



SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

GOVERNANCE IN RURAL AREAS



MAP NIENBURG AND SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN, GERMANY

This MAP Fiche is a joint output from the MAP in the county Nienburg, Lower Saxony, and the MAP in Schleswig-Holstein, consisting of representatives from local administration and authorities, farming organisations, advisory services, NGOs, students, civil society and research organisations.

Key recommendations discussed include supporting (1) sustainable farming systems and value chains by, for example, developing infrastructure for processing and marketing local produce, (2) trust-based networks to enable local actors to participate in the governance of rural areas actively, and (3) the engagement of the young generation.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Future rural policy

- Support the creation of local infrastructure for the processing and marketing of local products.
- Support the development of structures that facilitate cooperation and trust-based networks.
- Support dedicated education campaigns and reforms on sustainable agriculture and viable rural areas.
- Support the development of community meeting places for rural communities.
- Strengthen the role of local communities and councils to foster collaboration and participation in the governance of rural areas

Future rural research

- How to foster long-term processes of social innovations in agri-food value chains by learning from existing experiences, successes and failures?
- How can principles and processes of sustainable and resilient value chains be scaled up to larger-scale food systems?
- What is the potential of trust-based networks to transform rural communities into "living labs" for environmental and climate protection innovation?

KEY STRENGTHS

- There are opportunities to utilise tourism and the proximity to urban areas in developing local value chains and on-farm processing and marketing.
- Various initiatives are in place that have gained experience with new forms of governance in food systems and rural communities.
- Young farmers and other young rural actors are willing to engage in informal and formal cooperation networks at the local and regional levels.
- There is an increasing awareness of the importance of involving trust-based networks and various actors to legitimise the decision-making processes.

KEY NEEDS

- There is a lack of knowledge on effective implementation, highlighting new requirements for specialised agri-environmental advisory services.
- Infrastructure for collection, storage, processing, distribution and selling of products is required, and formal rules and tools are needed to strengthen local trade.
- More social innovations involving the young generation are necessary to enhance the capacities of rural communities to cooperate in environmental and climate protection.
- For the financing of targeted measures and planning laws and regulations, more decision-making power must be allocated to the local community.



EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Lower Saxony Path

The Lower Saxony Path (Der Niedersächsische Weg), is a new agreement by the ministries, the agricultural sector and nature conservation associations to enhance biodiversity and water quality. In addition, to collaborative efforts to support sustainable farming practices, this agreement also includes campaigns to curb food waste and strengthen food appreciation.



The Blue Bioeconomy programme in Northern Germany

The Blue Bioeconomy programme in Northern Germany supports the transition to a bio-based economy throughout Germany and innovative projects from the world of blue bioeconomy are processed. The programme engages a wide range of local actors in the transformation to, and governance of, a bio-based economy. For example, it targets start-ups in the Blue Economy with projects such as AQUATOR fostering trust-and trust based networks and collaborations becoming a successful accelerator for such start-ups