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RURALL



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL MANUAL

Interreg
Danube Region



Co-funded by
the European Union



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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

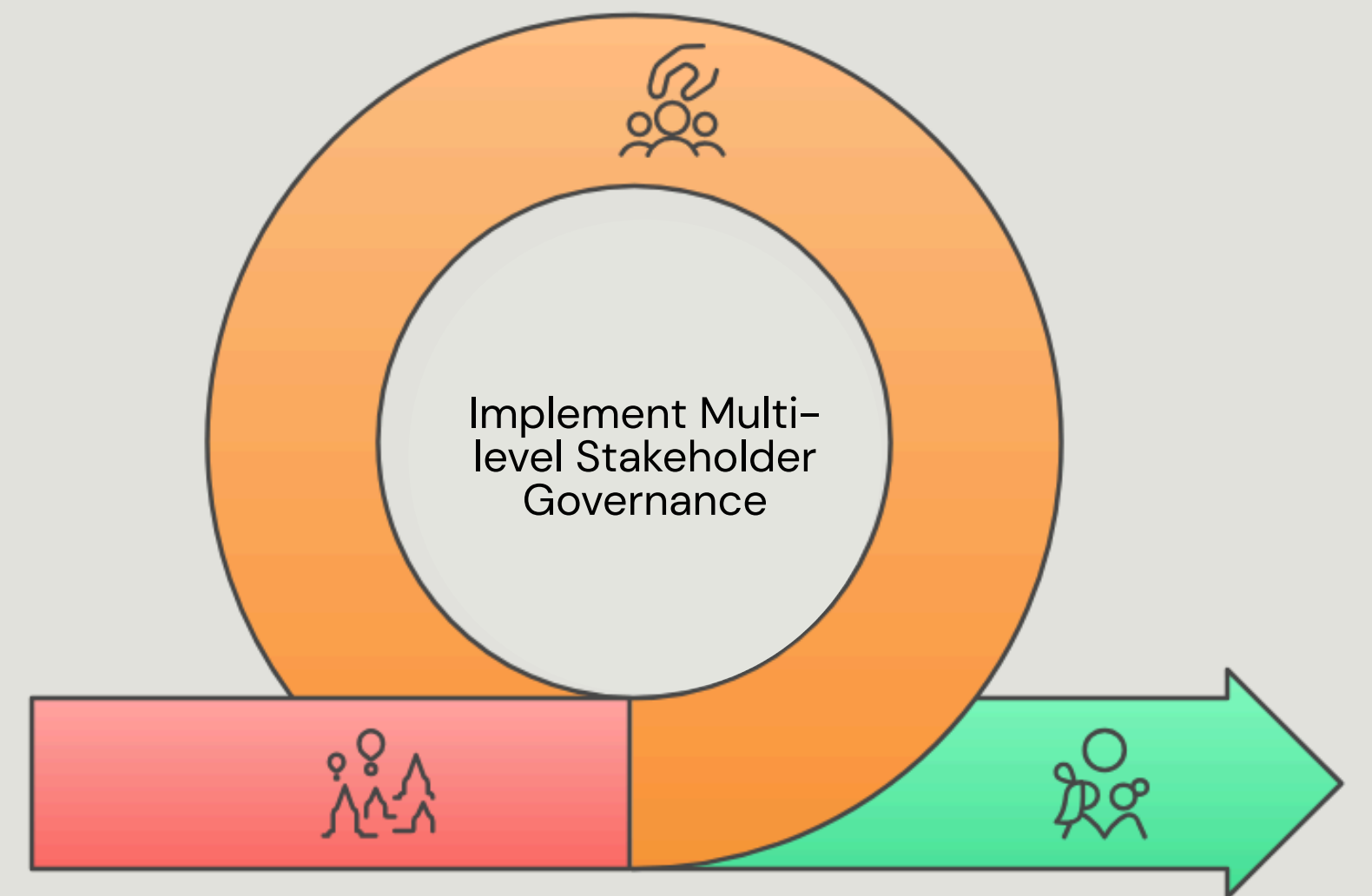
This manual is designed to support rural communities in developing and implementing a **Multi-Level Stakeholder Governance Model** that enables them to respond effectively to the main challenges of rural areas, such as depopulation, declining public services, and limited economic opportunities. It provides a structured yet flexible framework to help communities mobilise local actors, external experts, policymakers, civil society, and the private sector around shared development goals.

The manual focuses on how underused and deteriorating buildings can be repurposed as catalysts for **social, economic, and environmental revitalisation**, creating new spaces for public services, housing, entrepreneurship, and community life. Grounded in the principles of the **New European Bauhaus**, it promotes solutions that are not only functional, but also sustainable, inclusive, and aesthetically meaningful.

Mobilize Local Actors

Engage experts, policymakers, civil society, private sector

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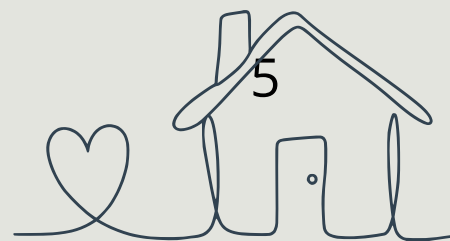


Rural Community Challenges

Depopulation, declining services, limited opportunities

Revitalized Rural Community

Thriving public services, economic opportunities, community life



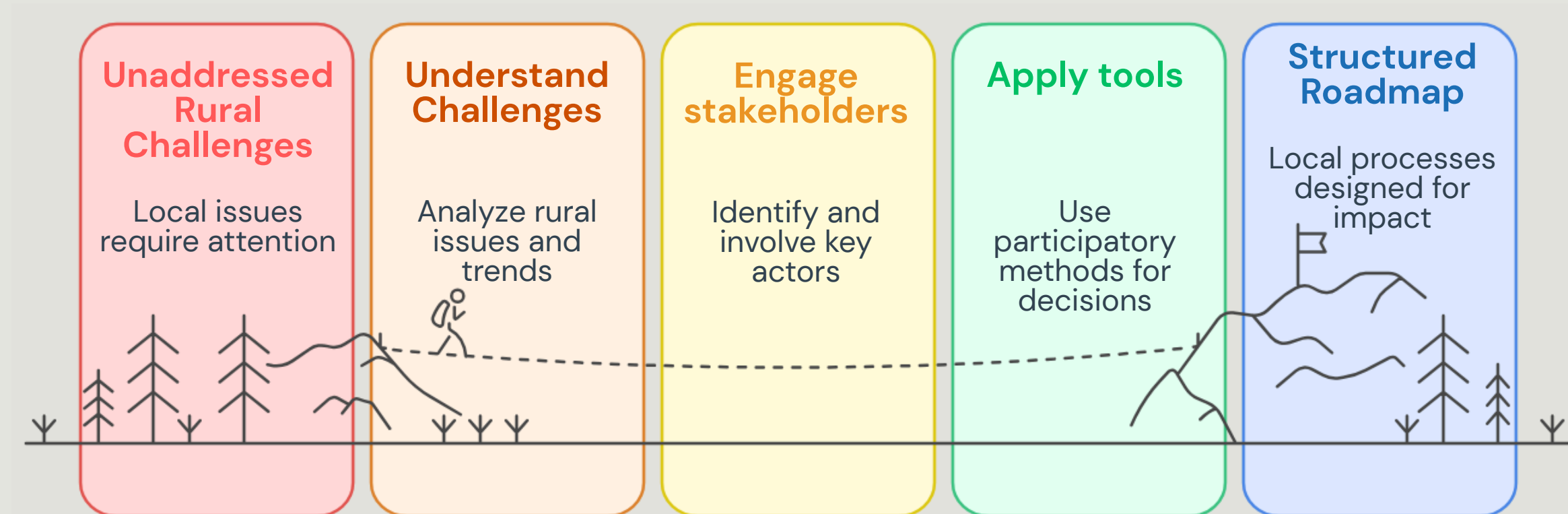
HOW TO USE THE MANUAL?

This manual is intended as a practical, step-by-step guide that can be adapted to different local contexts. It is structured to accompany communities throughout the full governance and innovation process:

- From understanding rural challenges and governance trends,
- To identifying and engaging stakeholders,
- To applying participatory tools and decision-making methods,
- And finally to implementing a structured roadmap for action.

Users are encouraged to work through the chapters progressively to design their own locally tailored processes. The manual can also be used selectively: communities may focus on specific sections depending on their immediate needs.

The manual is designed to be used both in short-term and in long-term strategic planning processes, supporting experimentation, learning, and continuous improvement.



WHO CAN USE THE MANUAL?

This manual is intended for a wide range of actors involved in rural development and governance, including:

- Local and regional governments
- Community leaders and residents
- Civil society and non-governmental organisations
- Local entrepreneurs and private investors
- Urban and rural planners, architects, and designers
- Universities, researchers, and innovation hubs
- National and European policymakers

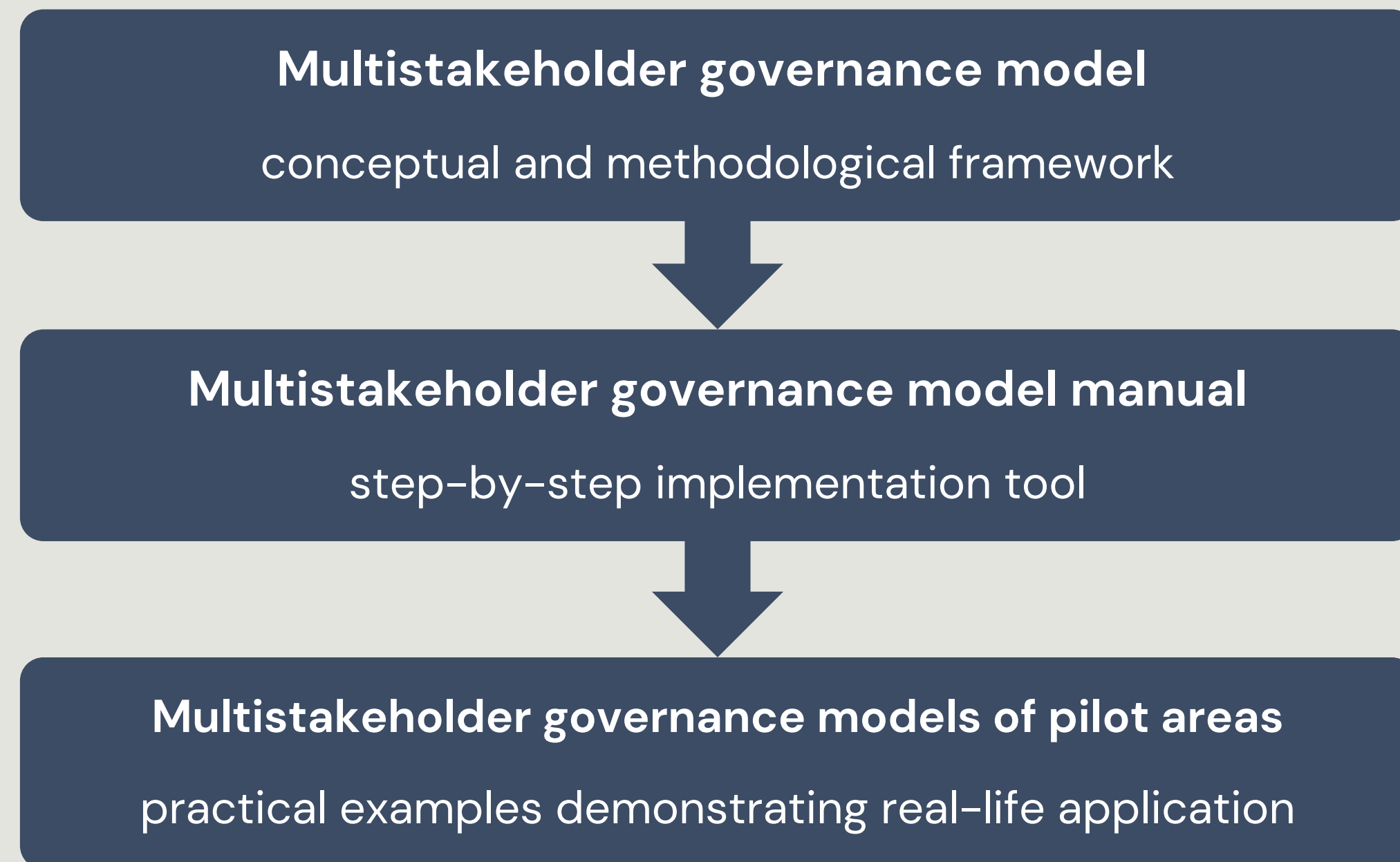
It is especially useful for communities that want to move beyond traditional top-down decision-making and adopt a **collaborative, participatory, and knowledge-based approach** to development.



HOW TO USE THE MSGM PACKAGE?

In the RurALL project we provide a MSGM package as a coherent set of complementary documents. While the Multi-Stakeholder Governance Model (MSGM) offers a comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework, its full value is realised when used together with the accompanying Manual and the governance models developed by the RurALL pilot areas.

The objective of this section is to clarify the role and added value of each component, as well as to guide different target groups—such as municipal authorities, practitioners, and experts—in selecting and combining the materials according to their specific needs. By doing so, the MSGM package supports both strategic understanding and practical implementation, while also facilitating transferability to other territorial contexts.



THE VISION

Vibrant, inclusive, and resilient rural communities where people choose to live, work, and invest, supported by strong governance, active citizenship, and well-used shared spaces.

Innovative Governance for Sustainability

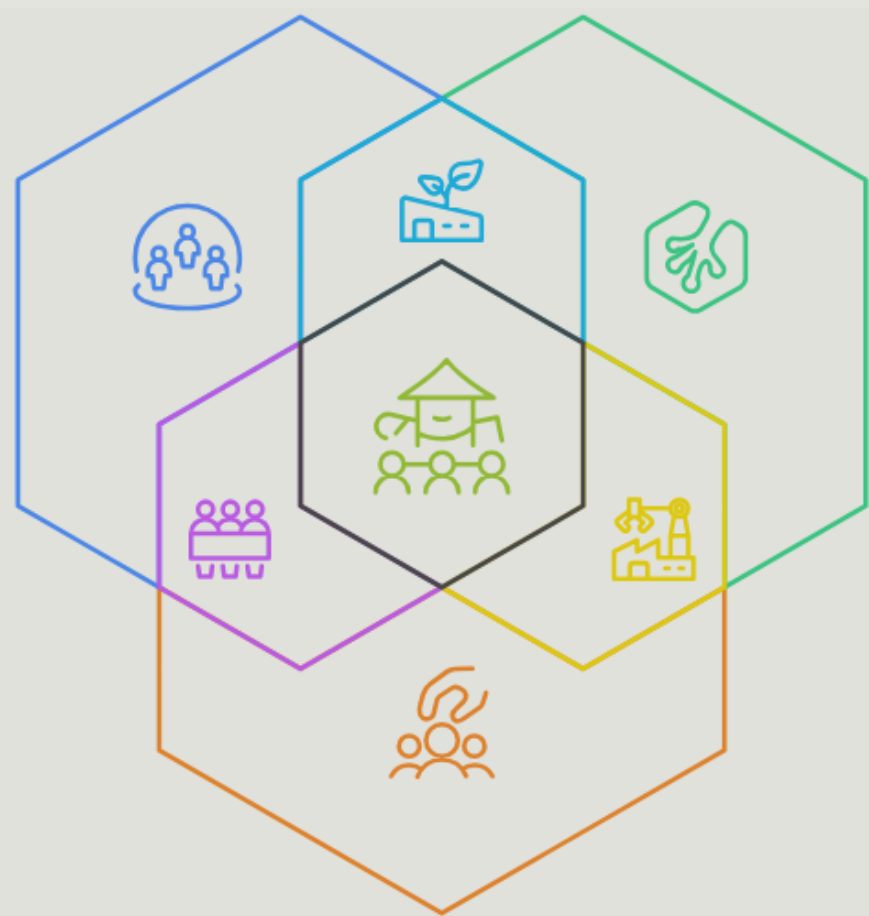
Collaborative solutions for green transformation

Multi-Level Multi-Stakeholder Governance

Collaborative decision-making

Participatory Governance

Community-led development



Responsible Innovation and New European Bauhaus

Sustainable, human-centered solutions

Community-Driven Innovation

Local solutions for sustainable growth

Shared Ownership and Empowerment

Community-driven development

THE MISSION

To empower rural communities to co-create their future by building multi-stakeholder governance structures that combine local knowledge, professional expertise, and citizen participation. Through responsible innovation and the New European Bauhaus, the mission is to transform underused assets—especially empty and deteriorating buildings—into drivers of social cohesion, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability.

By fostering collaboration, transparency, and shared ownership of development processes, this manual supports rural areas in strengthening their capacity to face demographic, economic, and environmental challenges and to build a more attractive and competitive future.



Main challenges of rural areas
Why Rural Depopulation Matters?
What the Project Aims to Achieve?
Countries and Partners Involved



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MAIN CHALLENGES OF RURAL AREAS

Rural areas across Europe are increasingly affected by megatrends such as depopulation, urbanisation, and ageing. Young and working-age people often leave for cities, leading to population decline and a shrinking local workforce.

Fewer residents make it harder to sustain public services, businesses, and infrastructure, creating a negative cycle that further reduces the attractiveness of rural areas.

Ageing populations increase pressure on healthcare and social systems, while **limited and less diversified job opportunities** weaken local economies.

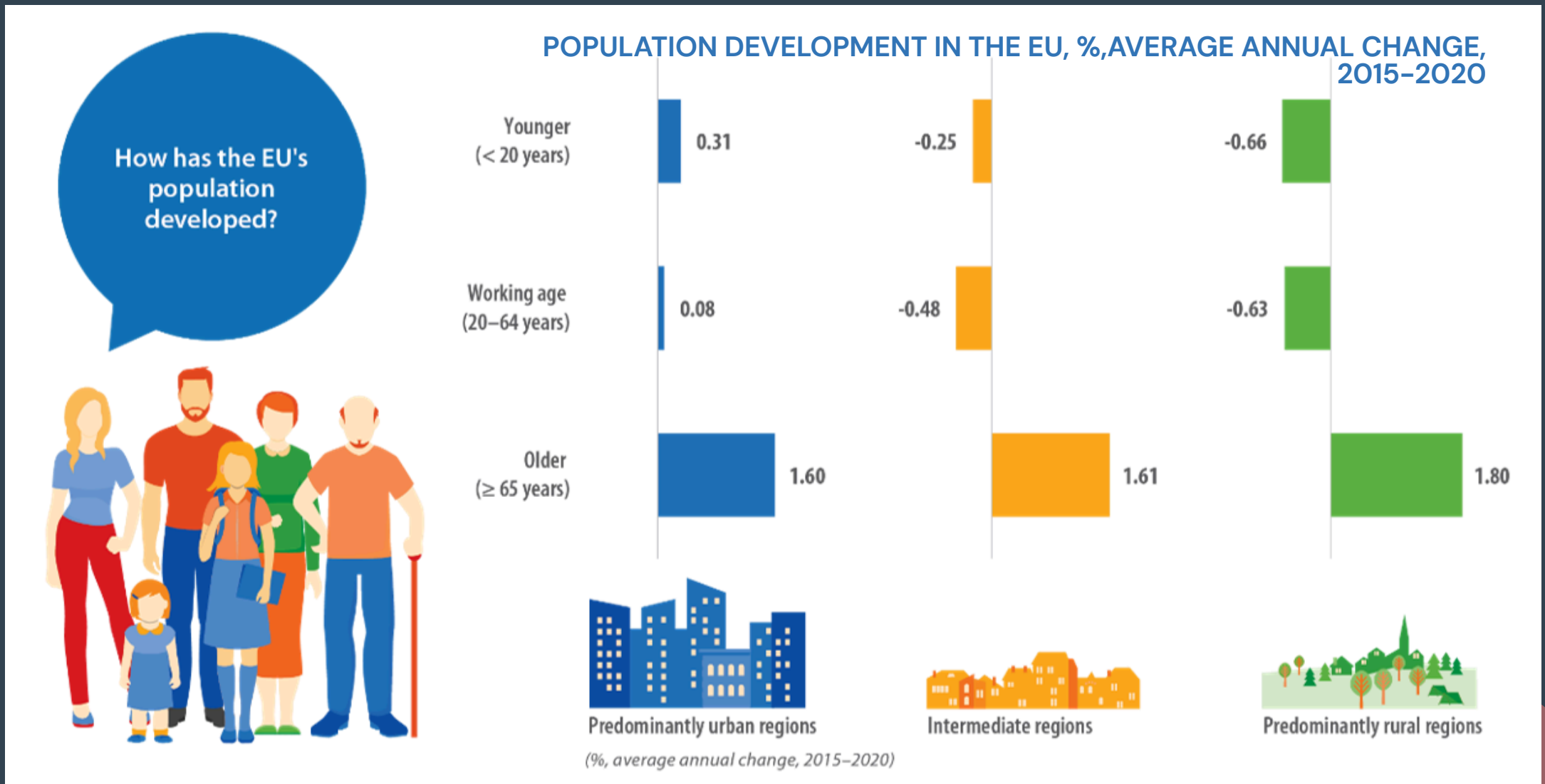
These processes are often visible in **vacant and deteriorating buildings**, which signal decline but also offer opportunities for revitalisation if reused strategically.

Such complex challenges cannot be solved by municipalities alone. They require cooperative governance involving public authorities, citizens, businesses, civil society, and experts. Strengthening multi-stakeholder governance is key to turning rural challenges into sustainable development opportunities.



WHY RURAL DEPOPULATION MATTERS?

Rural depopulation is one of the most significant structural challenges facing Europe today, particularly in the Danube Region. Urbanisation, ageing societies, labour market concentration, and migration flows towards cities have resulted in a persistent decline in rural populations across large parts of Europe.



Depopulation is not merely a demographic issue. It triggers a self-reinforcing negative spiral: as population decreases, public services become harder to maintain, local economies weaken, and institutional capacities decline. This, in turn, makes rural areas less attractive for residents, investors, and newcomers, accelerating further outmigration—especially among young and highly educated people. As a result, rural regions face a shrinking working-age population, rising old-age dependency ratios, and reduced social and economic resilience.

SOURCE: EUROSTAT (2022)



WHY RURAL DEPOPULATION MATTERS?

