

Rural Canvas Project

Fostering Rural Resilience
through Creativity and
Arts-driven Entrepreneurship

www.rural-canvas.eu



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Rurart Alliance Blueprint 2022

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1. Identification of relevant stakeholders

Stakeholders

“Stakeholders are individuals, groups, and organizations with direct and indirect interest in value-creating activity and its impact.”

(Source: EntreComp).

1.1. Steps/methods to map the landscape

In accordance with actual statistic tools and analytical methods of mapping a social and administrative territory one should retrieve and cross-examine following data fields:

- Geography of the Region
- Population (Inhabitants, employment, average age, life expectancy, distance to work / commuting, education, communities and municipalities)
- Economic data (businesses, local GDP trends, percentage of services, rural and non- rural activities, investment trends, development plans etc.)
- Community engagement (NGO's, Environmental organisations and initiatives, Community organisations, Community centres, Political representatives, other local centres)
- Cultural infrastructures (Artistic hubs, libraries, museums, cultural centres, patrimonial places of interest / heritage sites / archaeological sites, galleries, theatres, local festivals etc.)



- Education (Universities, research centres, vocational centres, schools, and schooling systems)
- Transport (transport networks, public transport infrastructures, traffic conditions etc.)

Once the data have been gathered and organised, there should be a short address list of relevant institutions and a bibliography of relevant sources and publications.

Possible problems in the process of gathering all the above information are:

- Non-actualised statistics or difficulty of accessing real statistical data
- Possible non-public development plans and future investments in the region, unknown to the organisers
- Lack of accessible address lists of the different responsible authorities and institutions

1.2. Step/methods to identify relevant roles

The nature and identifiable goals of the Rurart Alliance are the best enablers of the definition process of the relevant roles within it. If it is an active Alliance, supposed to actively participate in the planning and implementation of real community projects of sustainable development of the rural areas, then the key role definition could follow the mapping used by the best available tool box in the field of community work and community building processes, namely *The*



Community Tool Box, a service of the [Center for Community Health and Development](#) at the [University of Kansas](#). The main parts, to be used for the purpose of identification of roles within the Rurart Alliances are quoted here in this chapter, trying to identify the relevant stakeholder categories that should belong to the Alliances, in order to achieve a strong representation of the equivalent population scheme.

“Stakeholders are those who may be affected by or influence an effort. They may also include people who have a strong interest in the effort for academic, philosophical, or political reasons, even though they and their families, friends, and associates are not directly affected by it.

One way to characterize stakeholders is by their relationship to the effort in question.

- *Primary stakeholders are the people or groups that stand to be directly affected, either positively or negatively, by an effort or the actions of an agency, institution, or organization.*
- *Secondary stakeholders are people or groups that are indirectly affected, either positively or negatively, by an effort or the actions of an agency, institution, or organization.*
- *Key stakeholders, who might belong to either or neither of the first two groups, are those who can have a positive or negative effect on an effort, or who are important within or to an organization, agency, or institution engaged in an effort. Other examples of key stakeholders might be funders, elected or appointed government officials, heads of businesses, or clergy and other community figures who wield a significant amount of influence.*

While an interest in an effort or organization could be just that – intellectually, academically, philosophically, or politically motivated attention – stakeholders are generally said to have an interest in an effort or organization based on whether they can affect or be affected by it. The more they stand to benefit or lose by it, the stronger their interest



is likely to be. The more heavily involved they are in the effort or organization, the stronger their interest as well.

PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

Beneficiaries or targets of the effort

Beneficiaries are those who stand to gain something – services, skills, money, goods, social connection, etc. – as a direct result of the effort. Targets are those who may or may not stand to gain personally, or whose actions represent a benefit to a (usually disadvantaged) population or to the community.

Some examples are:

- *A particular population – a racial or ethnic group, a socio-economic group, residents of a housing project, etc.*
- *Residents of a particular geographic area – a neighbourhood, a town, a rural area*
- *People experiencing or at risk for a particular problem or condition*
- *People involved or participants in a particular organization or institution*
- *People whose behaviour the effort aims to change*
- *Policy makers and agencies that are the targets of advocacy efforts*

SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS

Those directly involved with or responsible for beneficiaries or targets of the effort

These might include individuals and organizations that live with, are close to, or care for the people in question, and those that offer services directly to them:



- *Parents, spouses, siblings, children, other family members, significant others, friends.*
- *Schools and their employees – teachers, counsellors, aides, etc.*
- *Doctors and other medical professionals, particularly primary care providers.*
- *Social workers and psychotherapists*
- *Health and human service organizations and their line staff – youth workers, welfare case workers, etc.*
- *Community volunteers in various capacities*

Those whose jobs or lives might be affected by the process or results of the effort

Some of these individuals and groups overlap with those in the previous category.

