



SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS



MAP GREENPORT GELDERLAND, NETHERLANDS

The Greenport Gelderland MAP focused on their fruit cultivation branch called "Fruitpact" in the Gelderland River region of the Netherlands and consists of members from science, society and policy.

The Greenport Gelderland MAP played a key role in shaping collaborative governance by connecting SME's with municipal and provincial authorities. Fruitpact may be insufficiently anchored in a long-term institutional and legal framework, risking being unable to keep playing this role. The fruit cultivation sector, represented via Fruitpact, tends to be more inward oriented and struggles to connect with civil society. The designation of new water reclamation areas brought stakeholders together, leading to stronger cooperation and new forms of interaction.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Future rural policy

- Give decision-making power to regional and rural areas for tailor-made decisions that consider local conditions, build trust and relationships with the national government.
- Improve communication in collaborative governance by involving civic organisations.
- Use an iterative process that bridges differences between top-down and bottom-up processes to guide sustainability transitions.
- Prevent fragmentation into small interest groups, and ensure a coherent vision and plan for sustainability transitions.

Future rural research

- Create opportunities for the development of long-term perspectives to focus on long-term issues to prevent that only short-term issues get addressed.
- Understand diverse local interests and viewpoints through in-depth knowledge about rural realities.
- EU could provide tools, such as a toolbox on network organisations and cross-visits between rural areas with similar sector focus, that can support local and regional governance.

KEY STRENGTHS

- Primary entrepreneurs actively participate in administrative processes related to Greenport Gelderland, demonstrating strong commitment.
- Strong cooperation has been established in recent years, providing a solid foundation for collective action.
- The crisis in relation to water catchment areas in the previous year showcased stakeholders' ability for collective action.
- Fruitpact participants have recently reached a consensus on a shared vision.
- Mutual recognition on the importance of interdependence between stakeholders exists, and relationships with municipal authorities are characterized by positive interactions and cooperation.

KEY NEEDS

- Engage large players (e.g. large fruit growers >100ha) to bring their entrepreneurial attitude to Greenport Gelderland.
- Protect social capital built up over time by maintaining stability and enhance the MAP's proactive capability to navigate challenges and anticipate changes.
- The sector to become more responsive to societal shifts and related expectations.
- Improve Fruitpact's external focus, involve participants more in agenda-setting and orient new Fruitpact participants.
- Recognize the importance of physical meetings to build relationships and improve collaboration.



EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Greenport Gelderland

Greenport Gelderland is a public-private network organisation and is well-positioned to stimulate innovation in and sustainable development of horticultural sectors in the region because it forms a kind of in-between structure between Provincial and local (municipal) levels. It creates enhanced connectivity between governance levels and makes collaboration between sector representatives and the region/Province more efficient and effective.

