



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

PLATFORM PROVENCE ALPES CÔTE D'AZUR REGION

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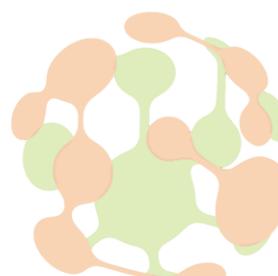
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1. Introduction

In Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, rural areas face demographic and climate change challenges. With the Covid-19 health crisis, the region will experience social, economic and ecological transitions which will become more pronounced by 2030-40.

Since the 2000s, a repopulation of rural areas arose due to peri-urbanization and the demographic dynamism in isolated rural communities. However, population growth has slowed for ten years, as a double effect of the deficit of births and an accentuated aging population.

Effects of climate change that Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region is already facing will become more pronounced over the next twenty years and will notably impact natural areas and the tourism and agricultural sectors.

The Covid-19 crisis will undoubtedly have lasting impacts on the social and economic situation in the region, regarding the nature of jobs, access to services or even mobility in rural areas.

Taking this changing regional context for rural areas into account, the SHERPA MAP identified four major challenges by 2030-40:

- Rethinking mobility and sedentary lifestyle in rural areas, in connection with demographic changes, the search for a better quality of life, development of tourism, demand for housing, rise in land prices, development of digital technology, management of natural areas and resources...;
- Creating the activities and jobs of tomorrow in rural areas, adapted to demographic changes, new societal expectations, effects of climate changes and Covid-19;
- Managing, conserving and enhancing a unique regional natural capital, as source of well-being and jobs, but which face both anthropogenic pressures and climate changes;
- Tools and modes of governance to support economic and ecological transitions in rural areas

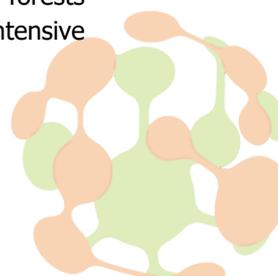
Keywords: *rural areas, agriculture, climate change, natural capital, demography, rural economy, local economy, employment, governance, mobility, digitalisation, natural resources management, quality of life, rurality, sedentary, lifestyle, services, tourism.*

2. Main scientific references

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur is a highly urbanized and dense region but its population is unevenly distributed. Urban areas are progressing through the absorption of rural areas (peri-urbanization) and a progressive artificialization of agricultural land and natural areas. There is a continuum of territories and the relationships between rural and urban areas, are essential and sources of many reciprocities. Rural areas which represent 71% of the territory are very diverse, implying common and specific constraints and opportunities.

Since the 2000s, rural areas have gained new inhabitants in search of a better quality of life and more affordable housing. However, over the past ten years this 'ruralisation' which has slowed down in demographic terms, is expected to continue and to reverse the attractiveness of the region. The current aging of the population will intensify with the arrival of generations of baby boomers. At the same time, the youth deficit will increase by 2030, especially in rural areas, with a decrease in the working-age population. As a result, the economic dependency ratio will deteriorate significantly.

The natural spaces which represent 75% of the regional territory shelter an exceptional biodiversity, in particular in the rural areas. This natural capital is a strong asset in terms of attractiveness. It provides services to the community and is a source of rural jobs. However, these natural spaces (including forests and agricultural land) and water resources are endangered by the artificialization of land and by intensive



farming methods, particularly in the plains and the hinterland. In addition, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, like the entire Mediterranean rim, is strongly impacted by the effects of climate change which will worsen by 2030 and 2050. These impacts are particularly important on biodiversity and water resources, forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors and underpin the implementation of coherent mitigation and adaptation policies.

Regional activity is marked by a predominance of services. This is particularly true in rural areas, due to the importance of the tourism sector but also of public services, while industries are scarce. The agricultural sector remains an important economic sector and in terms of land use planning, even if like everywhere in France, the number of farms continues to decline. The employment rate is particularly high in rural areas, but jobs there are often more precarious (seasonal jobs and low level of training). Pluri-activity linked in particular to seasonality is highly developed there, particularly in touristic areas. Tourism and agriculture sector faced multiple economic, social and environmental issues and must adapt to the effects of climate changes and to new societal demands that Covid-19 has brought to the surface (quality of life, return to nature, sustainable development, etc.). The importance of the social and solidarity local economy another particularity of rural areas. It is a source of growing activity, in particular due to the rise of self-employment status. There are also strong opportunities in the care economy sector (cf. silver economy) and in the "green economy".

