



SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS



MAP ESTONIA

The Estonian MAP operates at a national level and was established in 2021. The group consists of representatives of rural organisation, local citizens, businesses, research institutes, and regional and national authorities.

The Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs is responsible for developing and implementing policies to ensure sustainable development of rural areas. As such, transforming rural policy into a horizontal policy that includes rural proofing has been important. However, there are still some challenges ahead, such as mapping needs and opportunities of different rural areas, training local government officials, and recognising the peculiarities of Eastern European countries in the EU framework.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Future rural policy

- Increase share of competitive companies, support joint activities for entrepreneurship & inclusion, and address skilled labor in rural areas
- Improve policy-making by training local representatives
- Customise approach to rural development and consider Eastern European peculiarities and business landscape in EU's framework
- Establish uniform rules and preferential conditions for faster development of peripheral areas
- Focus on R&D, innovation and investment in youth

Future rural research

- Clarify the starting point before developing future rural policies
- Base decisions on research and monitoring, with a solid and measurable basis results
- Include rural areas in Horizon/Interreg international research projects through for example it being a horizontal theme
- Focus scientific research on mapping the needs and opportunities of different rural areas in order to provide a strong basis for policy decisions

KEY STRENGTHS

- Identity-based policymaking has emerged in Estonia, which has resulted in increased engagement and involvement from various groups, such as mulgis and setos
- Successful support measures including the regional distinctions have been implemented
- LEADER measure has proven to be beneficial in achieving specific goals that are important in rural areas

KEY NEEDS

- Rural entrepreneurs lack time and resources to engage in daily politics
- Many municipalities do not consider discussing with partners important or it is troublesome
- Promoting rural life requires a comprehensive approach involving multiple government ministries
- Inconsistencies in government policies due to changes in political direction can undermine long-term decision-making and implementation
- Current project-based and limited funding for voluntary organizations and NGOs hinders their ability to provide input for comprehensive policies, highlighting the need for permanent funding



EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Rural proofing

The Ministry of Rural Affairs has introduced rural proofing to ensure decisions consider the impact on rural areas. The principle of considering rural life is that when making decisions, one must think about whether there is a desired effect on the rural area, and these effects must be considered when making decisions. The goal is to achieve sustainable development and balance between living and business environments in rural areas.

