

Practice abstract 07

Author: PoliRural consortium

Design: SPI

Exploring rural attractiveness in 12 PoliRural pilot regions

PoliRural's foresight methodology is being piloted in 12 locations covering Europe plus Israel. One of the aims of the project is to capture the concept of rural attractiveness and how it varies from one place to another. In the first year, PoliRural pilots explored the current state of rural attractiveness in their region. The pilots defined an overall mission, ambition, priority issues and expected results with the help of 350 stakeholders - comprising policy actors, rural communities, newcomers and experts - who have pledged support to the project.

The needs gathering exercise sought to identify regional needs related to rural attractiveness, and proceeded in several stages. First, pilots reviewed the literature. Next, a large-scale online survey (n=1296) was conducted followed by a SWOT analysis. The SWOT results were then discussed with members of the stakeholder panels to validate regional needs and factors of rural attractiveness. More than 80 needs were identified in the process, covering themes such as digitization, employment, public services and environment.

The findings made it possible to cluster pilots based on common needs rather than geography. Specifically, four different categories were created: quality of life, social capital, cultural appeal, and natural capital. In the final step, each pilot selected 5-10 most relevant needs for a policy mapping exercise, during which a total of 115 needs were matched against about 180 policy measures.

