; Orange box: acceptable proportion; Red box: low proportion, could be improved. (Source: Dynamic Action Plans of national Multi-Actor Platforms).

Multi-Actor Platform (Country)	Target Communities		
	Society	Science	Policy
Bulgaria	45-50%	25-30%	25-30%
Czech Republic	70-75%	20-25%	-
Denmark	40-45%	25-30%	25-30%
Finland	30-35%	30-35%	30-35%
France	30-35%	15-20%	15-20%
Germany	-	-	-
Greece	-	-	-
Hungary	30-35%	30-35%	30-35%
Italy (Tuscany)	5-10%	5-10%	75-85%
Italy (Emilia-Romagna)	-	-	-
Lithuania	45-50%	25-30%	25-30%
Netherlands	50-55%	0-10%	35-40%
Poland	65-70%	20-25%	15-20%
Portugal	25-30%	30-35%	30-35%
Romania	40-45%	20-25%	30-35%
Slovenia	70-75%	20-25%	15-20%
Spain (Aragon)	50-55%	25-30%	15-20%
Spain (Galicia)	45-50%	30-35%	20-25%
United Kingdom (Dee Catchment Partnership)	35-40%	20-25%	35-40%
United Kingdom (Scotland)	65-70%	15-20%	15-20%

Overall, some MAPs are strongly based on one of the three Science-Society-Policy groups (see Table 2), for example a regional government, a university or a Local Action Group. As the MAPs become established, an aim will be to refine the balance of their membership as a requirement in the organisation of the MAP cycle. This will form part of the feedback to the MAPs will be to take action to enable a more equal representation of groups, and thus equal influence on the agenda and process of the MAP.

Generally, a stronger presence of the scientific community was expected which would be consistent with the composition of the SHERPA partnership, with academic experts often those who are promoting the MAPs. The roles of Facilitator and Monitor for most of the MAPs are filled by academics or researchers. Therefore, in some MAPs, the scientific is relatively low proportion of their membership, which will be reflected in the feedback to the teams running the MAPs.

Within the “society” sector, the most represented category is that of business organisations (c.40), followed by NGOs (c.25), civil society (c.25) and farmers organisations (c.20). As regards to the “policy” sector, most

<sup>3</sup> In many cases only affiliations were identified and not specific individuals, in which cases it was assumed there would be 1 person for each affiliation.



of the members represent regional public authorities (c.30) or national public authorities (c.20). External stakeholders have been identified in the Dynamic Action Plans for some platforms (i.e. Czech, Spain-Aragon, Slovenia and Lithuania). These stakeholders are participants invited to engage in a specific MAP cycle or a topic, but are not members of the MAP.

As regards to the policy sector, some platforms have a good balance between national, regional and local representatives. Others are more focused on the level of governance consistent with the geographical extent of the platform.

In some Dynamic Action plans, most of the possible members of the platforms have only been identified or invited. The Facilitators and Monitors are required to proceed to complete the process of invitations or obtain the confirmation of the invited members. That will enable the finalisation of the list of members consistent with timeline indicated in the Plans.

Overall, three different starting conditions have been identified in the MAPs which will influence the subsequent process of identification and selection of their membership. These conditions are listed below, in order of frequency:

- New MAPs supported by regional or local networks (mainly Local Action Groups), local government representatives for agriculture and rural areas. This group represents 55% of the MAPs.
- Existing MAPs, willing to enlarge the composition of the membership, or to ensure a better coverage in terms of geographic context, interests and type of stakeholders. This group represents 25% of the MAPs. It is noted that existing MAPs have adapted their composition and objectives in order to comply with the requirements of SHERPA.
- New MAPs, supported by national bodies and authorities (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture), aiming at involving mainly institutional actors and representatives. This group represents 20% of the MAPs.

