



SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS



MAP MONTAGNA TOSCANA

The MAP of Montagna Toscana covers the Northern Apennines mountainous area (Apuan Alps, Alta Versilia region) in central Italy, Lucca Province. The group consists of small firms, local citizens, NGOs, regional authorities and researchers.

The governance situation in the Tuscan mountain region is characterised by active participation of various local actors in the chestnut value chain. Useful policy recommendations emerged from collective discussions. The cooperative approach has been recognised by stakeholders as most effective to offer new services to local people. However, actors need more support to actively participate in decision-making processes and access regional and local opportunities.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Future rural policy

- Strengthen existing positive initiatives by involving local actors in decision-making
- Promote cooperative approaches by building communities through the provision of quality products and services, valuing biodiversity and traditions
- Support local actors in accessing funding opportunities by simplifying bureaucracy and providing professional support
- Enhance the aggregative role of local associations to maintain a sense of community and bring youth closer to mountain areas

Future rural research

- Map abandoned chestnut groves to facilitate the reuse of abandoned lands
- Deepen knowledge of different varieties produced in the area to support the flour quality assessment
- Conduct action research by implementing and giving continuity to participatory approaches and investigating the social impact of such actions. The university in particular can take up this role as a "synergies' facilitator"

KEY STRENGTHS

- Strong social ties and values at the local level: values of sharing, friendship and the pursuit of community goals
- A climate of cooperation, trust and lack of competitions, favouring horizontal coordination
- Presence of dedicated civil society organizations with a strong aggregating role
- Human capital, local knowledge and expertise in the chestnut flour value chain
- Co-learning as a common practice among value chain actors
- Provision of ecosystem services through chestnut forest management
- Multifunctionality of agricultural businesses, which can be seen as a strength and necessity

KEY NEEDS

- Creation of new employment opportunities based on local and sustainable value chains and improvement of essential services for local people
- Improvement mechanisms for land availability for chestnut trees and management of wildlife-induced damage
- Strengthening trust relations and joint initiatives between government agencies and local actors and integration of different levels of government
- Education and training services to strengthen human capital and local knowledge
- Better vertical coordination and administrative support for smaller actors
- New ways to encourage youth and continue the tradition in the chestnut value chain



EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Banca della Terra (Land Bank) – Regione Toscana

The Land Bank of the Tuscany region provides an up-to-date and complete inventory of public and private land available for rental or other contractual arrangements. This initiative aims to promote the use of abandoned lands and facilitate their productivity by supporting young entrepreneurs, protecting biodiversity, landscape and forestry heritage and preventing natural disasters. Access is facilitated through an official web portal, where public calls for applications are posted. The MAP stakeholders recognised the importance of such an initiative. Anyway, it should be revised in order to better respond to the specific local needs.