- *Police and other law or regulation enforcement agencies*
- *Emergency room personnel, teachers, and others*
- *Landlords*
- *Contractors and developers. Open-space laws, zoning regulations, and other requirements, as well as incentives, may affect how, where, and what contractors and developers choose to build*
- *Employers*
- *Ordinary community members whose lives, jobs, or routines might be affected by an effort or policy change*



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Government officials and policy makers

These are the people who can devise, pass, and enforce laws and regulations that may either fulfil the goals of your effort or directly cancel them out.

- *Legislators. Federal and state or provincial representatives, senators, members of parliament, etc. who introduce and pass laws and generally control public budgets at the federal and state or provincial levels*
- *Governors, mayors, city/town councillors, selectmen, etc. The executives that carry out laws, administer budgets, and generally run the show can contribute greatly to the success – or failure – of an effort*
- *Local board members. Boards of health, planning, zoning, etc., through their power to issue permits and regulations, can be crucial allies and dangerous opponents*
- *State/federal agencies. Government agencies often devise and issue regulations and reporting requirements and can sometimes make or break an effort by how they choose to regulate and how vigorously they enforce their regulations*
- *Policy makers*

Those who can influence others

- *The media*
- *People in positions that convey influence*
- *Community leaders – people that others listen to*



Those with an interest in the outcome of an effort

Some individuals and groups may not be affected by or involved in an effort but may nonetheless care enough about it that they are willing to work to influence its outcome.

- *Business*
- *Advocates*
- *Community activists*
- *People with academic or research interests related to a targeted issue or population*
- *Funders*
- *Community at large*

Once you've identified stakeholders, the next task is to understand their interests. Some will have an investment in carrying the effort forward, but others may be equally intent on preventing it from happening or making sure it's unsuccessful. Stakeholder analysis (also called stakeholder mapping) will help you decide which stakeholders might have the most influence over the success or failure of your effort."

Source: The Community Tool Box

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/encouraging-involvement/identify-stakeholders/main>

Thus, we can already identify following categories to be used for the definition of the stakeholder's roles in the Rural Canvas project:



- Representatives of the educational sector (both academics of universities and research centres and educators of vocational training structures: educators are in the best position to have a clear understanding of the population average interests and needs and a deeper knowledge of the real cultural life of the region
- Representatives of the economic sector such as local entrepreneurs, holders of local businesses, labour representatives: those are the motors of the economic life of the region, with a clear interest in the regions resilience and further development
- Leaders and representatives of local engaged NGO's and other community organisations: As persons already socially and ecologically involved with the life quality of the local society, they can define problems and problem fields of the local life, address the main issues in future development of the region and have access to their own organisational platform, which enables the communication of the existence and goals of the Alliance
- Elected political representatives: as the ones that should have in the core of their mission the very notion of local development and future planning and that are accountable for the implementation of real efforts towards those goals
- Representatives of any cultural infrastructure: as the best situated actors of any cultural activity of the region and with access to any existing infrastructures that could facilitate the planning and implementation of any cultural projects
- Persons involved with local press with a specialising in local themes and regional coverage: best partners in the communicating of the work of the Alliance
- Creative industry members / collectives / artists

1.3. Steps/methods for identifying relevant stakeholders fulfilling the roles

As a general method, one should create a list of possible stakeholders following the above presented role definition, trying to identify through activity analysis, those among them that already work in community building projects and networks and / or show publicly interest for cooperative initiatives and projects.

It should be generally difficult to fulfil the roles identified for the Alliance if there isn't any interest in community engagement from the stakeholders asked.

The above list could be obtained with the help of local authorities, such as the Regional Council etc., if not available through a simple internet search process.

