

Practice abstract 05

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The concept of Rural Attractiveness in PoliRural

PoliRural has a simple, if ambitious, objective - to make rural places and professions more attractive for established rural populations and recent or potential newcomers. In order to clarify the rural attractiveness's vision, the following research activities were performed: comparison of pilot regions according to their development indicators; comparison of survey results not only by region but also by responses of different question groups; SWOT analysis in pilot regions; needs-policy mapping and regional needs prioritization exercises.

Some conclusions have resulted from this analysis. Our regions view rural development through the prism of rural attractiveness, which varies from pilot to pilot. Some view rural attractiveness from the point of view of people who already live there, with the intention of reversing population decline. Some want to make rural professions more attractive, by focusing on jobs other than farming. Some envision attractive rural regions as a place suitable for living and home-working, while others emphasise the need to focus on entrepreneurs coming from abroad.

At the beginning, PoliRural developed a universal definition of rural attractiveness: "Rural attractiveness encompasses sustainable rural communities with access to high quality public services, a thriving and diverse local economy where agriculture related activities are complemented by sustainable tourism and other forms of employment. There is an attractive, ecologically rich and accessible countryside in which the environment and biodiversity are conserved and enhanced".

But as the project develops, it may be far more productive to encourage regions to develop their own unique concept or concepts of rural attractiveness. One that is based on their own needs, aligned with their own values, sense of identity and vision of the future.

