



SHERPA  
Rural Science-Society-Policy  
Interfaces

# A VISION FOR RURAL AREAS

MAP Position Paper



## LONG-TERM VISION FOR RURAL AREAS: CONTRIBUTION FROM 20 SCIENCE- SOCIETY-POLICY PLATFORMS

### MAP POSITION PAPER

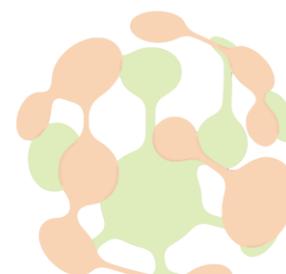
MAP DENMARK

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## 1. Headline messages from MAP Denmark

### Reap the opportunities in the green transition for rural development

Rural areas can play a central role in the green transition to reach national, supranational, and global climate and environmental targets as the majority of natural resources are located in rural areas. The transition to a sustainable, zero-emissions economy holds a range of opportunities for rural areas on all sustainability aspects: social, environmental, and economic. Supporting the key structures for enabling the green transition and the related opportunities should support and strengthen rural development. In this endeavour, MAP Denmark wants to highlight two specific aspects:

- **Secure local ownership to resources and that local activities benefit the local community and economy**

Ensure that local activities yield greater benefits to local communities by strengthening local ownership to resources and innovations, and local economic linkages. The main point of this message is that local economies and people must benefit more from economic activities in their areas, and the two main ways to do this are to own as many of the resources (including property rights in knowledge) as possible, and to strengthen economic linkages between local sectors.

- **Combat the negative narrative of rural areas**

Rural areas suffer from a negative narrative in the public debate and media presentation which support an unconstructive division of the Danish society in city and countryside. Increased attention should be placed on the interdependence between urban and rural areas, and the essential position rural areas hold for upholding welfare and prosperity in Denmark. Basically, give rural areas the credit they deserve, especially in managing climate and environmental-related challenges, which the European Commission in the European Green Deal specifies as 'this generation's defining task' (European Commission 2019:2). Combatting the negative narrative can help raise attractiveness of rural areas for people, business, and investment and support a socially just and democratic green transition.

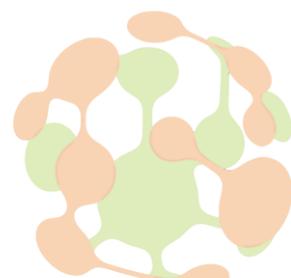
### Encourage long term strategies, joined-up thinking, and collaboration between sectors and actors

At municipal level, long term strategic plans should be developed in close collaboration with local stakeholders and actors (such as local councils, businesses, farmers, and citizens) who possess knowledge about local conditions. Because divergent opinions may exist between stakeholder groups, it is important to include and listen to all voices around the table to identify common interests and possibilities. In the process, identify local strongholds and potentials for development and provide municipalities with the resources and the power to create the best conditions for supporting and facilitating those.

At state level, long term strategic plans must be developed for rural areas that are cross-sectoral and where main sectors are included in drafting and developing those plans. Main sectors include among others housing, education, and the business sector. These plans need to be built from the bottom up, i.e. listening to the messages and strategies of the local plans. In that way national plans become attentive to the local desires for development making them attractive places to live and take part.

### Secure devolved power and public resources to municipalities, regions, and local actors

Continued centralisation is considered a central challenge for development of rural areas. Municipalities and regions need better conditions to pursue identified desires for local action, why MAP Denmark argues to ensure devolved power to municipalities, regions, and local actors. For example, when it comes to land use planning, municipalities need better possibilities to respond to local circumstances. This is closely related to the headline message above, where local knowledge must be included if discussing e.g., how to conduct smart shrinkage of villages.

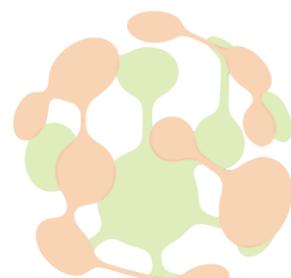
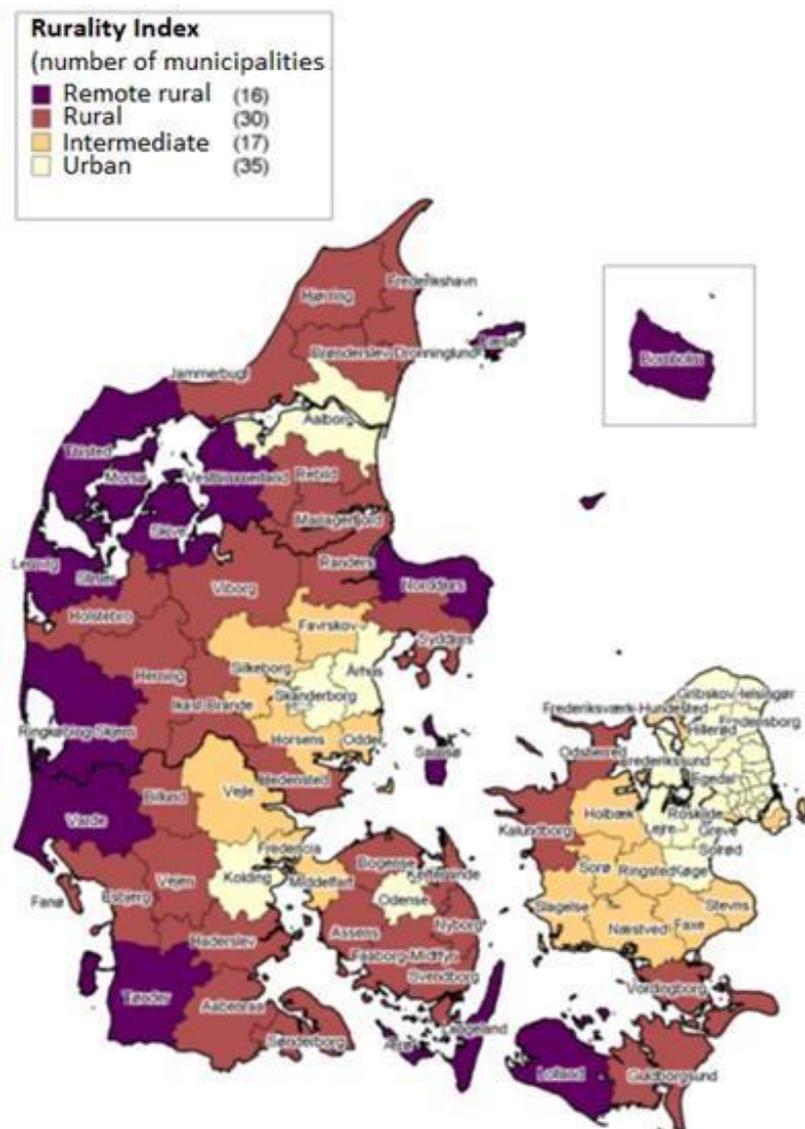


**Keywords:** green transition, cross-sectoral policies, local ownership, local actors, devolved power, long-term strategies, narrative.