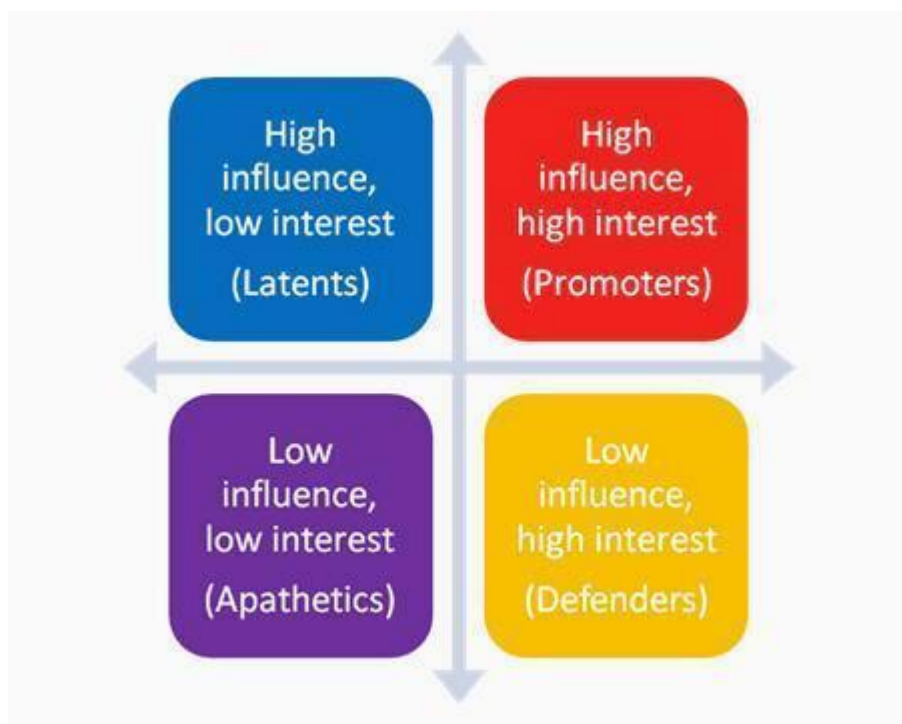
There could also be a specific questionnaire or survey addressed to many more candidates of the above lists, to use the effort of the creation of the Alliance itself as a tool of an actualisation of the questions and concerns that the mapping process could have risen.

2.Selection and successful formation

2.1. Selecting the members

It is clear that in order to proceed to the member selection for each local Alliance, there must be some kind of stakeholder mapping applied in the Region itself. About the whole analysis, the so-called mapping, there is again an interesting chapter in the already used Tool Box, using the definitions and main topics adopted by the World Bank in its stakeholder analysis.

“Most methods of stakeholder analysis or mapping divide stakeholders into one of four groups, each occupying one space in a four-space grid:



As you can see, low to high influence over the effort runs along a line from the bottom to the top of the grid, and low to high interest in the effort runs along a line from left to right. Both influence and interest can be either positive or negative, depending on the perspectives of the stakeholders in question. The lines describing them are continuous, meaning that people can have any degree of interest from none to as high as possible, including any of the points in between.



The people we've described as "key stakeholders" would generally appear in the upper right quadrant.

The purpose of this kind of diagram is to help you understand what kind of influence each stakeholder has on your organization and/or the process and potential success of the effort. That knowledge in turn can help you decide how to manage stakeholders – how to marshal the help of those that support you, how to involve those who could be helpful, and how to convert – or at least neutralize – those who may start out feeling negative.

An assumption that most proponents of this analysis technique seem to make is that the stakeholders most important to the success of your effort are in the upper right section of the grid, and those least important are in the lower left. The names in parentheses are another way to define the same stakeholder characteristics in terms of how they relate to the effort.

- *Promoters have both great interest in the effort and the power to help make it successful (or to derail it).*
- *Defenders have a vested interest and can voice their support in the community but have little actual power to influence the effort in any way.*
- *Latents have no particular interest or involvement in the effort but have the power to influence it greatly if they become interested.*
- *Apathetics have little interest and little power and may not even know the effort exists.*

Interest here means one or both of two things: (1) that the individual, organization, or group is interested intellectually or philosophically in the effort; and/or (2) she or it is affected by it. The level of interest, in this second sense, corresponds to how great the effect is.



Influence can be interpreted in several ways:

- *An individual or group can wield official power in some way – as a government official or agency, for example.*
- *As an administrator, board member, or funder, an individual or group has some power over the organization conducting the effort.*
- *Another possibility is influence as a “community leader” – a college president, hospital CEO, clergy member, bank president, etc.*
- *Key stakeholders are often connected to large networks, and thus can both reach and sway many community members. Such connections can be through work, family, long generations or years of residency, membership in many clubs and organizations, or former official status.*
- *Great influence can be exercised by people (or, occasionally, organizations) that are simply respected in the community for their intelligence, integrity, concern for others and the common good, and objectivity.*
- *Some people and organizations exercise influence through economics. The largest employer in a community can exert considerable control over its workforce, for example, or even over the community, using a combination of threats and rewards.”*

Source: The Community Tool Box

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/encouraging-involvement/identify-stakeholders/main>

2.2. Approaching and motivating members / forming the Alliance



The identification of the relevant stakeholders should then follow a simple method of addressing the candidates by mail and may be ask them to react to the overall project of the Rurart Alliance and Rural Canvas, explaining thoroughly the steps, obligations, contribution, and role of each member of the Alliance.

