



## GUIDANCE SHEET 1

# HOW TO ORGANISE A MAP EVENT AT REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL?

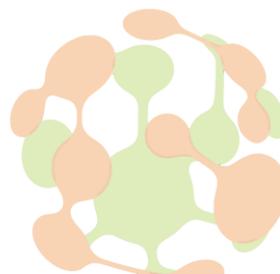
In the SHERPA project, Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs) are the core forum for two-way exchanges of ideas for co-learning and co-creation of knowledge with actors at European and regional levels. To function as a MAP, an existing group may need to include other types of actors to ensure representation of citizens, business, science and policy.

SHERPA MAP Facilitators and Monitors are in charge of the stakeholder engagement process. SHERPA MAP Facilitators are the ones who drive the process, the Monitors support the Facilitators and also observe, capture and report on progress on targets and process. The Facilitators strive to get a good balance between groups, create a safe space for dialogue. They draft the Dynamic Action Plans, guide discussions through MAP discussion papers, and summarise those in MAP position papers. The Monitors are responsible for reporting and evaluating the work. Communication is also an important task for both Facilitators and Monitors.

Organising meetings with stakeholders is essential to get their engagement and collaboration to the definition and pursuit of the objectives of each MAP. Every MAP has at least 10 members. They also involve a number of external stakeholders. The expected number of stakeholders involved on average in a MAP event is between 10 and 20. Making such events successful is of paramount importance for achieving progress in co-creation and co-learning between stakeholders and ultimately for the creation of lasting science-policy-society rural interfaces across the European Union.

This guidance sheet provides a selection of event methods that seem particularly suitable for helping MAP Facilitators and Monitors accomplishing this crucial task. The selection is based on the Engage2020 Action Catalogue, which is an outcome of the [FP7 Engage2020 project](#), and on the application of the criteria below.

- Objectives of the SHERPA project: 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).
- Objective of participation from stakeholders: involving; collaborating; engaging.
- Geographical scope of application: Regional; local.
- Participants: Policymakers, researchers; civil society representatives.



- Skills required in the application of the event method: intermediate subject matter expertise; basic IT skills; Intermediate facilitation skills, basic event organisation skills; basic project management skills.
- Number of participants: between 10 and 20.
- Retaining participants: there are certain times in the process where participants may leave the MAP and others may join.
- Budget needs: low.
- Time needed for execution of method: less than three months.
- Context of process: includes both online and face-to-face elements.
- Engagement of participants in the preparation of method: stakeholders can be involved in the preparation of and during the process.
- Digital skills needed from participants: Basic.
- Transparency of engagement process: The whole process can be made transparent easily.
- Time available for discussion: The process allows substantial time for deliberation and discussion among participants.

The suggested methods (in alphabetical order) are: Focus Groups, Future Workshops, Scenario Workshops and World Cafés.

## 1. Focus Group

The focus group is a qualitative method for determining the preferences of stakeholders or for evaluating strategies and concepts. Participants are selected according to certain characteristics in common that relate to the selected topic and are grouped into 8-10 people. The method is often used to generate or evaluate hypotheses and ideas in conjunction with a quantitative method, or as a primary data-collection method.

The questions participants are asked are typically qualitative and open-ended, therefore the information is open to interpretation. The answers have depth, nuance, and variety. Group dynamics, interaction and non-verbal communication need also be observed. The focus groups can reveal what the participants are really thinking and feeling, even though their responses may be harder to score on a scale.

There are 3 main characteristics of the focus groups:

- The group focuses on a specific topic;
- There is a facilitator whose job is to keep the group focused on discussing the specific topic;
- There is some careful planning behind the group's composition and the group discussion in order to create an environment in which people feel free to talk openly. Some members of the group may need to be encouraged by the facilitator to express their opinions.
- The focus groups are structured and directed, yet, allowing for the free expressions of opinions by the participants, they can gather a lot of in-depth information in a relatively short time. The method is often used to generate or evaluate hypotheses and ideas. At the end, the information gathered in the discussion should be summarized in writing.

The main results of this method are:

- A summary of the group results;
- Research data;

- Reliable knowledge on e.g. people's preferences with regard to problem solutions of the specific research topic, etc.;
- The method allows direct observation of the participants' reactions during the focus group session, which adds to the data collected via the method.



Further information: <http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7409>

## 2. Future Workshop

A Future Workshop is a method for planning and forming a vision of the future in a specific geographical area. Future Workshops help define aims and identify problems by local stakeholders.

The purpose of this method is to formulate concrete solutions and action proposals with a group of participants based on their own experiences. Future Workshops are usually held on a local issue or challenge or in connection with the planning of a local action concerning a particular development. A

Future Workshop usually involves 15-25 participants. Usually these workshops are open to all with some targeted selection. The aim is to involve participants who are directly affected by a problem and are able to remedy it.

Future workshops incorporate a three-phase process, sometimes preceded by presentations which outline the workshop objectives:

- Critical analysis phase involving detailed analysis of the situation/technology;
- Visionary phase where future visions are built upon the analysis in the first phase; these are then subject to a reality check;
- Implementation phase where the visions are turned into actions.