### Rural areas in Denmark

Several categorisations of rural areas and definitions of rurality exist, alongside a continuous debate on what is included under the term 'rural'. The Danish regions have an average population of above 1 million each and as all regions have larger cities, it can be argued that the regional-based definition does not provide a very good overview of rural Denmark. A more coherent picture of rurality is presented in the national classification of municipalities that was created after the municipal reform in 2007 where 271 became 98 municipalities (Figure 1) (Kristensen, Kjeldsen, and Dalgaard 2007). The classification is developed based on seven indicators of rurality: urbanisation, centre-periphery, the significance of agriculture, development, demography, education, and economy. 16 municipalities are classified as remote rural and 30 as rural. All small islands, independent of their municipality's classification, are categorised by remote rural conditions. Together rural municipalities cover 71% of the land area. However, municipalities defined as intermediary and urban also have areas that can be categorised as rural, thus when diving deeper than municipal level, yet another more complex picture of rurality is found.

Figure 1. National classification of municipalities (Kristensen et al. 2007)

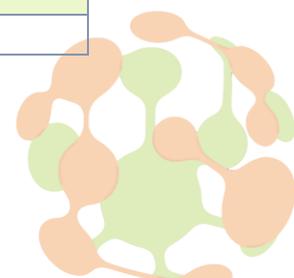


## 1.1. The Danish Multi-Actor Platform (MAP)

The overall aim for the composition of MAP Denmark is that members represent key stakeholders from rural Denmark and as broadly a representation of the different rural conditions as possible. For a complete overview of members in MAP Denmark see Table 1. In the table location refers to the physical place where MAP members operate from but is not limited to. New members have been added since the publication of the Discussion Paper (Vestergård & Refsgaard 2020) based on a continuous reflection about missing perspectives or central actors in the MAP.

Table 1. Members of MAP Denmark

<b>Science representatives</b>			
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Location, NUTS3</b>
<b>Centre for Regional and Tourism Research</b>	Rikke Brandt Broegaard	F	Bornholm
<b>Danish Centre for Rural Research</b>	Egon Noe	M	South Jutland
<b>Aarhus University, Danish School of Education</b>	Birgitte Romme Larsen	F	Copenhagen Surroundings
<b>Roskilde University, Department of People and Technology</b>	Niels Heine Kristensen	M	Eastern Zealand
<b>Policy representatives</b>			
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Location, NUTS3</b>
<b>Danish Business Authority, state level</b>	Camilla Nissen	F	West & South Zealand
<b>The Agricultural Agency, state level</b>	Erik Kristensen	M	East Jutland
<b>Svendborg municipality, local level</b>	Søren Bach-Hansen	M	Funen
<b>Central Denmark Region, regional level</b>	Mette Boel	F	West Jutland
<b>Lejre municipality, local level</b>	Nynne Friis	F	Eastern Zealand
<b>Society representatives – Private sector</b>			
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Location, NUTS3</b>
<b>Danish Agriculture and Food Council</b>	Karsten Willumsen	M	West Jutland
<b>Strandet, local SME</b>	Julie Møller	F	North Jutland
<b>GreenLab Skive, green industrial business park</b>	Thea Lyng Thomsen	F	West Jutland
<b>Thise Mejeri, local business</b>	Poul Pedersen	M	West Jutland
<b>Society representatives – Non-governmental organisations and civil society representatives</b>			
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Location, NUTS3</b>
<b>Rural Council of Denmark</b>	Grethe Saabye	F	East Jutland
<b>Collective Impact</b>	Søren Møller	M	East Jutland
<b>Balance Danmark</b>	Martin Christensen	M	East Jutland
<b>Association of Danish Small Islands</b>	Dorthe Winther	F	Funen



## 2. Key scientific evidence: Trends, challenges and opportunities for Danish rural areas

The MAP Denmark Discussion paper (Vestergård & Refsgaard 2020) provides an overview of significant trends, challenges, and opportunities for Danish rural areas. These include:

### Double urbanisation and demographic changes

In Denmark, a general process of urbanisation is taking place which not only include a movement from rural to urban areas on a national level, but also at local level where people are concentrating in local centres. As such, a double urbanisation process is observed from rural to urban areas both nationally and locally (KL 2014). In Figure 2. Total **population change by main component 2010-2018** (Grunfelder et al. 2020) the total population change by main component from 2010 to 2018 is depicted at municipal level.

Denmark has an ageing population especially in rural areas which result in an increasing old-age dependency. In addition, young people are concentrating in and around urban areas which studies suggest has a close correlation with the geographical centralisation of educations during the last 25 years (Andersen 2017). However, recent numbers from Nordregio show that for the age group 30-39 in many rural municipalities, and especially in Denmark, there is an overall positive internal net migration and for both sexes over the last decade (Figure 3). These numbers are also supported by Andersen and Nørgård (2018).

Figure 2. Total population change by main component 2010-2018 (Grunfelder et al. 2020)

