

SHERPA  
Rural Science-Society-Policy  
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

# Creating and sustaining meaningful engagement and dialogue in Nienburg



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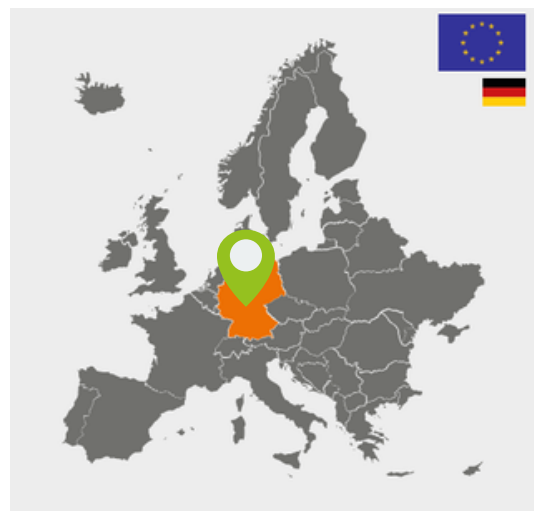


The participative processes undertaken in the SHERPA MAP Nienburg (Germany) provided opportunities to engage a set of local actors across policy, science and society in sharing information and views on sustainable and resilient value chains. The results emphasise the importance of networking and capacity building activities to strengthen the shared appreciation, trust and cooperation between actors as a basis for developing concrete practical solutions to a jointly identified key need of the rural area.

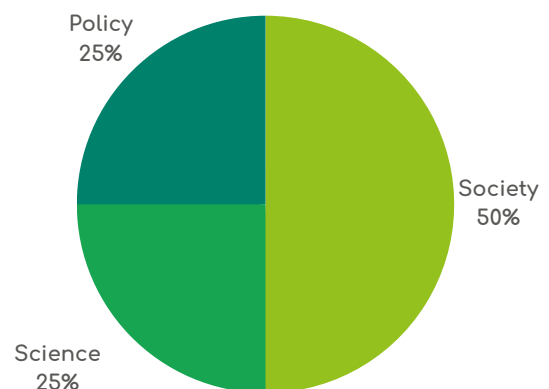
The main lessons and key uptakes on facilitating engagement of a diverse set of local actors are:

- To establish trust in a Multi-Actor Platforms takes time. In particular, developing a practical solution to a jointly identified key need of the rural area might require time that goes beyond a single project cycle;
- To design platforms in a structured way, aiming to create and strengthen long-term relationships;
- To allow flexibility in composition of participants at workshops and to enable a plurality of perspectives, providing an open space for sharing practical experiences and lessons learnt in developing or engaging in more sustainable value chains;
- To account for sufficient time on reflecting on local needs and potentials;
- To involve a trusted local actor as intermediary facilitates identification and recruitment of different actors;
- To utilise a mix of methods of engagement adapting to the preferences, motivation, connectedness and remote access of local actors;
- To integrate evidence from examples of past or current local value chain initiatives, as well as to ensure local embeddedness of the results act as levers to highlight the relevance for a particular context.

MAP Nienburg	
<b>Location</b>	Nienburg, Germany
<b>MAP contacts</b>	Facilitator: Gerald
<b>More info</b>	<a href="https://www.sherpa-platform.eu/Nienburg-SHERPA-rural-interfaces.eu">SHERPA Regional Multi-Actor Platform   Nienburg - SHERPA (rural-interfaces.eu)</a>



### MAP membership:





## ABOUT THE MAP

The Multi-Actor Platform operates in the county of Nienburg, Lower Saxony, which lies on the river Weser, northwest of the city of Hanover. The Nienburg County comprises an intensive agricultural area with sustainability issues regarding biodiversity loss and water quality. High land prices as a result of the proximity to regions with the highest livestock densities in Germany expose farmers to a great degree of economic pressures. The Multi-Actor Platform was established in the [UNISECO Project](#) and continued in the SHERPA project, in collaboration with the [DiverIMPACTS](#) project. Thematically it focuses on addressing key challenges of sustainable farming systems and related value chains.



## OBJECTIVES

The main aims were to translate the co-constructed strategies for transitioning to more sustainable farming systems into practical solutions that address identified barriers at the value chain level and to explore opportunities to sustain the Multi-Actor Platform set up in the UNISECO project in the longer term. The MAP focuses on issues related to agriculture and environmental sustainability, and innovations in agri-environmental policies. Sub-objectives are:

- To ensure a meaningful dialogue of local actors representing policy, science and society in an effective two-way exchange of ideas for co-learning and co-creation of knowledge of sustainable farming systems and related value chains.
- To sustain the Multi-Actor Platform set up in the UNISECO project in the longer term to enable the development of trusting relationships between the MAP members over the years
- To improve the understanding of factors impacting on the success or failure of sustainable value chain initiatives at local level and to co-construct practical solutions for setting up such an initiative.
- To derive recommendations for improved governance of sustainable and resilient value chains for consideration in the Rural Development Programme of Lower Saxony as well as for consideration in further reforms of the CAP at national and EU levels.



## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

During the first two years of SHERPA, IDRA has actively contributed to improving the coordination between relevant stakeholders and informing policy-makers regarding decisions for future policy-making concerning rural areas. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the slowdown of the depopulation trend.

The work has consisted of the arrangement of several activities, including three workshops for the first MAP cycle (discussing the long-term vision for rural areas in Aragón) and three workshops for the second MAP cycle (discussing the economic diversification of rural areas in Aragón) with the MAP members. In addition, additional interviews have been carried out where more in-depth information has been sought. Also, a survey with a very high response rate (+400 responses) was undertaken during the first MAP cycle. The facilitator and moderator have also participated in training regarding the facilitation and moderation of Multi-Actor Platforms.

This has resulted in the drafting of one [MAP discussion paper](#) inspired by the SHERPA discussion paper, and one [MAP position paper](#), which in turn have contributed to the SHERPA position paper (see here the [SHERPA Policy Papers](#)). The second cycle will result in a second position paper in October 2021.



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