



SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS



MAP ARGES, IASI & TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA

Romania's aggregated MAP includes the Arges county, Iasi county and Transylvania region. The group consists of producers, researchers, civil society representatives, and local and national public authorities.

A challenge for the Romanian governance system is integrating a participatory approach into the planning process. Public authorities often experience problems with communication with citizens and organisations, contributing to a low level of trust and public participation. In many Romanian rural areas, there is a lack of local leadership and functional partnerships, leading to development strategies without a clear vision. Improving skills of local actors is essential to mobilise communities and formulate long-term strategies.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Future rural policy

- Communicate the purpose of dialogue in accessible language.
- Introduce stable, formalised mechanisms and tools to guide the participation process both horizontally and vertically.
- Engage the national rural development network more actively by organising roundtables, workshops and training.
- Develop networks of professional organisations and create a national digital rural development platform.
- Establish a national network for rural facilitators and advisors and provide technical assistance for setting up professional training and information platforms.

Future rural research

- Overcome cultural barriers to increase motivation to participate.
- Communicate the benefits of citizen involvement effectively.
- Increase awareness and involvement of actors, including marginalised groups.
- Reduce fragmentation of rural actors to amplify their voice.
- Establish a regulatory framework and address capacity deficits in public authorities.
- Disseminate relevant good practices for participatory governance.
- Use statistical data to identify and address real needs in rural territories.

KEY STRENGTHS

- Proactive attitude towards involving young people in participatory governance.
- Raise public awareness of local/regional short chains and agri-food culture to increase participation.
- Reliable local leaders (expert groups, NGOs, etc.) can facilitate public debates and decisions.
- Association of farmers/producers in territorial "guilds" (federations, confederations, specialised groups, etc.) improves participation horizontally and vertically.
- Regulation and joint funding sources can encourage dialogue between authorities and potential beneficiaries in the participation process.

KEY NEEDS

- Improve representativeness of actors involved in participatory process.
- Balance power between small producers and larger agri-food actors.
- Increase the relevance and importance of local needs in national and European decision-making.
- Improve coordination and horizontal/vertical communication.
- Improve staff skills at local & national level for an effective participatory process.
- Promote access to public consultation for rural actors with limited resources.
- Raise awareness of the importance of active participation in decision-making.



EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

AgroTransilvania Cluster

AgroTransilvania Cluster is a professional association established in 2013 by the Cluj District Council and composed of key players from the local agri-food industry and government agencies. Its main objective is to provide advice to the council in devising government measures that strengthen the competitiveness of the district's agri-food sector both domestically and globally.

