

SHERPA

Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Balancing actors' representation in multi-actors platforms



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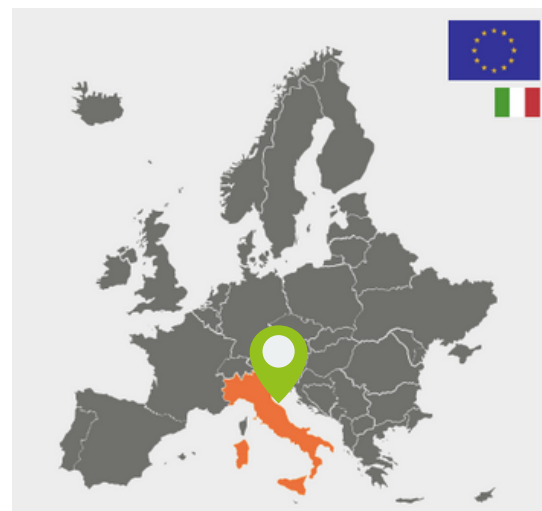
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- Selection of stakeholders and processing of information are of capital importance to balance actors' representation within the MAP. Both activities imply subjective choices made by the research team. Subjectivity cannot be avoided but can be nuanced, for instance, by integrating expert-based consultation in the MAP with other, more inclusive, consultation approaches (e.g. survey).
- It is important to include as much as possible all the different perspectives. However, be aware that in complex and multifaceted contexts this may hamper the identification of the key priorities.
- It is not only important to balance representation among science, society and policy groups, but also within each group. For instance, trying to include policy actors belonging to different sectors (e.g., rural development and landscape planning) and to different government levels (e.g. regional and local).
- To build the MAP it is good to start from pre-existing and consolidated networks and from a group of core actors.

<https://rural-interfaces.eu/maps/italy-emilia-romagna/>



A pie chart illustrating the distribution of research funding. The chart is divided into three equal segments, each representing 25% of the total. The largest segment, colored light green, is labeled 'Society 50%'. The other two segments, colored dark green and medium green, are labeled 'Policy 25%' and 'Science 25%' respectively.

Category	Percentage
Society	50%
Policy	25%
Science	25%



ABOUT THE MAP

In the region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy, the University of Bologna coordinates the Emilia-Romagna Multi-Actor Platform. This platform operates at regional level and was initiated from a long-lasting network that the University of Bologna has built with local experts and several administrative institutions, organisations and associations of the region. The Emilia-Romagna region includes two different types of rural areas: hilly-mountainous areas featuring extensification and abandonment of agriculture, and a plain area characterised by farm concentration (increasing UAA per holding and decreasing number of holdings) and intensification.

During the first phase of SHERPA, the platform focused on the plain areas, exploring the topic of relationships between agricultural production and biodiversity conservation. The second activity consisted in developing a long-term vision for rural areas and included both types of areas of the region. For this theme, the consultation carried out with the MAP was integrated with a survey addressing a larger group of regional stakeholders. Currently, the MAP is involved in its third activity whose focus is “climate change: mitigation and adaptation at local level”.



OBJECTIVES

The overarching objective of the MAP is to co-construct knowledge with local experts with regard to several topics of interest for rural areas of the region and to identify research needs. Due to the relevance of agriculture in the region, the MAP mostly focuses on issues related to agricultural production and environmental sustainability. More specific objectives for each activity conducted so far with the MAP, are:

- Identifying the main trade-offs and potential synergies between biodiversity and agricultural production.
- Developing a long-term vision for rural areas of the region with a horizon of 2040.
- Identifying the main strategies of adaptation and mitigation at regional level that can contribute to the objective of carbon neutrality by 2050.



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The Emilia-Romagna MAP has promoted the discussion among regional stakeholders on themes that are relevant for the development of rural areas, particularly in the view of the CAP reform. The discussion has been encouraged through three focus groups (one for each activity) that were conducted remotely due to the COVID-19, except for the first meeting on biodiversity conservation and agricultural production. For the work on the long-term vision, the focus group was integrated with interviews with the MAP experts and a survey to a larger group of stakeholders.

The first consultation process resulted in a [MAP Position Paper](#) on Biodiversity conservation and landscape features, while the activities on the long-term vision resulted in a [MAP Discussion Paper](#) and a [MAP Position Paper](#). Furthermore, the results of the consultation process on the long-term vision have been disseminated in several scientific conferences and also through the [online magazine](#) of the Italian Rural Network.



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