



SHERPA

Rural Science-Society-Policy  
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

# Operating the Czech Multi-Actor Platform in COVID-19 times



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SHERPA has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 862448. The content of the document does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the work of the MAP VENUS in Czechia. Some members were busy solving issues related to COVID-19, while other members experienced stress and a lack of time that resulted in less participation than expected. Various physical encounters had to be cancelled. The MAP found it challenging to organise digital meetings with the same quality of discussions. The transition to the digital environment decreased the participation and made the development of project documents slower. One positive effect is that it has been easier to share information with participants in remote areas.

Nonetheless, there is a need for training on how to involve more people in discussions through online platforms. The effects of COVID-19 are large but not liquidating, however, there is a risk of losing input and opinions when people are not comfortable with the digital format, when people do not access computers nor have good internet connection, and if the quality of meetings is not appropriate. Yet, online platforms can save time and reduce costs.

Practical recommendations that have been helpful:

- Get a good understanding of the tools you will be using so as to foster engagement of all participants.
- Send important documents in advance to the participants of the meeting.
- If it is not possible to meet in the field, create videos about the problem that is being solved.
- Publish or make available the results of the meeting or provide information on the course of the meeting.
- A questionnaire survey conducted by an interviewer will yield more information and authenticity than an online survey.



## MAP VENUS

### Location

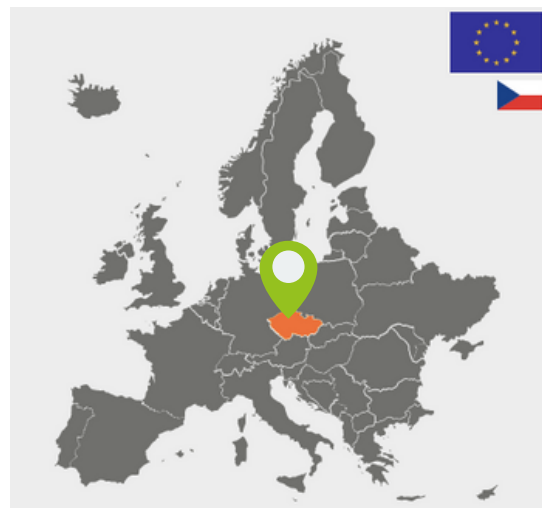
LAG Opavsko, Moravian-Silesian region, Czechia

### MAP contacts

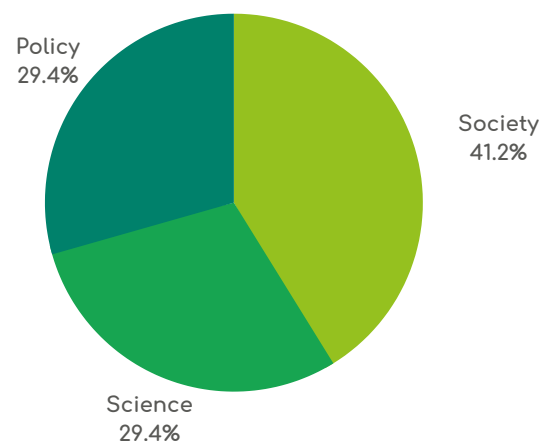
Facilitator: Jiří Krist  
Monitor: Petr Chroust

### More info

<https://rural-interfaces.eu/maps/czech-republic-moravia-silesia/>



## MAP membership:





## ABOUT THE MAP

In Czechia, the European Rural Development Network (ERDN) – Institute of Agricultural Economics coordinates the Multi-Actor Platform VENUS. This platform was created in autumn 2019 and it is based on the existing Local Action Group (LAG) Opavsko, operating in the Moravia and Silesia regions. A high-level steering committee with representation of four different ministries provides guidance to the MAP. The Chairman and Director of the LAG play a central role in organising the platform.

The MAP activities were focused on the topic of SMART energy in rural areas. The VENUS MAP contributed actively on regional policies, which aims to reach energy resilience and possibly becoming a comprehensively self-sufficient region. Citizens expect energy savings in the future and at the same time want to achieve a higher standard of quality of life. The common vision of 2040 aims at innovative technologies and cost-effective solutions that are measurable and manageable.



## OBJECTIVES

The vision of VENUS 2040 is to build a system of functional advice centres to realise energy savings and increase the share of renewable energy sources in the countryside. Above all, the deployment of smart energy requires that research well formulate a technical solution which will be discussed with politicians and citizens. A clear idea of the possibilities of energy savings, the use of renewable energy sources and community energy sharing (including smart grids, or energy storage systems) is one of the important steps in the process of established smart energy.

The specific objectives of the MAP are the following:

- To provide a conceptual basis for an energy saving strategy for public sector entities (municipalities and cities with less than 25 000 inhabitants), small and medium-sized enterprises and households.
- To develop project projects for public sector entities, small and medium-sized enterprises and households.
- To create a system of cooperation in the implementation of strategic energy savings and technical assistance in the implementation of specific projects.



## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Discussions in the VENUS meetings show that rural people do not have sufficient knowledge of energy saving issues or energy as such. Energy education does not work systematically, thus it will be important to build systemic tools in the form of education and lifelong learning, which will help prevent the effects of so-called energy poverty.

The MAP VENUS brings important outputs that can improve the situation a bit, such as the "Methodology for conceptual planning of energy savings in rural areas". The preparation and implementation of good practice projects is another way to contribute to the Strategy of the LAG Opavsko 2021 - 2027, where smart energy is one of the important areas.

Furthermore, during 2020, the MAP developed a [MAP Discussion Paper](#) and a [MAP Position Paper](#) on A vision for rural areas in Czechia, which fed into the [SHERPA Position Paper](#).



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