These demographic shifts are closely linked to broader megatrends such as:



Urbanisation

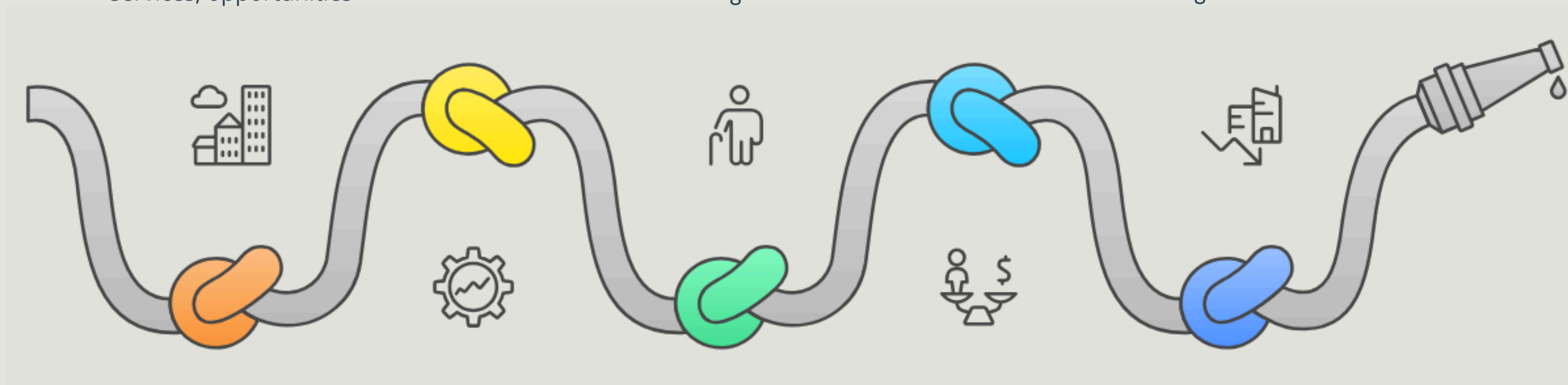
Concentrates people, services, opportunities

Ageing Populations

Pronounced in remote rural regions

Underused Assets

Untapped due to fragmented governance



Economic Restructuring

Favours knowledge-based economies in cities

Uneven Development

Widens gaps between urban and rural



WHY RURAL DEPOPULATION MATTERS?

At the same time, rural areas often possess underused assets—such as vacant or deteriorating buildings, strong social ties, cultural heritage, and natural resources—that remain untapped due to fragmented governance, limited investment capacity, and insufficient cooperation between stakeholders.



Addressing rural depopulation therefore requires more than sectoral policies or isolated investments. It calls for innovative governance approaches that can mobilise local knowledge, external expertise, and cross-sectoral collaboration.



WHAT THE PROJECT AIMS TO ACHIEVE?

The RurALL project responds to these challenges by developing and **testing a multi-stakeholder governance model tailored to rural contexts**. Its overarching aim is to **strengthen the capacity** of rural communities to plan, decide, and act collectively in order to counter depopulation and enhance long-term attractiveness and competitiveness.

Through pilot actions, participatory methods, and **transnational knowledge exchange**, the project demonstrates how rural challenges can be transformed into opportunities when responsibility, resources, and decision-making are shared among stakeholders.



WHAT THE PROJECT AIMS TO ACHIEVE?

Improve planning, management, and decision-making capacities in rural municipalities



Foster cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation between public authorities, citizens, businesses, civil society organisations, and experts



Unlock the potential of deteriorating and underused dwellings as drivers of social, economic, and spatial revitalisation



Apply the principles of the New European Bauhaus, integrating sustainability, inclusiveness, and quality of the built environment into rural development



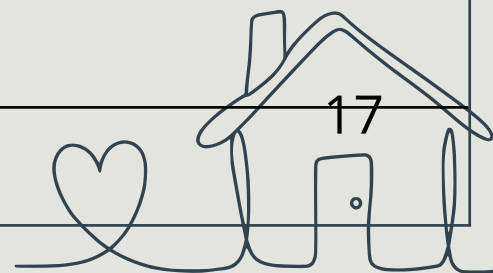
· Create a transferable governance framework that can be adapted by other rural communities across Europe.



PROJECT PARTNERS

2

Municipality of Beltinci	Slovenia
Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)	Austria
Pannon Business Network Association	Hungary
City of Bystřice	Czech Republic
ADEL Slovakia	Slovakia
Satu Mare County Intercommunity Development Association	Romania
Primorje-Gorski Kotar County	Croatia
Development Agency of the City of Prijedor "PREDA"	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Regional Economic Development Agency for Šumadija and Pomoravlje (REDASP)	Serbia
Municipality of Mojkovac	Montenegro
Business Information and Consulting Center - Sandanski (BICC-Sandanski)	Bulgaria
First Hungarian Responsible Innovation Association	Hungary
Institute PIP	Slovenia
MOBA Housing SCE	Croatia



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Multi-Stakeholder Governance
Principles of good governance
Benefits of Multi-stakeholder governance model
Transnational Relevance and Local Adaptation
Actors in Participatory Rural Processes.
Stakeholder involvement and engagement

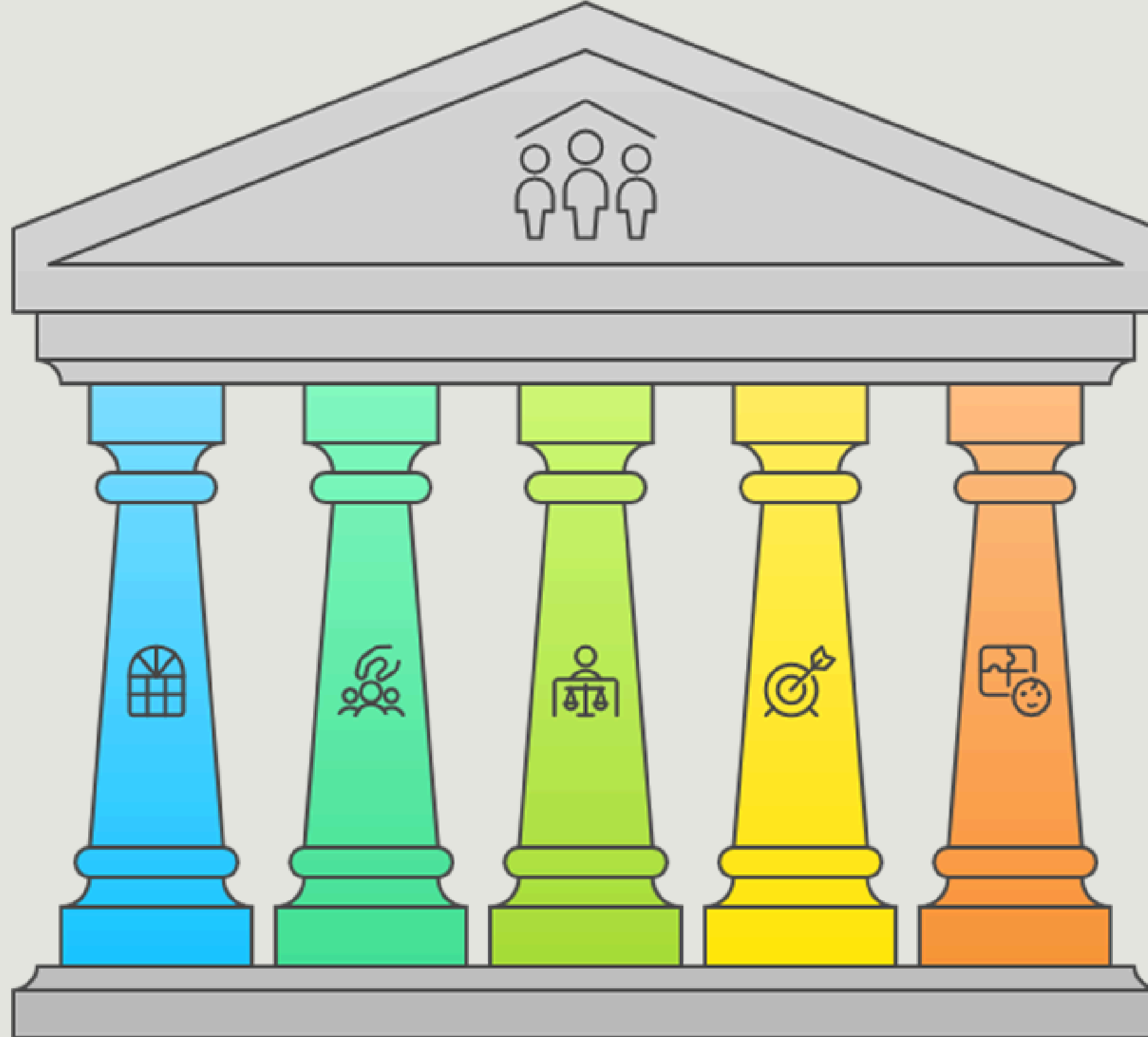


WHAT DOES “MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE” MEAN?

Multi-stakeholder governance is an approach to decision-making and implementation in which **different groups affected by a local challenge actively participate in shaping solutions**. Instead of relying only on municipal or institutional decisions, it brings together public authorities, citizens, businesses, civil society organisations, and experts.

In rural areas, challenges such as depopulation, lack of services, or vacant buildings are complex and interconnected. No single actor has the knowledge, resources, or capacity to solve them alone. Multi-stakeholder governance creates a **shared space for dialogue, cooperation, and joint responsibility**.





PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Multi(level) stakeholder governance can contribute directly to the effective implementation of these principles.

Openness

Prioritizing transparency and effective communication in decision-making processes.

Participation

Guaranteeing the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

Accountability

Prioritizing transparency and effective communication in decision-making processes.

Effectiveness

Prioritizing transparency and effective communication in decision-making.

Coherence

Establishing consistency and alignment among various actions.



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

Multi(level) stakeholder governance model is a vertical (multiple levels) and horizontal (multipleactors) allocation of central government authority, fostering the participation of a wide range of stakeholders (public, private and civic) in policy-making and implementation through formal and informal means (Bache – Flinders 2004).

The primary goal of the multi-stakeholder governance idea is to engage all relevantstakeholders in decision-making by means of a conversational exchange/ dialogue.



KEY COMPONENTS OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

How to implement multi-stakeholder governance?



Multi

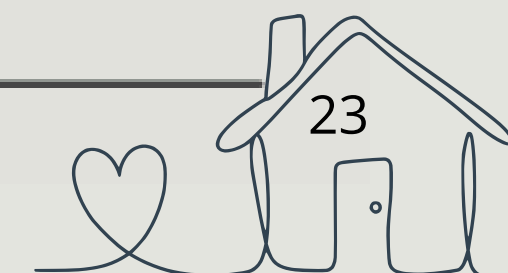
Engage diverse range of groups including entities such as civil society, government institutions like local authorities, ministries, and other state bodies, international organizations, the media, the private sector, as academic institutions, etc.

Stakeholder

Identify individuals or groups with an interest in the issue, including those affected, beneficiaries and influencers.

Process

Choose a governance process that suits the project, from informal discussions to formal partnerships.



DIMENSIONS OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

The Multi(level) stakeholder governance model can be interpreted on two dimensions: **Vertical and horizontal.**

1 Vertical – coordination between different levels of government and actors

2 Horizontal – the involvement of several actors from the same level



VERTICAL DIMENSION OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

3



TRANSNATIONAL

NATIONAL

REGIONAL

LOCAL



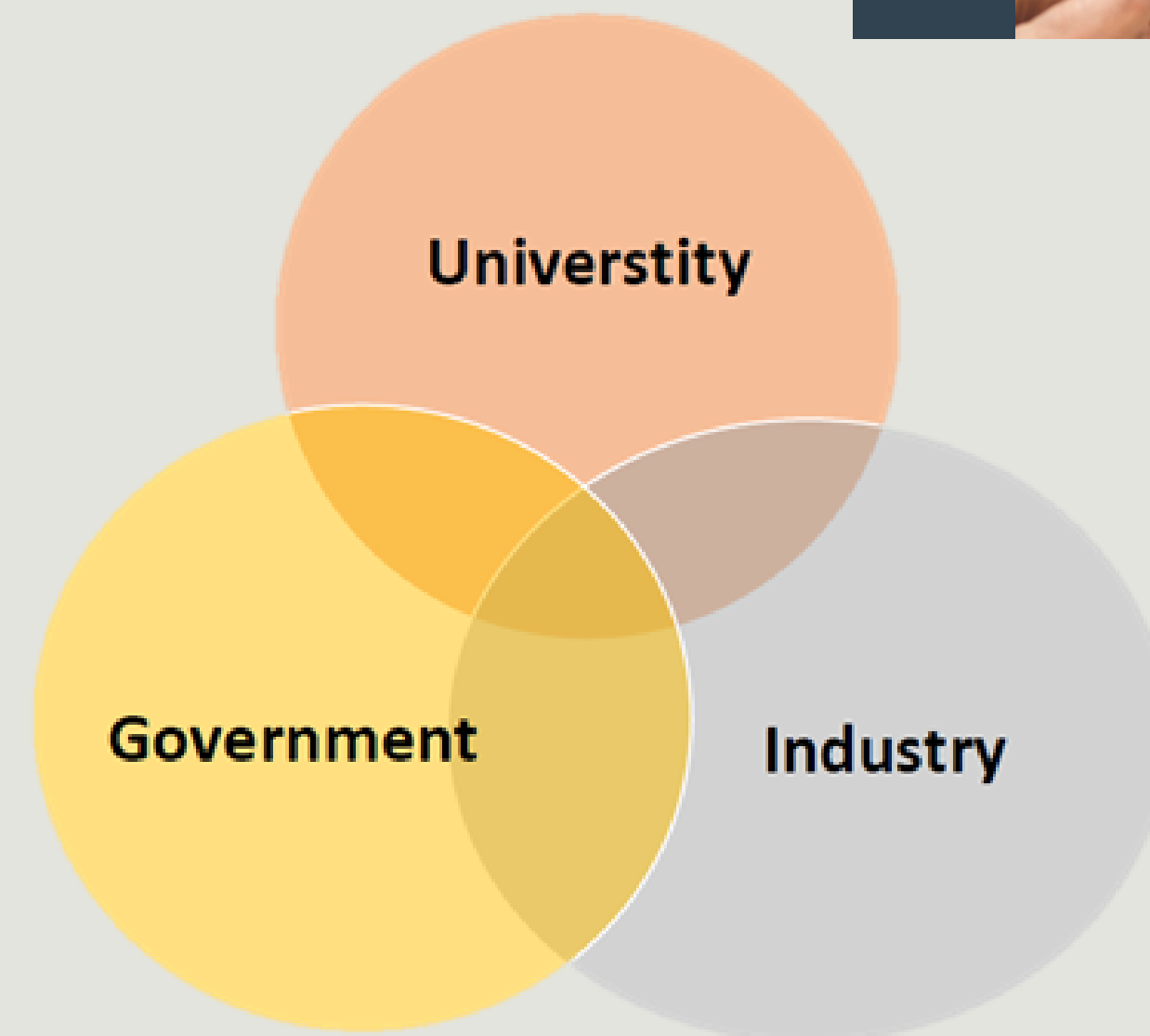
HORIZONTAL DIMENSION OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

3

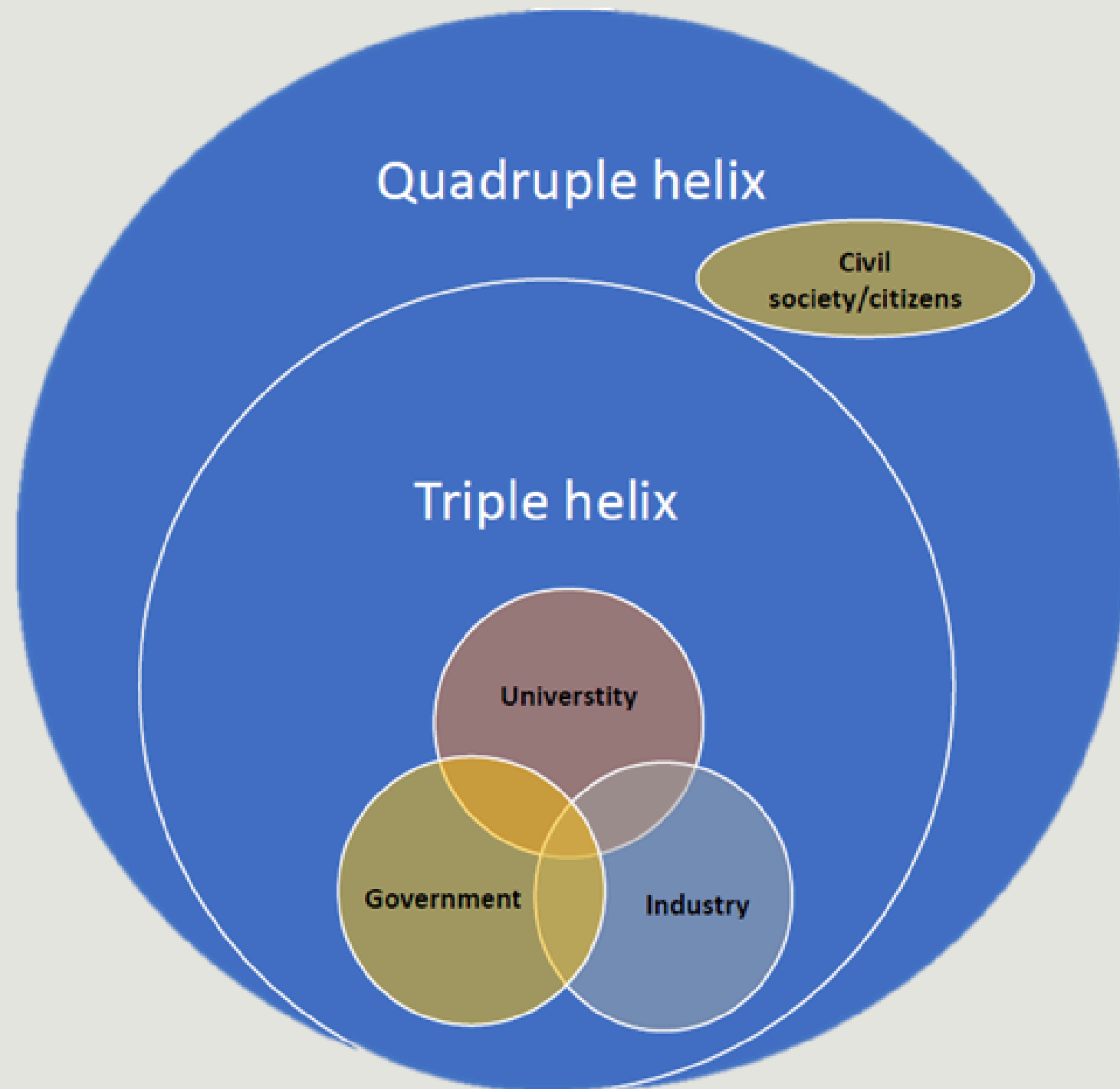


Triple helix model

In this tripartite relationship, academia focuses on education and research, industry drives business activities such as production and commerce, while the government establishes the necessary framework through policies and regulations.



HORIZONTAL DIMENSION OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL



Quadruple helix model

This model introduces a fourth element: the public, encompassing civil society and the media. The inclusion of this component addresses the issue that innovations may have limited impact if they fail to align with people's needs and demands. Engaging civil society and leveraging the media for communication and dissemination helps prevent or resolve such challenges.

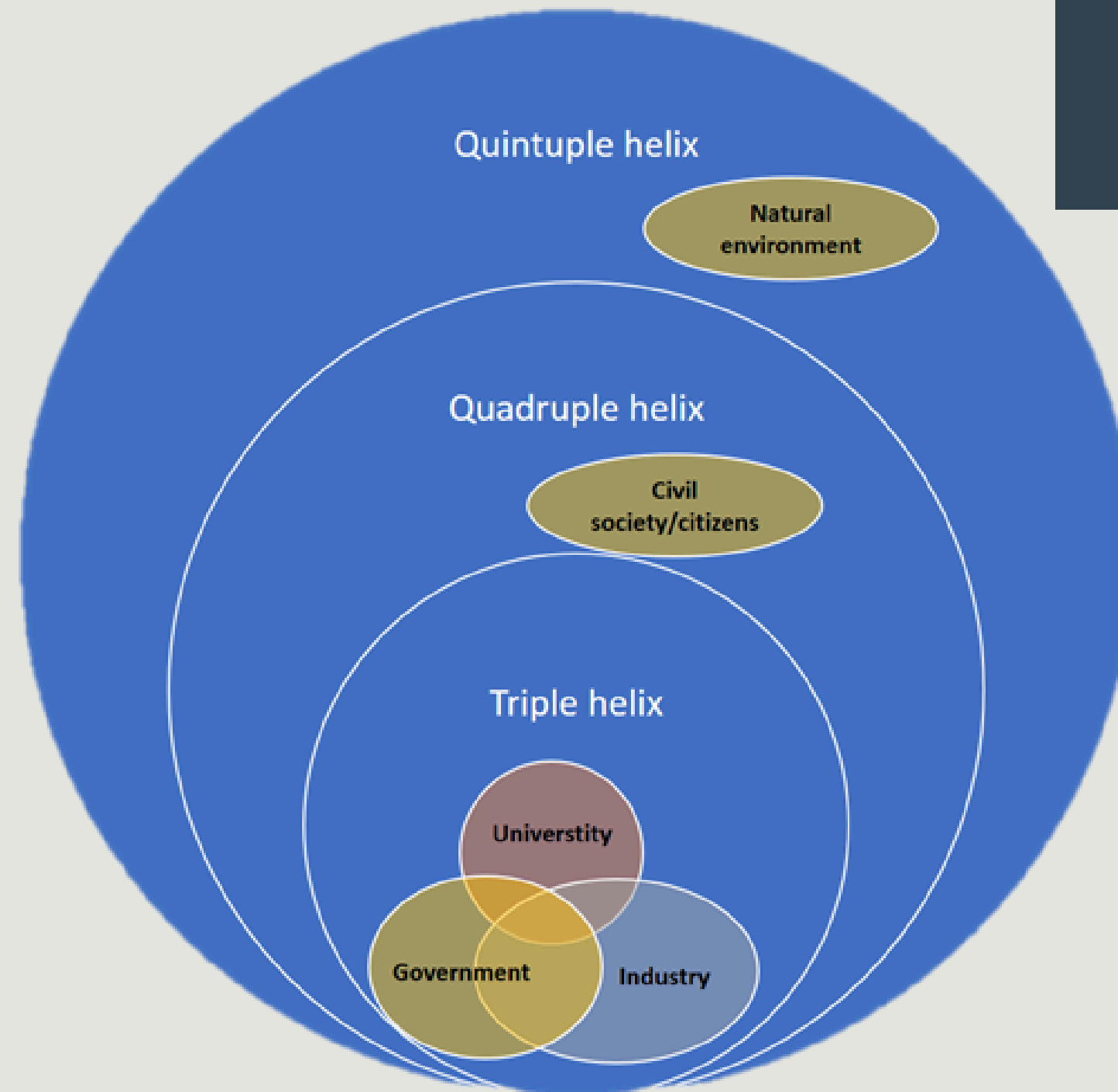


HORIZONTAL DIMENSION OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL



Quintuple helix model

The natural environment is introduced as the fifth helix in this model, emphasizing the importance of sustainable development and addressing issues such as climate change. While this aspect is essential, this guide will primarily focus on the quadruple helix model.