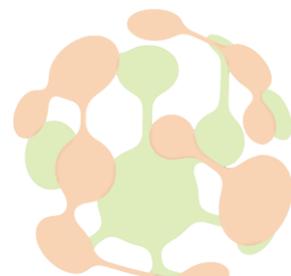
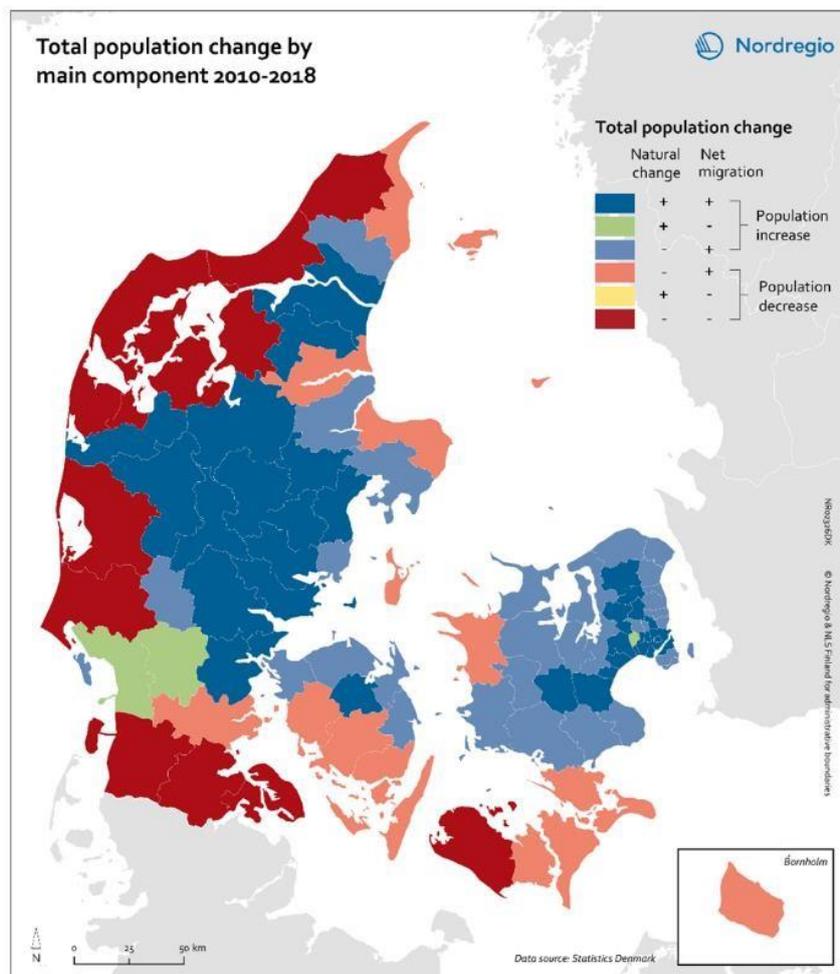
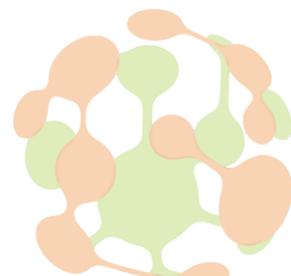
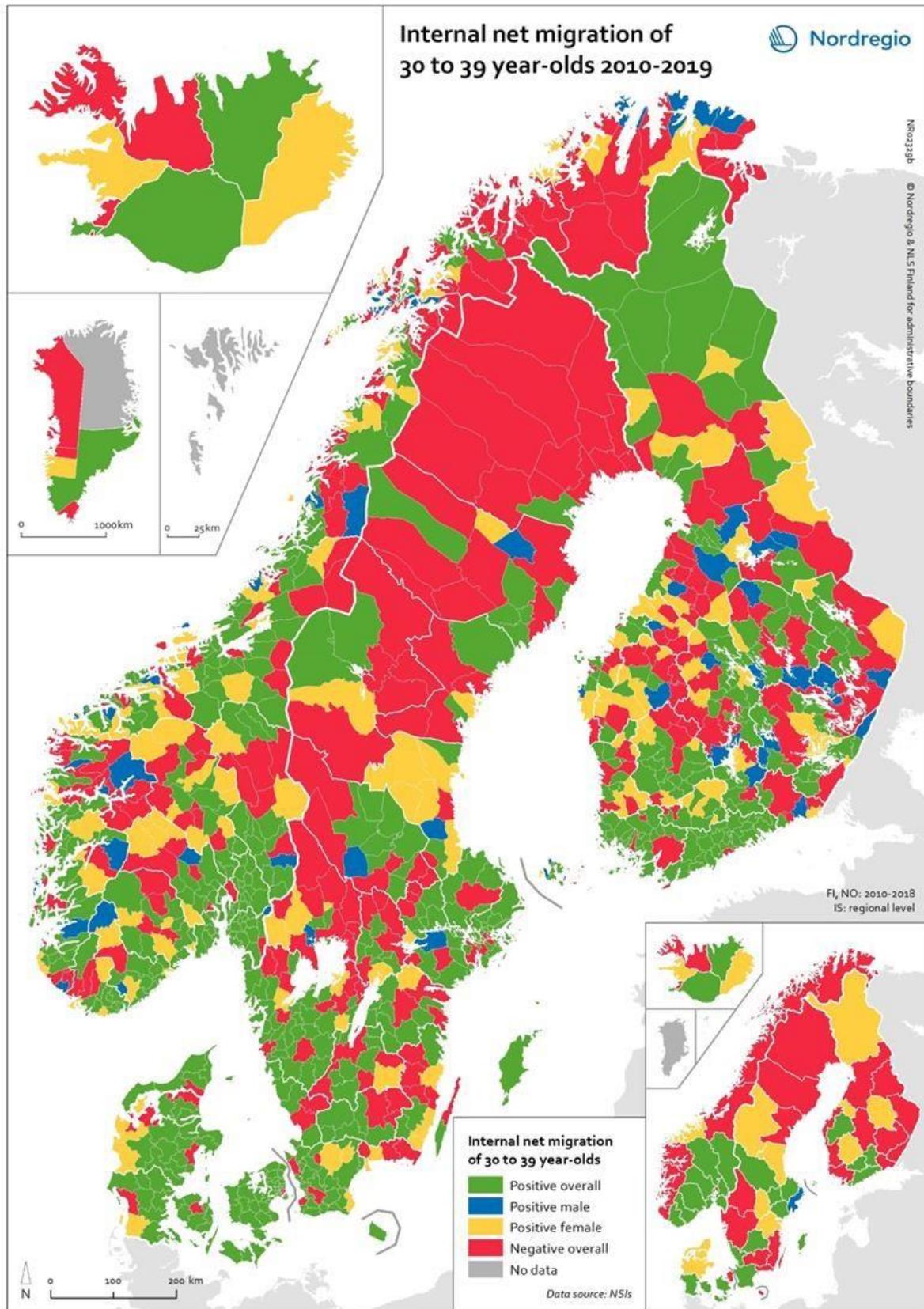


Figure 3. Internal net migration of 30 – 39 old in the period from 2010 – 2019 (Lundgren et al. 2020)



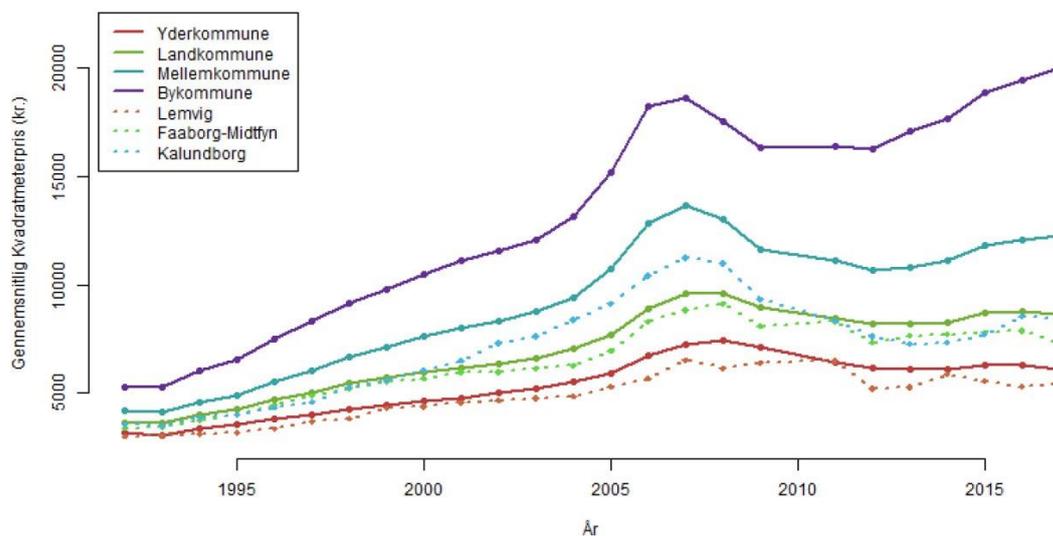
## Land use planning

An opportunity as well as necessity currently in focus is multifunctional land distribution, where the usage of land plots is renegotiated with the purpose to address the complex challenges as climate change, biodiversity loss and securing a sustainable food production (Ejrnæs et al. 2016). The Danish Agricultural Agency is currently working on this issue as well as the NGO 'Collective Impact'.

