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Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Involving civil society actors



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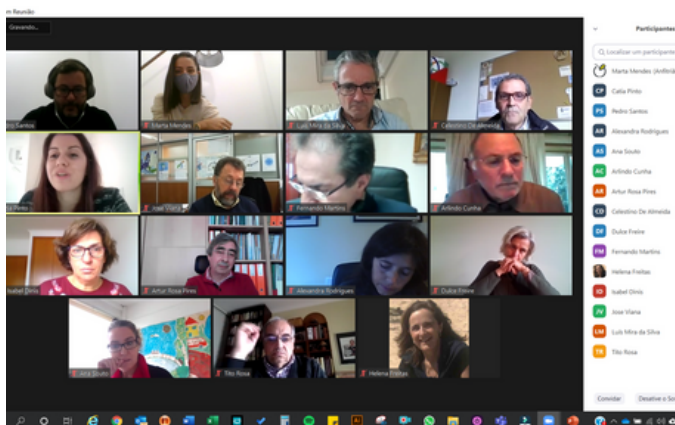
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MAP RURAL_PT was created, focusing on the Centro region of Portugal. Though the MAP activities developed entirely online, they allowed a very interesting level of discussion. Actions were identified that can contribute for this region to become a diversified, young, and innovative region, in 2040, with the capacity to attract investment and talent that leads in the evolution towards a more sustainable society. Throughout this exercise, the selection of civil society actors to be involved in this discussion was very important to achieve different perspectives and visions on the various sectors related to rural development. One of the successful exercises with civil society was a survey targeted primarily at the local community.

The biggest challenge identified was how to maintain civil society actors involved and engaged in the MAP throughout the cycle. It became imperative to make them understand the importance of their engagement in this discussion, highlighting as incentive the real impact that will have at the European policy level. The main lessons learned were:

- individual meetings with each member, especially at the start-up phase of the MAP;
- face-to-face group meetings to exchange ideas, knowledge and perspectives, promoting the creation of small group work dynamics.

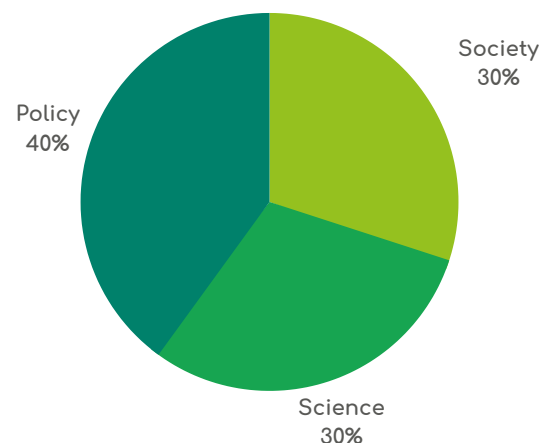
The MAP civil society actors recognised the importance of the opportunity to participate in a discussion where they are normally only heard at the conclusion validation stage and felt that their participation enriched the discussion and sought to give a sense of greater proximity to the territory and its concrete problems.



MAP RURAL_PT	
Location	Centro Region, Portugal
MAP contacts	Facilitator: Pedro Santos Monitor: Marta Mendes
More info	https://rural-interfaces.eu/maps/portugal-centro/



MAP membership





ABOUT THE MAP

The Portuguese Centro region, whose territory is very diverse and asymmetric, is an excellent example of areas needing innovative, multidisciplinary, and multidimensional approaches. One of the main objectives of the MAP RURAL_PT is to contribute to a strategic vision for the territory, involving the various relevant actors of the region, and to identify essential investments and instruments to promote a more sustainable and territorially balanced development. CONSULAI was the driving force behind the establishment of the MAP. The intention was to have a multi-actor platform of experts in the rural areas, from science, society, and policy, within the Centro region.

The great opportunity is that the MAP RURAL_PT can function as a 'neutral' and external ignition factor in the mobilisation process, listening to each other and promoting a debate that leads to concrete proposals and the clear identification of the conditions for the implementation of these proposals, rather than only the definition of desirable principles, priorities and types of actions.



OBJECTIVES

More specifically, all the work developed with the MAP RURAL_PT has been towards achieving the following objectives:

- Identification and prioritisation of main trends from the perspective of local stakeholders, members of the MAP;
- Identification of the main challenges facing the Centro region and build a matrix identifying the region's weaknesses and strengths, as well as the main regional threats and opportunities that could be seized, in the next 20 years;
- Contribution to a common long-term vision for Centro region of Portugal and define the needed actions to achieve it, in the four priorities identified during the first cycle of the MAP.



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The initial approach with MAP members was through an online survey for an individual reflection, about the most relevant key trends for the Centro Region, to discuss and to understand better their expectations regarding this MAP.

Subsequently, a first online meeting was held with MAP members to further discuss the long-term vision for the Centro region. The main outcome of this meeting was the elaboration of the SWOT for this region in the next 20 years.

In addition, an online survey was created for two objectives: i) what was the respondent's opinion regarding the main trends identified; ii) what was their perspective regarding the SWOT elaborated. The results can be consulted in this link.

Finally, a consensus meeting was held with MAP members. The aim of this session was to collect contributions for a common long-term vision for Centro region and defined the actions necessary to achieve it. As a result of this meeting, the [MAP Position Paper](#) was developed.



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