The methods for identifying members for new MAPs have been predominantly based on the technique of “snowball sampling”, consisting of two steps: (i) the identification of potential actors in the population; (ii) asking those actors to indicate other people (and then ask those people to indicate other ones, and so on). These steps are repeated until the necessary number of people is reached. In some cases, Facilitators and Monitors have searched for similar projects and initiatives to involve actors who are already engaged on rural issues, and to avoid overlapping and duplicating activities.

Not all MAPs have identified their members on the basis of pre-established criteria. The most common criteria has been geographical coverage, balance between traditional and innovative models of businesses, interests in relevant topics, national and regional importance and their participation in different work or positions on the topic to be considered. Some DAPs have not provided a description of the process of identification and selection of their members.

In most cases, for the new MAPs and for the invitation of new members to join existing MAPs, the first contact has been made by email and/or phone in order to engage an individual and explain the objectives of the project and the expectations of someone joining a MAP. Then, if potential members agree, the second step has been the sending of a formal invitation together with the participation consent form. In some cases, an issue raised has been that of the workload required. According to their specific needs, MAPs can evolve in their composition as the project develops. SHERPA Deliverable 5.1 will report on how Facilitators and Monitors are supported in the setting-up of MAPs.



## 4. Summary of the Main Objectives Identified for the MAPs

Within SHERPA, the aim of the MAPs is to gather knowledge and opinions from regional and EU levels to contribute to the formulation of recommendations for future policies relevant to rural areas.

From the analysis of the Dynamic Action Plans, five main areas of objectives have been identified as indicated by Facilitators and Monitors. The analysis has been performed through clustering the objectives reported in the Dynamic Action Plans and shown in Table 3. Each cluster is represented to a higher or lesser extent. For this reason, in the following table it has been reported also the number of objectives that can be traced back to each cluster.

Table 3: DAP's objectives and relative scopes

Clusters of Objectives in the Dynamic Action Plans	Number of Objectives Belonging to the Cluster
<b>Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)</b>	18
<b>Co-construction of policy recommendations</b>	12
<b>Policy review and analysis</b>	9
<b>Bridging visions and scientific evidences</b>	9
<b>Support to sustainable rural development</b>	7

Table 3 shows the five clusters that emerged from the analysis of the objectives of the Dynamic Action Plans. Comparing their consistency and the underlying objectives, it has provided an analysis of the degree of compliance with the objectives set by the SHERPA project (see Table 4).

Table 4: Assessment of the overall alignment of the objectives and level of compliance of the Multi-Actor Platforms with those of SHERPA (Source: interpreted from the Dynamic Action Plans)

Specific Objectives of SHERPA	Assessment of Alignment of MAP and SHERPA
<b>To map the main drivers of future trends and dynamics of EU rural areas</b>	Sufficient
<b>To establish Multi-Actor Platforms as effective and sustainable Science-Society-Policy interfaces</b>	Excellent*
<b>To create a shared knowledge base relevant to EU rural policy by taking stock of results of past and on-going research projects</b>	Sufficient
<b>To engage in dialogue between citizens, researchers and policy makers from EU territories</b>	Very good
<b>To formulate recommendations linked, if needed, with different scenarios for the development of modern rural policies at European, national and regional levels</b>	Very good

\* Note: some Dynamic Action Plans are still in the early stages of establishment and consolidation of their MAPs.