It should be essential for a successful formation of the Alliances to be in the position to ensure all participants that the projects that would be designed and adopted by the Rurart Alliances would also be implemented in a foreseeable timeframe and not remain wishful lists of ideas, landing in some drawers of an Agency.

There should be therefore a transparent and implementable set of milestones for the upcoming work and involvement of the Alliances in all the upcoming arts-driven entrepreneurial projects to be supported and mentored by the Alliances.

The key to a successful motivation of the asked stakeholders / members is engaging them to all decision-making processes ahead of the work of the Alliance and involving them in the planning and ongoing evaluation of the endeavour from its very early beginning.

3. Modalities of cooperation / Cooperation among diverse/interdisciplinary teams

One of the key problems on the modalities of cooperation is the diversity of the people forming an interdisciplinary team and their possibility of communicating with one another.

It is crucial to overcome possible jargon differences of the team members, encouraging them to engage in the understanding and



use of a common alphabet. This can be delivered by the use of a clear and simple reference volume of definitions that will be made accessible to all members of the Alliance and of the follow-up questions and discussions with the project leaders, if necessary.

The process must be preliminary to the first meeting of the Alliance, in order to avoid discussions that will be unproductive, because of the use of different definitions and general data pool.

The already used material from the two pilot-Alliances offers a useful tool for the preparation of any meeting or pre-discussions among members of the upcoming Alliances.

4. Modes of collaboration

4.1. Expert Consultation Events

The events are monitored discussions of approx. 2 hours each, evolving around the basic topics of the Arts-driven entrepreneurship and the related questions of skills needed by all stakeholders involved and of the effective understanding of the specificity of projects designed and implementable in rural areas, when it comes to their sustainability and transferability for other European regions.



The meetings will be held in English, due to the European character of the Programme.

The events can be organized based on focus group discussion method, where 1-2 moderators are needed to guide the discussion. The participants must be asked for their permission to record the discussion, so that the discussion can be transcribed for later analysis.

Two pilot Alliances were formed in two different European Regions - with some strong differences between them - and were organized around three Expert Consultation Events for each Alliance. Many interesting findings are included in the Skill Prioritisation Map that is their main intellectual output. Below, we point out some major insights on what type of themes can be used in these alliance meetings.

4.2. Analyzing rural areas and skills needed

To support and guide the alliance events and prepare for the discussions, moderators need to make in-depth information search and analysis on, for instance, the entrepreneurial skills and 21st century skills, the needs and challenges of rural areas as well as the potential for using creative expertise to develop rural resilience. For instance, the European Commission's long-term vision for rural areas of the European Union and EU Rural Action Plan¹ can be used as a background to gain understanding of rural areas, their strengths and areas of development. In addition, national rural plans and strategies and cooperative networks (such as, e.g., the European network for rural development) can provide more in-depth information, as well as research publications and journal articles.

When focusing on the skills needed, it can be recommended to choose an established framework, such as the Entrepreneurship

¹

https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en



Competence Framework ²(i.e. Entrecomp), which “proposes a shared definition of entrepreneurship as a competence, with the aim to raise consensus among all stakeholders and to establish a bridge between the worlds of education and work”.

This information search phase also can reveal the most relevant themes to be chosen for discussion. Here, we can pinpoint some of potential themes:

What are the needs and challenges of relevant rural areas?

What kind of rural development needs could be solved with the help of creative competencies?

How creative skills are experienced in rural areas?

What are the basic characteristics of a resilient development for the arts and creative industry workers?

What are the main challenges for the artists and creative workers?

Is sustainability of the arts only an economic issue? What about the role of education?

Ideas and best practice examples about creative ways and means to develop or communicate the resilience of rural areas?

Based on the themes selected for discussion, an analysis of which entrepreneurial skills as well as 21st century skills should be conducted.

The more specific findings concerning the forming of the Alliances and their functioning during the period of these events are an important example of “learned lessons” to be taken in consideration for all future formation of the upcoming Rurart Alliances.

² <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC101581>



4.3. Lessons learned by the South Ostrobothnia Region Alliance in Finland

An important conclusion concerns the planning and organization of Rurart Alliances: In Finland, we did an extensive search of potential members from various fields and were much advantaged to be able to establish a multifunctional group representing various skills and perspectives. In order to predefine various, specific themes on which the alliance discussions focused on, information search on trends and status of rural development and creative industries was necessary. Of course, planning also included generic issues such as scheduling and facilitation. In Finland, we had to organize the meetings online due to Covid regulations, but the experience was very good and the online discussions were fruitful and efficient. However, three meetings seemed to be the maximum number of organised sessions, in order to avoid overlapping themes in the discussions.