Poverty rate is relatively high compared to the national average, especially in rural areas where incomes are lower. It mainly affects young people, isolated people and single-parent families and has become more pronounced with the Covid-19 crisis. Lower incomes but also the large share of social minima in these incomes can also testify to a choice of life. According to MAP members, rural areas appear to have been much more resilient than cities during the first lockdown. This might demonstrate a richer social cohesion and participation in social and civic life compared to cities. In fact, the solidarity networks have been very responsive.

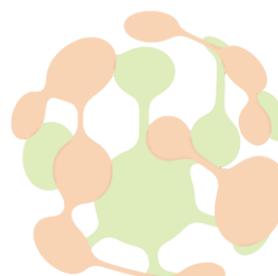
The living environment and quality of life are major assets for rural areas in a context of growing citizen demand in terms of well-being, a return to a life closer to nature which the Covid-19 context is accentuating. In addition to natural capital, rural territories are heir to tangible and intangible cultural and social capital which contributes to the richness of social relations. Strengthening the attractiveness of rural areas presupposes the provision of services adapted to different populations. If the rural areas of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region benefit from access to a more diversified range of equipment and services than elsewhere, this access is very unequal depending on the territory, with populations isolated and very far from these services. In addition, Covid-19 crisis has shown the fragility of access to these services, including cultural and commercial ones, especially in these isolated areas where local public services are gradually disappearing.

In addition to the solidarity networks mentioned above, the digital boom has in part made it possible to respond to these difficulties. It has become a major issue for the attractiveness of rural areas. A broadband connection has become a prerequisite to attract in particular younger populations. It promotes employment through the development of remote work, the emergence of new forms of collaborative work and is a source of competitiveness for many sectors. However, the development of digital technology, in addition to technical access problems, faces a digital divide for part of the population and raises the question of the acceptance or rejection of this new technology by the inhabitants of rural areas.

3. Summary of the results of the Delphi method

To develop this Position Paper, we proceeded in several steps which were severely impacted by the Covid-19 crisis (no face-to-face meeting could thus be organised):

- Office research work which enabled a first identification of long-term trends, opportunities and challenges for rural areas in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region (until May 2020);



- Sending a questionnaire to members of the MAP and to external regional experts in June (20 people), covering the main items outlined in the first SHERPA discussion paper. The majority of respondents preferred to be interviewed than to respond online and very few addressed the question of the "desirable future";
- A videoconference was organised on September 16th and gathered together 17 members of the MAP and external experts. It enabled very dense and fruitful exchanges on the discussion paper and on the design of the Position paper;
- The development and dissemination of a draft position paper based on the discussion paper and video-conference exchanges (September 16th - October 3rd);
- A second videoconference on October 12th (7 people) supplemented by 7 interviews to discuss and to validate the position paper;
- The completion of the paper position on the basis of these exchanges.

It's worth to mention two specificities of this regional SHERPA process:

- The choice to go beyond the seven items initially proposed to develop four cross-cutting issues;
- The strong involvement of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regional Council, which brought very valuable insights on rurality prospects in the light of the upcoming EU operational programs (EAFRD, ERDF, ESF).

3.1. Challenges and opportunities in the next twenty years

From the analysis of the major highlighted trends, responses to the questionnaire and the discussions during the first video-conference, several challenges clearly appeared and made it possible to identify some priorities concerning the future of rural areas:

Urban pressure and artificialisation of land, natural spaces and agricultural land

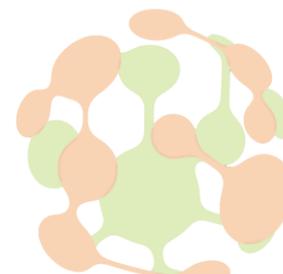
In the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, urban sprawl is faster than population growth. The speed-up of peri-urbanisation is reflected in a rapid and massive growth of artificialised spaces to the detriment of natural spaces and agricultural land. In addition to the impacts on biodiversity, water resources and agricultural production, this urban pressure results in an increase in the price of land making it difficult to install new agricultural businesses and limiting the attractiveness of rural areas for housing. As almost jobs are now concentrated in cities, this pressure also has consequences on mobility between urban and rural areas.

Stopping the artificialisation of agricultural land and natural spaces is therefore a priority with strong implications in terms of land use planning and management of conflicts over the use of these spaces. Managing mobility, including limiting commuting between home and work, is a second priority.