## Housing challenges

The MAP also refers to different types of challenges in the housing market in rural areas which are not only related to a mismatch between supply and demand but also to difficulties in obtaining loans, a significant share of dilapidated buildings and houses as well as an out-dated housing stock with few rentals and apartments available. According to Noe et al. (2020) the challenges in the housing market is a logical consequence of the increasing financialisation of the housing market impacting on where it is profitable to invest in houses. This in turn is a reflection both of centralisation processes, and of the belief that these processes will continue in the future. In figure 4 one sees the large increase in difference in average price per square metre for different municipality types with the rural areas being the large losers.

Figure 4. The development in the average square metre price for single houses for four types of municipalities (red being remote rural municipality, green rural municipality, blue intermediate municipality and purple urban municipality) and three case municipalities (Noe et al. 2020).

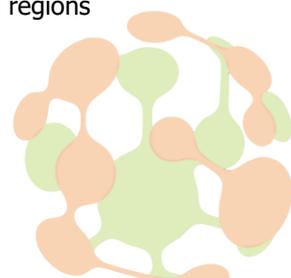


## Digitalisation provides great opportunities, but an urban-rural divide exists

Well-functioning digital infrastructure is considered essential for running businesses, attracting citizens and conduct distance-working in rural areas (Erhvervsministeriet 2019). Though Denmark is performing well in terms of broadband coverage in an international context (European Commission 2020), differences in access for households in rural and urban areas do exist. Nordregio research by Randall, Vestergård, and Meijer (2020) shows that the percentage of households on a municipal level with access to a broadband connection of at least 100Mbps (fast broadband) in 2018 is lower in a range of rural municipalities.

## The potential within the green transition

The green transition and within that the bioeconomy provides potential for regional development, as the bioresources, whether at land or at sea, are widely distributed in rural and remote areas where alternative sources of livelihood are usually scarce. The percentage of total employment in the bioeconomy sector, excluding agriculture, forestry and fisheries make up for more than 16% of total employment in all regions



in Denmark (see Grunfelder et al. 2020). Further a notable increase in employment has occurred in all of Denmark from 2009 to 2017.

## 2.1. The 'economic leak' from rural areas

MAP Denmark has emphasized that many activities in rural municipalities are not supporting local economies, therefore a small economic analysis has been carried out.

In figure 5 the number of jobs per inhabitant in the industry and in the services sectors is calculated. One sees, that the larger the municipality the larger the relative size of the services sectors, while the municipalities with 15 000 up to 100 000 inhabitants have the largest industry sector per inhabitant. Further data from Statistics Denmark (2020) show, that a large number of rural municipalities have a high number of new enterprises, the darker blue municipalities in the map (figure 6). Jobs in industry including agriculture normally create jobs in service sectors, both upstream and downstream the value chain. The question is where do these indirect created services locate? The MAP argues that many services both public and private have become more centralised over time, e.g., banking, insurance, research, accounting, business services, education, etc. Further it is the case that in many of those areas the higher-level responsibilities have been centralised, leaving lower level, clerical and sales, jobs in the smaller towns and rural areas.

Smaller local economies are often characterised by fewer sectors and therefore weaker economic structures and generally lower economic multipliers due to the so-called "import" of services. This implies that keeping the indirect effects of growth in industries in the local economy can be an interesting strategy for areas outside the big cities for their positive economic development. This is also reflected by the MAP with the focus they give to keeping ownership and value added in industry in the municipalities. The problem is that services are not tied to a place while manufacturing/immovable is much more tied to a place.

Figure 5. Jobs per inhabitant according to sector, 2018

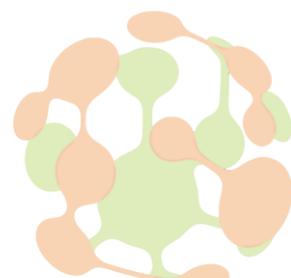
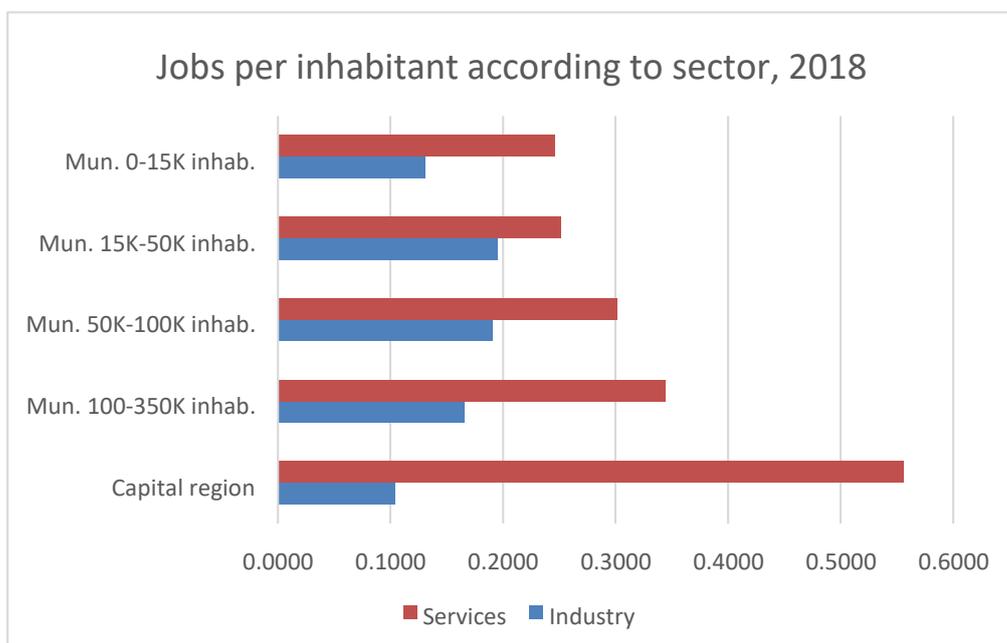
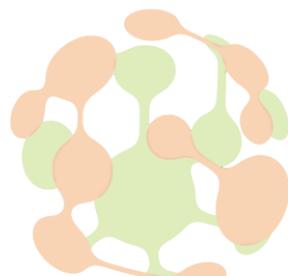
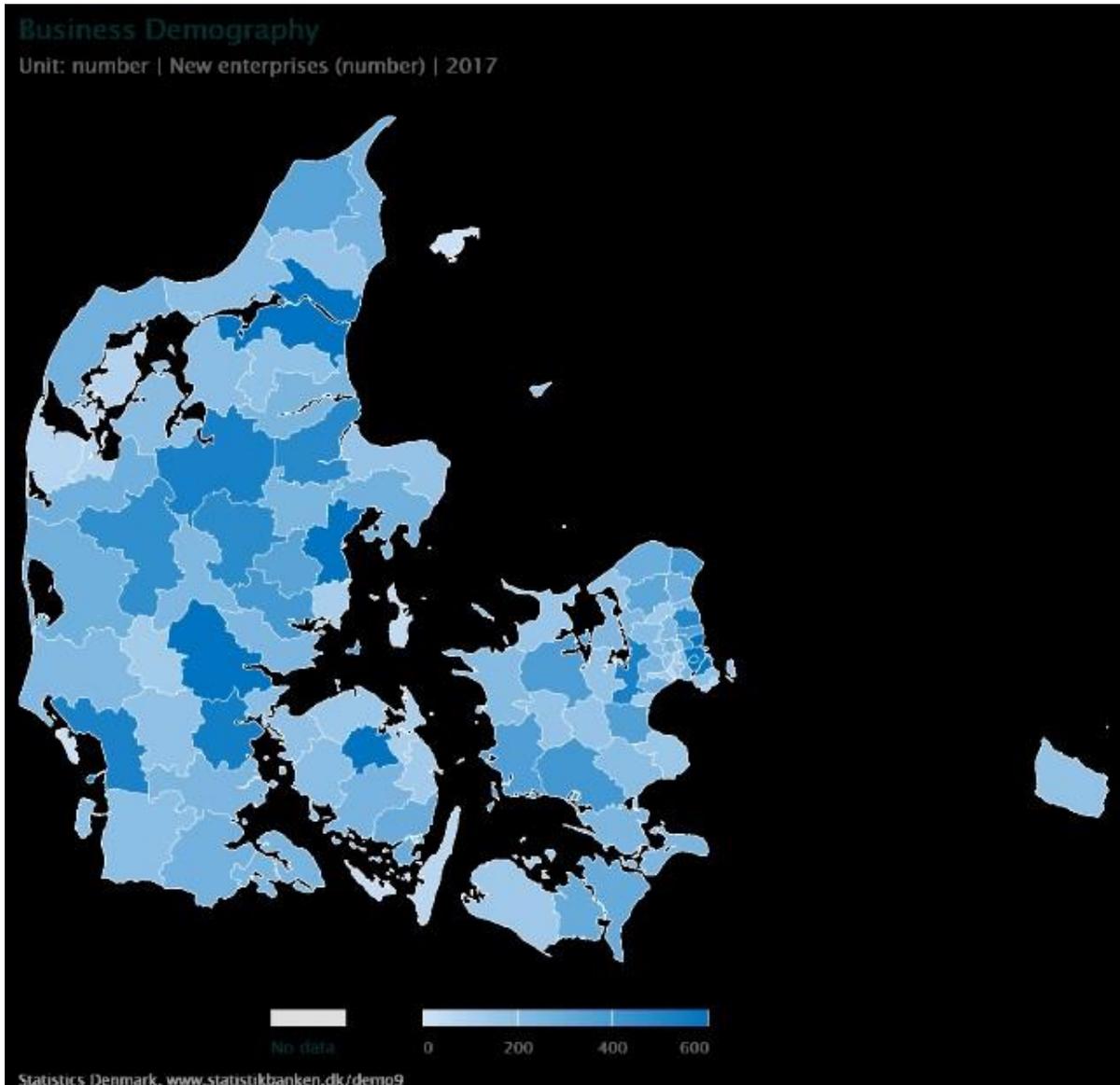