DIMENSIONS OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

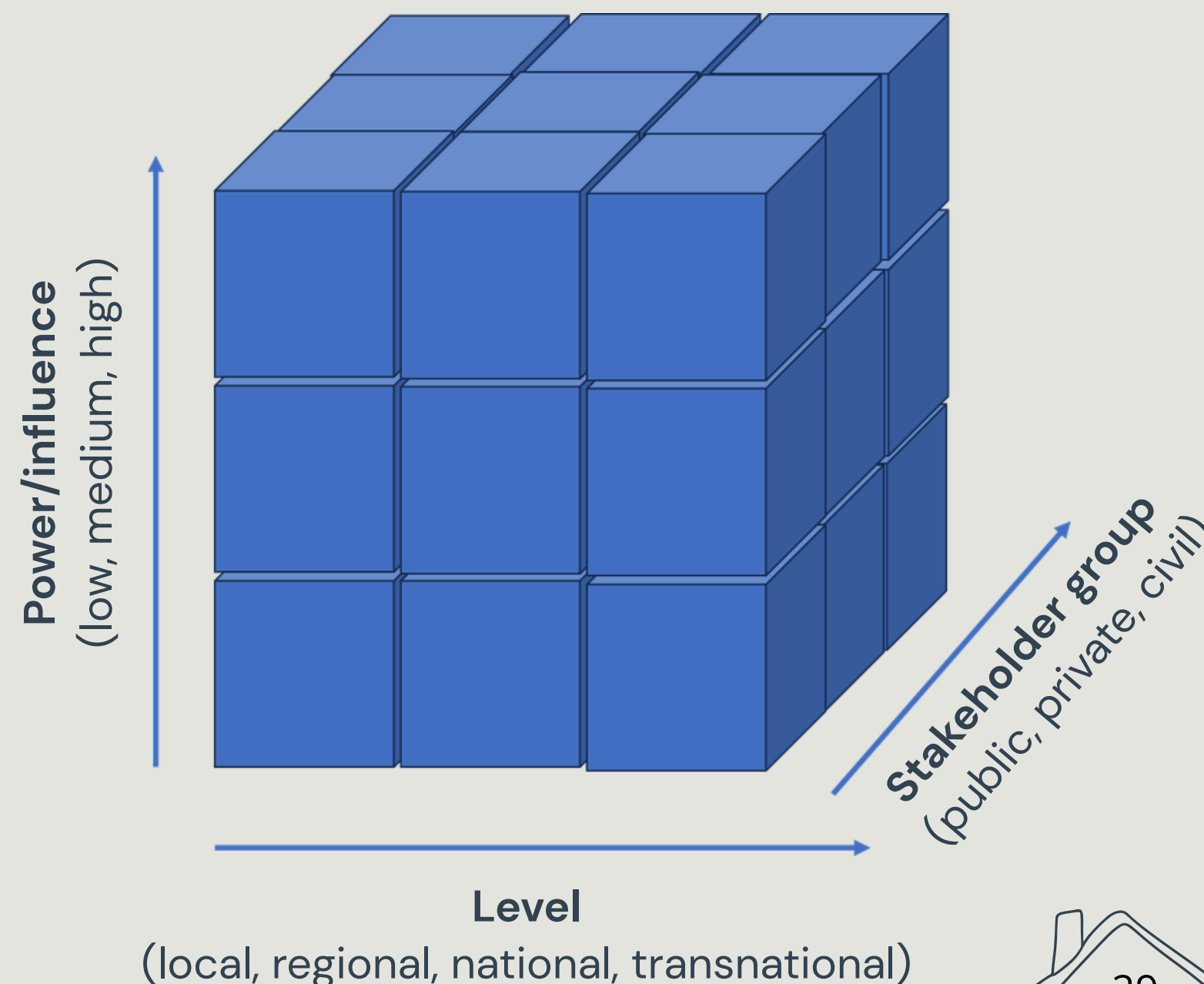
Multi(level) stakeholder governance model can be depicted as a **three-dimensional cube**. The model organizes stakeholders along three axes, capturing the complexity and diversity of governance environments:

1.Power/Influence: This axis represents the level of power or influence stakeholders hold in decision-making, categorized into low, medium, and high tiers. It illustrates how different stakeholders contribute to governance processes based on their capacity or authority.

2.Level: This axis defines the geographic or jurisdictional scope of governance, spanning from local to regional, national, and transnational levels. It highlights the varying scales at which stakeholders operate.

3.Stakeholders: This axis classifies stakeholders into public, private, and civil sectors, reflecting their roles in governance processes. Public stakeholders include governments and intergovernmental organizations, private stakeholders encompass corporations and businesses, and civil stakeholders include NGOs, community groups, and individuals.

This model helps visualize and analyze the interactions and relationships between diverse actors involved in governance, supporting more inclusive and effective decision-making processes.

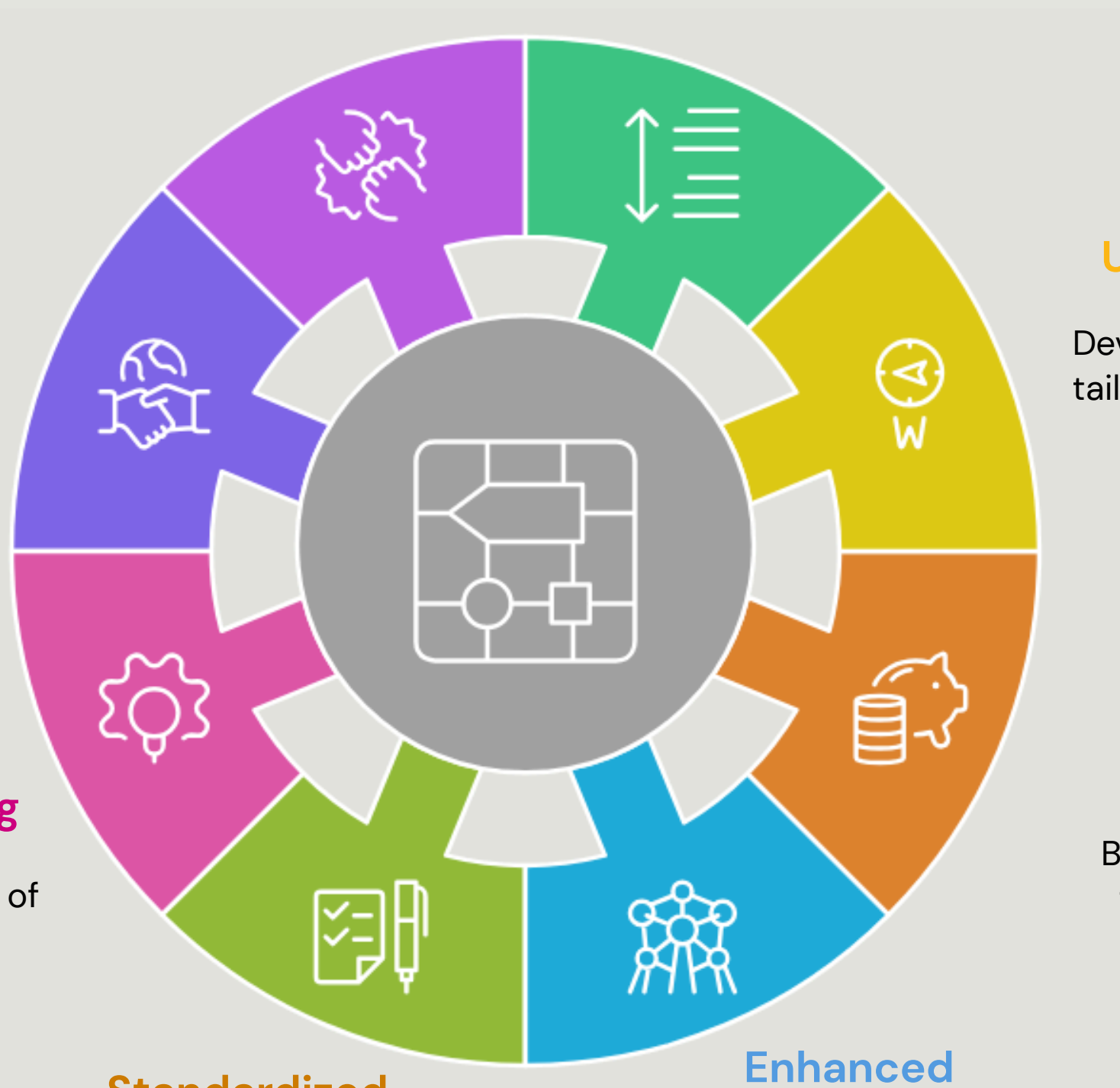


Collaborative Relationships

Fostering consensus and defined roles

Policy alignment

Ensuring consistency across different governance levels



Resource pooling

Maximizing efficiency by combining resources

Unified vision

Developing clear goals tailored to local needs

Knowledge sharing

Facilitating the exchange of expertise and skills

Financial opportunities

Building partnerships for investment and funding

Standardized monitoring

Ensuring consistency in reporting and evaluation

Enhanced communication

Promoting coordination and efficiency among stakeholders

BENEFITS OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL



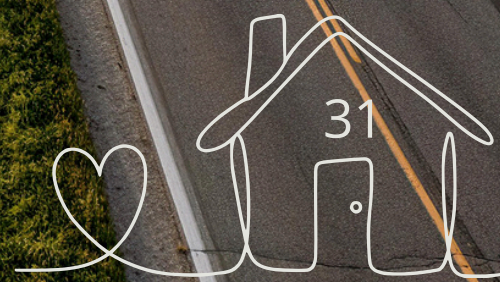
TRANSNATIONAL RELEVANCE AND LOCAL ADAPTATION

Although the governance model was developed in a transnational project context, it is designed to be **locally adaptable**. Rural areas differ in size, culture, governance traditions, and institutional capacity.

The model therefore offers:

- a **common logic and structure** for cooperation,
- but leaves room for local actors to choose appropriate tools and levels of engagement.

Transnational cooperation helps rural areas learn from each other, exchange good practices, and test innovative solutions, while **local ownership** remains the key to successful implementation.

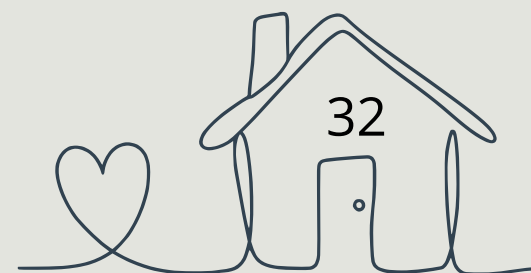


ACTORS IN PARTICIPATORY RURAL PROCESSES

Effective multi-stakeholder governance depends on the active involvement of different actors, including:



Together, these actors contribute different perspectives and resources, making participatory processes more inclusive, effective, and relevant to local realities.



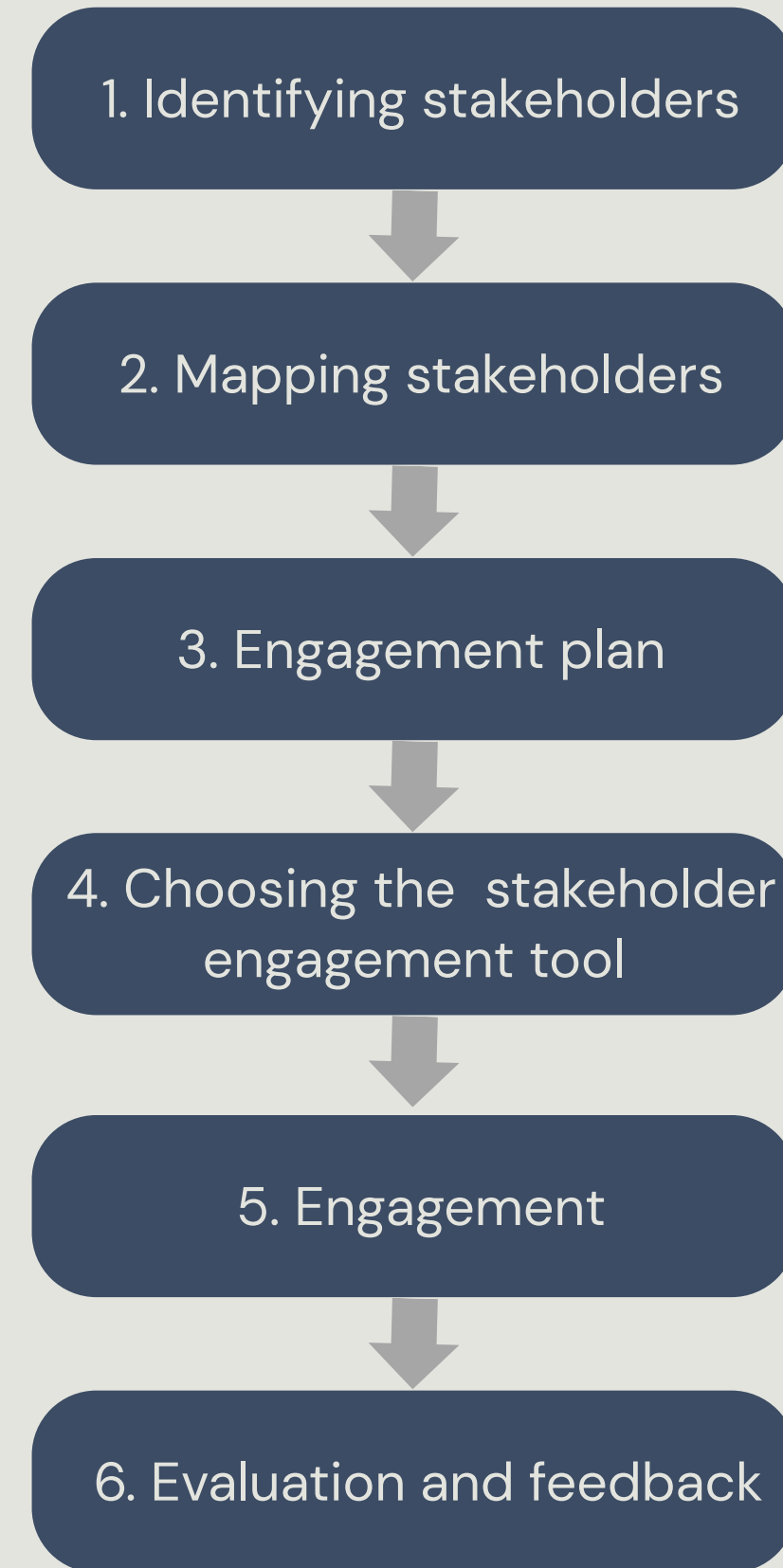
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder involvement is a central element of the multi-(level) stakeholder governance model.

Rural challenges are complex and interconnected, and effective solutions require the knowledge, resources, and perspectives of different actors.

A structured engagement process ensures that participation is meaningful, balanced, and goal-oriented. The stakeholder engagement process follows a series of logical steps.

This process recognises that not all stakeholders need the same level of involvement, nor do they need to be engaged at the same time. Strategic prioritisation is essential.



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

The first step is to create a comprehensive list of all relevant stakeholders and stakeholder groups connected to the issue or project.

This includes those who:

- are directly affected,
- have influence over decisions,
- hold relevant knowledge or resources,
- or represent important community interests.

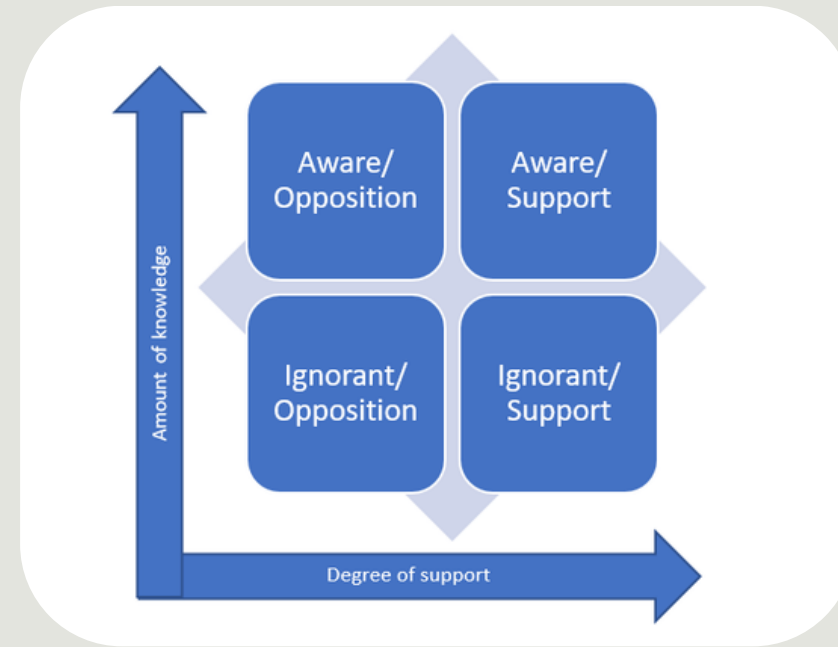
During this stage, it is also important to understand **why** stakeholders might want to participate. Motivations can vary widely, including economic interests, social responsibility, professional expertise, or community well-being.



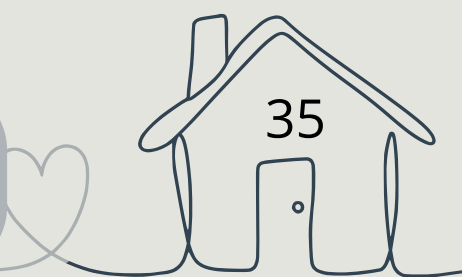
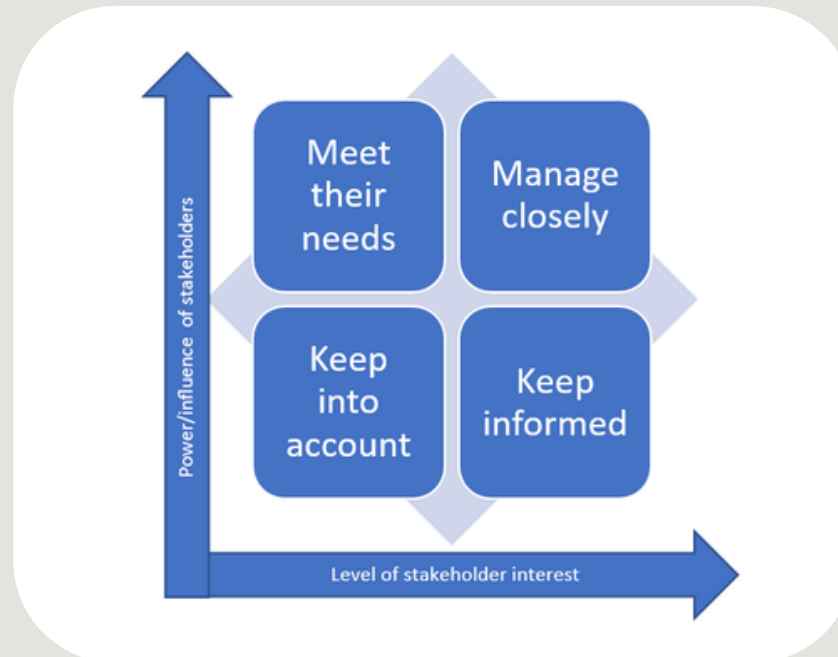
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

After identification, stakeholders are analysed and prioritised. This ensures that engagement efforts focus on the most relevant actors and use appropriate levels of involvement. **Several methods** have emerged to aid in identifying and categorizing stakeholder groups:

Stakeholder Knowledge Base Chart: This tool evaluates stakeholders' attitudes and knowledge regarding a project. Based on these factors, stakeholders can be classified into four categories: Aware/Opposition, Aware/Support, Ignorant/Opposition, and Ignorant/Support.



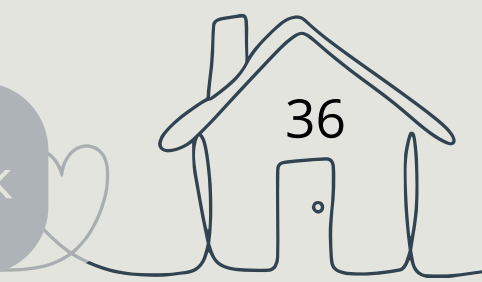
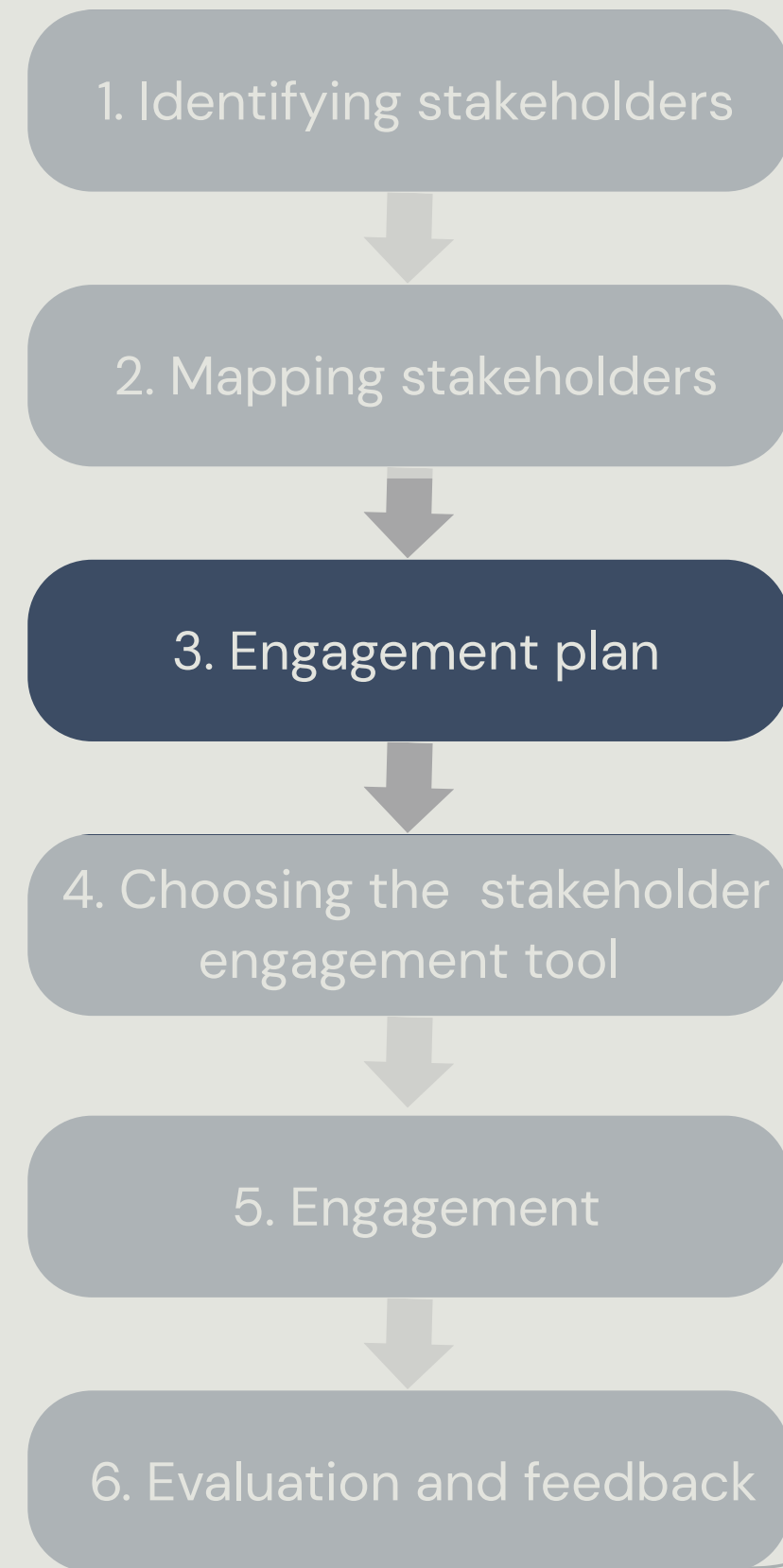
Power/Interest Grid: This tool organizes stakeholders into four key quadrants based on their level of power and interest. It helps in strategizing tailored engagement approaches for each stakeholder group.