Increased aging of the population and a growing deficit of young populations in rural areas

Attracting young populations whose deficit will continue to increase is the major priority of rural areas in terms of social and economic vitality. Reversing this trend supposes developing an attractive environment corresponding to the expectations of these populations (employment, early childhood services, access to digital, housing...).

Given the rise of aging population with the arrival of baby boomers, caring for the elderly is another priority for rural areas. It is a source of job opportunities with the development of the silver economy (health services, personal services, adapted housing, etc.).



Adaptation to climate changes

Effects of climate change, which are already very significant in the region, will become more pronounced over the next twenty years (rise of temperatures, drop of rain precipitation, higher frequency of intense climatic episodes, etc.). The impact of its changes particularly affects the management of water resources, forests, biodiversity, the agricultural sector and the tourism sector. Beyond the constraints that these changes impose, they are sources of opportunities through the necessary adaptations creating innovations and new jobs.

Here, there are many priorities but overall, it is a question of putting in place adequate mitigation and adaptation strategies, in particular concerning the sectors of agriculture and tourism and more generally the preservation and management of spaces and natural resources (water, forests, biodiversity), via more resilient and more sustainable development models.

Adapting activity and jobs to new societal demands

One of the specificities of rural areas is the importance of the local economy based on the development of activities directly linked to the territories. Thus, as mentioned above, economy and employment in rural areas rely to a large extent on the service sector, due to the importance of tourism and local public services.

Regarding the tourism sector, in addition to the necessary adaptation to climate change, it's worth noting the shock of the Covid-19 crisis on tourism with the reduction in the number of foreign tourists and the new societal expectations that this same health crisis seems strengthen (return to nature, respect and conservation of nature, family and local tourism, ethical tourism, etc.). The agricultural sector, another flagship sector in rural areas, will continue to face multiple challenges: land pressure, effects of climate change, renewal of generations, and new societal expectations (short supply chains, healthy diets and quality food, pesticide-free farming methods...). It is also about promoting the local economy, including the social and solidarity economy (personal services, shops, crafts, etc.) and the green economy.

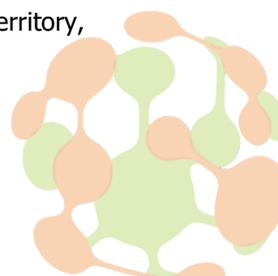
Priority is therefore to develop a more sustainable and resilient rural economy, which invents the jobs of tomorrow that meet societal expectations. Such development is based on a conducive environment to maintaining and creating jobs in rural areas in uncertain economic and social context due to the health crisis, including future training curricula.

Poverty in rural areas and quality of life

Poverty particularly affects the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, both in town and in the countryside, and affects young people, single-parent families and often elderly single people. In rural areas, incomes are generally lower due to more precarious jobs and often lower levels of training. Covid-19 crisis, while accentuating this precariousness, has also shown the resilience of rural areas. Inequalities are lower there, social participation and civic life richer, contributing to greater social cohesion. The quality of life, witness to unique lifestyles, is a strong asset of rural areas. It meets the expectations and needs of different populations (long-time residents, newcomers, tourists) and must be preserved. In addition to the preservation of the natural spaces already mentioned, priorities here relate to improving the status and remuneration of the most precarious jobs and in particular seasonal jobs in tourism and agriculture and the promotion of multiple activities. A good quality of life also supposes an adapted management of conflicts of use of rural spaces by the different populations and the promotion of good living together. It is also about promoting the cultural and social capital of rural areas.

Equitable access to services in rural areas, including digital technology

The Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region has access to a more diversified supply of equipment and services than elsewhere, including in its rural areas. However, this access is unequally distributed over the territory,



with a deficit of infrastructures in the most isolated rural areas. In a context of abandonment of local public services, the development of an adapted territorial approach and cooperation between territories should make it possible to better meet the different expectations of residents and tourists and to be more efficient. The digital boom can also contribute to enable better access to services providing there is real digital inclusion and also respecting the citizen' right to be disconnected from internet as well. The priority here is therefore to ensure equitable access to the most essential services by relying on a cooperative territorial approach and by promoting appropriate and voluntary access to digital technology.

3.2. What desirable future for rural areas in the South region?

During the first videoconference, MAP members underlined the importance of favouring a transversal approach and to overcome a silo-approach induced by item's shopping list. Four cross-cutting issues have been identified which constitute the main axis of "a desirable future" for rural areas in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region. The fourth issue relating to governance covers the strategies and tools to be implemented to meet the priorities and is the subject of point 3.3.