Following the completion of the workshop, the action plan should be monitored and if necessary adjusted with more workshops planned. One of the most common models of future workshops involves a one-day workshop where the critical phase takes place in the morning, the visionary phase takes place in the early afternoon, and the implementation takes place in the second half of the afternoon.

The future workshop method is particularly suited to assessing issues at the local level. The results of a future workshop may be included in a report, but most importantly they should lead to action and /or the creation of a new interest group. The idea is to work towards action proposals the participants can implement themselves.



Further information: <http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7391>

## 3. Scenario Workshops

The scenario workshop is an instrument for participatory planning, based on dialogue and collaboration between a group of local citizens, stakeholders, experts and policy makers. The method aims to stir dialogue, provide the opportunity for exchanging experience and knowledge about existing barriers and possible solutions, enhance the understanding on the central topic/problem of discussion, and facilitate consensus on proposed solutions among the involved groups.

The purpose of the scenario workshop is to assess different solutions to specific problem. The solution can be technical, regulatory or an alternative method to organise or manage a problem. The scenario workshop is a two-day meeting involving 20-30 local representatives such as citizens, policy makers, stakeholders, technology experts and private sector representatives. Before the workshop, a set of scenarios is developed

and used as visions and inspiration at the scenario workshop. From these the participants develop visions in groups through discussion such as local plans of action to solve the problem.

### Before the workshop

The organiser appoints an external planning group which comprises several people with specialist knowledge on the workshop topic. A set of scenarios is written, describing alternative ways of development. The scenarios represent different technical and organisational solutions with social and political values. Participants are carefully selected, and they are asked to read the scenarios beforehand.

### During the workshop

The workshop is guided by a facilitator and the participants are divided in 'role groups' or 'theme groups' according to experience and interests. The workshop combines group work with brainstorm, debate, voting, presentation and plenary sessions. The process is divided into the following three phases:

- Phase 1 'Critical analysis':  
The participants comment on the scenarios based on their views, knowledge and experiences, providing both positive and negative feedback and highlighting barriers. It should be made clear to participants that the scenarios are not predictions and the aim is not to select or assess the scenarios. The primary objective is to use particular scenarios to help participants develop their own visions.
- Phase 2 'Vision making':  
Using the knowledge gained from the critical analysis phase, the visionary phase focuses on developing personal visions for future development. The participants' personal visions are discussed in the group. Each participant can choose elements and parts from the critical analysis phase to create their own vision. The participants continue to work in groups within their expertise theme and formulate different visions.
- Phase 3 'Implementation':  
The visions have to undergo a process to become realistic, and the group has to consider barriers such as economic, cultural, social, organisational, political or technical. All groups present their ideas in plenum and there is time for discussion, clarification and priority. The visions turn into action proposals that are gathered in a final action plan. The action plan contains the visions with a focus on the solutions about implementation.

The main results of this method are:

- An action plan, including the created visions, and new ideas and recommendations for future actions, policies and initiatives.
- A networking opportunity for citizens, stakeholders and policy makers, allowing them to interact, exchange knowledge and experiences, develop common visions and produce a plan of solutions for future action on a specific problem.
- Policymakers can gain new knowledge about the citizens' discussions.
- Citizens can gain new knowledge and awareness in a specific topic.
- The method can contribute to better and more sustainable decisions in fields where future changes depend on the engagement and participation of citizens.
- The workshop brings people together who usually don't meet and discuss local problems. This can dissolve prejudices that can be a barrier in local issues.



Further information: <http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7453>

## 4. World Cafés

World Café is a method for engaging groups, both within organisations and in the public sphere. World Cafés are based on seven design principles and a simple method. This method is founded on the assumption that people have the capacity to work together, no matter who they are.

The setting should create an environment which is most often modelled like a café (including round tables with 4 or 5 chairs). The host should begin with a welcome and an introduction in the process. A World Café process begins with the first of three or more twenty-minute rounds of conversation for the small group seated around a table.

After the first round each member of the small groups moves to another table. One person will stay at the table and is a table host for the next round and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round. Each round of a World Café is prefaced with a question designed for the specific context and desired purpose of the session.

After the small groups, the participants are invited to share results from their conversations with the rest of the whole group. These results are reflected visually in a variety of ways, most often using graphic recorders in the front of the room.

Summed up, a World Café follows **seven core design principles**:

1. set the context;
2. create hospitable space
3. explore questions that matter
4. encourage everyone's contribution
5. cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives
6. listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions, and
7. harvest and share collective discoveries.

A main result of World Cafés is graphic recording, which involves capturing people's ideas and expressions in words, images and colour. This documentation is created by the participants of the World Café. It allows the group's collective work to be shared with others as a framework and guide.

A further analysis is the basis for written and visual documentation of the methods results and recommendations. A personal presentation of these outcomes in the workshop provides the platform for a discussion of their practical consequences and implementation.

World Cafés can create results to generate new ideas, to enable joint decision-making on key strategic issues, to discover new ways for collaboration, to reflect on the implications of a complex issue and in identifying specific step(s) for further exploration and implementation.<sup>1</sup>

 Further information: <http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7402>

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<sup>1</sup> Icons made by flaticon.