

SHERPA
Rural Science-Society-Policy
Interfaces

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Why should researches join a Multi-actor Platform in Tuscany?



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

Authors: Sabrina Arcuri and Sabrina Tomasi, University of Pisa

Reviewers: Carla Lostrangio, Merveille Ntabuhashe, Serafin Pazos Vidal, AEIDL; Jorieke Potters, Wageningen University & Research; Brigit Zomer, Ecorys

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Sustainability concerns have challenged the role of researchers and led them to increasingly go beyond their traditional role as researchers in a particular discipline to engage in experiments in Living Labs and Multi-Actor Platforms (MAP), such as SHERPA MAPs. The SHERPA MAPs bring together different types of actors – from society, policy, and science – for co-learning and co-creating knowledge on specific issues, often seeking for innovative solutions (and, in the case of SHERPA, for developing policy recommendations). In the last years, for instance, several scientific actors linked to rural-related research have been involved in the MAP Tuscany (Italy). Involving scientific actors in MAP discussions was not difficult: the MAP relied on networks already in place, which revolved around rural development and food-related topics. As a result, it was possible to make synergies between the issues selected for SHERPA discussions and local interests and policy cycles, avoiding the multiplication of events and participation fatigue.

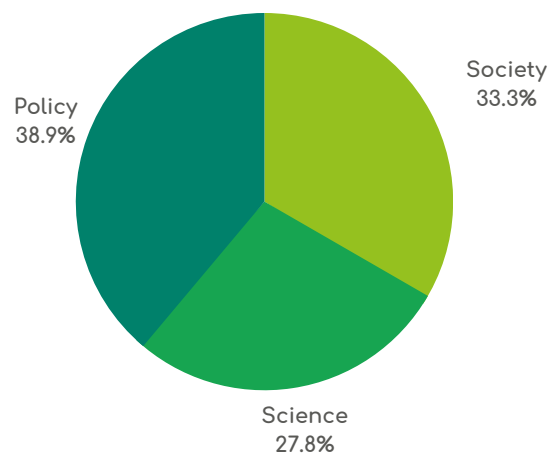
For instance, sustainable value chains – how to foster, promote and assess them and their performance – have both been investigated by researchers active in the local Tuscany context (and beyond) and encouraged by policy and societal actors.

One major public initiative regarding the creation of a regional Centre for Training and Competences on traditional local products (discover more in our MAP Position Paper/ MAP Fiche) have given ground for a participatory discussion, where researchers have been: 1) Sharing their evidence-based knowledge (often); 2) Facilitating the discussion in certain groups (sometimes); and 3) Learning (often) directly from practitioners, whether they are farmers, processors, retailers, caterers, or local administrators, what their difficulties and needs were, if these products were to make a real contribution to sustainable territorial development and in particular to the revitalisation of rural areas.

MAP Tuscany
<p>Location Tuscany, Italy</p>
<p>MAP contacts Facilitator: Sabrina Arcuri Monitor: Sabrina Tomasi</p>
<p>More info SHERPA Regional Multi-Actor Platform Tuscany - SHERPA (rural-interfaces.eu)</p>



MAP membership:



The search for an explicit link with policy cycles and scientific expertise at the local level can potentially help make the engagement last beyond the MAP cycle and make the MAP contribution more significant.



ABOUT THE MAP

The SHERPA MAP Tuscany (Italy) has been operating at regional level since 2020. It brings together actors from science, society and policy which have been taking part in networks focused on rural areas and agri-food issues. At the regional and sub-regional level, indeed, there is a debate going on on topics related to the revitalisation of rural areas, with a particular focus on mountain areas, but also on governance arrangements that may support entrepreneurship in the agri-food sector and broader territorial development (e.g., food communities, rural districts, local food strategies).



OBJECTIVES

- To create a dedicated space for exchange, learning, networking across different levels of governance;
- To develop recommendations for future policy and research relevant for rural areas, at EU and local level;
- To contribute to participatory discussions occurring at the regional level on rural development and related themes.



MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

This MAP achieved to organise and deliver several workshops, events and interviews with key actors. Most of the activities, especially during the first years, were carried out online. Through its see the MAP Position Paper and MAP Discussion Paper, this MAP also contributed to the consultation on the EU's Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas (LTVRA).

As a continuation of the reflection on the LTVRA, this MAP contributed to the Foresight exercise carried out within the SHERPA project in 2021, (see MAP Position Paper). Key findings and recommendations of this MAP are presented in the MAP Position Paper on Sustainable and Resilient Value Chains in 2022 and the MAP Fiche and MAP Position Note on Governance in Rural Areas.



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