



SHERPA  
Rural Science-Society-Policy  
Interfaces

## GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS



### MAP RURAL\_PT, PORTUGAL

The Portuguese MAP RURAL\_PT is located in the Fundão region and is part of the Beira Baixa Intermunicipal Community (CIMBB). The MAP has eight members from science, six members from society, and six members from policy.

The Fundão region has launched several initiatives to promote citizen participation, such as a platform and a participatory budget. A Citizen's Portal has been established to provide access to local services and enable citizens to participate in local decision-making. Despite having a dense network of actors and a strong commitment to involving local actors, more understanding is needed on the involvement of rural actors in multilevel governance and the visibility of rural networks.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Future rural policy

- Establish regional councils with more representation of active regional actors.
- Create inclusive local governments and institutions with diverse perspectives.
- Encourage debate on rural development.
- Involve marginalised populations in planning and decision-making.
- Improve infrastructure to increase cooperation between rural and urban areas.
- Provide technical and financial support from EU to support actions, facilitate cooperation and strengthen institutions & networks.

#### Future rural research

- Research on natural resource valorisation and innovative business models to promote sustainable rural development.
- Explore how governance policies can be improved to support climate change adaptation in rural areas.
- Examine social innovation for sustainable rural development.
- Identify gaps and develop strategies to increase competitiveness and sustainability of rural producers.
- Assess needs and perspectives to improve transportation and infrastructure.

## KEY STRENGTHS

- Strong commitment to engage rural actors and local government in multi-level governance.
- Easy identification of and contact with relevant actors due to past experiences.
- Inclusive and collaborative governance in rural areas.
- Local actors have a good understanding of realities on the ground.
- Municipal policies and infrastructure for inclusion of disadvantaged groups.
- Dense network of actors to promote community involvement and policies tailored to local needs.
- Proximity rural and urban areas facilitates a more sustainable food system.
- Valorisation of historical, cultural and natural heritage creating dynamic of urban-rural connectivity.

## KEY NEEDS

- Enhanced involvement of rural actors & local level in multi-level governance.
- Improved visibility and understanding of rural networks.
- Support for pilot projects on integrated governance based on territorial, thematic or specific selection of beneficiaries.
- Introduction of new perspectives and increased citizen participation in political decision-making processes.
- Strengthening rural-urban interconnections through placed-based approach and investments in transport & telecom-munication.
- Development of strategies and partnerships to respond to different territorial contexts.
- Integration of rural development objectives into regional policies.



## EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

### Provere networks |Aldeias do Xisto and iNature

The Provere networks are cooperation networks between public and private sectors that aim to develop innovative projects in specific areas (e.g. tourism, culture, the environment). A few examples are **Aldeias do Xisto**, which consists of restored villages adapted for tourist, and **iNature**, which promotes eco-tourism activities (e.g. hiking, bird watching).

[Please visit the website for more information on Provere Networks.](#)