Rethinking mobility and sedentarities in rural areas

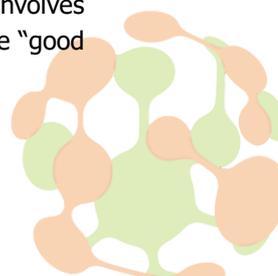
Demographic changes, urban pressure, new societal demands, the development of tourism and today access to digital technologies are leading to a rethinking of sedentarities and mobility in rural areas. It is a matter of both preserving a quality of life and an "art of living" specific to its rural areas, improving their attractiveness and managing the relations, reciprocities between rural and urban areas. If we cannot think of the rural without taking cities into account, it should be emphasized that the rural is plural, we should therefore rather speak of ruralities, which often implies local responses to particular situations and therefore to promote territorial approaches.

Several issues have been identified here as major by the members of the platform:

- To promote the vitality of rural communities, it is essential to attract younger populations there. This involves questioning the hosting conditions that would make rural areas more attractive to these populations. In particular, this involves giving access to services adapted to the expectations of these populations, in particular in terms of housing which is often the first reason for settling in, but also in terms of education and childcare services. It is also about providing an environment favourable to job creation, notably through networks of dynamic actors (i. e. chamber of commerce, thematic cluster...), support for young project leaders and through digitisation. Finally, the cultural offer is also a strong expectation for these new residents.

More generally, access to quality, services and equipment are essential assets for attractive rural areas. However, the gradual disappearance of local public services is often seen as an abandonment. It is therefore essential to stop or limit this process and to strengthen initiatives aimed at alleviating these closures (public service houses, "France Services" houses, delegation of public services to local shops, etc.). In addition, the rise of digitisation with the dematerialisation of public services and the generalisation of open data can also promote access to certain essential services, including health, but also to cultural and commercial services for a large majority of users, especially in isolated areas.

- Strengthening the quality of life in rural areas is another major issue in terms of the attractiveness and vitality of rural municipalities. In addition to access to the services mentioned above, it is also a matter of conserving a unique natural capital (see next point), but also of promoting the cultural and social capital of rural areas. Living in a rural area also means adopting a different way of life. Social life and citizen involvement are richer there, the solidarity networks more responsive, but the populations who live there often feel neglected. On the basis of this cultural and social capital, it is a matter of reinventing a "belonging to the territories and a positive rurality". This involves supporting the creation of meeting places and conviviality in the municipalities that promote "good



living” between generations and between long-term residents, newcomers and tourists, helping to reduce conflicts. These places of life can be hybrid with a commercial but also social vocation and provide public services (coffee, country bistros, AMAP, solidarity grocery stores, homes, etc.). It is also about strengthening citizen participation in the life of the municipalities (cf. 3.3.).

- The rural territory is for many a synonym of isolation, yet there is a continuum of territories, ranging from isolated municipalities to metropolitan areas, passing through peri-urban areas. It is therefore essential to take into account the relationships between these different territories, particularly in terms of transport, but also trade. Thus, in the region, jobs are concentrated in large urban areas, yet many city dwellers move away from cities due to the cost of housing and to find a better quality of life. This results in high mobility within large urban systems organised into networks to which a large part of rural areas is linked.

It is essential to continue to open up the most isolated areas, to facilitate and improve the quality of transport and mobility between different territories by favouring the development of greener and softer modes of transport and inter-modality so to reduce GHGs emissions.

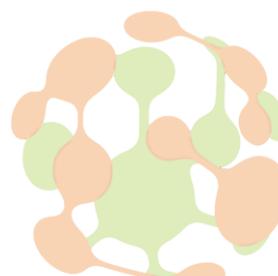
In the long-term, travels must also be reduced, in particular commuting, by developing new jobs in rural areas and by relocating certain activities. Access to digital technology, by promoting new jobs that can be relocated with the development of teleworking, and the Covid-19 crisis by requesting very extroverted economic models (exports of agricultural products, import of labour and foreign tourism), are already contributing to this relocation and are also transforming the methods of exchanging goods and services between regions (cf. short supply chains, local tourism, etc.).

- Access to internet broadband and digitisation have become a crucial issue for the development and attractiveness of rural areas, in particular in isolated municipalities. The use of new technologies is a source of competitiveness for companies. They enable dematerialisation of public services and the generalisation of open data, access to these services, including health, but also to cultural and commercial services. The Covid-19 pandemic has also confirmed acuity of digital, in particular through the continuity of access to remote services and the development of teleworking.