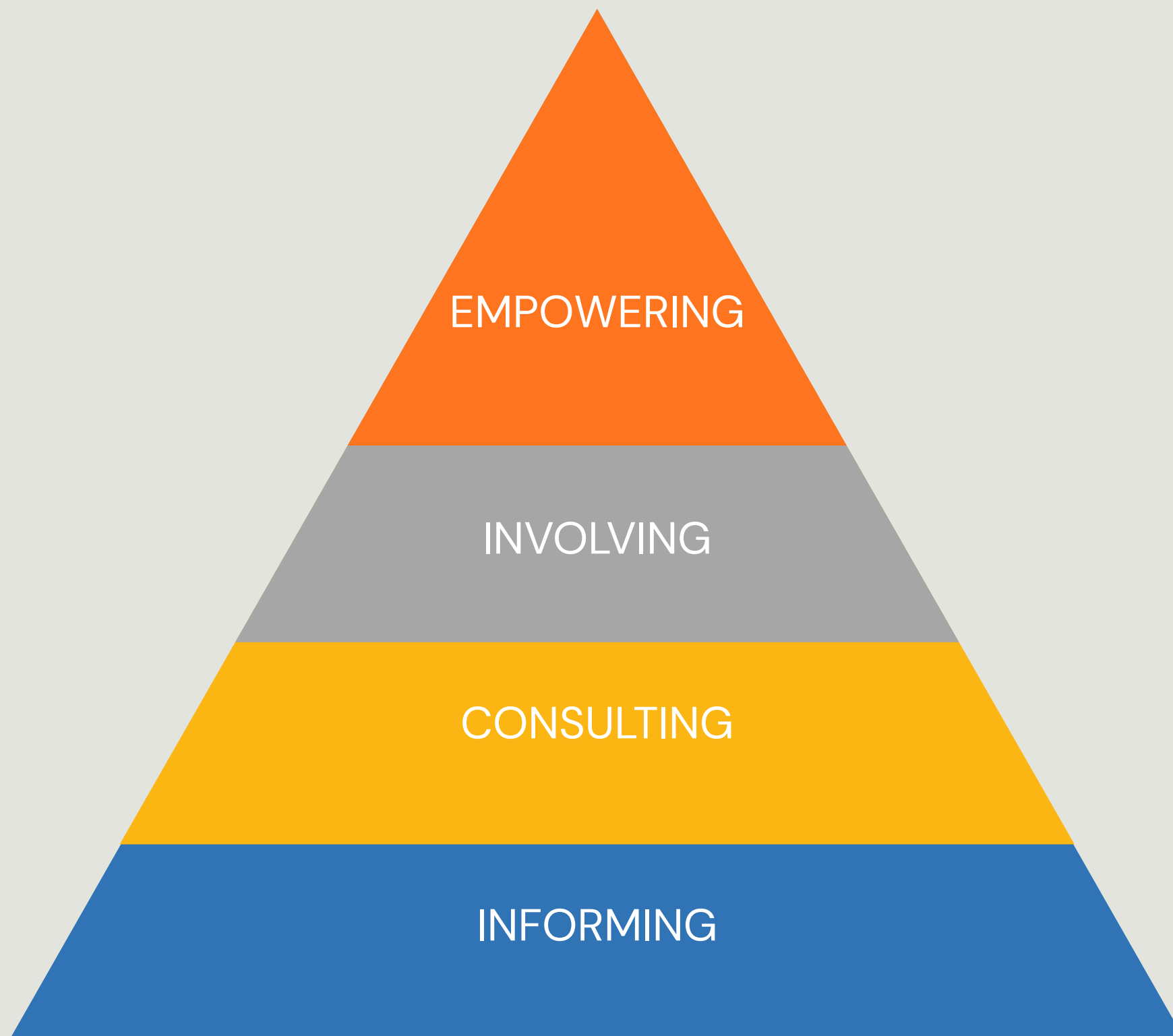
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders can participate at different levels depending on their role, expertise, and the project phase. Four main levels of participation can be distinguished:

- 1. Informing:** Stakeholders receive information about the project, its goals, and progress. Communication is one-way. They are aware but not directly involved in decisions.
- 2. Consulting:** Stakeholders provide opinions and feedback through tools such as surveys, interviews, or consultations. Their input can influence decisions, but final responsibility remains with the project team.
- 3. Involving:** Stakeholders actively participate in workshops, discussions, and planning activities. Their contributions are integrated into decisions, and they help shape project outcomes.
- 4. Empowering:** Stakeholders act as equal partners. They share responsibility and decision-making power throughout planning, implementation, and governance. This level supports strong ownership and long-term sustainability. Choosing the appropriate level depends on the stakeholder group, the topic, and the project stage.



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT



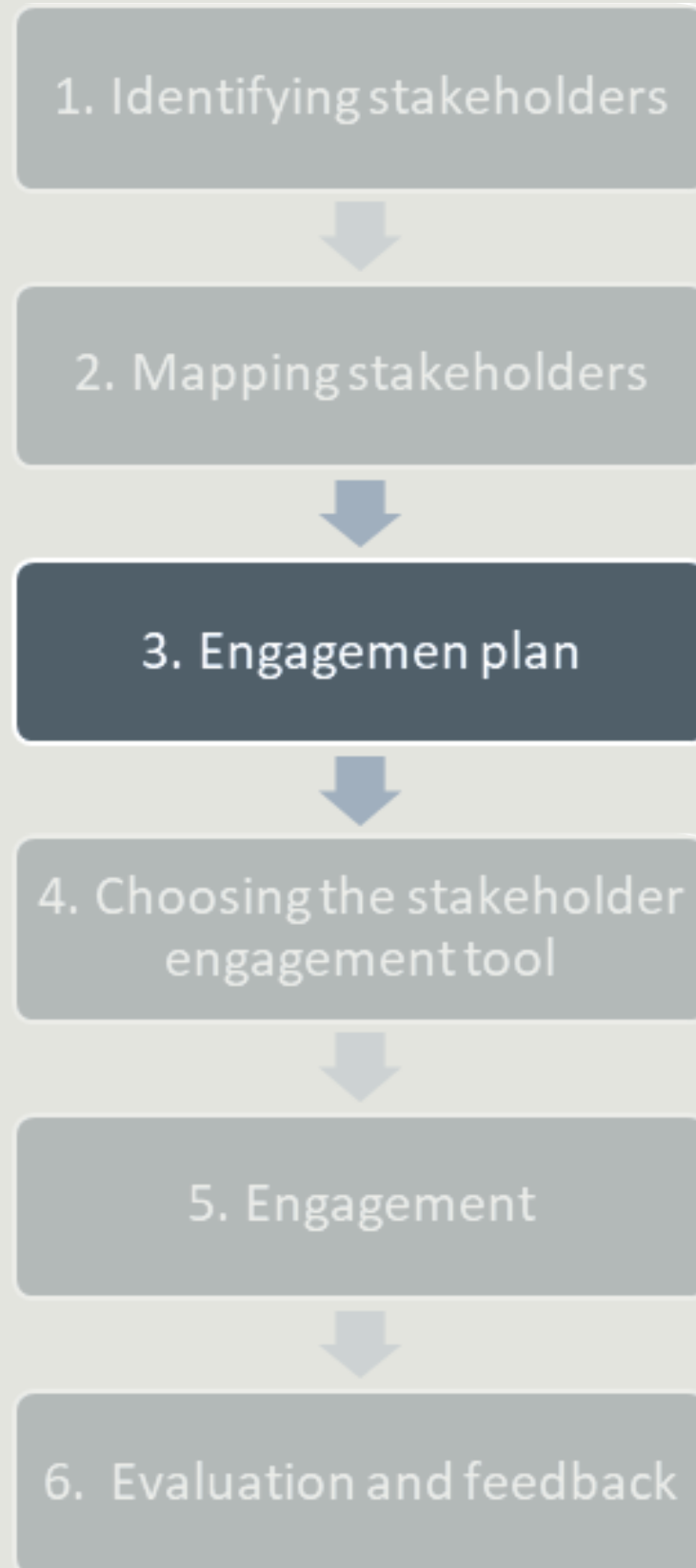
Level of involvement

proactive

active

semi-active

passive



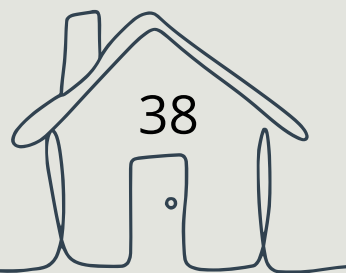
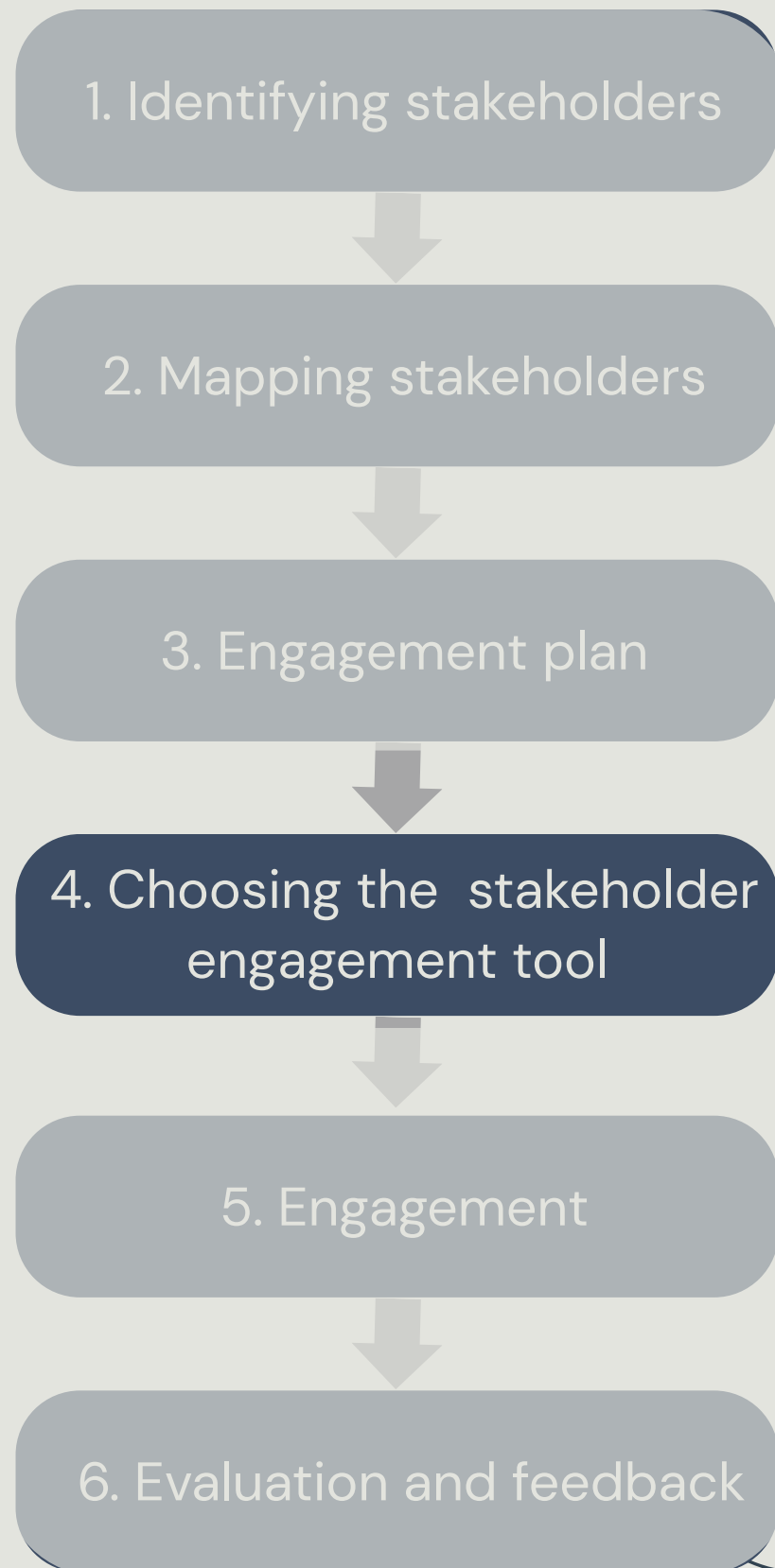
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Participatory tools help ensure that stakeholder involvement is structured, inclusive, and results-oriented.

Different methods are suitable for different phases of the governance process, levels of participation, and types of stakeholders.

These methods strengthen stakeholder participation by promoting dialogue, creativity, shared learning, and collective problem-solving.

Choosing the right tool depends on the project phase, objectives, and stakeholder profile. A variety of participatory tools can support stakeholder engagement.



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

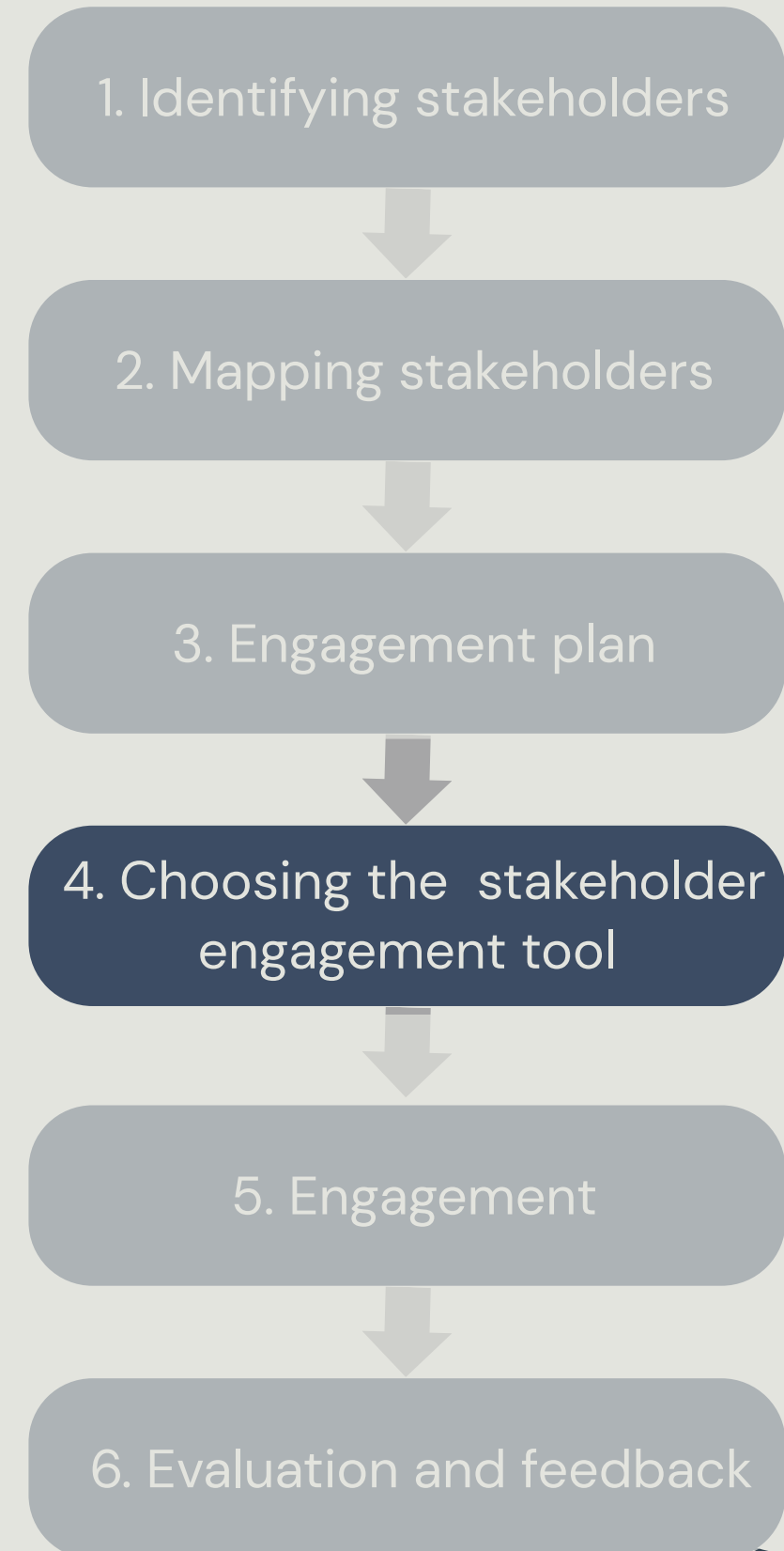
OPERA method

It is a structured group facilitation tool that supports idea generation and collective prioritisation. It ensures that all participants are active, avoiding domination by a few voices. By combining individual reflection and group consensus, OPERA builds shared ownership and commitment.

Main steps:

1	Present the Task Facilitator introduces an open question or challenge.
2	Individual Reflection Participants write down their ideas independently.
3	Pair Collaboration Participants discuss ideas in pairs and agree on joint proposals.
4	Proposal Explanation Each pair briefly presents its proposal without debate.
5	Prioritisation Participants rank proposals using agreed criteria.
6	Organising and Aligning Ideas are grouped and structured on the OPERA board.

Best used for:
workshops, brainstorming,
group decision-making, and
early co-design phases.



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Decision Theatre

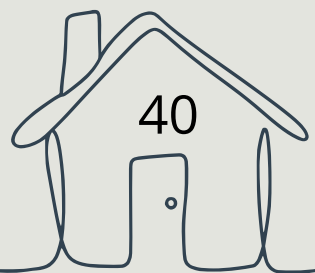
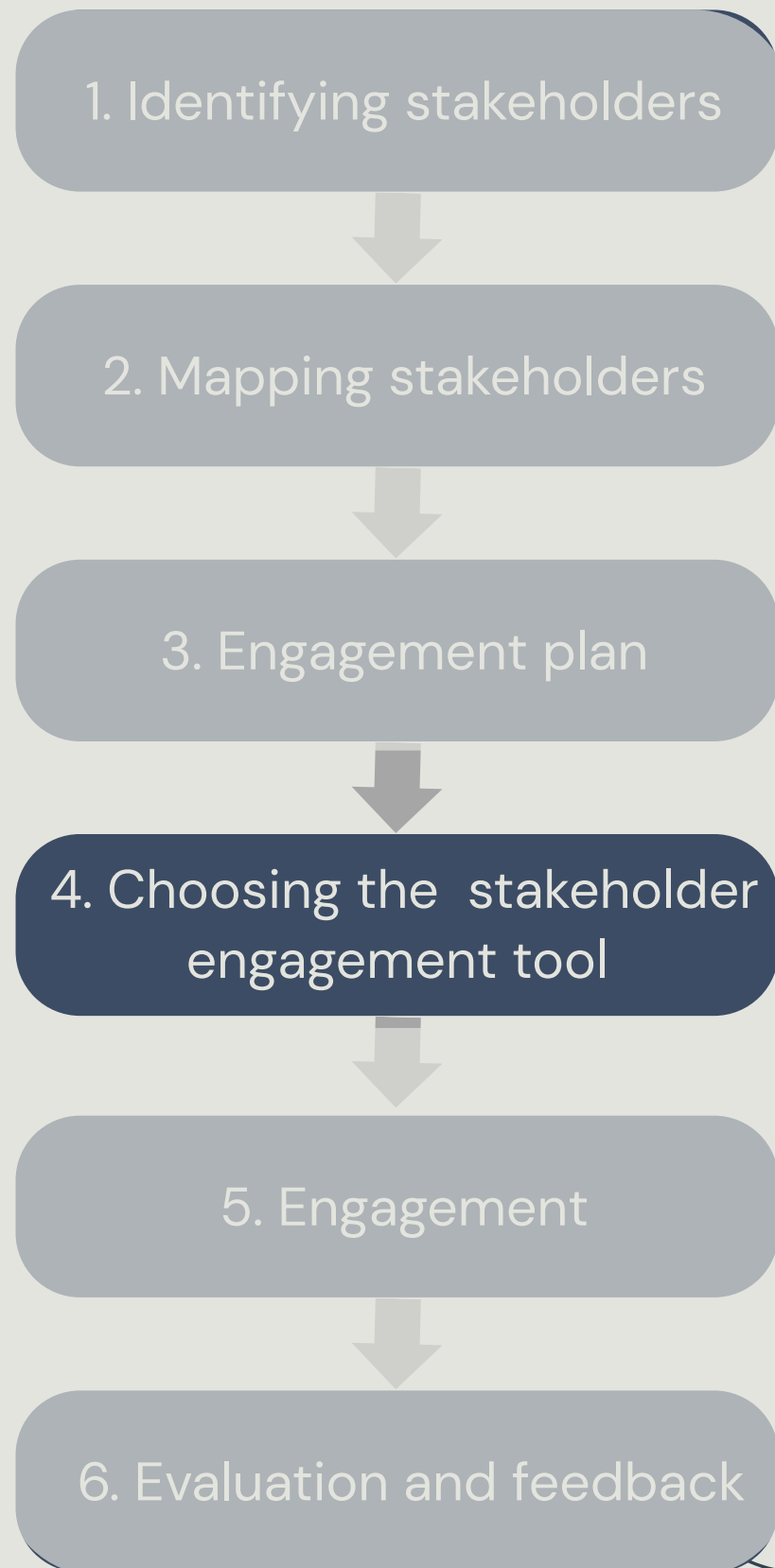
The Decision Theatre is an advanced, technology-supported environment for visualising data, plans, and scenarios. It helps stakeholders understand complex issues through interactive models and simulations, making it easier to explore consequences of different decisions.

Process phases:

1. Presentations – Experts and local actors present data, insights, and models.
2. Interactive group work – Participants explore scenarios using stimulation tools.
3. Feedback and discussion – Joint reflection on results and possible actions.

