

SHERPA

Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Engaging remotely with rural actors in Aragón, Spain



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The first two years of running the Multi-Actor Platform IDRA has been characterised by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, all meetings, workshops and interviews have had to be organised online. The members of the MAP did not know each other before the start of the project and have mostly not met in real life. As such, it has been found that the main advantages with meeting online have been:

- It facilitates the participation of more members as there is no need to travel and it requires less time commitment; leading to lower costs both for travel and organisation.
- It facilitates the participation of members from remote places, thereby enriching the debate with new and different perspectives.
- It facilitates the definition of clearer and more concise objectives of the meetings, as the meetings have to be shorter and better organised online.

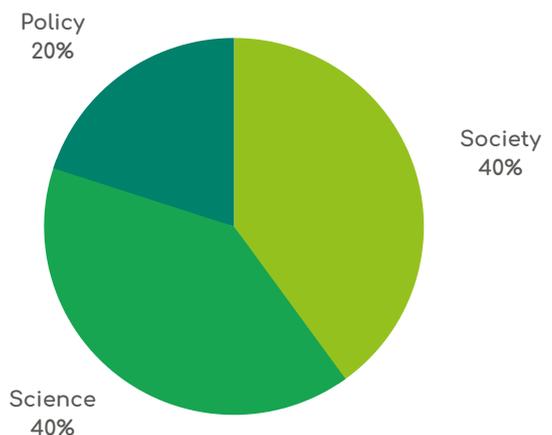
The main disadvantages with meetings online have been that:

- Discussion and moderation are more complicated since it is difficult to cut off the people who speak; the time limit of participants interventions limits the spontaneity as well as the possibility to continue the thread of the discussion with another participant, and the online tools limits the possibilities of organising dynamic interactions between participants. Also, connection problems and/or lack of knowledge or experience with online tools limits spontaneity. As such, this results in a loss of generation of ideas and information.
- It is complicated to maintain the concentration, attention and interest of the participants whose main focus is on their own intervention in the meeting.
- It is very complicated to organize breaks that allow for social interaction between the participants, which many times is more important than the interaction during the meeting itself.

Innovación en Desarrollo Rural de Aragón (IDRA)
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<p>More info https://rural-interfaces.eu/maps/spain-aragon/</p>



MAP membership:





ABOUT THE MAP

IDRA focuses on rural development in the region of Aragón in north-east Spain. The Multi-Actor Platform is newly established, bringing together members from the regional government, from the University of Zaragoza and two universities in Madrid, and from civil society (including members of Local Action Groups, farmers' union and business association). These make up the core group of members. Additional experts are invited to participate depending on the topic to discuss.

The region of Aragón is characterised by large heterogeneity, where parts of the region have very low population density with ongoing depopulation, an ageing population (with some of the highest old-dependency rates of the EU), and an increasing proportion of men in rural areas because of the outmigration of women. As a consequence, IDRA focuses on territorial themes linked to demographic shift, change in production and diversification of the rural economy, infrastructure and basic services, digitalisation, and inequalities and well-being in rural areas.



OBJECTIVES

- Contribute to identifying measures that could contribute to the slow-down of the depopulation trend.
- Contribute to generate knowledge and create networks among relevant stakeholders in order to improve the knowledge basis from which decisions can be taken.
- Seek synergies between various policy areas in order to magnify the impact and ensure there is no overlapping.



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

During the first two years of SHERPA, IDRA has actively contributed to improving the coordination between relevant stakeholders and informing policy-makers regarding decisions for future policy-making concerning rural areas. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the slowdown of the depopulation trend.

The work has been carried out through several activities, including three workshops for the first MAP cycle (discussing the long-term vision for rural areas in Aragón) and three workshops for the second MAP cycle (discussing the economic diversification of rural areas in Aragón) with the MAP members. In addition, several interviews have been carried out for more in-depth information. Also, a survey with a very high response rate (+400 responses) was undertaken during the first MAP cycle.

This has resulted in the development of one [MAP Discussion Paper](#) inspired by the SHERPA discussion paper, and one [MAP Position Paper](#), contributing to the [SHERPA Position Paper](#).



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