However, apart from the technical and physical constraints linked to the rugged terrain of the region, digital development is confronted on the one hand with the existence of a digital divide, on the other hand with a desire for non-connectivity from part of the population. Therefore, rural areas could become "laboratories of digital acceptability". Digital technology can thus be a vector of social and territorial innovation, particularly through the development of "smart villages". This aims, as the ADRETS association defends, to develop an "co-constructed approach between actors from various backgrounds, combining local resources and skills, and possibly mobilising digital tools to respond to current and future rural challenges, on mobility, governance, citizenship, the environment, quality of life or even the economy".

Main proposals

- Attracting younger populations in rural areas
- Strengthening the quality of life and reinvent belonging to rural areas and positive rurality
- Facilitating and improving the quality of transport and mobility between different territories, by favouring the development of softer modes of transport and inter-modality, and ultimately limit travel
- Turning rural areas into digital acceptability laboratories



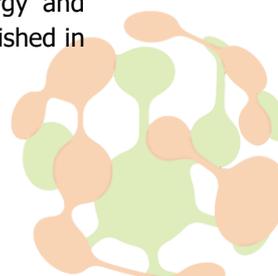
Create the activities and professions of tomorrow in rural areas

Attractiveness of rural areas also depends on economic development and job opportunities that meet the transitions underway as well as new societal expectations. Effects of climate change, international competition, demographic changes are constraints that the various sectors of activity must take into account. They have already done so, but they are also sources of opportunities to be seized. The Covid-19 crisis we are currently experiencing has reinforced and accelerated the evolutions underway, but questions certain choices, particularly in terms of (re) location of activities.

- For each territory, it is therefore a matter of rethinking the existing economic ecosystems to create the activities and professions of tomorrow. As proposed by the regional Economic, Social and Environmental Council (EESC), it is a matter of making a territorial diagnosis of the local economic fabric, highlighting the skills and know-how to be valued, the needs to be satisfied, the opportunities to be seized and the connections between the different sectors of activity to be strengthened.
- Life in rural villages largely depends on the local economy activity (trade, crafts, small business, personal services, cultural services, etc.). It is considered (by the EESC) as "a response to the major challenges of French society". It is an endogenous source of jobs and activity directly connected to local heritage and know-how, using local and human resources. Finally, this local economy has a strong social utility: it provides many essential services and offers places of conviviality and discussion, generating links between generations and / or populations. With the aging of the population, there are strong opportunities in terms of care and services (silver economy), while the settlement of younger populations requires an appropriate range of services (early childhood, cultural services, etc.). Support for the local economy is therefore central and requires appropriate financing tools that take into account this social utility which is generally poorly or unpaid.
- The agricultural issue must be dealt with in a transversal and integrated manner, from fork-to-fork and even from seed-to-compost. It is about developing sustainable territorialised agricultural and food systems that meet multiple challenges: the renewal of generations; dependence on imported labour which weakens the sector during the health crisis and raises the question of the social management of agricultural labour; the sharp drop in the number of farms due to retirements and land pressure linked to the artificialisation of land; taking into account strong natural constraints and adaptation to climate change.

It is also a matter of meeting new societal expectations in terms of respect for the environment and sound management of natural resources, consumption of healthy diets and quality products, promotion of local products. Development of quality brands and organic farming, promotion of short supply chains and the implementation of territorial food projects that promote the promotion of local agriculture and limit reliance on food imports are part of the territorial responses. The Covid-19 crisis has also shown the vulnerabilities of agriculture that is too outward looking.

- The tourism sector is a unifying sector in many rural areas where it is the main supplier of direct jobs and contributes to many indirect jobs in related activities. It is severely affected by the Covid-19 crisis and must now adapt to major changes. In each region, this involves gradually changing models and offering a new tourist offer that responds to the effects of climate change (in the mountains, but also on the Coast and in the "middle country"); the decline in foreign tourism which could continue; new forms of tourism (older people, family tourism, cultural tourism, local tourism, etc.) and the demands of tourists in terms of environmental preservation and sustainable development. This offer must favour the sustainable development of a unique natural, historical and cultural heritage.
- In addition to the new professions to be created in these two sectors to adapt to the transitions underway, rural areas must also support the development of the green economy and the circular economy (agroecological transition, waste management, production of renewable energy and insulation of housing), but also of the social and solidarity economy already strongly established in



rural areas. They are important sources of new business and jobs. The development digitisation can also be a tremendous asset for the development of activity in rural areas. It is a source of competitiveness and innovation and promotes employment through the development of remote work and the emergence of new forms of collaborative work.