Figure 6. New enterprises at municipal level in 2017 (Statistics Denmark 2020)

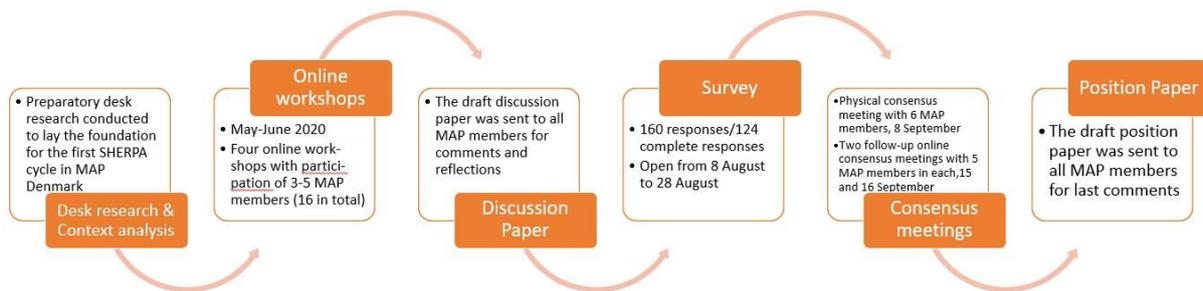


### 3. Conclusions and results from discussions in MAP Denmark - summary of the outcomes of the Delphi method

In this section, main challenges and opportunities identified for Danish rural areas are presented as well as MAP Denmark’s vision for rural areas towards 2040. Significant enablers to support rural development and fulfil the scenarios of the vision are elaborated.

The work conducted in MAP Denmark during SHERPA thematic cycle one “A long-term vision for rural areas” followed the methodological guidelines of a 6-step Delphi prepared and presented by project partners (Kull et al. 2020). The process is depicted in Figure 7 (see Annex 1 for methodological details).

Figure 7. Methodological steps in SHERPA cycle 1 “A long-term vision for rural areas”



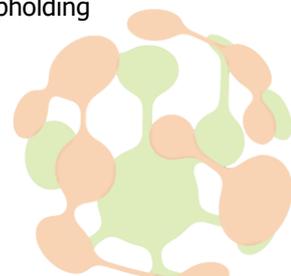
#### 3.1. Challenges and opportunities in the next 20 years

##### Challenges facing Danish rural areas

Continued centralisation of key structures for welfare and for economic development is a central challenge for securing positive rural development in the next 20 years emphasised by MAP members and survey respondents alike. Centralisation has been a strong political focus in Denmark during the last decades which have resulted in the concentration of services in urban centres with the closure or consolidation of schools, businesses and services, a centralisation of political power due to larger municipalities, poorer infrastructure, fewer job opportunities and fewer possibilities for taking an education as a consequence.

MAP members especially stress the negative consequences of centralising and prioritising educational institutes in the larger cities. Consequently, a significant share of young people is drawn towards the urban areas when attending both specialised and higher education. In prolongation, is the challenge to attract the young people to settle in rural areas after ended education where they have established themselves with families and network. MAP members emphasise the prevalence of an urban norm where living in cities is considered the modern lifestyle, while rural areas are usually associated with something that is considered backward or static. This is then being reinforced by predictions and scenarios where economic analyses and population forecasts are based on past trends and business as usual in which way such predictions become self-fulfilling prophecies. However, the MAP also discussed whether the Corona pandemic may contribute to somewhat changed attitudes.

A persistent negative narrative of rural areas and poor visibility in the media picture are considered barriers for rural development and raising attractiveness. MAP members point to the fact that few Danes have first-hand knowledge and insights to the role of rural areas, why the public debate and media presentation is the only picture they are exposed to. That Denmark is divided in a city versus countryside mentality – an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ – is unconstructive and hampering, instead increased focus should be placed on the interdependence between urban and rural areas, and the essential position rural areas hold for upholding



welfare and prosperity in Denmark. For example, MAP members report the difficulty of attracting the media's attention, even for events of significant national innovation.

