Long term vision for rural areas - Outline of workshop for stakeholder workshops

A long term vision for our rural area #rural2040 #RuralVisionEU

Purpose

An opportunity for groups of rural citizens to explore together their ideal vision for the future of their own rural area. To provide a way for rural people's views, via the outcome of the workshops, to be taken into account as part of the stakeholders' contributions to the Communication on a Long Term Vision for Rural Areas.

Concept and rationale

To offer a **clear and simple template for a participatory workshop** that could be organised and run autonomously by stakeholder groups throughout the EU, using a **standard basic script and harvesting sheet**, providing output in a consistent format, to facilitate analysis and incorporation into the overall process. All material, including supporting guidance/explanations for organisers, would be available to download.

Designed as a process that would be run **physically**, as it would be for smallish local groups, running through the autumn/winter 2020. The material would also allow a **virtual alternative**.

The exercise is intended to **complement the on-line questionnaire and the foresight** activities, so incorporates some of the same elements/concepts/consistency in language to facilitate combination of outputs into the Communication.

It should **encourage rural citizens to think about what they would like their area to be, how it might change** over the next 20 years, **what developments they would like to see**, and **what enabling conditions are needed** so that their area can become the place they dream of.

Format

Two hour participatory workshop

Preparation in advance

Read through the background and script and make any adaptations appropriate for your group and situation (e.g. you might feel it appropriate to focus more on certain of the characteristics/drivers, especially if you have a small group and/or very limited time).

Depending on the number of participants who will attend, decide whether to work as one group throughout, or to break into smaller groups for some parts.

Prepare materials and equipment (see materials list) and set up room

For a physical workshop:

- Download and print the graphics for:
  - The visual canvas, and arrange the eight segments on a flip chart or other large piece of paper.

- o   The harvest sheet and arrange them on flip chart or other large piece of paper
- o   The driver cards: one set (four cards) for each table/small group
- o   An A4 copy of the visual canvas for each table/small group

For a virtual workshop:

- Download ppt
- Prepare your virtual platform (breakout groups etc)

Outline flow

Organised in 4 modules. All parts should be covered, but scope to adapt timing/depth depending on the group characteristics/time available. Important to manage time so as to concentrate on the last two modules on potential futures (eg by ring fencing the time for them and shortening the first 2 sessions)

Introduction (5 mins)

Welcome by host. Explanation of concept, purpose and programme of the workshop. For example:

We're meeting today to think about our own rural area, and to explore together our vision for what it might be like in the future …. Say in 20 years time…. 2040.

This is part of the European Commission's initiative to establish a Long Term Vision for Rural Areas. We are using a method developed by the Commission to provide a channel for rural communities to feed in their views. This process will culminate with a virtual conference in March 2021, and a published "Communication on a Long Term Vision for Rural Areas" in June 2021. I'll be sending back a summary of our discussions to the European Commission so that our views can be taken into account.

We are using participatory methods, conversations and groupwork - we will explore together, share our views, and exchange ideas. There aren't right or wrong answers, we aren't in competition, it is a free space to explore, exchange, imagine and co-create.

There is a lot to think about in a short time, so I would ask everyone to be disciplined, to respect each other and the time available, to listen carefully to others and to contribute ideas to the discussions.

What are the needs of rural areas today?

What makes rural areas attractive?

What are the opportunities for the future of rural areas?

What needs to be done in terms of governance in rural areas?

Ice-breaker (5 mins)

Stand in a circle

Let's each think individually about our rural area for a couple of minutes. What do you like about it? Or not like? What one word would you use to describe what it means to you?

(build word cloud on paper, writing the words spoken, or do it digitally and display on a screen – could use Slido or Mentimeter)

Module 1 **Our Rural Area** (15 mins)

- **Story telling** *(*participants split into small groups of two or three*) Tell each other about an occasion when something has happened that has made you glad that you live where you do, or proud of this area*. (10 min)
- *These stories help us understand our area, and the things that matter to making it a good place to live.*
- **Agreement on the territory being considered** for this exercise (village, region, county, parish, mountain range, coastline, LAG area). Could be defined in any way – <u>organiser to propose an initial definition/area for group to consider</u>) to ensure shared understanding by all participating. (5 min)

Module 2 **Where are we going?** (40 mins)

- This session can either be done all together, or divided in small groups (with each group focussing on one or two of the eight characteristics).
- Using the prepared *visual canvas*, depicting eight sets of characteristics of the area, and the four *driver cards* as prompts/discussion starters, participants consider how the four *key drivers* (Climate Change, Digital and Technological Change, Demographic Change and Globalisation/Localisation) could affect each of the 8 characteristics of their area from now to 2040. [The group can refine the drivers, choose specific aspects they consider most important and/or add others if they consider it appropriate, although this is likely to increase the time needed, so if time is short, may be better to keep the four proposed].
- *Explore likely futures*. Participants explore the likely impacts of the drivers on the characteristics shown on the canvas. (Limited time will mean need to concentrate on the most important effects.)
  - *The visual canvas gives us a way to illustrate what we think about our area. For each of the eight characteristics, where would you place our area on a line from "poor" – in the middle of the circle, to "good" at the edge of the circle?*
  - *There are many factors which influence how and why the situation may change. The cards on your table summarise four important drivers that are influencing society, communities and territories and are likely to lead to significant changes in the way we live over the next 20 years. Climate Change, Digital and Technological Change, Demographic Change and Globalisation/Localisation.*