Best used for:

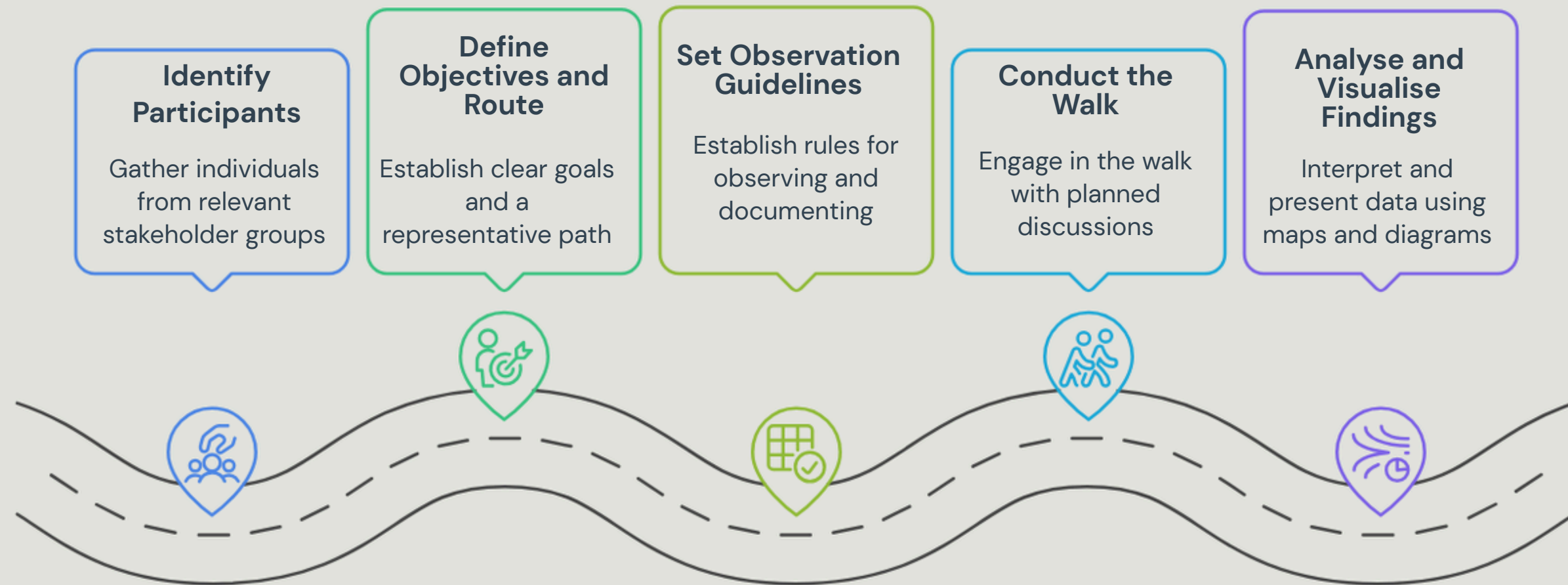
strategic planning, complex policy choices, and evidence-based discussions



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

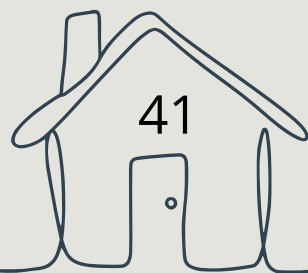
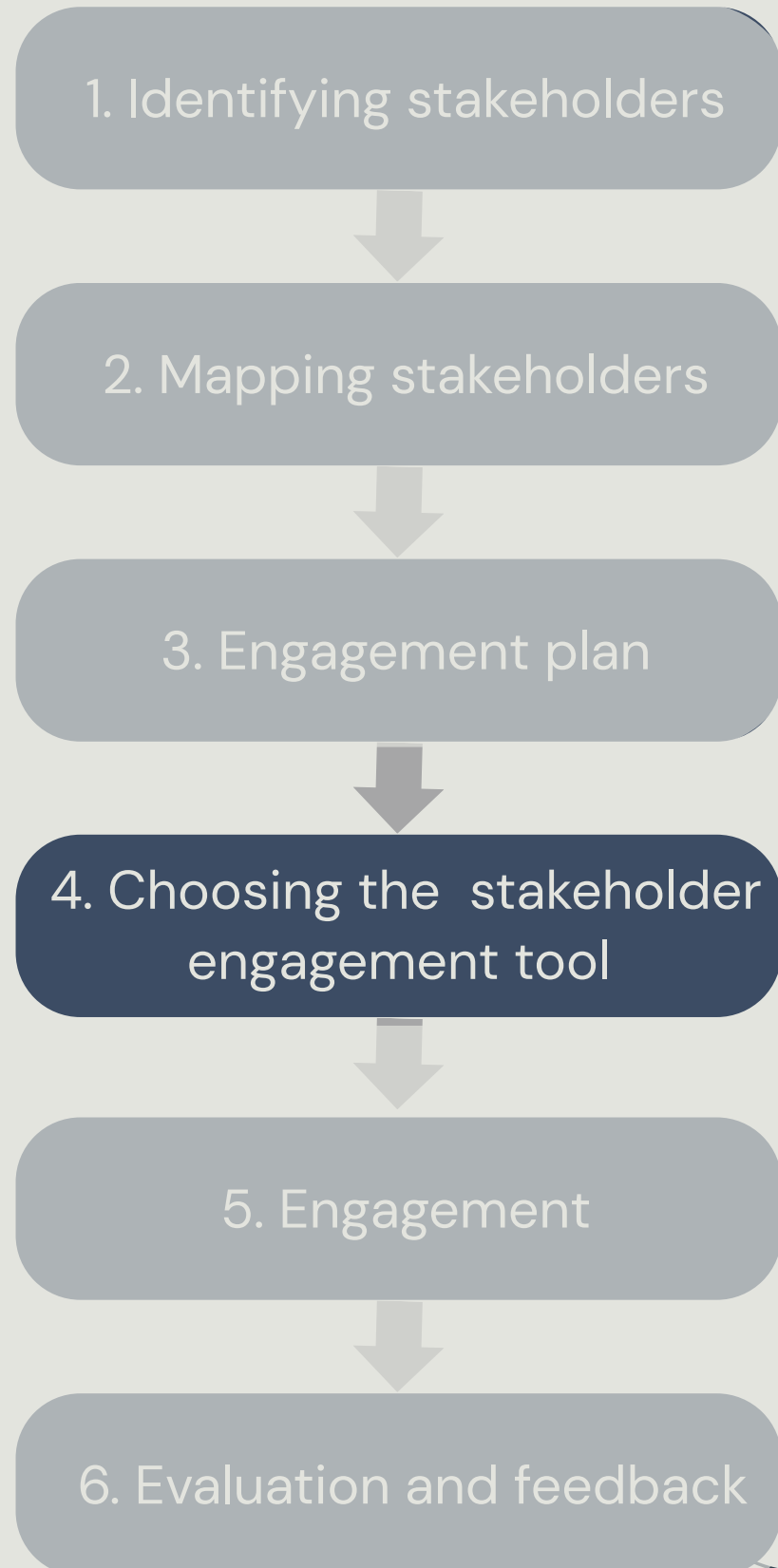
Walkshop

A walkshop combines a workshop with a guided site visit. Participants walk through a project area together, discussing real-life conditions on-site. This method links dialogue directly to physical space, encouraging informal exchange and shared observation.



Best used for:

spatial planning, local problem identification, and community-based design



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Hackathon

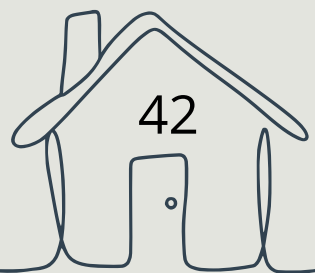
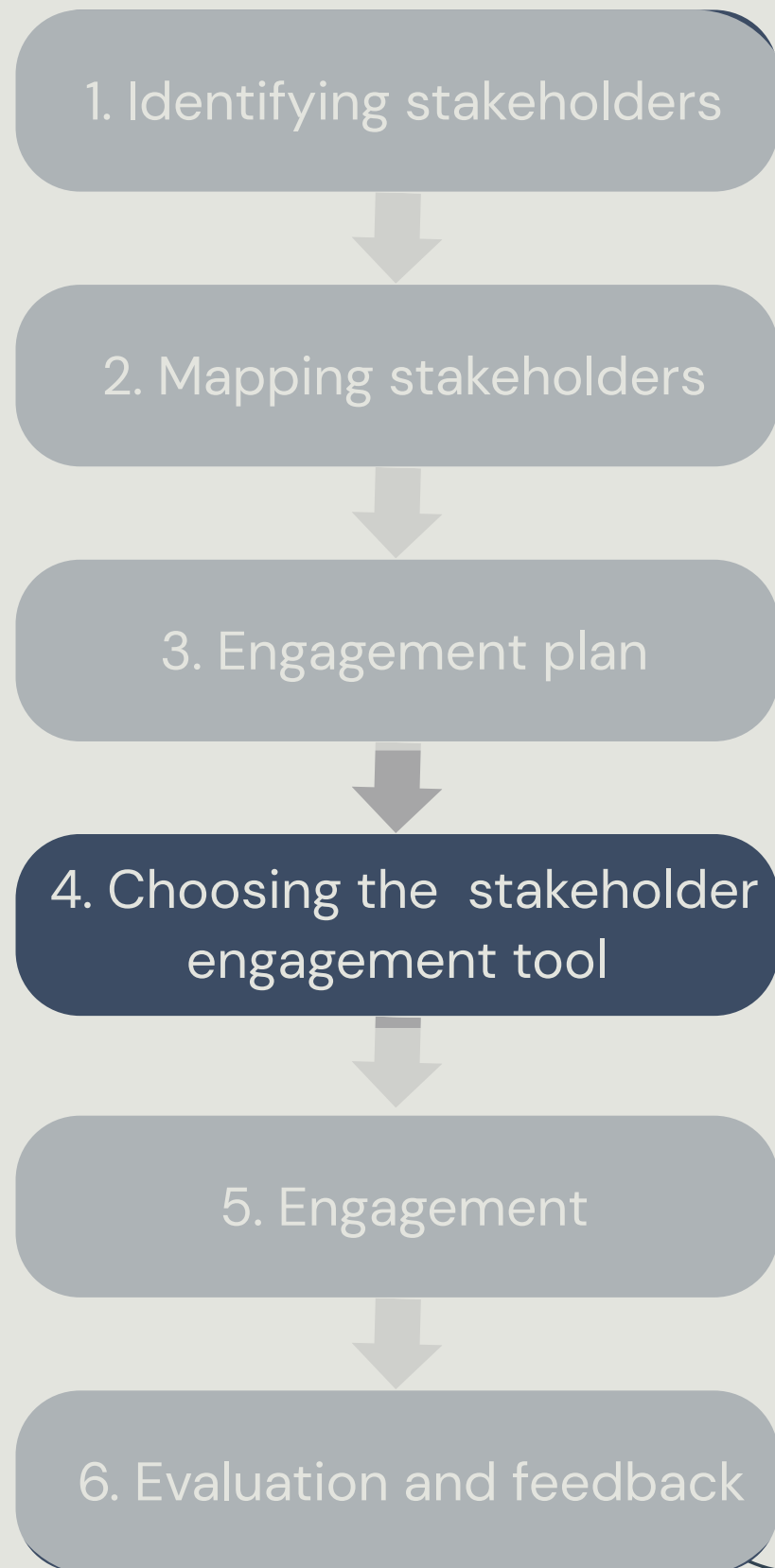
A hackathon is an intensive, collaborative event where diverse participants work together to develop innovative solutions within a limited time. Originally used in the tech sector, hackathons are now widely applied to social and territorial challenges.

It often follows the design thinking process:

1. **Empathise** – Understand users and stakeholders.
2. **Define** – Clarify the problem.
3. **Ideate** – Generate ideas.
4. **Prototype** – Develop testable concepts.
5. **Test** – Gather feedback.
6. **Iterate** – Improve solutions.

Best used for:

innovation challenges, youth engagement, and solution-oriented collaboration



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement does not end with participation activities. The final step is to collect feedback and evaluate the process.

This helps to:

- assess satisfaction and effectiveness,
- identify lessons learned,
- improve future engagement,
- and maintain trust and long-term cooperation.

Continuous feedback creates learning loops, making governance processes more adaptive and sustainable.

Well-designed stakeholder involvement ensures that rural development processes are not only more inclusive and transparent, but also **more effective and widely supported**.



THE IMPORTANCE OF A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR ADDRESSING THE GREAT CHALLENGES OF RURAL AREAS



RURAL MEGATRENDS

- Depopulation
- Urbanisation
- Ageing Population
- Limited Job Opportunities
- Vacant & Deteriorating Buildings



WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

- Shrinking population & brain drain**
– loss of young & skilled people
- Pressure on public services**
– healthcare, education, mobility
- Weaker local economies**
– fewer jobs & less investment
- Abandoned buildings & underused spaces**
– signals of decline but also opportunities
- Need for cooperative governance**
– no single actor can solve it alone

WHY MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE?

- Combines local knowledge with external expertise**
- Creates shared vision & ownership**
- Mobilises resources & innovation**
- Builds inclusive & resilient rural communities**

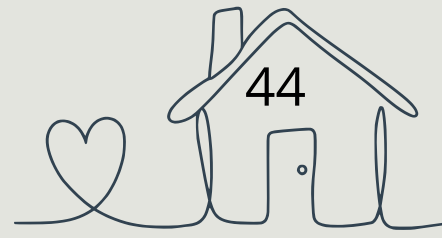
KEY ACTIONS FOR RURAL REVITALISATION

- Reuse vacant & deteriorating buildings**
(housing, services, business, culture, co-working)
- Engage citizens & local actors in decision-making**
- Support local entrepreneurship & green jobs**
- Improve public services & digital access**
- Foster cooperation & shared decision-making**



OUR VISION

- Vibrant**
- Inclusive**
- Resilient**
- Sustainable**
- Attractive rural areas**



Relevance of community engagement
Engagement Strategies
Tools for Mobilising Communities
Conflict Management and Mediation
Conflict Management and Mediation

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WHY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS IN RURAL GOVERNANCE?

Community engagement is a central element of multi-level stakeholder governance model. Rural regeneration processes affect daily life, local identity, and the use of shared spaces, therefore solutions must be developed together with communities rather than delivered to them.

Community engagement is a cornerstone of building resilient, vibrant rural communities. It enables the **active participation of individuals, groups, and organisations in decision-making, problem-solving, and collaboration**, strengthening trust, transparency, and shared responsibility.

Rural territories often face depopulation, ageing populations, declining services, and underused buildings. These are not only spatial or economic issues but deeply social ones.



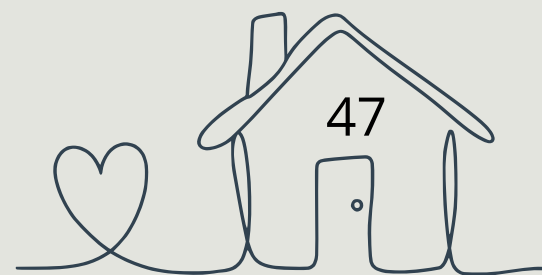
WHY **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** MATTERS IN **4** RURAL GOVERNANCE?

Community engagement helps ensure that regeneration processes:

- Reflect real local needs and knowledge
- Build trust between citizens, authorities, and other stakeholders
- Strengthen social cohesion and cooperation
- Improve acceptance of change
- Support the long-term sustainability of project outcomes



Through engagement, residents become active contributors and co-creators of development rather than passive beneficiaries.



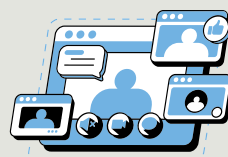
HOW TO INVOLVE LOCAL PEOPLE: **ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES** FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS

Rural communities are diverse. Strategies must reflect differences in socio-economic status, age, culture, ethnicity, geography, language, and gender.

Key approaches:



Understand the community first through assessments, surveys, interviews, and focus groups to identify needs, motivations, and barriers.



Use clear, accessible communication, tailored to different groups and delivered via multiple channels (meetings, flyers, social media, local press, personal contact).



Work with trusted local actors (community leaders, schools, organisations, businesses) to reach harder-to-engage groups.



Address participation barriers by providing multilingual materials, accessible venues, suitable timing, solutions for transport or scheduling issues.

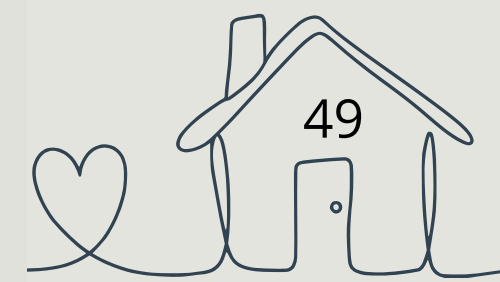
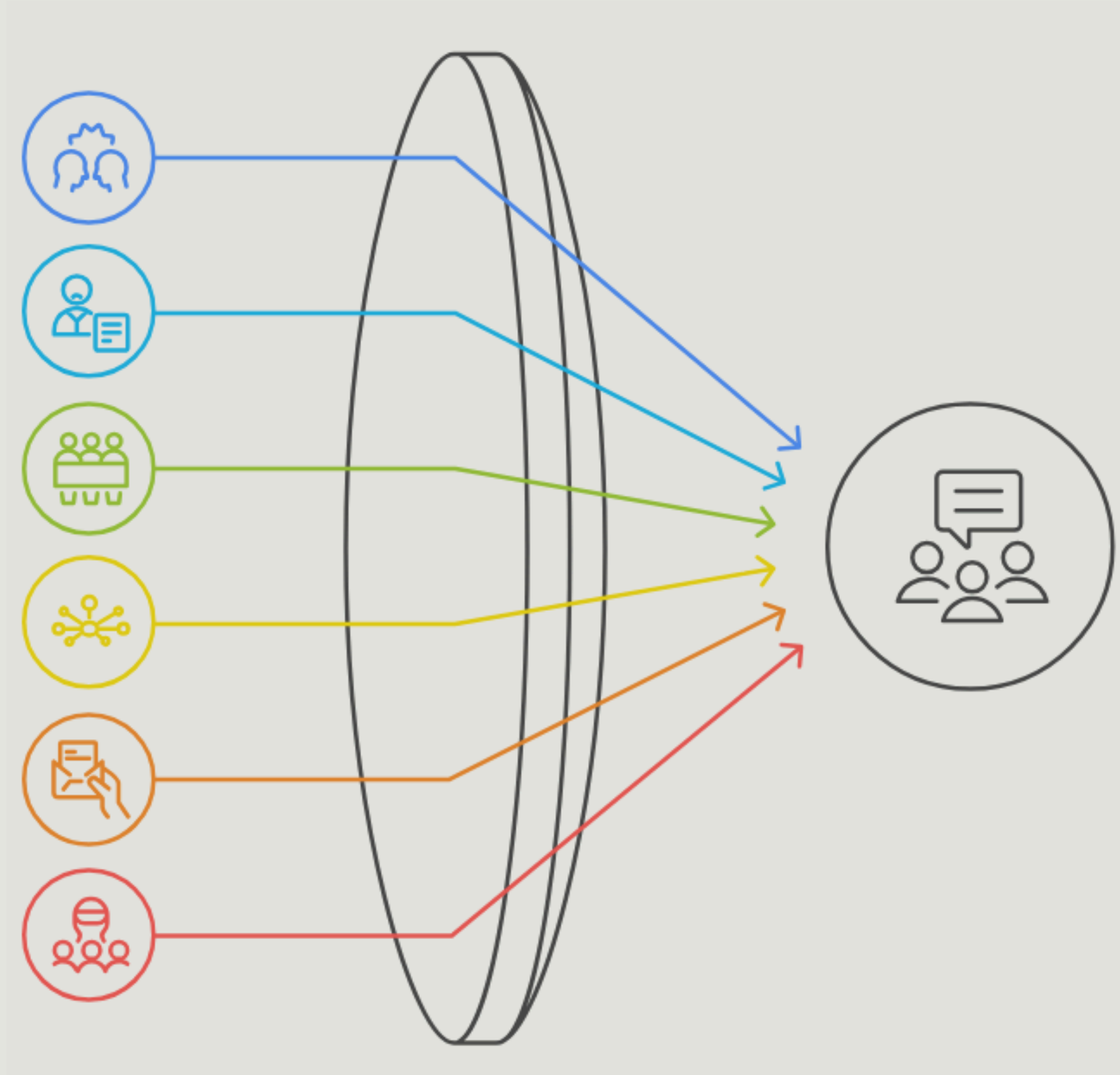
In small rural communities, personal and direct approaches (face-to-face invitations, door-to-door contact) are especially effective.



TOOLS FOR MOBILISING COMMUNITIES

Effective mobilisation combines communication, participation, and facilitation tools:

- Community meetings, workshops, and forums for dialogue and co-creation.
- Surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather broad and in-depth insights.
- Advisory boards and participatory groups that involve residents in planning and decisions.
- Multi-channel communication (newsletters, flyers, social media, local media).
- Personal invitations and incentives (refreshments, recognition, small rewards) to encourage attendance.
- Professional facilitation, including main facilitators, support facilitators, and technical organisers, to ensure inclusive dialogue and smooth processes.



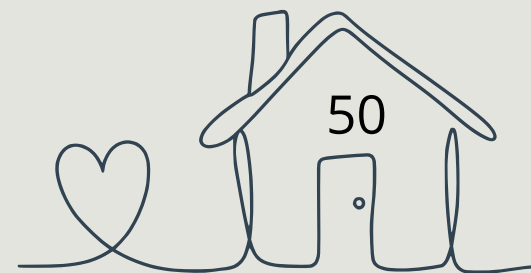
Sustainable regeneration depends on whether communities feel that initiatives belong to them.

Ownership is built when:

- Stakeholders are involved early in defining problems and visions
- Decision-making processes are transparent
- Local actors have roles in implementation and governance
- Continuous feedback mechanisms are in place
- Local initiatives and leadership are supported



Ownership encourages responsibility, care for shared assets, and continuity beyond the project duration



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND MEDIATION

Diverse interests and perspectives may lead to tensions. Constructive conflict management is therefore an integral part of participatory governance.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND MEDIATION



Respectful Dialogue

Establishing clear rules for constructive communication



Balanced participation

Ensuring all stakeholders have an equal voice



Issue-Focused Approach

Prioritizing problems over personal conflicts



Neutral facilitation

Using impartial guidance to guide discussions



Transparency

Maintaining openness in decision-making processes

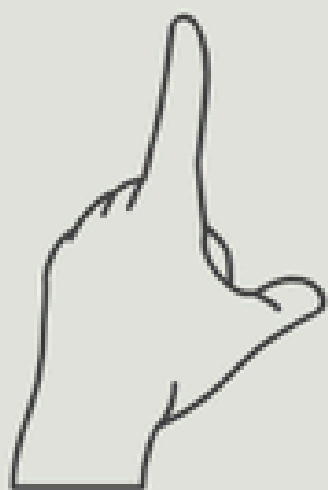


MANAGING DIFFICULT INDIVIDUALS



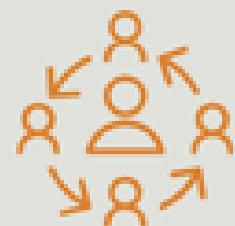
ACTIVE LISTENING

Acknowledging concerns can de-escalate tension and build trust.



STAY CALM

Avoiding escalation maintains a productive environment.



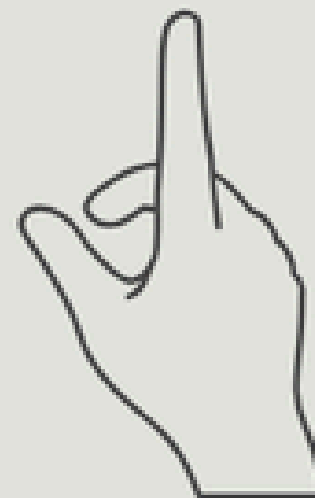
REDIRECT DISCUSSION

Focusing on shared goals keeps the group on track.