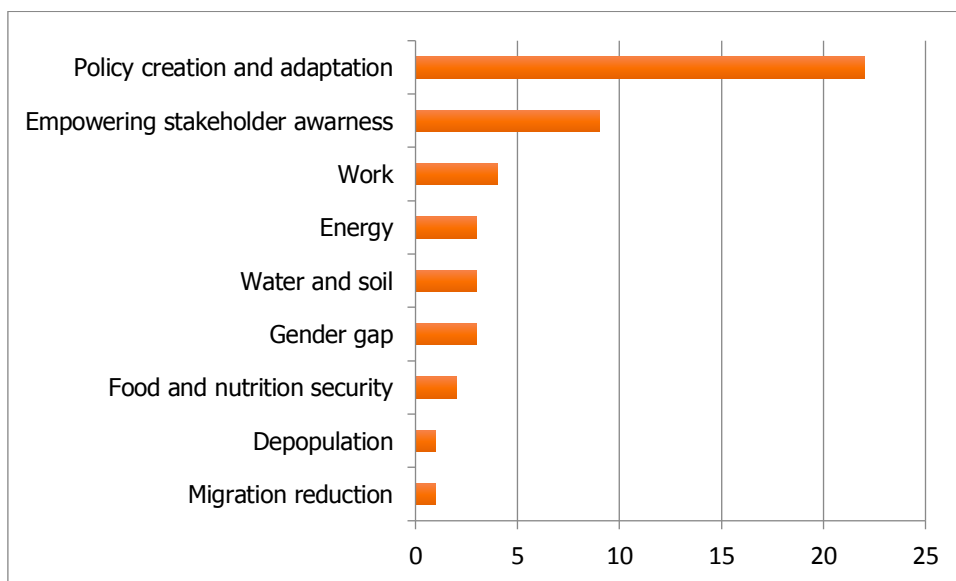


In SHERPA, the MAPs are the core mechanism and forum for exchanging knowledge regarding past and ongoing research, and co-constructing recommendations to support future policies. It is noted that some MAPs aim to focus upon rural development and policy implementation rather than providing input to policy formulation and a research agenda, and others on a specific topic (e.g. digitalisation, renewable energy). Some MAPs define their objectives in terms of research rather than engagement in policy formulation and research agenda. This reflects the prominent place that knowledge co-creation has in SHERPA, and recognition that research is needed in order to have a meaningful discussion and define actions for policy implementation.

For achieving the aims of SHERPA it is important for the focus to be on the policy formulation and research agenda. To ensure consistency with the objectives of SHERPA, feedback to the MAP teams will re-emphasise the co-creation of knowledge through the use of research evidence and interaction between the different actor groups, and the risks of developing a 'tunnel vision' so that engagement takes place across all relevant topics.

The activities of the platforms are directed on the creation of impacts in or for rural areas. Nine main areas of impact have been identified. The number of impacts related to specific fields are shown in Figure 4. based upon the number of expected impacts identified most will relate to outcomes of discussions of policies, and their adaptation to issues associated with supporting the development of rural areas. Secondary impacts may emerge during the development of the work which are evidence in later stages of the project

Figure 4. Clusters of impacts of the Multi-Actor Platforms as identified from the Dynamic Action Plans



## 5. Classification of the Main Topics of Interest Identified by the 20 Multi-Actor Platforms

Determining the topics on which each Multi-Actor Platform will work in each cycle requires a process of matching the topics of interest of the 20 MAPs with the EU level policy processes and research agenda. For the first MAP cycle this process is on-going. The MAP teams (Facilitators and Monitors) with the support of MAP members (where it is already established) have identified the topics of interest for the MAP to which they are contributing. Similarly, the coordinator has identified topics of relevance at EU level. These are shown in Figure 4.