“The media's negative presentation of the rural areas is perhaps not intentional, but however present. One of the big TV channels made a feature about mobility patterns between city and countryside. And even though the story attempted to be objective and address the good aspects of both rural and urban areas, the picture behind the newscaster was a picture showing a worn-out rural village with 'at sale' signs next to a picture of a busy side-walk café in central Copenhagen. The media is a part of preserving this desolate perception of the rural areas in the population's consciousness.

**Survey respondent: Woman, 34, representing public sector at municipal level**

Other challenges rural areas are facing relate to housing. Challenges include the difficulty of obtaining loans for buying, renovating or constructing houses, a housing stock that is not updated and does not meet the needs and wishes of people in addition to a prevalence of old and outdated buildings in rural areas which give people a sense of decline. This situation supports the negative narrative clinging to rural areas.

A related topic brought up in MAP discussions and among survey participants alike is the issue of declining villages and the lack of political response to manage their decline. In this endeavour MAP members encourage politicians and public officials to be attentive to approach and wording. For example, to talk of 'reorganisation' of villages instead of demolition, and by that invite to dialogue with local citizens about the future of the area, including addressing overall causes related to centralisation, rural housing finance etc.

Additional challenges highlighted in the survey are poor public transportation and poor digital and physical infrastructure not only in terms of roads but especially a lack of biking lanes and walking paths which makes it unsafe for locals and especially children to transport themselves around. Conflicts of interest between different local actors especially between farmers and local communities is emphasised.

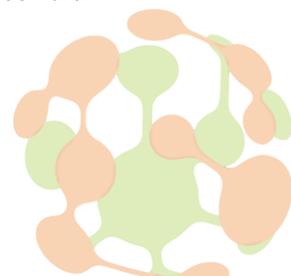
MAP members emphasise that an underlying problem behind the above-mentioned challenges are the uneven structural conditions that rural areas have in comparison to urban areas. Economic systems and models that steer the political systems favour urban environments, why systems and models must be scrutinised to secure a balanced development in all areas and regions of Denmark.

## Opportunities to grasp

Two current societal transitions high on the political agenda provide great opportunities for rural areas: the green transition and the digital transition. The rural areas are core territorial spaces where changes can be made to realise climate and environmental targets. As such the green transition brings many opportunities to stimulate innovation, start new businesses, create new jobs and educational possibilities which can attract for example young people and highly educated people to settle in rural areas.

Digitalisation holds promise in terms of service provision, job creation, and the development of new digital products. Rural areas are, historically, places of innovation and to continue realising innovative projects they need good conditions as stable and fast digital infrastructure. Opportunities enabled through digital infrastructure such as working and studying from home, have not yet been fully realised in rural areas, but given new high speed digital infrastructure and the threats revealed or posed by COVID-19 and similar viruses can add much more positively to future rural development.

An enabler for the abovementioned opportunities in rural areas is the lifestyle rural areas can offer that include access to nature, availability of space, clean air, and more peaceful, safe and quiet surroundings. Values which have gained increased attention during the last decades - sometimes referred to as rural



renaissance. Equally important strengths of rural areas are the presence of strong communities with active citizens and the possibility to participate in the local democracy and value-based communities.



The positive narrative should come from actively supporting local strengths. This could be business support structures for micro companies, who could receive advantageous conditions. (...). It is these strategies that attract more citizens and resourceful citizens (and actors in general). It is these strategies that make it attractive to live and study here. But it will only be possible if we organise ourselves better in the rural areas and collaborate instead of competing between the small communities. And that is only possible if there is economic and processual support (e.g., facilitation (and not dictation) from municipalities) and support structures (that are dynamic and unbureaucratic). And the actions should depart from a local initiative, where the complete ownership is at the hands of local forces. **Survey respondent: Male, 41, business representative**

### 3.2. Attractive rural areas: Desirable future for 2040

The scenarios of a desirable future for the Danish rural areas towards year 2040 elaborated below is based on MAP members ideals for rural development in Denmark and input from the 160 survey respondents.

#### **Danish rural areas are considered attractive places to live, work and study for people of all ages.**

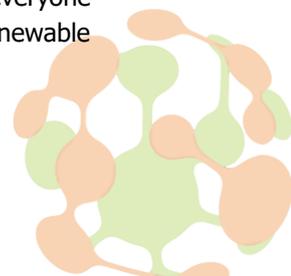
Attractiveness is increased as fast and stable digital infrastructure is available for all citizens and businesses. The digital development enables better service provision, new business opportunities, distance-working, a life with more mobility of people between urban and rural places, as well as more educational possibilities for young people. It is important to engage young people to increase the possibility that they return and settle in rural areas e.g., by creating 'innovation labs' where creativity and innovation is spurred. This links to an increased focus on diversity in rural areas both in terms of activities, people, but also in businesses, production, and agriculture.

Attractiveness is further enhanced when there is a positive narrative of rural areas in the public debate and as there is a widespread recognition of the valuable contributions rural areas have for the present and future economy, prosperity, and welfare of the Danish society. Rural and urban areas are in a symbiotic relation where there is a clear understanding that they are dependent on each other to reach and realise complex and common societal goals. Rural areas are acknowledged by their potentials and unique character that is different from the character of urban areas.

Attractiveness is increased when people meet a well-functioning housing market and where the dilapidated, outdated houses have been removed. Social innovation is made possible so new types of shared housing and working facilities have been developed which support thriving of local communities. Furthermore, the issue of non-viable villages has been managed which have resulted in that some of them have disappeared, especially the ones along the bigger roads. This adds to the more intelligent use of land where other important activities can unfold for example more coherent and accessible nature for recreational and biodiversity purposes.

Attractiveness is increased as sustainability principles and circular economy are at the core of rural societies. Natural resources are used more intelligently and the focus on monoculture and rationalisation are trends of the past, as such the land area is used more diversely. Green and natural resources are made centre for decisions and for the economy.

Attractiveness is raised as area development plans are clear, transparent, and long-term, so everyone knows where towns and cities, food production and agricultural land, water, recreation, and renewable



energy production are developed and placed. As such, disputes can be avoided as everyone knows the plans. Furthermore, local councils and citizens have more influence when it comes to decisions of the local area.

### **Summary of a desirable future for Danish rural areas:**

Danish rural areas are considered attractive places to live, work and study for people of all ages. A positive narrative of rural areas is present in the public debate where there is a widespread understanding of the valuable contributions rural areas have for the economy, prosperity, and welfare of the Danish society. The positive narrative also attracts families to settle in rural areas and young people have the possibility to take an education. Sustainability principles and circular economy are at the core of rural societies where fast and stable digital infrastructure is available for all. Non-viable villages and dilapidated houses no longer found in the landscape and people are met with a well-functioning housing market.

## **3.3 Enablers to achieve the vision**

### **Reap the opportunities in the green transition for rural development**

Rural areas have an essential part to play in the green transition to reach national, supranational, and global climate and environmental targets as the majority of natural resources are located in rural areas. The transition to a circular bioeconomy holds a large range of opportunities for rural areas on all sustainability aspects: social, environmental, and economic.

