



SHERPA  
Rural Science-Society-Policy  
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

# Linking different level of policy and creating common perspectives in Finland



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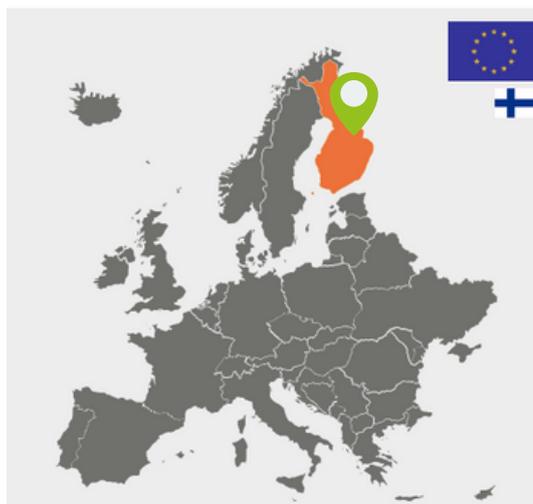
The Multi-Actor Platform Suomi-Finland has been constructed on several existing Finnish rural networks, particularly related to the Rural Policy Council MAP members represent different levels and areas of policy, including central government, regional and local levels; as well as members from producers' organisations, cultural associations, language communities, etc.

Linking these different spheres works well, since the composition was consciously built to reflect the diversity of Finnish rural areas, ranging from peri-urban to sparsely populated ones. Further, the MAP managed to have different levels and spheres of governance involved, contributing with insights from different knowledge domains. This is important for the creation of nuanced, complementary and alternative future images and policy options. Ultimately, linking these domains works well because of the members whom are very eager and enthusiastic in the group work. Everyone contributes with valuable input and nobody is overly dominant.

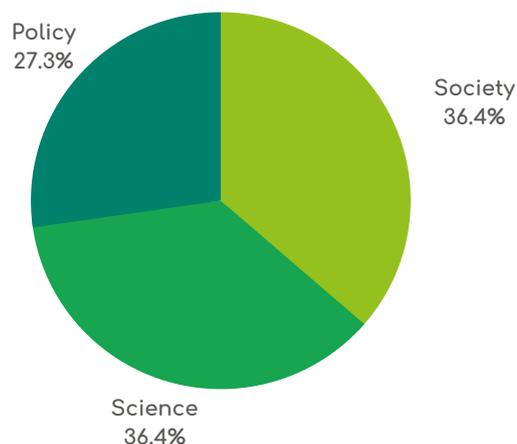
Practical recommendations for a good group dynamic:

- Aim to achieve a good composition of the group, ensuring participation from different levels of governance (national, regional, local) and of societal actors, gender balance, and in this case, language representation of both Finnish and Swedish communities.
- Inform in advance of all meetings, the clear goals of the meeting or activity, send the background material and invite those not able to attend to share their input bilaterally.
- During the meeting or activity, give space to everyone to contribute and make them feel heard.
- Invite members to further disseminate the results with their networks, and allow them to give feedback.

MAP Finland
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### MAP membership





## ABOUT THE MAP

The Finnish MAP is a national network gathering representatives from all corners of the country. This is to ensure both 1) language and cultural diversity through representation of both Finnish and Swedish speaking rural areas, and 2) geographical diversity by involving more densely populated regions of the south and sparsely populated areas and arctic regions.

Finland is one of the most rural country in the EU, with 95% of its land area being classified as rural. There are about 5.5 million Finns, of which 1.6 million live in rural areas. However, 2.1 million people are part-time residents in rural areas. About 40% of all companies in Finland are situated in rural areas. Based on the Eurostat typology, Finland is also the “most rural” Nordic country, with the largest share of regions being classified as predominantly remote rural region.



## OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the current cycle in 2021 are threefold:

- Position Paper on “Change in production and diversification of the rural economy”, looking into the dimensions of rural diversification, highlighting good practices, including projects, tools and methods but also obstacles and enablers supporting the overcoming of challenges. The paper will point at key research gaps and provide recommendations for the local, regional and national levels, as well as for the wider EU.
- General recommendations for and from Finland with a focus on policy-makers working on rural development at multiple levels of governance and within the wider field of diversification of the rural economy.
- Sharing the findings with a wider audience through workshops at the national rural parliament in September 2021.



## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The MAP had the opportunity to meet at least once face-to-face in March 2020 and to kick-off its activities prior to the pandemic. The other two group meetings and additional focus group interviews took place online. Nevertheless, the MAP was able to produce a [Discussion Paper](#) and a [Position Paper](#), alongside the following steps:

- Joint analysis of strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Finnish rural areas.
- Survey “Rural development up until 2040 - Challenges, opportunities, enablers and hinders”, which received almost 100 replies from all over the country.



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