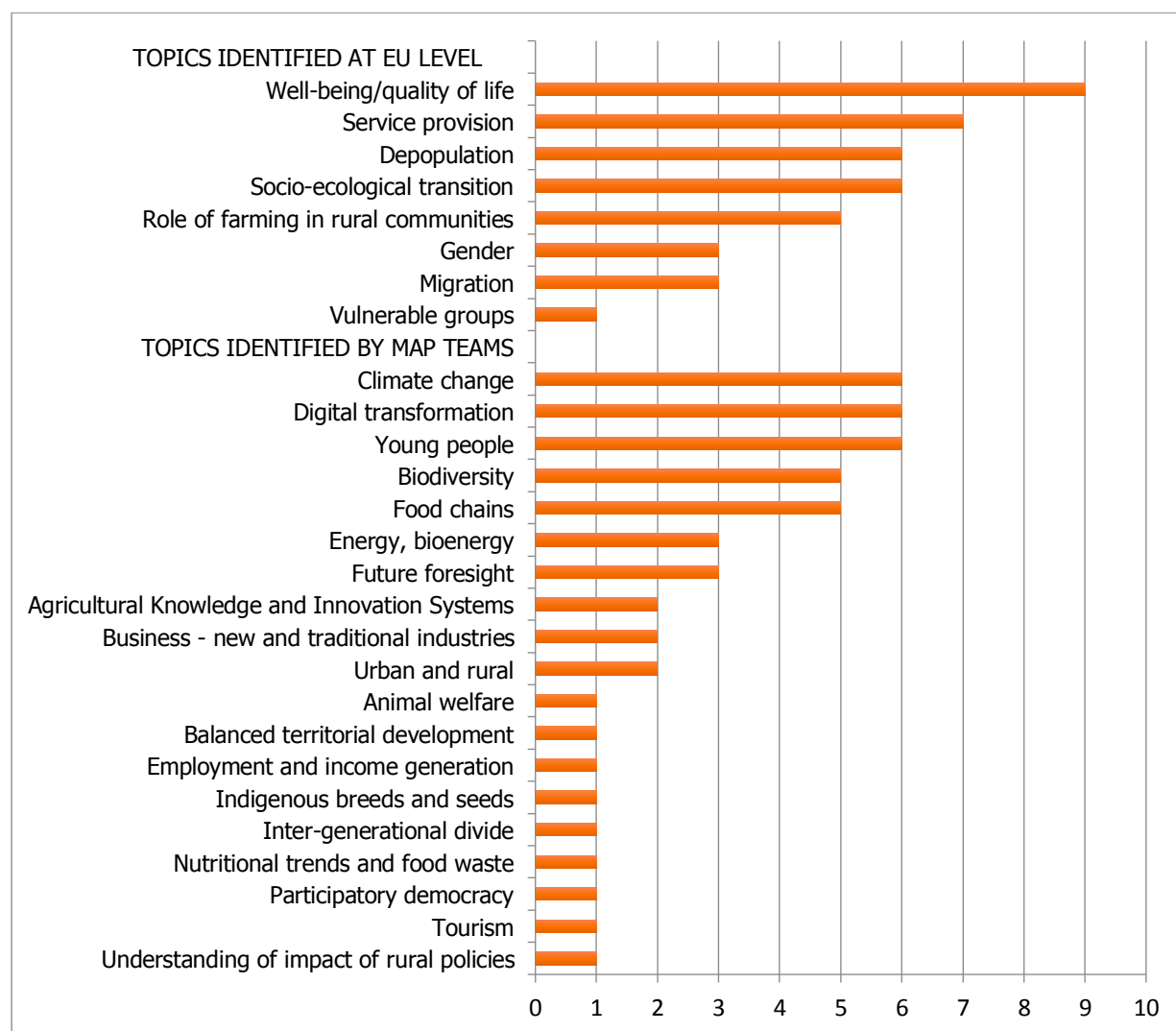
The topics suggested by the MAP teams are different in nature, scale and levels of abstraction compared to those pre-identified. However, in most cases they can be linked. For example, "Digital transformation", a



topic raised in the MAPs, could be linked strategically to the more general topic of “Well-being/quality of life”, as suggested at EU level. Similarly, the topic of “youth” raised by MAPs is an issue connected to the topic of “depopulation”, identified at EU level.

Nevertheless, it is useful to include all the topics identified by the MAP teams to provide an initial impression of the first Dynamic Action Plans, and identify weaknesses and feedback to Facilitators and Monitors, and the relevant Work package and Task leaders.

Figure 5: The frequency of the topics of interest as pre-identified and Multi-Actor Platform teams.