- Pluri-activity linked to seasonality is a specific feature of jobs in the most touristic rural areas. While it can be a source of insecurity, it constitutes an important lever of local dynamism by allowing activity to be maintained in the territory and by promoting less profitable activities (sports, cultural, social activities, etc.). Pluri-activity is often a source of innovation. It can be a transitional mode of installation and promotes the integration of young people into the labour market. The special status of seasonal workers and pluri-active workers must be strengthened and be more protective to help improve the attractiveness of rural areas and the treatment of workers. This status should benefit from a special scheme within the framework of the unemployment insurance reform project.
- To support these transitions and to create the activities and jobs of tomorrow, developing a training offer adapted to different job opportunities in rural areas is a major challenge. It should be developed with all the stakeholders concerned, on the basis of the territorial diagnosis.

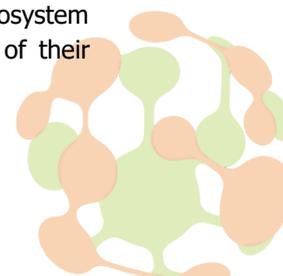
Main proposals

- Carrying out territorial diagnostics of the local economic fabric
- Supporting the local economy via financing tools enhancing the social utility of this economy
- Developing sustainable territorialised agricultural and food systems
- Changing the tourism model and propose a new tourism offer
- Supporting the development of the green economy, the circular economy and the social and solidarity economy, sources of new activities and jobs
- Strengthening the special status of seasonal workers and multi-active workers to help improve the attractiveness of rural areas
- Developing a regionalised training offer adapted to different job opportunities in rural areas

Managing, conserving and enhancing a unique regional natural capital

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region benefits from a unique natural capital which contributes to the attractiveness of rural areas while offering many services to rural communities. However, this natural capital is subject to strong anthropogenic pressure, in particular due to urban sprawl, intensive production methods and is confronted with the effects of climate change.

- Conservation and restoration of ecological continuities thus constitute an essential stake for the maintenance of regional biodiversity. As currently provided for in regional planning documents, it is necessary to stop the artificialisation of natural spaces and agricultural land and to support the revitalisation of land (in particular by promoting the installation and transmission of agricultural land). In addition, agriculture will adopt production methods that are even more ecologically sound, in order to limit water and soil pollution and its impacts on biodiversity.
- Climate change effects which will be accentuated by 2030 and 2050, will have a lasting impact on biodiversity, forests and on water resources in the longer term. In addition to efforts to reduce GHGs emissions within a big regional emitter, conservation of biodiversity and natural resources also help to combat the effects of climate change. Adaptation policies developed in each territory are essential here, relying in particular on the work of the Regional Group of Experts on the Climate (GREC South) and on the regional natural parks whose mission is to preserve biodiversity and natural spaces.
- Territorial natural heritage must be considered as a common good. It provides multiple ecosystem services necessary for the development of rural and urban spaces and the well-being of their



inhabitants: water, food production, energy, landscapes, climate regulation. This natural heritage is the basis of specific activities such as agriculture and tourism. However, many of these services are hidden and not recognised institutionally for their value. The conservation of natural capital and the enhancement of these services are therefore essential for the future of rural areas. In particular, it involves devising mechanisms to promote positive environmental amenities (landscape, well-being, climate regulation, biodiversity, etc.). We can also consider reciprocities between urban spaces and rural territories based on the free availability of natural resources. For example, the water resource that comes from alpine territories and supplies large metropolises could justify specific funding or "cooperation agreements" for the attractiveness of these territories (support for the development of local tourism or relocatable services, support for the installation of new activities...).

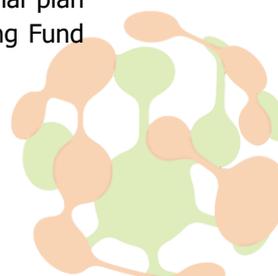
Main proposals

- Stopping artificialisation of natural spaces and agricultural land and support the revitalisation of land
- Promoting agricultural production methods that are more respectful of the environment,
- Reducing GHGs emissions and implementing regional climate change adaptation policies
- Valuing ecosystem services through the promotion of environmental amenities and the construction of reciprocity between urban spaces and rural territories

3.3. New tools and governance methods to support economic and ecological transitions in rural areas

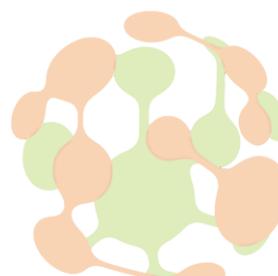
The transitions of rural spaces imposed by current and future developments require new governance methods and tools at both local and regional level.