- o *Have a look at the cards, and spend some time considering how these factors are likely to influence our situation. What shifts might happen from where we are today as a result of these drivers, or trends? What have we already seen, or know about? Are these changes likely to become more pronounced, or less important for our area?* This could be done for all the 8 characteristics (whole group together, or in smaller groups each considering all 8). Or,if more appropriate, with small groups each considering only one or two of the 8 characteristics. In this case, clearly identify tables/spaces for each sub-set of characteristics, and either let people decide which group they join, or pre-allocate them (e.g. by going round the circle and numbering people 1,2,3,4, 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4… for 4 groups each considering 2 characteristics). It is important that groups consider the impact of all 4 of the drivers on the characteristic(s) they are allocated.
  - o After leaving time for discussion, ask the groups *to plot on the A4 visual canvas on their table – on the line from "poor situation" (in the centre) to "good situation" (around the edge) where they think the area is likely to be heading by 2040* (This could be simply drawn using pen, or they could place sticky dots. An alternative would be that this could be done individually, but discussion tends to generate richer outcomes) (20 min)
- **Combine outcomes**. *Ask each group to report back to the whole group, place a marker (e.g. sticky dot) for each characteristic they have considered in the appropriate place on the big visual canvas and explain why.* (i.e. to transfer over the position from their small A4 sheet) Once all groups have placed their markers on the large visual canvas*, reflect on the pattern, encourage questions and discussion, and aim to come to consolidated view of likely future situation*. If there are diverging views, then record these on the visual canvas (marking a range, or a variety of dots) (20 min)

Module 3. **Where would we like to be?** (15 mins)

- With all the group together, in a circle around the visual canvas and the outcome of the icebreaker (word cloud). Do this collectively, as it is important to share ideas and aim for a common view in this section:
- *Looking back on the ice-breaker outcome, and reflecting on the canvas presenting possible situation in 20 years.* **What matches our aspirations, what falls short**?
- **Identify most significant issues** (*those with greatest importance – having greatest impact on those affected, and those with greatest magnitude – affecting greatest number of people*).
- *Identify the* **most significant gaps**. *What are the aspects that we would most need to address in order for our area to match our hopes and aspirations? Addressing the gaps, overshoots etc that keep us from the safe sustainable operating space – represented by high scores for all characteristics on the canvas. As before, either those with greatest importance - greatest impact on those affected, or greatest*

magnitude – affecting greatest number of people. Add the significant gaps to the **harvest sheet**

- *Which are the characteristics with the **greatest potential** to move towards our desired vision?* Add these to the **harvest sheet**

Module 4 ***What are the enabling conditions to fulfil our vision?*** (30 mins)

- *In this session we will focus on the characteristics with the most significant gaps that we have just identified, and those where there is the greatest potential to move towards the desired vision.*
- *Taking into account the current situation, the potential we've identified, the projected changes due to the drivers, and our desired place to be, **what do we need, to take us to where we would like to be***?
- This could be done with whole group, or in small groups – e.g. could have groups considering one gap and/or one potential.
- *What pathways, actions, activities, support could we use to get to where we would like to be?*
- *Think of stories of **examples** that we could draw on, adapt, or develop to match our own area and our own aspirations* (remind participants of the stories they shared at the beginning)
- If break-out groups used, come back together and share the stories shared.
- Agree/Vote on inspiring story – could do this by moving around – gravitating towards the person telling the story you like most, and then progressively eliminating the smallest group(s) asking people to join one of the remaining groups, and progressively eliminating the smallest one until one or two groups are left….(scope for flexibility here, and combination of stories – see what emerges from the participants choices…)
- Complete the **harvest sheet** with the enabling conditions identifed, and an inspiring story
- (Introduce the **active citizen passport** unlikely to be time to discuss this, but raise it is an option for continuing to develop active plans for the area - details included in the background pack)

Check-out (10 mins)

- Bring everyone back into a circle. Have someone prepared to note down participants' contributions.
- *We are coming to the end of this workshop, we've thought about our area, and the outcome will be sent to the European Commission to feed into the Long Term Rural Vision Process – to get the voice of our area heard in Brussels. So far so good – that is already an achievement. But this is not a full stop, the end of a process. It is only one step along a path. What path, and where to? We have seen that there are many factors that influence our journey and our area. But it does not all depend on others – on "out there", on the EU, on our capital, our region……we also can influence what*

*happens, the path our area takes, and where we find our community in 2040.We can see from what we've produced that our community has energy, ideas, capacity, resources...... So, the final question to you today is: What will be **my next step** towards fulfilling our dream?*

Support materials needed (resource pack)

Explanatory note for hosts (Background material on substance, including info sheets on drivers (with more detail than the driver cards); explanatory material on workshop organisation, tips on hosting, info on how to feed outcomes into the Rural Vision process)

Detailed flow/script (with options for adaptation, including questions to start discussions) *Question: does it need to be more detailed than the script above, or is that sufficient to allow hosts to develop a session appropriate for their group?*

List of materials and practical set-up needed

Visual aids (downloadable/printable/digital):

Visual canvas (most people cannot print out large sheets, therefore one A4 image, and downloadable elements/labels that can be placed on a big sheet/flip chart to make canvas large enough to work on, plus an electronic version of the canvas (e.g. PPT)

Hosting meaningful conversations poster aide memoire: (listen with attention, speak with intention.... All ideas welcome....) to print

Driver cards (picture and summary) for the main drivers to print and put on tables

Harvest sheet (downloadable with printable labels (same principle as canvas), and/or diagram to construct, and/or electronic)