Overall, the descriptions put forward in the Dynamic Action Plans emphasise the importance of the definition of mechanisms and policies aimed at fostering economic development of rural areas, and in particular in the context of the socio-economic effects of implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2020. In this first phase, “well-being and quality of life” has been narrowly associated with economic development, and to some extent, to social aspects. Environmental aspects of rural area are less well represented.

Figure 5 shows that the “well-being/quality of life” topic was the most frequently referenced at EU level. This is a topic which contains a broad range of sub-topics that have been considered as stand-alone in some Dynamic Action Plans. For example, topics such as “(un)employment” and “income generation in rural areas” have been considered as part of the “well-being/quality of life” topic, while some other Facilitators and Monitors have indicated them separately.



The topic which was most frequently proposed in the Dynamic Action Plans is that of “climate change”. Comments in the Plans are divided between adaptation and mitigation, with a stronger focus on adaptation. Connections are made between climate change and the conservation of natural resources, extreme climatic events in rural areas, natural flood management (including blue-green infrastructures) and environmental pressures, such as water quality and eutrophication of water bodies. Some DAPs have stressed the connections between climate change and social impacts, observing that sustainable and inclusive land management should aim at addressing climate change in the context of the difficult and challenging demographic trends in rural areas.

“Service provision” is the second most referenced topic at EU level. In the Dynamic Action Plans discussion of services is primarily related to the provision and access to transport, healthcare, education and housing services, recognising that, in many MAP regions, the wide distribution of habitation inhibits the effective distribution of such services. In some rural area, public services mainly address emergency issues, which is different to provision in urban areas. Amongst the sub-topics related to “service provision”, are smart specialisation and partnerships in providing services in rural areas through public, private and third sector cooperation. Reference is also made to the adoption of Place-based development strategies for service provision, meaning targeted measures to different types of rural areas.

The third most cited topic is “digital transformation”. Questions posed with some Dynamic Action Plans are how digital technologies can contribute to addressing issues of the provision of services noted above. Also noted is the use of new concepts in rural development (such as Smart Villages and smart rural development to empower rural communities) for strengthening local and regional policy and initiatives.

On the topic of “depopulation”, amongst the issues most frequently represented are a lack of opportunities (linked to the topic of “well-being/quality of life”) and generational renewal in agriculture. Sub-topics reflect support for socio-ecological transitions of small-scale agriculture towards agro-ecology and the issues related to land management, improvements in land use, and land abandonment.

The topic of “Young people” is included under headings such as the attractiveness of rural areas (often linked to the topic of gender) and the access to land (“rebuild/rethink youth role in farm succession and/or their role as new entrants in farming”).



## 6. Overview of Activities planned in the Multi-Actor Platforms

An overview of the MAP cycle is presented in Figure 6. The setting up of the MAPs comprises:

- inviting MAP members and establish working relationships and roles;
- obtaining consent and compliance with ethical requirements of the SHERPA project (as per deliverables in Work Package 8);
- agreeing on structure and resources for the activities;
- making an inventory of topics of interest by introducing a MAP dynamic agenda;
- developing the initial DAP starting from a proposal of the facilitator and discussing it with MAP members.