- First of all, as the MAP members have pointed out, it is important to clarify what is meant by "rural areas". National demographic institute (INSEE) is currently finalising a new methodology for a definition of rural that goes beyond the reference to urban and from which the SHERPA map future work may be inspired.
- There is not one rurality but multiple ruralities, which implies developing territorial approaches, based on territorial diagnosis. However, it is important that the existing and future regional exchange and support networks (regional natural parks, Local Action Groups, etc.) be inclusive and integrate interstitial zones between urban and rural areas.
- One of the peculiarities of the work of the SHERPA MAP is their contribution to the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regional Council on rurality. This is particularly accurate within the future EAFRD, ERDF and ESF operational programs (including future call for proposals on behalf of LEADER and the interregional program for the Alps and the rural component of the ERDF-ESF operational program).
- While there is no specific regional policy dedicated to rural areas, many EU, national and regional strategies, action programs and funding concern rural areas. The Regional Plan for Sustainable Development and Equality of the Territories (SRADDET) adopted on June 26, 2019, which carries the regional strategy for regional development (by 2030-2050), plays a coordinating role in both for the strategies of the regional institution and for those of other communities covering the regional territory. It is thus opposable to sub-regional documents (Mobility plans, Charts of regional natural parks, Territorial climate-air-energy plans, Territorial coherence schemes or municipal maps, Local municipal and inter-municipal urban planning documents). Any regional strategy in favour of rural areas will therefore fall within this framework and should first and foremost promote greater coherence between the various programs and tools that can be mobilised, for greater effectiveness and efficiency. This concerns in particular: the State – Region Planning Contract 2021-27, one of the sections of which would be dedicated to rural areas; the Massif des Alpes interregional plan contract; Regional Territorial Equilibrium Contracts (CRET), the Regional Land Use Planning Fund

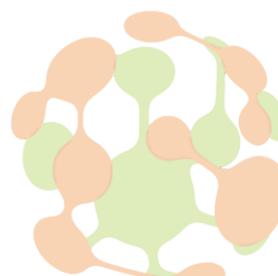


(FRAT); the Regional Climate Plan "a COP in advance" or the Regional Recovery Plan for after Covid-19. Let us also add regional sectoral strategies or plans (Common Strategy for the digital development of the territory, Regional Tourism Development Plan 2017-2022).

- At the national level, the Rural Agenda is a relevant framework. It constitutes the action plan in favour of rural areas, which itself forms part of the European Rural Agenda approach. Rurality contracts are the tool for coordinating and structuring public policies in rural areas. Finally, as mentioned previously, the European programs (EAFRD and ERDF), for which the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur Region is the managing authority, constitute also structuring instruments for rural areas.
- Given the multiplicity of structures and support tools, mapping seems essential in particular for stakeholders in rural areas and primarily rural mayors. It is also necessary to ensure, through the SRADDET, the consistency and complementarity of the different strategies and instruments available, including national and European ones.
- As mentioned above, territorial approach must be favoured in order to best respond to the questions raised and for that the most relevant level is the municipality. However, depending on the needs, this approach must be flexible and of variable geometry: an approach in terms of basin or inter-communality makes sense if we think about better access to local services, for example. In addition, the development of small centralities can also make it possible to no longer only favour large inter-communalities and large projects and thus strengthen the territorial network.
- To better meet the needs and expectations of rural areas, the regional support system for rural areas must evolve:
 - The development, implementation and monitoring of projects must be as inclusive as possible and bring together all the stakeholders, in order to promote project proposals from the territories themselves. Active citizen participation in the future of territories must go beyond consultation and be a central objective of a renewed territorial approach.
 - To allow the emergence of these projects, it is essential to make human and financial resources available to municipalities, but also to other local actors (non-profit structures, citizen groups, development agencies, etc.) and to pool support in terms of territorial engineering (for example via territorial spaces or the pooling of resources between inter-municipal authorities) to set up, implement and monitor projects and respond to calls for proposals. Specific funding should be provided to promote this support. This should be one of the main projects of the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion, which firstly plays a role of "project factory" to allow communities to carry out their projects, by pooling the skills of departmental engineering agencies. public, regional or even independent support structures.