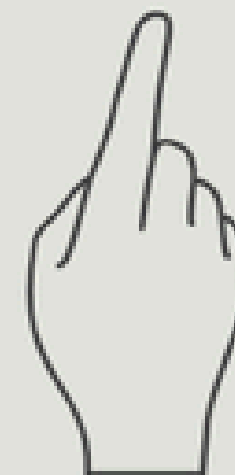
ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS

Addressing issues privately can be more effective.



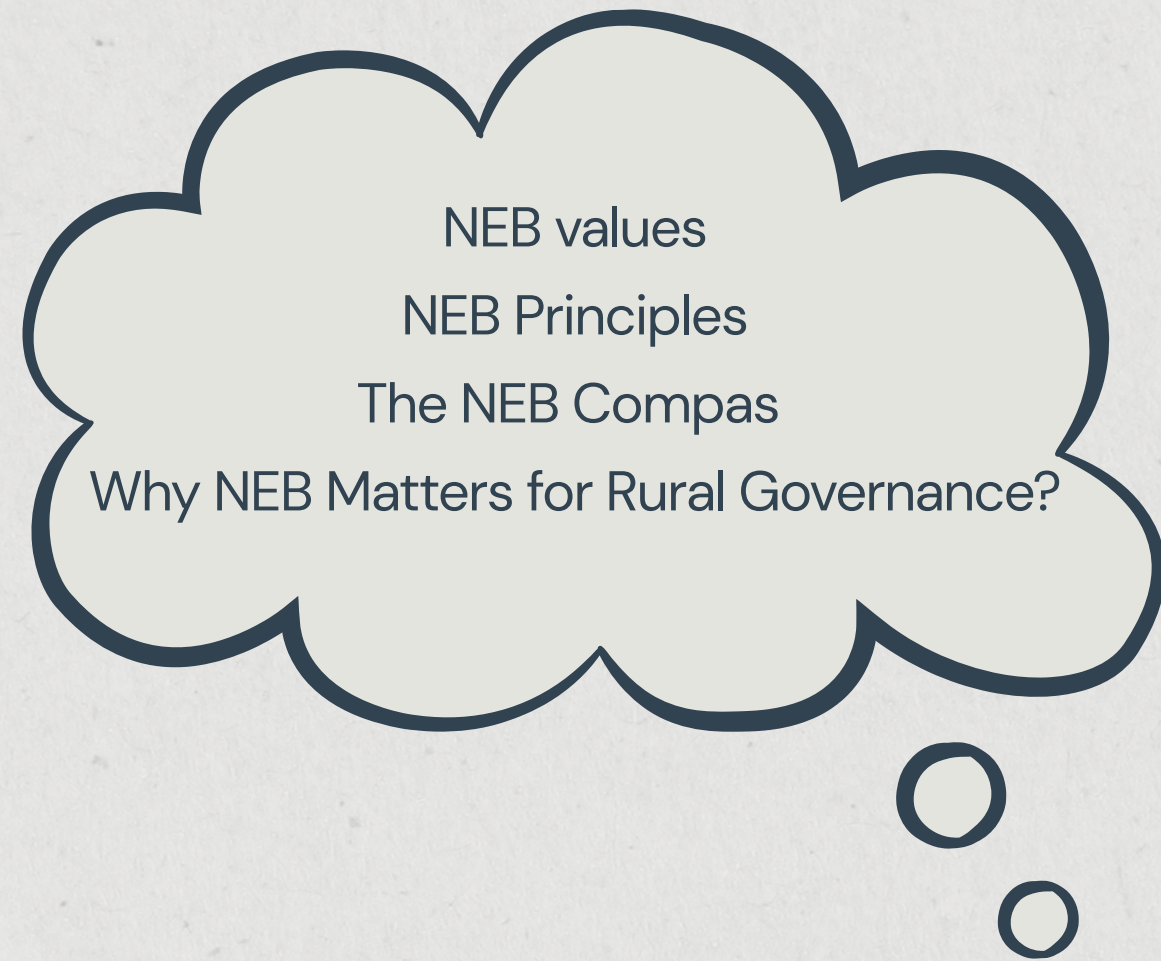
SET BOUNDARIES

Establishing clear boundaries prevents disruption.



Well-managed mediation can turn disagreement into learning and strengthen mutual understanding. Community engagement makes rural regeneration a shared social process, increasing legitimacy, resilience, and long-term impact of development actions .





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NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is an initiative of the European Commission that connects sustainability, culture, and innovation. It brings together science, art, design, and community knowledge to rethink how we live, build, and interact with our environment.

NEB promotes the creation of spaces, services, and solutions that are not only environmentally responsible, but also socially inclusive and aesthetically meaningful. It supports the goals of the European Green Deal and encourages communities, experts, businesses, and institutions to co-create place-based transformations.

At its core, NEB asks a simple but ambitious question: **How can we live together in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and beautiful?**



NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS VALUES

By creating bridges between different backgrounds, cutting across disciplines and building on participation at all levels, the New European Bauhaus inspires a movement to facilitate and steer the transformation of our societies along three inseparable values:



1. Sustainability (Sustainable) :

- Prioritizing climate goals, circular economy principles, zero pollution, and biodiversity.
- Ensuring that designs and projects contribute positively to the environment.



2. Inclusion (Together):

- Emphasizing accessibility, affordability, and diversity.
- Fostering spaces that welcome and reflect the needs of all individuals.



3. Aesthetics (Beautiful):

- Enhancing the quality of life by going beyond mere functionality.
- Incorporating style and experience into the design process to inspire and uplift communities.



NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS PRINCIPLES

NEB operates on three guiding principles that ensure the alignment of its projects with its values:

1. Participatory Process:

- Engaging communities throughout the design, decision-making, and implementation phases.
- Ensuring that local voices and lived experiences shape project outcomes.



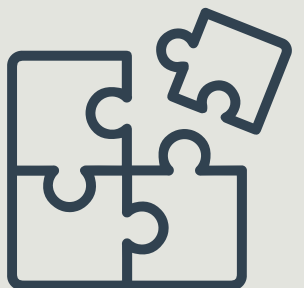
2. Multi-level Engagement:

- Addressing challenges at local, national, and global levels by integrating horizontal (within communities) and vertical (across governance levels) dimensions.



3. Transdisciplinary Approach:

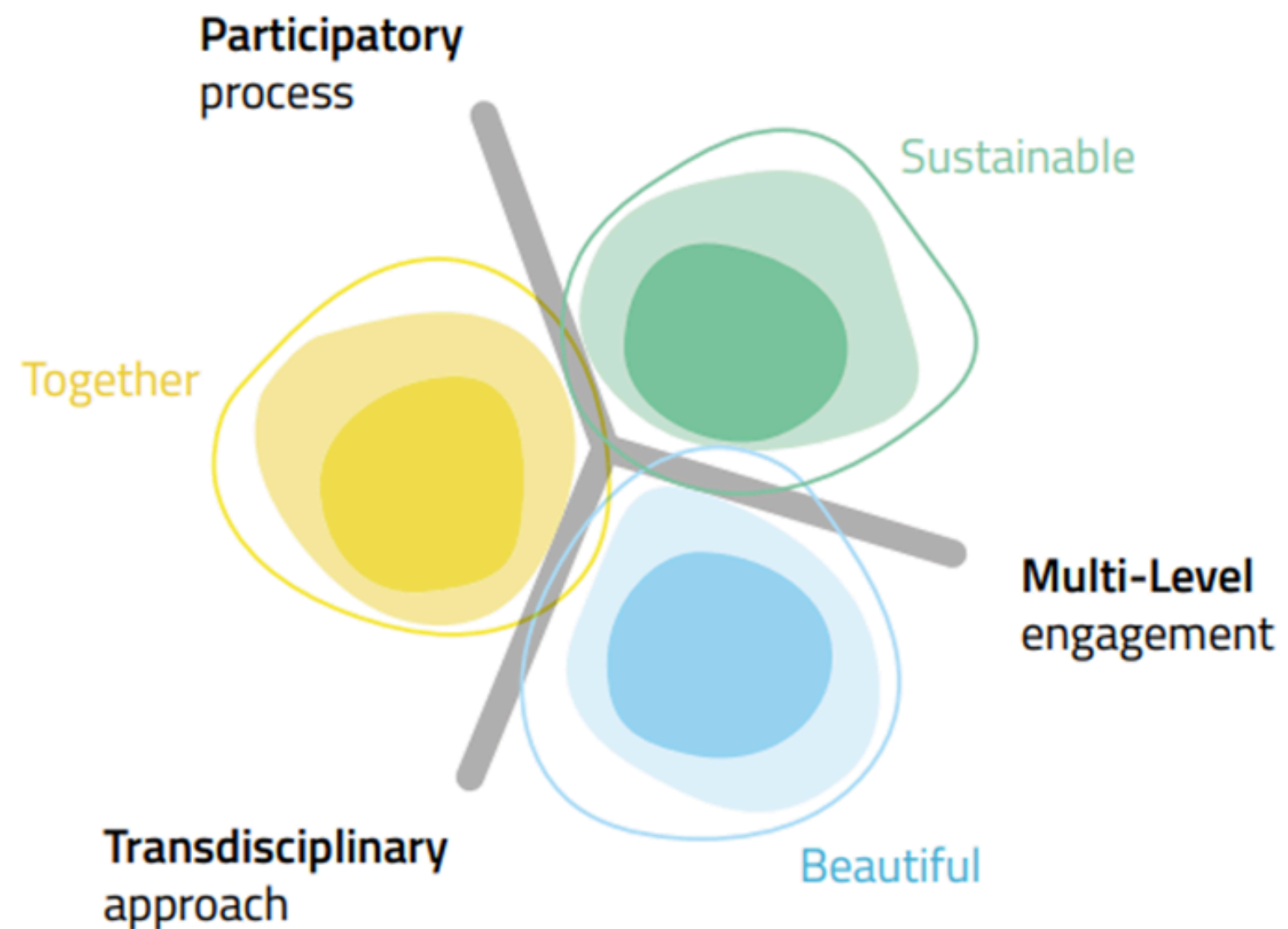
- Combining expertise from various disciplines, including non-formal knowledge.
- Moving beyond professional silos to encourage holistic problem-solving.



These principles describe the process through which a project should operate and work to achieve the highest level of ambition in the three values.



THE NEB COMPASS



The NEB Compass serves as a guiding framework for project developers and decision-makers. It helps ensure that projects align with NEB values and principles by:

- Providing criteria for assessing sustainability, inclusiveness, and aesthetic quality.
- Encouraging iterative design and evaluation processes to meet evolving community needs.



WHY NEB MATTERS FOR RURAL GOVERNANCE?

For rural areas, NEB provides a framework to transform underused spaces, services, and local assets in ways that are:

- environmentally responsible,
- socially inclusive, and
- culturally meaningful.

By linking design quality with participation and sustainability, NEB complements multi-stakeholder governance and supports long-term, place-based rural development.





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Why RRI matters for Governance?

The Four Dimensions of RRI

RRI keys

RRI and Stakeholder-Based Innovation



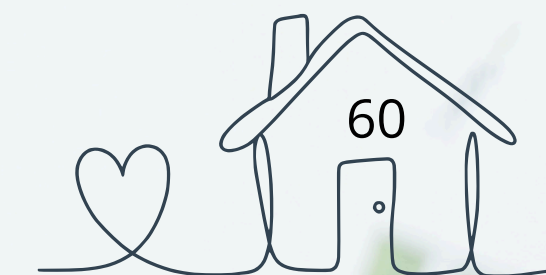
RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

RRI promotes a shift from innovation driven only by technical or economic goals toward innovation that is also ethically acceptable, socially desirable, and environmentally sustainable. It emphasizes that not only researchers, policymakers, and businesses should shape innovation, but also citizens and civil society.

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is an important concept for governance models that aim to address major societal challenges such as resource depletion, poverty, demographic ageing, and environmental pressures. It responds to the growing need to make research, development, and innovation processes more open, inclusive, and aligned with societal values.

In simple terms, RRI means that innovation processes are:

- transparent,
- interactive, and
- responsive to society's needs and values.



WHY RRI MATTERS FOR GOVERNANCE?

Rural and regional development increasingly depends on innovation – new services, new uses of buildings, digital tools, or new forms of cooperation. However, innovation can also create risks or unintended consequences. RRI helps ensure that innovation contributes to long-term well-being rather than new inequalities or environmental problems.

RRI supports governance models that:

- involve stakeholders early,
- anticipate potential impacts,
- reflect on values and assumptions,
- and adapt to new knowledge and feedback.

This aligns closely with multi-stakeholder governance, where cooperation and shared responsibility are central.



DIMENSIONS OF RRI

RRI can be understood through four key, interconnected dimensions:

1. Anticipation

Stakeholders explore possible future impacts of innovations — economic, social, and environmental. The goal is not to predict the future, but to ask “what if?” questions and identify potential risks and uncertainties early.



2. Reflexivity

Innovators and decision-makers reflect on their own assumptions, values, and goals. This dimension encourages awareness of how personal perspectives influence decisions and innovation directions.



3. Inclusion (Deliberation)

A broad range of stakeholders — including citizens and affected groups — are involved in discussing goals, concerns, and visions for the future. This improves legitimacy, trust, and the quality of decisions.



4. Responsiveness

Institutions and actors remain open to change. Based on feedback and new knowledge, they adapt plans, structures, and actions.



RRI KEYS

The European approach to RRI highlights five practical elements that guide implementation:



Public engagement

Active involvement of society in shaping innovation.



Open access and open innovation

Sharing knowledge, data, and results widely..



Gender equality

Balanced participation and attention to gender aspects.



Ethics

Respect for fundamental rights and high ethical standards..



Science Education

Strengthening knowledge and engagement with science and innovation...



RRI AND STAKEHOLDER-BASED INNOVATION

RRI can be seen as the combination of **innovation + stakeholder participation + ethical and social considerations**. It promotes innovation ecosystems based on trust, cooperation, and openness.

By involving stakeholders throughout innovation processes, RRI helps:

- balance economic, social, and environmental interests,
- reduce conflicts and uncertainties,
- and create solutions that are more widely accepted and sustainable.



For rural governance, this means that innovation — whether in services, infrastructure, or community initiatives — should not be developed in isolation, but **co-created with society** to ensure it truly serves local needs and long-term development.



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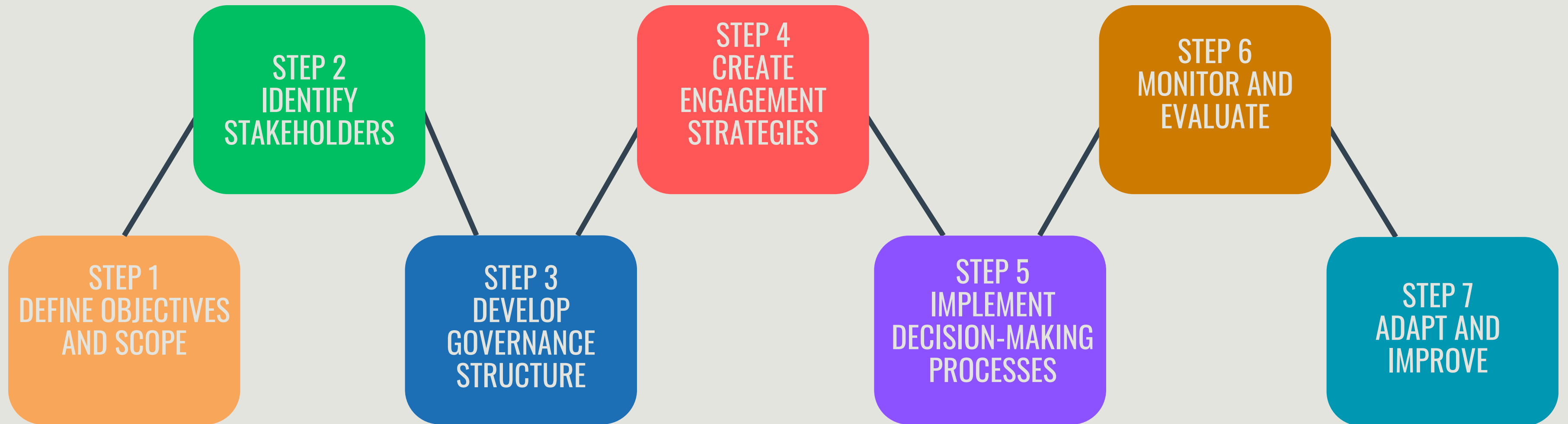
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PROCESS AND ROADMAP OF THE MULTI(LEVEL)-STAKEHOLDER MODEL – **STEP BY STEP GUIDE**

Creating an effective multilevel stakeholder governance model involves several key steps.



PROCESS AND ROADMAP OF THE MULTI(LEVEL)- STAKEHOLDER MODEL – **STEP BY STEP GUIDE**



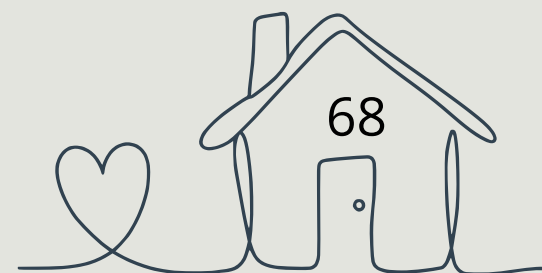
Step 1: Define Objectives and Scope

The first step is always to identify the main purpose and determine what you would like to achieve. Based on this the boundaries of the governance model should be clarified, including which stakeholders will be involved and what are the main roles of the stakeholders.



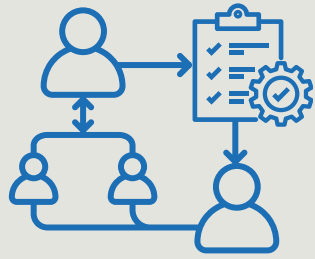
Step 2: Identify Stakeholders

The next step is the **mapping of stakeholders**. Under this activity, we need to list all relevant stakeholders (e.g., community members, employees, investors, suppliers, regulatory bodies). After that we need to **analyze their influence and interest**. We need to evaluate each stakeholder's level of influence and interest in the governance process to prioritize engagement efforts.



PROCESS AND ROADMAP OF THE MULTI(LEVEL)– STAKEHOLDER MODEL – **STEP BY STEP GUIDE**

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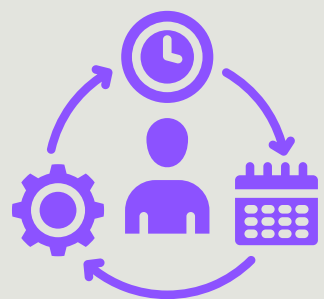
Step 3: Develop Governance Structure

The third step is about developing the main structure of the governance model. It consists of **defining the roles and responsibilities**, assigning roles for each stakeholder group within the governance structure, outlining their responsibilities and decision-making powers.



Step 4: Create Engagement Strategies

For this purpose a **communication plan should be developed** and tailor-made for each stakeholder group, ensuring transparency and clarity. We also need to choose appropriate methods for stakeholder engagement (e.g., workshops, surveys, public meetings).



Step 5: Implement Decision-Making Processes

Establishing processes that promote collaboration and collective decision-making. With the help of continuous feedback, we can adapt governance practices based on stakeholder input.



PROCESS AND ROADMAP OF THE MULTI(LEVEL)– STAKEHOLDER MODEL – **STEP BY STEP GUIDE**

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Step 6: Monitor and Evaluate

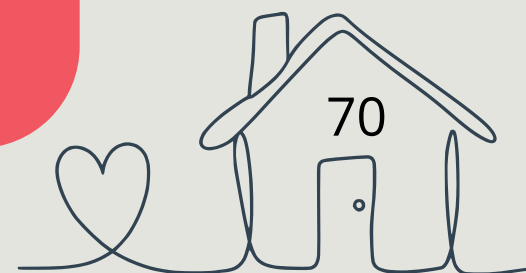
Define key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the effectiveness of the governance model. Schedule regular evaluations to assess stakeholder satisfaction, engagement levels, and overall governance effectiveness.



Step 7: Adapt and Improve

Use the insights gained from evaluations to make necessary adjustments to the governance model.

By following these steps, a robust multilevel stakeholder governance model can be developed encouraging effective collaboration, enhancing accountability, and supporting informed decision-making.



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BELTINCI - SLOVENIA

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“Within the RurALL project, our pilot in the Municipality of Beltinci addresses depopulation challenges by mapping vacant and deteriorating dwellings with potential for renovation and new community-oriented functions. The process combines analysis of public records with systematic field visits, technical assessments and photographic documentation to create a reliable local database. In parallel, we engage property owners, municipal representatives, experts and residents through workshops and meetings. Using a co-creation approach, stakeholders jointly identify reuse scenarios and define priorities, contributing to the development of a locally tailored multi-stakeholder governance model that supports sustainable rural revitalisation.”



BELTINCI - SLOVENIA

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

“The multi-stakeholder governance model helped address local challenges related to depopulation, fragmented property ownership and limited communication between public authorities and residents. By bringing together municipal representatives, property owners, experts and community members in a structured dialogue, the model increased transparency, built trust and clarified responsibilities. It enabled joint prioritisation of vacant dwellings with the highest revitalisation potential and facilitated more realistic, community-supported reuse scenarios. As a result, local decision-making became more inclusive, coordinated and strategically aligned with long-term rural development goals.”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“The short-term impact of the multi-stakeholder governance model is improved communication, stronger cooperation between the municipality and property owners, and a clearer overview of vacant dwellings with revitalisation potential. It increases awareness of the problem and creates momentum for concrete renovation initiatives.

In the long term, the model can support more strategic spatial planning, reduce the number of deteriorating buildings, strengthen social cohesion and contribute to slowing depopulation trends. By involving stakeholders – especially the local community – it fosters more resilient and sustainable local development.”





What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“The most effective element of testing the multi-stakeholder governance model (MSGM) was the integration of evidence-based mapping with structured stakeholder dialogue. The clear overview of vacant and deteriorating dwellings created a shared understanding of local challenges. Particularly successful was the active involvement of the community in identifying new functions for selected buildings. Through co-creation workshops, concrete needs of target groups – associations, public institutions and residents – became visible, and initial steps were already taken to address some of these needs. For other regions, we recommend combining solid data with early community engagement, clear coordination, and continuous communication to ensure realistic and broadly supported outcomes.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“A key challenge in testing the multi-stakeholder governance model (MSGM) was maintaining consistent engagement across stakeholder groups. Fragmented property ownership and limited availability of some actors slowed progress, while certain building owners expected immediate renovation funding. However, the project does not finance works directly; it focuses on identifying funding sources and preparing future investments. Strong municipal support proved essential for coordination and long-term sustainability.

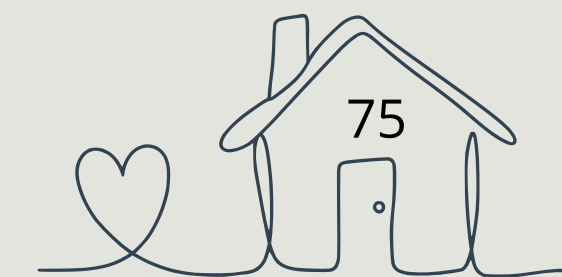
For future implementation, clearer early expectation management, transparent communication on scope and financial frameworks, a smaller core working group, and a phased approach with visible short-term results are recommended to ensure continuity and commitment.”