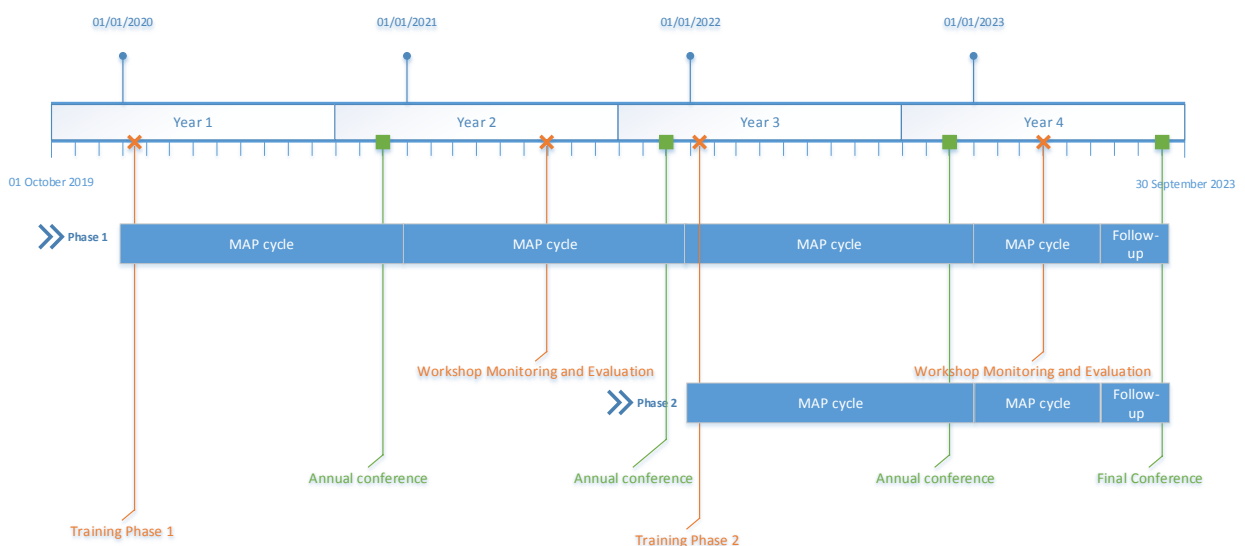
After the start-up activities, there are three steps for the platforms of: Preparation, MAP Discussion, and Follow up.

The Preparation step includes several activities such as analysing the SHERPA Discussion Paper, gathering additional regional input, identifying external stakeholders, designing, organising and facilitating the event(s), and the preparation of a MAP Position Paper.

In the MAP Discussion step, activities are triggered by sharing knowledge and challenges with MAP members so that all stakeholders invited can engage in the discussion. In this step it is essential to examine, assess, and discuss the topic of the MAP, sharing different perspectives within the science-society-policy interface. Taking account of the various perspectives of members of the MAP, the platform will take decisions on the main points that will lead to its Position Paper. A final and crucial step is the documentation of the whole process and all of the responses gathered during the discussion.

The Follow up step is led by the Facilitator, who will prepare the MAP Position Paper. This provides the inputs to the SHERPA Position Paper. The MAPs will then evaluate the functioning of the MAP cycle and, if necessary, will update and adapt the Dynamic Action Plan for the platform for Phase 2 of SHERPA.

Figure 6. The MAP cycle in SHERPA



From the analysis of the first initial Dynamic Action Plans there are some differences and similarities regarding the methods that Facilitators and Monitors have used in order to communicate, interact, and engage with MAP members. Overall, three main groups of activities:

- Engagement and preparation before the meetings of the Multi-Actor Platforms

Methods of identification and selection of members have been set according to the geographical scope of the Dynamic Action Plan. For example, national level DAPs have preferred to start from the contacts with national bodies in order to identify and invite potential members, while more local level DAPs started by contacting Local Action Groups, networks or organisations/associations.

In some cases, a regular flow of messages and communications has been planned before starting the MAPs. However, in most cases, it has been decided that before the first meeting of the MAP all members will be approached in individual or multi-lateral phone-meetings to discuss their special interests and approaches to rural challenges. These discussions can provide a basis of the MAP Discussion Paper, and the preparations of the first meeting of the MAP.

- Interaction with members during the meetings of the Multi-Actor Platforms

In several Dynamic Action Plans, there is a plan to provide introductory documents which are prepared by Facilitators and Monitors. These will summarise the situation from different perspectives, sometimes including a scenario study. In one case (Portugal), a work plan has been developed to promote active contribution from all the actors, and also to motivate participants to engage in activities that will ultimately lead to a position paper that takes into account, as much as possible, all of contributions and relevant findings.