Concerning the entrepreneurial and 21st century skills, we noticed in the analysis phase that the entrepreneurial skills were easier to discuss and share in the alliance meetings than the list of 21st century skills. It might be that there were many overlapping skills in both lists, and the categorization used in Entrecomp framework was easier to adapt and interpret by the participants. All findings are to be used further in our second and third areas of project output, when planning the training modules and digital platform to disseminate them.

One needs to consider the national context when organizing the Alliance meetings. In the Finnish society, rural areas are considered as one of the success factors, which support the strengthening of a sustainable society. In addition, rural areas are seen to provide building blocks for good life, innovative actions and entrepreneurial activities. The creative economy is growing in Finland, but still lacking behind the growth of many other European countries. To be able to



reach the European level, a roadmap for the creative economy has been established at national level, which also includes actions for skill development. In the alliance discussions, it was noted that one needs to have a supportive, political climate: what type of investments are seen as important and what type of financial allocation is given to, for instance, rural development.

4.4. Lessons learned by the Hovedstaden Region Alliance in Denmark

In the process of the formation of the Hovedstaden Alliance, there has been a notable number of setbacks:

- The refusals of participating by many candidate stakeholders, due to the lack of understanding of the goals of the project
- The refusals of other stakeholders due to the nature of the projected tasks of the Alliance
- The negative effect of a careless texting on the initial drafted homepage of the project

The most important lesson would be the importance of clear definitions used in the project, identifiable goals of the endeavour as a whole, and the addressing of the problems caused by the difficulty of organising the Events so that all members could participate.

The very special character of the Hovedstaden Region as an atypical one for its rural areas – those are mainly the outskirts of the big Copenhagen Metropolitan Area – made it even more important to spend time in the preliminary discussions, explaining why this could nevertheless be a Region of interest for the specific project. It was established that all around Europe, some of the so-called rural areas are in fact outskirts of the big capital cities of many countries. The impact of the condensed “urbanity” of those areas on the projected



entrepreneurial ideas is obvious and definitively unknown in rural areas that are remote and distant from urban ones.

Some of the findings were included in the Skill Prioritisation Map, nevertheless, they are to be considered valuable also in the framework of this present Blueprint:

- The project risks to become somehow elitist and theoretical, if it only concentrates on skillsets that would be given to creative workers, and doesn't acknowledge the importance of networks, community based work, and of a deeper understanding of the needs and characteristics of rural areas themselves
- It is crucial to persevere, in times of adversity, because these areas are probably overlooked and artists are mostly needed, because this is how people can channel their negative emotions in a positive way, but also develop their environmental awareness, because sometimes development of those rural areas happens at the expense of the environment
- If there is a need on creating opportunities in the rural areas, there may be a need to rethink the regulations that are in place and sometimes create a feeling of stagnation and of lack of will for change. To bridge these desires in many ways on an inclusive level may need a new legal regulations of a local development framework

4.5. Lessons learned: Covid Pandemic and its impact

The impact of the Covid Pandemic cannot be ignored in the process of a successful formation of Rurart Alliances. It must be noted that one of the most important motors of the Rural Canvas Project was in fact the initial reports on the Covid-generated pan-European crisis:



“The regional and local impact of the crisis is highly asymmetric within countries. Some regions, particularly the more vulnerable ones, such as deprived urban areas, have been harder hit than others. Certain vulnerable populations, too, have been more affected. In economic terms, the impact of the crisis is differing across regions, at least in its initial stages. Differentiating factors include a region’s exposure to tradable sectors, its exposure to global value chains and its specialisation, such as tourism.”

Source: OECD-Report



5. Transferability to other regions

The Rural Canvas Project aims in applying the model of the Rurart Alliances in all Regions of the EU. Therefore it is important to understand and consider carefully all the possible specificities of the rural areas in the different parts of the continent, as they could influence the core of the transferability question:

“Because of national differences in the characteristics which distinguish urban from rural areas, the distinction between urban and rural population is not amenable to a single definition applicable to all countries. For this reason, each country should decide which areas are to be classified as urban and which as rural, in accordance with their own circumstances.

It must be recognised, however, that a distinction by urban and rural based solely on the size of the population of localities does not always offer a satisfactory basis for classification, especially in highly industrialised countries. Some countries have developed a classification of localities based not on population size alone but on ‘socioeconomic structure of the population’, in the localities.”

Source:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/work/2014_01_new_urban.pdf



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