TAKEAWAY

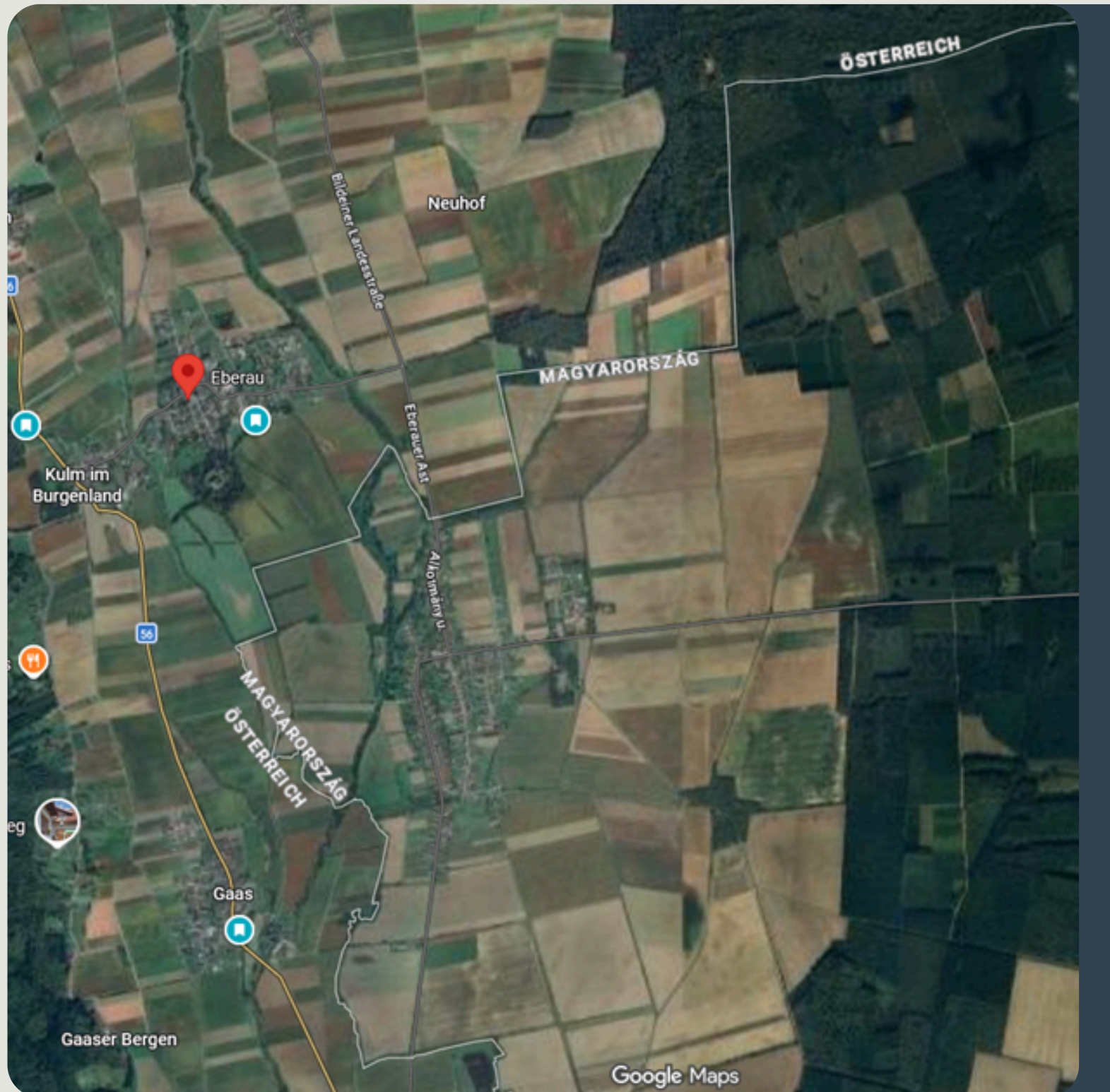
BELTINGI - SLOVENIA

"A multi-stakeholder governance model is most effective when reliable data, early and continuous community involvement, and clear coordination are combined to turn shared challenges into jointly owned and actionable solutions."



EBERAU - AUSTRIA

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“Eberau is a small municipality in Southern Burgenland/Austria consisting of five communities (altogether about 900 inhabitants). It is characterized scenically by vineyards and culturally by its proximity to the boarder, i.e., the regional connection to Szombathely (today: Hungary). The main square of Eberau (connected to the Castle) is surrounded by town houses, while traditional dwelling types of the area are the Streckhof (‘lenghty farm’) and the Kellerstöckl (small agricultural buildings in the vineyard). The mapping showed that a lot of abandoned dwellings are of the latter type, which have increasingly been used as secondary residencies and tourist accommodations. Since the community is quite small, the community and stakeholder engagement processes have merged into one single process. The community engagement process managed to increasingly attract a broad range of stakeholders and people interested in regional development, some of them already actively contributing with their own projects (e.g. private regional museum etc.). .”

EBERAU - AUSTRIA

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

"It was not possible to differentiate between community and stakeholder engagement due to the smallness of the community. Due to the overlap of roles (people being engaged as citizens of Eberau or the region, as well as the local administration for example) personal contact turned out to be the fundamental way of communication and of ensuring impact after the project ends. The RurALL events were used as networking opportunities as well.."



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

"The MSGM with its system of stakeholders might be useful if in the future the project would be conducted on a larger area / region, where more stakeholders are mapped and involved. In that case, the impact would be to support the identification of key actors in diverse positions.

For the current RurALL project, the local community (due to its smallness) is very aware of roles and opportunities of individuals, therefore, not in need of a model. However, by reaching out to a secondary technical school nearby (HTL), who designed the dwelling designs, we managed to strengthen regional networks. Through the community engagement regional management, engaged citizens and a few institutional authorities got involved and interested in the process"



What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

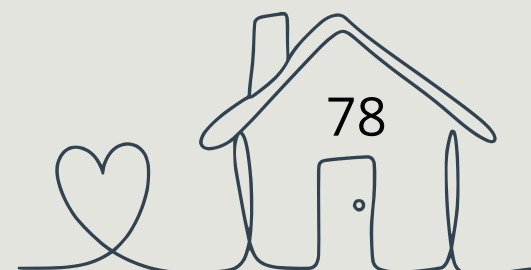


“Remaining patient and persistent if people are interested but restricted in time. Usually, there are a few central figures and if the municipality is small, a lot of work lands on their shoulders. Therefore, personal contact and transparency about what the project can (and cannot) deliver is necessary. Building trust and relationships requires time and presence, hence plan and dedicate enough time and resources for this, as it lays fundamental ground for many other steps of the project.

We also started to activate our newly established network to ensure local impact (i.e., at least that the ideas developed and the work conducted during the RurALL project) won't be forgotten after the project finishes. We would recommend doing this early on.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

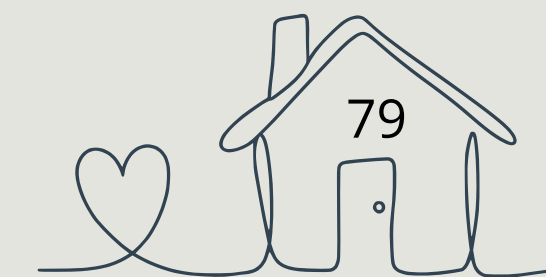
“Plan enough time for relationship work with the municipality and community, especially when you are not a local. Trust takes time to build..”



TAKEAWAY

EBERAU - AUSTRIA

„Be patient and adjust to people's timelines and energy – work with them (and their restrictions), not against them. Focus on what would be helpful for the stakeholders in the community. What do they get out of the project (also, after it ends)?”



SÁRVÁR - HUNGARY



The pilot in Sárvár focuses on reusing underused and vacant buildings to address key local challenges such as youth outmigration, ageing and the need for vibrant community spaces. Together with the municipality, Pannon Business Network, educational and cultural institutions, civil organisations and young people, we first mapped the local building stock to identify underutilised sites that are structurally suitable for revitalisation and well located near schools, services and public transport. Through community workshops, stakeholder meetings and thematic working groups, stakeholders jointly assessed needs and co-created future functions. This process led to the selection of three priority buildings and the development of concrete reuse concepts and business plans for each. The pilot therefore combines technical dwelling mapping with participatory planning to ensure that new functions are economically viable, socially inclusive and closely aligned with Sárvár's long-term development goals.



SÁRVÁR - HUNGARY

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

“The multistakeholder governance model helped Sárvár address its local challenges by creating a clear, shared framework for cooperation. It started from a common diagnosis of youth outmigration and underused buildings, and then used structured tools such as stakeholder mapping, power–interest grids and community workshops to ensure that all relevant actors were identified and actively involved in decision-making. Consensus-based decision rules, regular meetings and transparent communication channels helped to reduce conflicts, align expectations and turn diverse ideas into three jointly owned, implementable pilot concepts that respond directly to Sárvár’s long-term needs..”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“In the short term, the multistakeholder governance model creates a shared vision for the reuse of Sárvár’s underused buildings, strengthens trust between key actors and speeds up decision-making. It has already led to three concrete, co-created pilot concepts with business plans, bringing together different actors around joint projects rather than isolated initiatives. This improves coordination, reduces duplication of efforts and makes it easier to mobilise funding for investment and pilot activities.

In the long term, the MSGM can help Sárvár gradually reduce youth outmigration, support active ageing and build a more resilient local economy. The new hubs – for civil organisations, youth and entrepreneurship, and digital skills – are expected to become permanent focal points for community life and innovation, generating new services, jobs and learning opportunities. The governance model itself becomes a transferable asset: an established network, clear roles and decision rules that can be reused for future projects, making Sárvár better prepared to design and implement integrated solutions to emerging social, economic and environmental challenges.”



What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

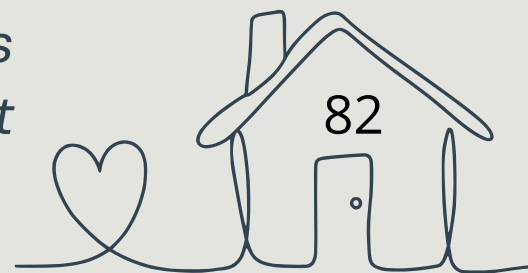
“One of the strongest elements was the structured, but still very practical, way of bringing stakeholders together. Regular workshops and thematic working groups created space for honest discussion, quick feedback and joint problem-solving, instead of one-way information sharing. The combination of clear roles (Steering Committee for strategic guidance, working groups for content) and simple, consensus-oriented decision rules helped to build trust and keep everyone engaged over time. For other regions, we would recommend: starting with a systematic stakeholder mapping and power–interest grid to clarify who needs to be at the table; investing in at least one neutral facilitator to guide meetings and mediate between interests; and linking co-creation directly to tangible outputs, so participants see concrete results of their involvement. It is also helpful to anchor the MSGM in an existing local strategy, so that the pilot is clearly connected to the city’s long-term development goals and funding opportunities.”



What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“One challenge was that the process required significant time and coordination effort, especially when many actors with different expectations and time horizons were involved. Reaching consensus sometimes slowed down decisions, and it was not always easy to keep less powerful or less active stakeholders (e.g. smaller civil organisations or individual young people) continuously engaged throughout all phases. In addition, aligning the pace of co-creation with formal municipal procedures and external funding timelines proved demanding.

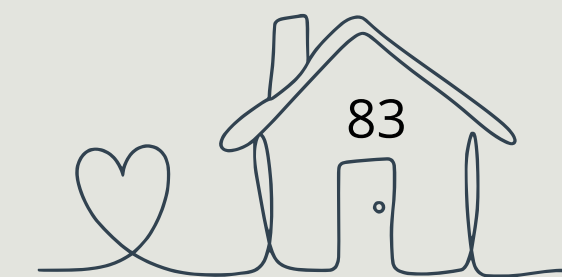
For future applications, we would recommend defining from the start which decisions truly require broad consensus and which can be delegated to smaller groups; planning shorter, more focused engagement cycles with clear milestones; and using more flexible formats (online tools, micro-workshops) to keep a wider group informed without overburdening them. It is also useful to agree early on a realistic timeline that takes into account political decision-making and funding windows, so that stakeholder enthusiasm can be maintained and quickly connected to visible pilot actions.”



TAKEAWAY

SÁRVÁR - HUNGARY

„A well-designed multistakeholder governance model only works if it is rooted in real local needs and leads to concrete, shared projects—so always combine broad participation with clear responsibilities, timelines and tangible pilot actions.”



BYSTŘICE - CZECH REPUBLIC

8



“BYSLab is a community-oriented coworking and makerspace hub developed in a renovated public building in Bystřice. The pilot focused on identifying real local needs and engaging key stakeholders in shaping the final concept of the space. Freelancers, entrepreneurs, students, schools, parents and seniors were invited to participate through public workshops and thematic discussion groups. The multistakeholder governance model helped align the expectations of the municipality, local businesses and the community, ensuring that the final design reflects practical demand and long-term operational sustainability rather than a top-down vision.”



BYSTŘICE - CZECH REPUBLIC

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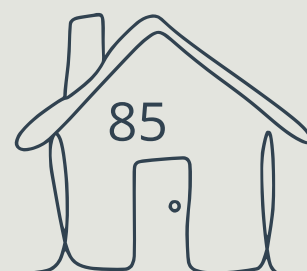
How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

“The MSGM approach helped address several key local challenges: skepticism toward new public projects, concerns about underutilization, and the risk of designing a space disconnected from real needs. By actively involving different stakeholder groups—municipality representatives, entrepreneurs, schools, youth and residents—the pilot validated actual demand for coworking and maker facilities. It also helped define realistic pricing models and operational rules. Co-creation strengthened public acceptance and reduced the risk of the space becoming underused, while fostering collaboration between the education sector and local business community.”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“In the short term, the MSGM approach strengthened dialogue between the municipality and citizens and increased transparency in decision-making. It created a network of engaged stakeholders willing to contribute to programming and future operation. In the long term, the model can support local entrepreneurship, help retain young people in the region and stimulate innovation culture. It also sets a precedent for participatory planning in future public projects, increasing trust in local governance and promoting shared responsibility for public infrastructure.”





What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“The combination of an open public workshop and targeted thematic working groups proved particularly effective. It ensured broad participation while allowing deeper discussions with specific user groups such as entrepreneurs and educators. Transparent communication about budget constraints and operational realities helped keep expectations realistic. We recommend that other regions begin with thorough needs mapping, clearly communicate project limitations and involve future users already during the operational design phase. Early engagement significantly improves both project relevance and sustainability.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

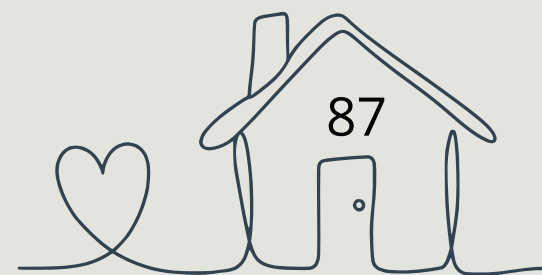
“Engaging less active or less vocal groups of residents was challenging. Participation was higher among already engaged citizens and entrepreneurs, which may have partially biased the discussion. In the future, we recommend combining in-person workshops with online surveys and targeted outreach to specific groups, such as young people or parents of small children. Another challenge was balancing ambitious ideas with financial feasibility; therefore, communicating budget limits continuously throughout the process is essential.”





BYSTŘICE - CZECH REPUBLIC

„Engaging stakeholders from the earliest stages significantly increases project quality and long-term sustainability, but it requires transparency, patience and honest communication about limitations”



JELŠAVA - SLOVAKIA

8



“Within the pilot, 60 municipal buildings in Jelšava were mapped, assessing ownership, condition and redevelopment potential. 23 buildings were selected for deeper analysis, with 20 general and 3 detailed renovation concepts prepared. Three community workshops engaged residents, youth, Roma representatives, businesses and institutional actors in co-creating new functions for vacant buildings. We successfully managed to engage not only representatives of the town (also members of town council participated, including major) but also a variety of people from all parts of the society. Participants identified missing services, discussed design solutions compatible with the historic town centre, and prioritised interventions. The degree of engagement was surprised for the town representatives and it was a very positive experience to see the interest and involvement of the locals (both general public and stakeholders) in revitalisation plans. Community events were also space for us to present The process combined technical mapping, stakeholder engagement and business model preparation under the multistakeholder governance framework.”



JELŠAVA - SLOVAKIA

8

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

“The MSGM created a structured platform that connected municipal authorities, residents, vulnerable groups, regional institutions, stakeholders and experts (on national and international level). It enabled transparent prioritisation of buildings, improved trust in decision-making, and aligned environmental, social and economic perspectives. Through workshops and working groups, the model transformed fragmented discussions into coordinated action. External expertise and interregional exchange strengthened technical quality and business planning. Without MSGM, the integration of mapping, community co-creation and feasibility preparation at this scale would not have been achievable, as well as business model preparation, which relied heavily on the leadership of external experts from partner organisation, municipality normally does not have access to.”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“In the short term, the model strengthens institutional coordination, increases civic participation, and develops redevelopment concepts for unused municipal buildings. It improves transparency, trust, and cooperation among stakeholders, while enabling timely delivery, better access to expertise, and evidence-based prioritisation.

In the long term, it can help stabilise depopulation by activating new services and community spaces that enhance quality of life and opportunities. It provides a structured, financially sustainable framework for renovating municipal assets, strengthens environmental coordination, and improves access to knowledge, partnerships, and funding. The governance structure remains operational beyond the project and can adapt to future priorities.”





What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“Clear governance structure and defined roles significantly improved coordination. The Steering Committee and thematic working groups allowed focused technical discussions while maintaining public legitimacy through community assemblies. The combination of technical mapping with participatory workshops worked particularly well. Visual tools and simplified communication helped residents understand renovation concepts. Targeted inclusion of youth and Roma representatives increased participation quality. The double-check mechanism ensured sensitive decisions were not imposed without affected groups’ input. Early involvement of heritage and environmental authorities prevented designs, which would not be usable for the municipality once it decides to execute the plans.

Recommendation: combine technical expertise with participatory formats, institutionalise mediation roles for vulnerable groups- for Jelšava, targeting the Roma population and lower social economic strata of population was crucial, as they tend to slip the involvement in activities related to public interests and thus remain unrepresented.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“Participation rates especially among youth were low, for this specific workshop for youth would be needed to be designed, for which we did not have capacity in the project scope, with already densely planned activities.(not crucial, just observation). Municipal capacity constraints slowed implementation. Administrative workload was underestimated. Challenging was to maintain the interest of all the parties throughout the whole duration of the project. Communication of technical renovation plans was initially too complex. Visualisation tools were introduced only after feedback. Investor engagement required more detailed feasibility data than initially available, this part and part of the business models content remained theoretical, as at the moment immediate execution of the plans won't be possible. However, there is a benefit of having a long term vision and gaining information on the possibilities which could be modified and applied later.”



TAKEAWAY

JELŠAVA - SLOVAKIA

„A multistakeholder governance model only works when transparency, inclusion and structured coordination are treated as operational principles, not just formal commitments.“



HODOD - ROMANIA



“Main objective of Multilevel stakeholder governance model in Hodod is Making a livable community in Hodod village by attracting new population through the use of abandoned and deteriorated dwellings. 41 deteriorated or abandoned buildings from Hodod have been mapped. Out of these 41 mapped buildings, 20 have been selected and basic concepts for their renovation have been prepared. Three buildings have been selected together with local stakeholders and detailed design templated have been prepared. For the three selected buildings also business plans have been elaborated. The local community and stakeholders have been involved in this process. Three community engagement events have been organized. During these, participants have been introduced in the thematic of the project and have been asked to come with possible solutions to make their commune more livable. Then, participants worked together to find possible uses for the 3 buildings that have been selected for detailed design templated. Finally, community engagement workshop represented an opportunity for participants to analyze the 3 business plans elaborated within the project.”



HODOD - ROMANIA

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

"The multistakeholder governance model focuses on the involvement of the local community to overcome the challenges related to depopulation of Hodod. The problem of depopulation and unused buildings is a problem that affects the entire community. In order to ensure inclusivity, the mapping activity included not only desk research but also site visits organized for several days. In this way, residents of all categories have been involved in the process, as well as representatives of the municipality. The local community has been involved also in the community engagement events, to which local residents have been invited to participate, and which represented areas for co-working and co-designing. The following stakeholders have been involved in the project implementation: local residents (providing input), local administration (providing input for mapping of buildings, site visits, decision making), local institutions (school, church), businesses (local entrepreneurs, craftsmen, start-ups interested in renovation-based business opportunities)."



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

"Expected outcomes of the multistakeholder governance model in Hodod are on the short term: mapping of 40 abandoned or deteriorated buildings; developing prototyping solutions for 23 buildings; elaboration of business plans for 3 buildings in the commune; implementation of 3 community engagement workshops. While on the long term: developing a culture of co-participation and co-decision making at the local level and increasing the participation of the local stakeholders in public affairs; making more attractive the village for youth and young families to stay; creating work and economic opportunities in deteriorated or abandoned buildings by activities that could determine people to remain in the commune; using deteriorated or abandoned buildings for community destination."





What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“During the project implementation, the support of the Associated Partner, Municipality of Hodod, has been crucial in implementing the MSMG. The municipality supported the partner in mapping the dwellings by participating at site visits and collecting some of the necessary data. Municipality has also been active in organizing the community engagement events by distributing the invitations and discussing with residents about the events. Local stakeholders have been active in all three community engagement events. Through open dialogue, co-working, shared experiences and knowledge, they have provided valuable input. Another important aspect was that the community engagement events were moderated by an expert that has knowledge on the topic but also has good communication skills.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

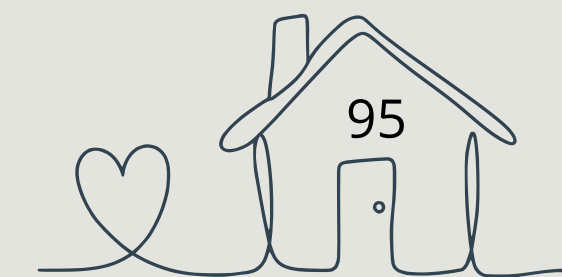
“The participation at the community engagement events could have been higher, but at the same time the number of participants was sufficient in order to ensure effective co-working and keeping to the subject of the meeting. We recommend to continue personal invitations through trusted local networks and municipal announcements.”



TAKEAWAY

HODOD - ROMANIA

„The multistakeholder governance model is useful in involving the local community in co-working and co-decision processes with the aim to solve the challenges and the problems that the community faces.”



GORSKI KOTAR- CROATIA

8



“Within the RurALL project, the Gorski kotar pilot addresses long-standing rural depopulation by identifying and mapping abandoned and underutilised buildings across nine municipalities (Delnice, Vrbovsko, Čabar, Ravna Gora, Mrkopalj, Fužine, Skrad, Brod Moravice, and Lokve). The mapping process combined desk research, field visits, technical assessments, and community engagement workshops were conducted between June and November 2025. Through participatory workshops, local stakeholders jointly identified priority buildings and co-created reuse scenarios across three thematic areas: housing, economic development, and community and cultural spaces. The result is a community-supported governance model grounded in real local needs, designed with aim to reverse demographic decline and revitalise the region’s built heritage.”



