

SHERPA

Rural Science-Society-Policy  
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

# Involving civil society in a rural Science-Society-Policy interface in Italy



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

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SHERPA has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 862448. The content of the document does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s).



The SHERPA MAP Montagna Toscana, launched in 2022, focuses on the chestnut flour value chain and corresponds to the MAP from the Northern Apennines of the HORIZON 2020 MOVING project. The area is characterised by several fragilities in terms of land abandonment, climate change, lack of essential services and infrastructure for inhabitants.

The activities carried out in the context of the MOVING and SHERPA projects pointed out the willingness of local stakeholders to preserve and re-activate the chestnut flour value chain. At the moment, this value chain is at risk of disappearance, and it cannot represent a full-time occupation for the farmers involved. Nevertheless, a strong socio-cultural value is associated with the chestnut flour value chain, which represents a way to strengthen social ties and establish a collaborative environment among farmers, based on trust (e.g.: reciprocal help), to pursue environmental and biodiversity preservation, to preserve and enliven intangible cultural heritage, to recovery and re-use abandoned assets.

In this context, the participation in SHERPA project enabled civil society representatives to widen their network by getting in direct contact with researchers and regional-level policy makers. Moreover, the project's appointments established a continuative dialogue among local stakeholders, which could reflect on the future of the mountain area and of the value chain. Workshops and meetings were the occasion to share visions and positions about potential innovations and sustainable practices that can be implemented at the local level, also in collaboration with the university, through project planning and co-creation. An example could be increasing chestnut producers' market power through their participation in complementary and alternative supply chain models, including ecosystem services, honey, tourism, etc.

Such elements have been condensed and presented in the MAP Position Paper.

## MAP Montagna Toscana

### Location

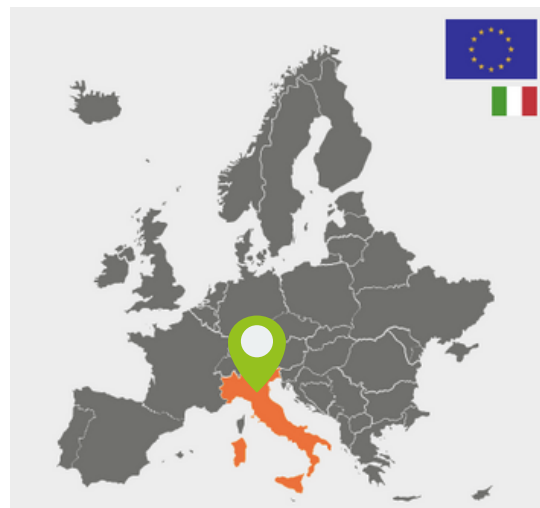
Alta Versilia (Tuscany, Italy)

### MAP contacts

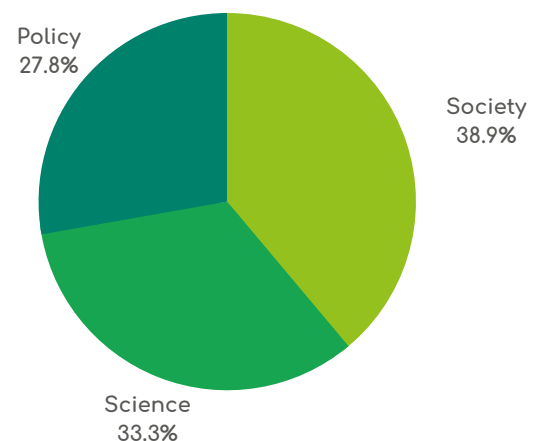
Facilitator: Sabrina Tomasi  
Monitor: Sabrina Arcuri

### More info

[SHERPA Regional Multi-Actor Platform | Montagna Toscana - SHERPA \(rural-interfaces.eu\)](#)



## MAP membership:



Position Paper provides several recommendations to the MAP actors, especially in terms of access to funding; long-term planning and support to local entrepreneurs; enhancing opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange and collaborative learning; research opportunities and data collection; mapping, activating, and managing local resources.



## ABOUT THE MAP

The MAP Montagna Toscana is located in the Apuan Alps in the Northern Apennines and covers the area of the Municipalities' Union of Alta Versilia, namely Camaiore, Massarosa, Seravezza and Stazzema, in Lucca Province (Italy). The MAP mainly consists of about 40 actors, including agricultural companies, producers and producers' associations, but also other categories, such as policymakers, researchers, non-agricultural businesses, NGOs, and civil society.



## OBJECTIVES

The SHERPA MAP Montagna Toscana pursues the following objectives:

- Contribute to the analysis of the chestnut value chain in the MOVING project, expanding the analysis to the broader area identified and the stakeholders involved;
- Improve the understanding of the interrelations between the agri-food value chains and local socio-ecological systems
- Develop recommendations for local and regional policymakers on rural development linked to the topic of sustainable agri-food value chains (focus on local varieties of chestnut).
- Publish relevant documents (e.g. MAP Position Paper) to provide an overview of the main achievements of the MAP in terms of value chain sustainability and recommendations to take actions at a systemic level.



## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

During the third cycle (between 2022 and 2023) several activities held in collaboration with the researchers from the MOVING project, have been carried out, involving the MAP's local actors:

- A set of interviews with small local entrepreneurs, representatives from NGOs and local policymakers was conducted between February and March 2022 to provide an in-depth analysis of the value chain.
- One workshop about alternative and complementary value chains (e.g. honey) and one workshop about the assessment of the value chain vulnerability (respectively in May and June 2022).
- An additional participatory workshop on the future of mountain areas and on how young generations can contribute to ensuring it in a sustainable way involved both local high school students and entrepreneurs connecting the chestnut value chain with other complementary value chains related to the mountain area (e.g.: tourism, agro-forestry services, etc.).
- Publication of the MAP Position Paper (2022) based on the data collected from other activities.
- From January to March 2023, the MAP actors have been involved in a foresight exercise in three steps, aiming at defining different scenarios for the sustainable future of the value chain and at identifying potential actions to be taken to achieve the set objectives.
- Publication of MAP Position Note and MAP Fiche on governance in rural areas (2023).



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