Imagining the future of Europe’s rural areas
22-26 March 2021
The French Rural Agenda: Overview and return of experience about local governance

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24 March 2021

Workshop 8: ‘People, policy, practice – proofing and implementing a new rural reality’
Rural agenda: 181 measures to promote rurality

French rural agenda: making countryside territories of tomorrow
Context: why a rural agenda in France?

- 30% of population in rural areas
- Half population would like to live in rural areas
- But a strong feeling of failing public policies for Rural areas

→ ‘yellow jacket’ crises in 2018

→ transposition of European concept agenda rural
Rural agenda method: a cooperative governance

- Large **public consultation** (national great debate)
- **Multi-level concertation** and management (local referents, ministry referents...)
- **Breaking silos**
- Test innovation and **develop news practises** by demonstration

**Result** is an action plan which includes 181 measures to support the inclusion of rural areas in terms of: to implement and focus rurality in each public policy (**health, mobility, youth, employment, public services**, ...)

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Measures are very concretes: connected campuses, initiatives 1000 cafes, small railway lines, youth mentorship, engineering in local communities, public services to less than 30' of every rural inhabitants, new places- new links,...
In order to ensure the effective implementation of each measure, a specific governance has been set up with monitoring committees.

A dedicated State Secretariat was established in July 2020.
Example for a desirable future: evolutions in local governance of public third places

The digital transformation of territories in the rural agenda in France

• very **high-speed broadband** for fixed and mobile
• **e-inclusion** and accompaniment towards new digital uses
• development of **service applications** usable by all territories (open-source standard)
• creation of **meeting places** allowing actors to work together or within networks

The “New Places, New Links” program

• 300 “**fabriques de territoire**” (territorial factories) to support and operate together an increasing number (2000) of third places

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Example for a desirable future: evolutions in local governance of public third places

Profile of the “fabriques de territoire” (territorial factories)
Out of 218 factories in selected territories, 58 are in “rural revitalization zone”, parts of the French territory located in rural areas and experiencing difficulties in particular in social, economic and demographic matters.

The territorial factories offer a wide range of services:

- digital training
- support for project promoters
- welcoming of coworkers
- fabLabs and Living Labs services
- organization of cultural meetings
- production of organic products and creation of local commercial circuits...

Frequent EAFRD funding for these projects

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Example for a desirable future: evolutions in local governance of public third places

“Territorial factories” bring together associations, companies and local authorities

Three elements are decisive:

1 - **The effect of territorial radiation**: factories must serve as an example, create and share technical and educational support as well as expensive equipments;

2 - **The balance of the economic model**: if public funding is needed for start-up, each structure must find other resources such as invoicing for services, sponsors, private investments;

3 - **The opening up of governance**: the factory, sometimes carried by a community, is always involved in collective approaches, which requires involving all those concerned in the decision-making process
Example for a desirable future: evolutions in local governance of public third places

Characteristics of new forms of governance in rural “territorial factories”:

- **Open to all partners**: through the creation of appropriate consultation bodies, entrepreneurs, citizens, association leaders, elected representatives of local authorities join together with the staff of the factory
- **Enabling training of local actors**
- **Participation according to the skills of each at the different levels**
- **Detailed rules** for the participation of users, from simple consultation up to the vote
- **Development of consensus involving all groups concerned** from the stage of territorial diagnosis, consolidation by decision making by qualified majority
- **Setting up collaborative projects** and organising them into networks
- **Use of dedicated digital tools**
Example for a desirable future : evolutions in local governance of public third places

Evolution towards legal support involving public and private stockholders
A wide panel of solutions : consortium, local public corporations, co-operative corporations, collective interest co-operative corporations, local land investment corporations, organized towards variable capital opportunity...

First results
Significant number of memberships, population gain and attractiveness of the territory, evolution towards a “smart village approach”, adaptability and scalability of projects, very positive testimonies around self-confidence and vision of the future, organization of “do-o-craty” experiences, which proposes to the project leaders to launch quickly in the realizations and to put in place downstream regulatory approaches if necessary.
Thank you

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