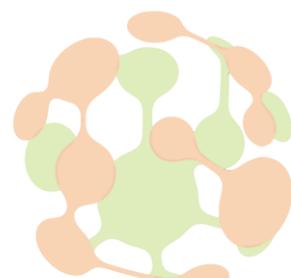
New or revitalised organisational structures for ownership to the local resources e.g., bioresources and renewable energy facilities. Local ownership of resources can help to prevent economic leakages involving transfer of rents, profits and salaries away from the places of activities where actual value is created. On ownership structures one MAP member states: The more distance-ownership within all sectors (agriculture, industry, health), the harder it is to have influence. Local economic knowledge and someone who knows the local area is key for creating development.

Opportunities emphasised by survey respondents include agriculture that is more attentive to natural cycles and biodiversity efforts. However, MAP members within the agricultural sector emphasise that their need to be room for both niche production as well as large-scale agricultural production, but both need to be smart and appropriately placed where it makes best sense economically, environmentally and socially.

### **A negative narrative cling to the rural areas**

MAP members emphasise that the current division of Denmark into city and countryside is a hampering element for rural areas. Instead, there should be an increased focus on unity in the Danish society, where rural and urban areas are working towards the same goal. This is connected to understanding MAP members experience in the debate, where rural areas are associated with non-environmentally friendly behaviour. However, this understanding should be combatted, and focus must be given to the central role of the new circular bioeconomy in the green transition, the environmental changes and innovation that takes place in the rural areas. The media has a central role to play by covering the important and innovative developments in rural areas, but MAP members find that the media picture is twisted and catching the media's attention is a very difficult endeavour. Such developments and ideas include:

- The institutional arrangements for wind turbine development, for fishing quotas in Torup Strand, and related can be found in the development of hydropower in Norway, community ownership of land in Scotland as well as forms of ownership related to multifunctional land distribution.
- Improving the accountability, reputation and narratives, because the present system does not give the rural areas the credit they deserve, due to a systematic bias when measuring innovation, climate, value creation, etc.



- A revised agricultural sector where the dialogue and invitations from the sector is welcomed as well as encouragement to diversification for the agriculture in collaboration with rural communities.

### **Encourage long term strategies, joined-up thinking, and collaboration between sectors and actors**

A cross-sectoral approach and collaboration that involve all relevant sectors is needed to provide the framework conditions for realising rural potentials. A recent study found that rural development in the municipalities has the character of a 'residual' category which includes that which is not urban development, agricultural development, or business development (Hedetoft & Broegaard 2020). MAP Denmark emphasises the need for a strategic approach across sectors at both national and municipal level. The cross-sectoral approach will also support contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) alongside interaction with other rural areas on how to go ahead.

At municipal level, long-term strategies for rural development should be developed in close collaboration with different types of local stakeholders. A key point is to facilitate more and better dialogue across interests and sectors for example between local citizens and farmers. Involving local knowledge is essential as local actors hold valuable knowledge of economic, environmental, and social factors in the area and furthermore local engagement will ensure stronger support for the local development plans.

As one MAP member says: Make a plan that address the question: what should happen here? Which businesses and sectors to develop? This should happen in close collaboration between municipality, business sector and citizens. If we are to succeed in the long run, we have to make long term plans where everyone is on board.

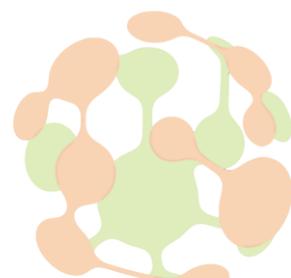
Long-term strategies should include long-term spatial planning for land use by addressing the issue: where should we have land for agriculture, water, villages, forests, recreational areas, renewable energy facilities and so on developed in close cooperation with the local stakeholders. To realise the opportunities, proper framework conditions is needed. Some MAP members and survey respondents emphasise the constraints current laws and regulations in the Planning Act is having for social innovation in rural areas, for the deadlock over housing in rural areas because the countryside or coastline needs to be protected.

In the latest iteration of OECD's policy framework for rural development, the inefficiency of non-coordinated policymaking is recognised, and instead it is recommended that policy design must be conducted based on the uniqueness of each place (OECD 2020). In the process of drafting the long-term strategies, local strongholds and potentials should be identified and given the best possibilities to be realised. The focus on identifying local potentials have received increased attention in recent years under the heading 'Smart specialisation'.

Long-term strategies should address physical and digital infrastructure. By placing jobs where the resources are why a lot of commuting and transport of goods can be avoided. This implies to invest in flexible and sustainable transport and provide for easier and safer ways of individual transport including bike paths and walking lanes. Securing high quality and equal costs for digital infrastructure is also considered highly important for raising attractiveness for settlement in rural areas enabling to work and run a business from rural areas.

The strategies should address opportunities for education and training in the rural areas that is linked to the resources being used for industry development, e.g., with focused and targeted vocational and university training. Also having opportunities for supporting businesses through financing of both start-ups and ongoing SME's is an important sector to include in the long-term strategies.

Finally, the housing sector is very important to consider in the strategies ensuring adequate opportunities for establishment of buildings for businesses including use of demolished buildings in old industry, agriculture

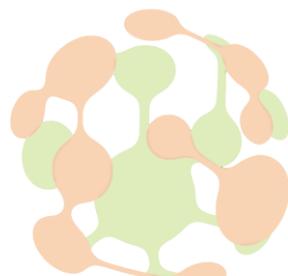


etc. And for ensuring adequate and affordable housing for young people alongside with appropriate financing regimes for private housing.

### **Secure devolved power and public resources to municipalities, regions and local actors**

Devolved power to municipalities and regions followed by resources with increased administrative capacity and fulfilling a need for more flexibility in specific policy areas. Within this work the regions can provide facilitation of cooperation between municipalities in different areas, e.g., within the green transition. Those policy areas include:

- Land use planning allowing for more flexibility regarding regulations on housing (location, coastal area and financing)
- Local environmental regulations as well as dialogue for farming especially on traffic and smell
- Multifunctional land distribution
- Ability to work and invest in businesses including tendering rules and local ownership
- Public – private investments that enable new initiatives, e.g., in the bioeconomy, which reduce uncertainty and create local opportunities.



## Annex 1. Methodology used in the MAP

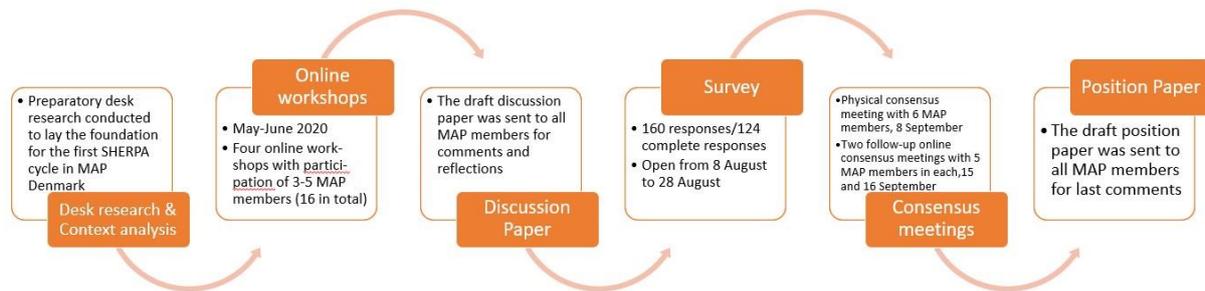
The work conducted in MAP Denmark during SHERPA thematic cycle one "A long-term vision for rural areas" was inspired by the methodological guidelines of a 6-step Delphi prepared and presented by project partners (Kull et al. 2020).