- It is also necessary to rethink the financing tools available, including within the framework of the ERDF and the EAFRD:
 - Administrative and financial procedures, in particular for European projects, should be simplified. They exclude many (small and medium size) rural development actors and might generate inefficient transaction costs.
 - Medium-term financing tools concerning a change of scale or the spin-off of projects which have shown their relevance must be developed, in order to move from "small innovative projects" to structuring projects. Cooperation funding is too heavy and too complex today to meet this need.
 - Existing funding must include budget lines for cooperation, but also animation, training and information and educational actions.
 - It is necessary to invent financing tools adapted to hybrid projects which take into account the social utility of these projects which are generally poorly or unpaid.
 - By learning LEADER lessons, funding opportunities under the next EAFRD and ERDF must give more importance to the right to experimentation and innovation (including continuity), in order to promote thinking prospective on the rural territories of tomorrow.



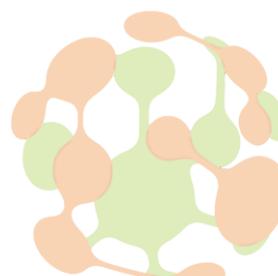
Annex 1 – List of MAP members

- **Regional Rural Network – Regional Council**
 - Chrystelle CASO, animator
 - Thomas DJIAN, animator
- **Researchers**
 - Maud HIRCZAK, Lecturer Aix-Marseille Université, LEST CNRS UMR 7317
 - Lucie BRUIS, PhD in sociologie - Aix-Marseille Université, Laboratoire Population Environnement Développement
 - Stéphane BELLON, research engineer in agroecology (INRAE - Avignon)
 - Mathieu LEBORGNE, sociologist (curricula at EHESS)
- **Civil society and local enterprises**
 - Sandrine PERCHEVAL, ADRETS, Study and resources center for development of services in Alpes and rural territories
 - Bastien GIRAUD, director, national federation of rural bistros ('Bistrots de pays')
 - Marie-Paule CHAUVET, farmer, member of the Leader local programming committee in Pays d'Arles
- **Policy makers**
 - Eric BLOT, Director, Alpilles' Regional Natural Park
 - Sophie CROQUETTE, project manager, Pays d'Arles territorial and rural pole
 - Julien MATELLINI, director, Alpes de Hautes Provence development agency
 - Géraldine Pollet, director of agriculture, forest and water, Regional Council
- **CIHEAM**
 - Jean-Pierre ROLLAND, MAP facilitator
 - Samuel FERET, MAP monitor
 - Tristan BERCHOUX, lecturer in geography
 - Mélanie RESQUIER DESJARDINS, lecturer in economy

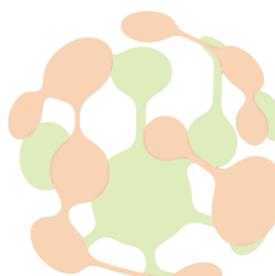
External stakeholders

In addition, we invited other external stakeholders to participate in the work of the MAP. Those who responded (notably INSEE, GREC-Sud, DRAAF and the Southern Region) gave a very positive opinion on the SHERPA project and agreed to participate actively in it. We met or had telephone or video-conference interviews with them:

- Alexandre GAUTHIER, deputy director, INSEE regional office in Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (national statistics)
- Philippe ROSSELO and Julie GATTACCECA, expert and research group on climate (GREC-Sud)
- Nadine JOURDAN, Chief officer, regional service of economic and statistic information/regional directorate of agriculture, food and forest of Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (DRAAF PACA)
- South Region Council
- Celia PASQUETTI, policy officer, agriculture service



- Isabelle POMPIDOU, policy officer, EAFRD service
- Boris Courant, policy officer, biodiversity, parks and rural territories service
- Sandrine ANDREANI, project officer Leader and regional natural parks, coordination of regional programmes service
- Florence CICALINI, policy officer, EU territorial cooperation service
- Claude HOLYST, deputy director, General Directorate for land planning and sustainable development
- Barbara COTTAIS, Florence CICALINI, policy officers, coordination of regional programmes service
- Agnès VERDEAU, policy officer, knowledge of territories service
- Christine LOUSSERT, policy officer, EU research and innovation service



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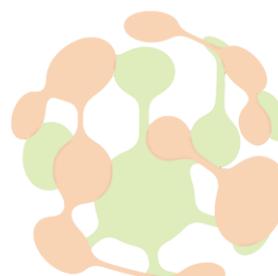
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