Some Dynamic Action Plans contain details of the several tools and methods to be used in the participatory activities, whereas in other plans there is nothing specific identified. The most common methods for the involvement of members during the MAP cycles (thus not only during the meetings of the MAPs) are: focus groups discussions, direct interviews, co-creation workshops, online consultation, world-café, Delphi (in one case), questionnaires, field trips, roundtable workshops.

- Collection of feedback from members and follow-up dialogue after the meetings of the Multi-Actor Platforms.

Some Facilitators and Monitors have detailed how they will collect feedback and further inputs from members following the meetings of the MAPs. In some cases, minutes will be produced and circulated by Facilitator and Monitor after each meeting. In other cases, reference is made to communication activities. In two cases, online tools such as the website and the social media have been mentioned as methods to communicate and interact with members., and to share and disseminate information about the MAPs. The framework prepared in SHERPA Work Package 2, Task 2.2, provides an online stakeholder engagement support (OSSES) tool for assisting Facilitators and MAPs during and after the project. This toolbox is designed to offer hands-on guidance on methods and tools for stakeholder engagement.





## 7. Final Remarks

The Multi-Actor Platforms of SHERPA will work on policy issues in rural areas and are characterised by a strong diversity of members, defined aims and actions planned around a broad range of topics. At month 5 (February 2020), the MAPs are at different stages of development. The completion of the invitations to potential members, the balance between the three target communities to be involved (society-science-policy) and, to a lesser extent, the definition of objectives and expected impacts, vary case by case. From analysis of the 20 DAPs, the following evidence and recommendations are summarised.

### Summary of analysis of the Dynamic Action Plans:

- Approximately 250 actors have been identified, selected, invited or already confirmed participation in the MAPs;
- The average number of members in the MAPs is 15;
- Forty-five to fifty percent of the expected members come from the "society" sector, 25% to 30% from "science" and 25% to 30% from "policy" sectors. This implies an imbalance in favour of civil society representatives;
- Some MAPs have a strong base in one of the three Science-Society-Policy groups, being a regional government, a university or a Local Action Group;
- Three different starting conditions influence the process of identification and selection of the MAP's members:
  - New MAPs supported by regional or local networks (mainly Local Action Groups), local government representatives for agriculture and rural areas;
  - Existing MAPs, willing to enlarge the composition of the membership or ensure better coverage in terms of geographic context, interests and type of stakeholders;
  - New MAPs supported by national bodies and authorities (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture), aiming at involving (mainly) institutional actors and representatives;
- The methods for the identification of members of new MAPs have been based, predominantly, on the technique of "snowball sampling";
- Some MAPs aim to focus on rural development and policy implementation rather than providing input to policy formulation and research agenda;
- The monitoring of the Dynamic Action Plans and activities of the MAPs will take be aware of risks of 'tunnel vision', with a view to ensure that the membership of the MAPs enables engagement across the breadth of relevant topics;
- The topics suggested by MAP teams are different in nature, scale and levels of abstraction compared to those suggested at EU level. The principal topics identified at EU level are well-being/quality of life, service provision, depopulation, socio-ecological transition; and from the MAPs are climate change, digital transformation, and young people;
- The most common methods for the involvement of members during the MAP cycles (thus not only during the MAP meetings) are: focus groups discussions, direct interviews, co-creation workshops, online consultation, world-café, Delphi (in one case), questionnaires, field trips, roundtable workshops.



**Feedback to the Multi-Actor Platform teams:**

- Representation of the scientific sector needs to be increased in order to provide a better balance in the society-science-policy interface;
- Action should be taken to enable all groups to be equally represented and have equal influence on the agenda and process of the MAP;
- Facilitators and Monitors should proceed to completion of the invitations to membership of the Multi-Actor Platforms, or obtain confirmation of acceptance by those invited to become members;
- The activities of the Multi-Actor Platforms should be better geared towards co-creating knowledge through the use of research evidence and interaction between the different actor groups;
- Facilitators are invited to read and use the online stakeholder engagement support (OSES) tool.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

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