The 6 steps presented by Kull et. al (2020) are the following:

- Desk research and context analysis
- Interviews
- Interview analysis, writing MAP Discussion Paper and preparation of survey
- MAP survey
- Step 5: Survey analysis
- Step 6: Validation of results

The progress of the work and methodological steps in MAP Denmark are depicted in the figure below:

Figure 8. Progress of the work and methodological steps in MAP Denmark



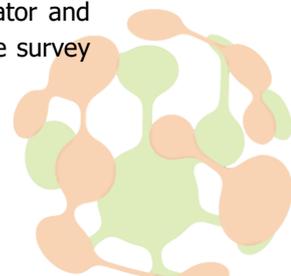
**Step 1:** Desk research to review key trends, challenges and opportunities as well as explore existing foresight analyses was conducted from April to June 2020 to feed into the Discussion Paper.

**Step 2:** During May and June 2020 four online workshops were held with MAP members in smaller groups of three-five people during May and June 2020. The workshops lasted three hours and were structured around three sections. Firstly, a presentation round followed by a discussion of central challenges and opportunities for the Danish rural areas. To explore the question of challenges and opportunities, a SWOT inspired exercise was conducted. MAP members were asked to present what they saw as strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, challenges, and threats for rural areas followed by a discussion. Finally, a conservation about the desired future for rural areas with the set time horizon of 2040.

MAP members received the central questions to be explored during the workshop on beforehand to prepare for the group discussions. To facilitate a safe and constructive discussion environment, the aim was to include two representatives from the same actor group in the workshops. In each of the workshops, at least two actor groups were represented.

**Step 3:** Based on the desk research conducted in step 1 and the online workshops with MAP members in step 2, the Discussion Paper was drafted (Vestergård & Refsgaard 2020). The Discussion Paper was circulated to all MAP members for comments and reflections.

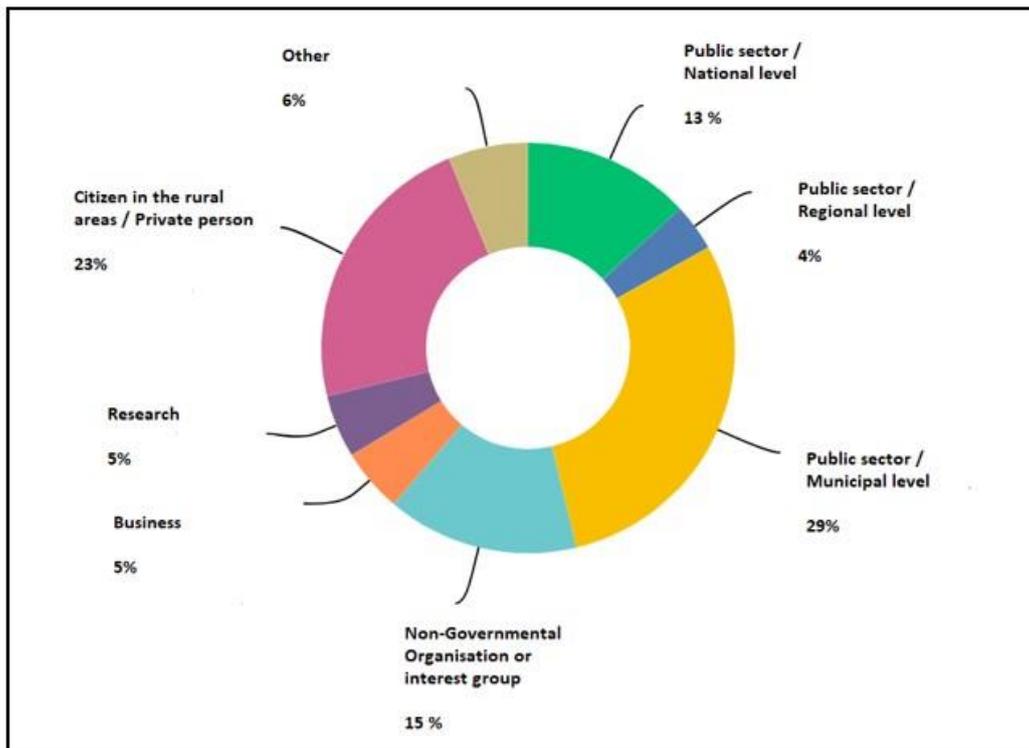
**Step 4:** Based on the outputs from the workshops, an online survey was created by the facilitator and monitor which was distributed to the MAP members and by MAP members to their networks. The survey



consisted of 15 questions regarding background of the respondent, strengths and opportunities, weaknesses and challenges, a desired future for rural areas and the perceived resilience of rural areas.

The survey was open from 8 August to 28 August and received 160 responses with 124 complete responses. See Figure 8 for the division of respondents based on stakeholder group. The survey results supported many of the discussions between MAP members, but also brought new topics to the table. For example, public transportation as a challenge for rural areas and the need for improvement of the physical infrastructure in rural areas, where survey respondents especially highlighted the need of bicycle lanes and walking paths to increase safety in rural areas.

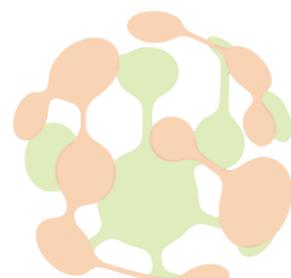
Figure 9. Respondents divided on stakeholder group



**Step 5:** The results of the survey were presented to MAP Denmark and laid the foundation for continued discussion between MAP members. The aim of the discussion was to identify concrete enablers to achieve positive rural development in Denmark and fulfil the scenarios of the vision. A physical consensus meeting was held with six MAP members on 8 September 2020 at the Rural Council of Denmark’s headquarter. As the attendance of several MAP members was hindered, two follow-up online consensus meetings were held. In total all MAP members but one participated in one of the consensus meetings.

**Step 6:** Based on all the data and material gathered in the previous steps, the Position Paper was drafted. The final draft of the position paper was distributed to all MAP members by the 25<sup>th</sup> of September for last comments. As hosting a consensus meeting with all MAP members was not conducted, this was an important part of the sixth and final step of the Delphi methodology where results are validated by the involved actors.

Some MAP members objected to the heading of the meeting as ‘consensus’. This produces the idea, that all MAP members in the end decided to agree on certain stands, however this is not the case. As such it is important to stress that the messages and recommendations presented in this report, is not the agreed consensus opinion of all MAP members, but the overall issues discussed by a majority of MAP members.



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