



SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS



MAP SOFIA, BULGARIA

The Sofia Multi-Actor Platform (MAP) aims to understand the problems of rural areas at the regional level. It brings together stakeholders from the field of science, the public sector and social communities (including private sector and non-governmental entities).

Multi-level governance is considered essential for the future of Bulgarian agriculture. There has been progress in multi-level cooperation, decentralised decision-making and civil society participation. Several challenges, however, pertain including a need to 'reform the reformer', address corruption and the lack of adequate funding. In this Fiche, the MAP lists the strengths and needs of its governance of rural areas, and recommendations that can further improve it.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Future rural policy

- The future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU should focus more on support and measures for rural development, and transaction costs in CAP implementation should be decreased.
- Prioritise the allocation of funding and support to areas that are most in need.
- Include measures to increase transparency, accountability, multi-level coordination and stakeholder engagement in decision-making.
- LEADER should give more independence and freedom to set up local development strategies.

Future rural research

- Assess the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement in multi-level governance in Bulgarian agriculture and the role of civil society organisations.
- Explore the role of the local government in multi-level governance in Bulgarian agriculture.
- Investigate the impact of EU policies on multi-level governance in Bulgarian agriculture.
- Understand the impact of emerging technologies on multi-level governance in Bulgarian agriculture.

KEY STRENGTHS

- Cooperation and coordination between local, regional and central authorities.
- Bulgaria's membership in the EU provides access to various funding opportunities.
- Decentralised decision-making allows for more local input and participation in policy development.
- Civil society participation provides a voice to farmers and other stakeholders.
- Significant developments in technological innovations have taken place in the agricultural sector.

KEY NEEDS

- 'Reform the reformer' although there is resistance to reform at all governmental levels.
- Address the lack of adequate funding for local governments and small- and medium-sized farmers.
- Address that the Bulgarian agricultural sector is often overlooked and programs are not solidly designed.
- Address corruption and nepotism, affecting the effectiveness and legitimacy of government at all levels.
- Increase meaningful public participation in decision-making processes at all levels.



EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

National Agriculture Strategy - NAS

The NAS is a policy document that outlines the country's goals and objectives in the agriculture sector. It is developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) and involves stakeholders from various levels of government, including regional and local authorities and industry representatives. The government, farmers, and other stakeholders work together to develop policies, strategies, and programs that address the challenges the agriculture sector faces. For example, the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) works closely with local farmers' organisations to provide advice and support.