GORSKI KOTAR- CROATIA

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

“Within the RurALL pilot, the multi-stakeholder governance model helped Gorski kotar address its core challenges of depopulation, ageing, and underused infrastructure. By bringing together representatives from local government units, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, RRA PGŽ and residents in structured workshops, the model created a shared diagnosis of problems and a common platform for co-creating solutions. Tools such as mapping, and community workshops ensured that all relevant actors were identified in order to be meaningfully included in decision-making.

It enabled joint prioritisation of vacant dwellings and facilitated more realistic, community-supported reuse scenarios. As a result, local decision-making became more inclusive, coordinated and strategically aligned with long-term rural development goals.”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“In the short term, the multi-stakeholder governance model has strengthened cooperation across Gorski Kotar municipalities, improved communication between the municipality and property owners, and provided clearer overview of vacant dwellings with revitalisation potential. It increased awareness of the problem and has created momentum for concrete renovation initiatives.

In the long term, the model can support a measurable reduction in out-migration, particularly among young people and families, through the creation of affordable housing, co-working spaces, cultural venues, and community services. Renovated buildings could generate new economic activity and employment, while the governance model itself — with established roles, decision rules, and stakeholder networks — would become a replicable framework for future rural development initiatives across the region and beyond.”





What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“One of the strongest elements in testing the MSGM in Gorski kotar was the combination of evidence-based mapping with open, participatory community workshops. This approach ensured that both decision-makers and everyday residents had a meaningful role in shaping outcomes. Rotating workshops across municipalities helped ensure geographic representation and maintained engagement across the region. The phased approach, starting with a shared problem diagnosis and moving towards concrete building assessments and reuse scenarios, gave the process a clear direction and helped participants see tangible progress. For other regions, we recommend: investing early in stakeholder mapping to clarify who needs to be at the table; using a combination of formal governance bodies and informal engagement formats to maintain broad participation; and grounding the process in concrete, locally relevant outputs so that stakeholders remain motivated and can see the value of their involvement.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“In Gorski kotar, the MSGM pilot faced challenges in coordinating engagement across municipalities, particularly with low turnout at the initial workshop due to overlapping local elections. In this case, alternative time frame was not entirely possible, due to project dynamics. Varying levels of familiarity with EU funding mechanisms among stakeholders also required somewhat extra capacity-building to enable equal participation. Additionally, some actors had questions whether project provides direct funding for renovations, whereas the project focuses on identifying funding sources and building a strong foundation for future initiatives, without providing renovation funds itself. For future implementations, we recommend consulting local calendars early to avoid election periods, with built-in flexibility for rescheduling. Tailored capacity-building, such as peer-learning pairings between experienced and newer participants, can streamline coordination. Clear, upfront communication about the project's scope—especially its non-funding nature for renovations—helps manage expectations and sustain enthusiasm, much like emphasizing institutional support for long-term success.”



TAKEAWAY

GORSKI KOTAR- CROATIA

"A multi-stakeholder governance model thrives when it brings together trustworthy data, early and ongoing community engagement, and strong coordination to transform shared rural challenges into practical, collectively owned pilot solutions."



PRIJEDOR - BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



"In the City of Prijedor and the surrounding region, RurALL pilot builds on mapping deteriorating and underused dwellings in rural settlements and on structured stakeholder and community engagement. PREDA coordinated the process with support from the City of Prijedor, local community councils, residents, and owners. Through community engagement workshops and targeted discussions with different groups (youth, elderly, women, and vulnerable households), we co-created realistic reuse options and prioritized actions based on local needs and feasibility. As a result, three pilot directions were shaped: (1) a commercial wine tasting area to boost rural appeal and the local economy, (2) an upgraded community/public service space with co-working features to enhance access to services and job opportunities, and (3) a hybrid model combining visitor accommodations with a family-in-need serving as on-site operators of a small visitor point for hikers and climbers."



PRIJEDOR - BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

8

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

“The MSGM helped us turn a complex local situation—different interests, limited resources, and sensitive ownership issues—into an organized, transparent process. By using a multi-stakeholder structure (municipality, PREDa as secretariat, community councils, residents, owners, NGOs, SMEs, and technical experts), we reduced “top-down” decision-making and increased trust and legitimacy. Community workshops fostered a shared understanding of needs and priorities, while targeted owner meetings and feasibility checks helped manage legal, technical, and financial risks early. The MSGM also enabled constructive handling of competing ideas by applying clear criteria, documenting decisions, and closing the feedback loop (“you said – we did”). This made pilot choices more realistic, supported by community ownership, and feasible pathways.”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“The MSGM enhances Prijedor's ability to coordinate rural revitalization in a practical manner in the short term. Stakeholders understand their roles, decisions are traceable, and pilot actions progress from concepts to actionable plans. It also improves the quality of participation by ensuring that rural voices—including those of youth, women, and the elderly—are reflected in priorities and in the design of functions.

In the long term, the MSGM has the potential to become a permanent local mechanism for activating rural assets. Mapped dwellings will not only be documented but also prepared for integration into official municipal geographic information systems (GIS) and planning processes, which will create a pipeline for future investments and services. This model supports sustainability by linking community initiatives with municipal procedures and higher-level funding opportunities, making rural areas more attractive for living, work, and tourism.”



What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?



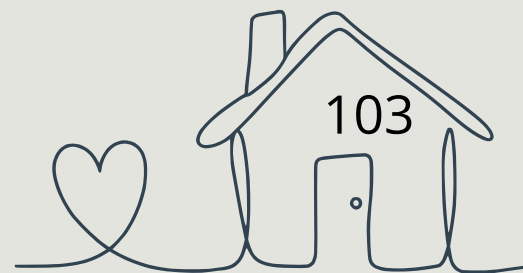
“What worked well for PREDA was the establishment of clear roles, where the municipality was responsible for decision-making while PREDA ensured coordination, supported by predictable meeting routines. Community workshops were effective because they produced concrete priorities rather than remaining at the level of general discussions. Targeted engagement of underrepresented groups, including youth, women, and the elderly, helped to improve inclusivity. There was also an early focus on identifying who would operate the initiative, ensuring that the operator pathway was considered alongside the concept design. In addition, the use of simple documentation tools such as meeting minutes, decision logs, and action trackers improved follow-through. A key recommendation is to apply a stage-gate approach, moving from community input to feasibility, then to a decision package, and finally incorporating a feedback loop.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“Maintaining engagement intensity proved challenging when communities did not see quick, visible progress. To address this, it is important to schedule smaller but regular updates and communicate clear “you said – we did” messages after each milestone to demonstrate progress and responsiveness. Ownership and legal clarity also emerged as factors that can slow down pilot projects, particularly when private owners are involved. A more effective approach is to begin confidential consultations with owners at an earlier stage and define minimum legal conditions as part of a feasibility gate. Additionally, some ideas, while attractive, were not operationally realistic due to constraints such as staffing, operational expenditure, or internet access. This can be improved by validating operator capacity, ensuring coverage of operational costs, and confirming infrastructure prerequisites before finalizing the function.”



„The Multistakeholder governance model builds a permanent local mechanism for rural revitalisation—linking community ownership with municipal procedures and sustainable operation models”



DESPOTOVAC - SERBIA



“In Despotovac 31 dwellings were mapped and three were selected as priorities for reconstruction, development of detailed designs and business models. Four community meetings were held: the initial one where the community representatives were informed about the project activities and planned methodologies deriving from the New European Bauhaus; two meetings for discussing and deciding about the future purpose of the mapped buildings and their purpose and one meeting for reviewing the basic concepts, detailed designs and developing business models for priority dwellings. The priorities are:

The restaurant Toplica near Resavska cave, the Sokolski dom in Senjski Rudnik (coal mine settlement) and the dwelling for shelter for the homeless and temporary housing (mostly during winter) of the most vulnerable elderly persons.”



DESPOTOVAC - SERBIA

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

“The multistakeholder governance model envisages identification of all important stakeholders and establishing the models and channels of communication. In such way the trust of the community towards the local authorities is built and the local government collects important input from the citizens to get insight into the local problems, needs and priorities, to improve quality of life and perform more effective investment plans. The MSHG model is based on the principles of NEB, citizens participation and good governance principles such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, responsiveness, equity, and efficiency.”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“The main short-term impact of the MSHG model for Despotovac is improved coordination and cooperation between municipal authorities, REDASP, civil society, citizens, and private actors. It also contributes to increased institutional capacity of the municipality and local stakeholders for participatory planning and project implementation. In addition, the model fosters a stronger sense of ownership and belonging among local residents regarding revitalised dwellings, while also increasing civic engagement and participation in local decision-making processes. In the long term, the model is expected to increase the attractiveness of rural settlements and enhance conditions for population retention, particularly among younger households, thereby helping to slow down out-migration trends in pilot areas. It can also support the development of new economic activities linked to tourism, cultural heritage, creative industries, and services. Furthermore, it encourages the mobilisation of diverse funding sources, including EU, national, municipal, and private investments. Over time, this contributes to increased local employment opportunities, as well as strengthened local value chains and a more diversified rural economy.”





What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

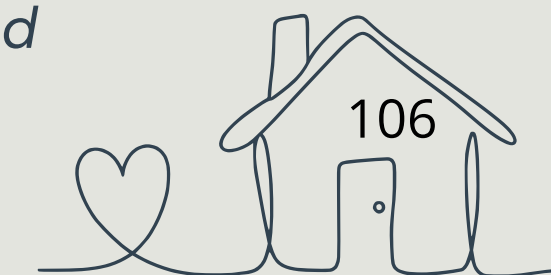
“The response of the citizens and stakeholders was strongly inspired by the direct communication and involvement of the municipal officials and experts – engineers. The direct dialogue and discussions in the community meetings encouraged citizens to trust decision makers. The sense of planning according to the citizens’ real needs was built and turned out to be recommended for the future sectoral plans and strategies.

We recommend the officials to directly communicate with citizens and involve municipal experts as much as possible.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“Main challenges are: the restricted resources of the public sector and required extra time for communication, organization and planning, and the restricted budgets and need for extra research and planning of the external sources of funding the implementation of development plans.

We recommend establishing a mechanism/ tool for identification and dynamics of external sources of funding and accordingly review priorities on regular basis. (e.g. quarterly).”



DESPOTOVAC - SERBIA

TAKEAWAY

„Foster direct and continuous communication with citizens and stakeholders of different interests to build trust and good governance.“



MOJKOVAC - MONTENEGRO



“The pilot in Mojkovac focused on the field mapping of deteriorated dwellings in rural areas of the municipality, as a basis for planning their future use. The mapping was implemented in cooperation with the Faculty of Architecture through a methodologically defined process documenting the condition of buildings, location, infrastructure accessibility, and basic ownership data. In parallel, workshops and meetings were organized with local residents, youth, representatives of the Municipality, and engaged experts (anthropologist, legal-agricultural expert, architecture student). Through this process, realistic activation models were identified, linked to agro-tourism, small-scale production, and valorization of local heritage.”



MOJKOVAC - MONTENEGRO

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

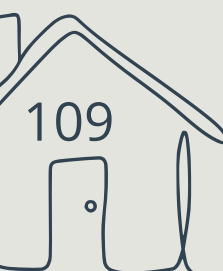
“The MSGM ensured that the mapping process went beyond technical documentation and became a basis for joint planning. Instead of the Municipality defining priorities independently, local actors and experts from different fields were directly involved. This enabled clearer identification of key constraints – property–legal relations, low awareness among owners, and the absence of viable business models for building activation. The model improved coordination between the local administration and the community and introduced a practice of decision-making based on field data rather than assumptions.”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“In the short term, the pilot resulted in a concrete database of mapped deteriorated dwellings and a clearer assessment of the condition of the rural housing stock. Communication between the Municipality and local stakeholders was strengthened, and the mapping became a foundation for future public calls and development measures.

In the long term, the established cooperation model can serve as an operational framework for systematically addressing deteriorated housing assets, supporting small businesses in agriculture and tourism, and designing measures aimed at retaining young people in rural areas. The established cooperation model can serve as an operational framework for systematically addressing deteriorated housing assets, supporting small businesses in agriculture and tourism, and designing measures aimed at retaining young people in rural areas. It also provides a structured basis for integrating property activation into local development strategies and future planning documents.”





What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“The most effective element was the combination of structured fieldwork and direct stakeholder involvement. Cooperation with the Faculty of Architecture ensured methodological consistency in data collection, while workshops enabled identification of practical constraints and realistic development options. A clear division of roles between the Municipality, experts, and local participants reduced procedural ambiguity and facilitated implementation.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“A major constraint was the limited availability and accuracy of ownership data, which slowed down the assessment of activation potential for certain dwellings. Additionally, some property owners were hesitant to engage in the initial phase.

In future applications, earlier coordination with cadastral and property administration authorities would improve efficiency. A targeted communication plan specifically addressing private owners would also increase participation and implementation feasibility.”



MOJKOVAC - MONTENEGRO

TAKEAWAY

„Mapping deteriorated dwellings produces tangible development value only when it is embedded in a clearly structured cooperation model between local government, experts, and the community from the outset.“



SANDANSKI - BULGARIA



“The Municipality of Sandanski, in cooperation with BICC–Sandanski, identified 57 publicly owned or underused buildings across its 54 settlements. Two tailored assessment tools were developed – a detailed one for municipal experts (5 criteria) and a simplified version for community members (3 criteria). The engagement process included an information session (November 2024, 32 participants), an expert workshop (March 2025, 9 participants), a community workshop (April 2025, 31 participants), a community brainstorming session with village mayors (July 2025, 24 participants) and a technical expert workshop (August 2025, 12 participants). Based on collected input, 23 buildings were shortlisted and 3 were selected for detailed renovation design: one residential, one commercial, and one for public use.”



SANDANSKI - BULGARIA

How did the multistakeholder governance model contribute to overcoming local challenges?

“The MSGM provided a structured framework for stakeholder engagement that was previously ad-hoc and uncoordinated. While the municipality had existing consultation mechanisms – the Consultative Council on Tourism, monthly meetings with the 54 village mayors, citizen feedback channels – these operated independently with no shared agenda on rural revitalisation. The MSGM connected them and defined clear stages for involving different types of actors (municipal staff, village mayors, technical experts, NGOs, citizens) at appropriate points. This structured approach enabled a systematic progression from building identification through community input to technical assessment – a sequence that would not have happened through usual municipal procedures. BICC–Sandanski as the operational Secretariat compensated for limited municipal staff capacity.”



What can be the short and long-term impact of the multistakeholder governance model on your city?

“In the short term, the MSGM enabled systematic mapping of 57 deteriorating buildings, structured engagement across five events with over 100 participants, and detailed renovation designs for 3 priority buildings. It created a shared understanding among diverse stakeholders about the scale of the challenge and the potential for revitalisation. In the long term, the governance structure has been integrated into the regular work of the municipality. The coordination between BICC–Sandanski as operational Secretariat and the municipal administration continues beyond the pilot. The methodology and tools developed can be applied to future revitalisation efforts across the remaining settlements and can inform the next municipal development planning cycle.”





What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“Separating expert technical assessment from community brainstorming worked well – it ensured both perspectives were captured without one dominating the other. Using BICC–Sandanski as operational Secretariat compensated for limited municipal staff capacity and provided continuity across all activities. Building on existing consultation mechanisms (village mayors’ meetings, municipal expert groups) rather than creating parallel structures helped secure institutional support. The involvement of village mayors as community representatives was effective, as they brought direct knowledge of local needs. We recommend investing in adapted assessment tools for different stakeholder groups, and anchoring the coordination role in an experienced organisation that can maintain the process between formal events.”

What worked particularly well during the pilot in applying the multistakeholder governance model (MSGM), and what practices would you recommend to other regions or organizations planning to implement a similar model?

“Motivating broader community participation beyond institutional actors proved difficult. Despite multiple communication channels (municipal website, social media, direct invitations), the share of residents not affiliated with any institution or project role remained around 10% at community workshops. General lack of interest and motivation in the rural population is a persistent challenge that the MSGM alone cannot solve. Limited municipal staff capacity was another constraint – with only 1-2 experts available part-time, the operational burden fell largely on BICC–Sandanski. For future implementation, we would recommend investing more in proactive face-to-face outreach at village level, possibly through the chitalishta network, and securing dedicated municipal staff time from the start of the process.”



SANDANSKI - BULGARIA

TAKEAWAY

„Build on what already exists in your municipality – connecting and coordinating existing structures around a shared agenda is more realistic and sustainable than creating parallel governance mechanisms, especially in small rural municipalities with limited resources.”





Main strengths of MSGM
Main challenges of MSGM
Recommendations

WHAT?

1. INTRODUCTION

2. THE RURALL PROJECT CONTEXT:
CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

3. MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5. NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS APPROACH

6. RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

7. ROADMAP AND STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

8. OUR STORIES: EXPERIENCES FROM CITIES

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

WHY?

HOW?



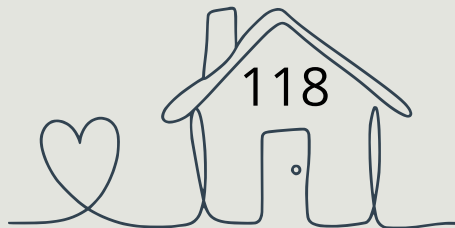
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPLYING THE MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL IN RURAL AREAS

Effective multi(level) stakeholder governance in rural areas is not a one-time institutional reform but a continuous, learning-oriented process built on cooperation, shared responsibility, and long-term vision. Successful governance depends less on formal structures and more on ongoing dialogue, trust-building, and coordinated action among public institutions, private actors, civil society, and knowledge institutions. Multi-stakeholder processes can range from informal cooperation to formalized partnerships, but all must function as platforms for dialogue, debate, and negotiation.








The experience gathered through the pilots of Rurall project highlights several strategic lessons and forward-looking recommendations for both local authorities and transnational partners.

KEY STRENGTHS OF THE MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

The pilot experiences demonstrate that the Multistakeholder Governance Model (MSGM) offers a robust and adaptable framework for addressing complex rural challenges. Its effectiveness lies in combining structured processes, inclusive participation, and a strong focus on practical outcomes.



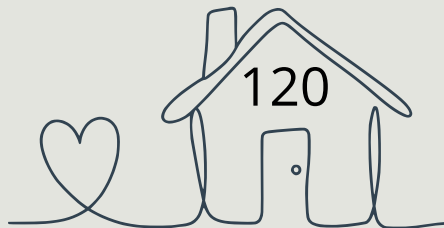
KEY STRENGTHS OF THE MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

	Strength	Description	Implication for Practice
	Evidence-based and structured approach	Provides a clear analytical foundation that supports informed, objective, and transparent decision-making.	Ensure continuous data collection and use simple tools to present evidence clearly to all stakeholders.
	Effective stakeholder engagement and co-creation	Actively involves diverse actors in shaping solutions, increasing relevance and shared ownership.	Apply participatory methods (e.g. workshops, co-design sessions) throughout the entire process, not only at the beginning.
	Improved coordination and cooperation	Aligns actions across institutions and sectors, reducing fragmentation and duplication of efforts.	Establish coordination mechanisms (e.g. working groups, regular meetings) to maintain alignment.
	Increased transparency and trust	Open processes and communication build confidence among stakeholders and strengthen governance legitimacy.	Communicate regularly, openly share information, and document decisions to maintain trust.
	Community empowerment and social inclusion	Gives local actors a voice in decision-making, ensuring that solutions reflect real community needs.	Use inclusive approaches and targeted outreach to involve underrepresented groups.
	Generation of practical solutions	Focuses on actionable outcomes that maintain stakeholder motivation and demonstrate visible progress.	Prioritise quick wins and pilot actions that show tangible results early.
	Long-term institutional learning	Enhances the capacity of local governance systems through accumulated experience and knowledge sharing.	Document lessons learned and integrate them into local policies and procedures.



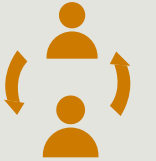

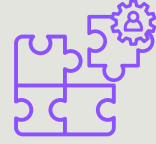



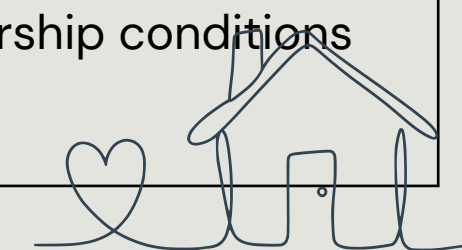
KEY CHALLENGES OF THE MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

The challenges highlight that successful implementation of MSGM is not automatic and requires careful management, adequate resources, and continuous facilitation. Issues such as sustaining engagement, limited local capacity, and legal constraints can significantly affect outcomes if not proactively addressed. However, these challenges are not barriers but critical factors to anticipate and manage, and with the right strategies in place, they can be mitigated to ensure the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of the model.



KEY CHALLENGES OF THE MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL

Strength	Description	Implication for Practice
 Difficulty maintaining long-term stakeholder engagement	Sustaining active participation over time is challenging as interest, availability, and priorities change.	Keep stakeholders engaged through regular updates, visible results, and clear incentives for participation.
 Time- and resource-intensive processes	The model requires significant investment in coordination, facilitation, and stakeholder involvement.	Plan realistic timelines and secure adequate human and financial resources from the outset.
 Limited administrative capacity in rural municipalities	Smaller local governments often lack the staff, skills, or resources to manage complex participatory processes.	Provide external support, training, or dedicated facilitators to strengthen capacity.
 Expectation management and communication gaps	Misaligned expectations or unclear communication can lead to frustration and reduced trust.	Clearly communicate goals, limitations, and roles from the beginning and revisit them regularly.
 Limited participation of key target groups	Certain groups, such as youth or marginalized communities, may remain underrepresented without targeted outreach.	Design tailored engagement strategies (e.g. youth-focused events, flexible formats) to ensure inclusivity.
 Legal and ownership constraints affecting implementation	Regulatory barriers and complex property structures can delay or hinder the execution of planned actions.	Involve legal expertise early and map ownership conditions before planning interventions.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODE

Several conditions appear essential for the successful operation of the Multi-Stakeholder Governance Model. Clear communication and transparent decision-making among all stakeholders are critical to building trust and ensuring alignment of goals. Adequate resources, including time, funding, and skilled facilitators, are necessary to support the coordination and implementation of activities. Strong local leadership and commitment from participating organizations help maintain momentum and engagement throughout the process. Additionally, structured yet flexible frameworks that can adapt to local contexts allow stakeholders to address specific needs while maintaining coherence in the overall governance approach.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL



Start with evidence

Use reliable local data to create a shared understanding of challenges.



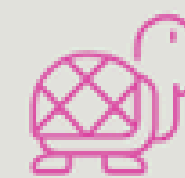
Engage Early and Continuously

Involve stakeholders from the beginning and maintain regular interaction.



Anchor in Real Needs

Ensure actions are based on locally identified challenges.



Be Patient and Flexible

Adapt timelines and processes to stakeholders' capacities and constraints.



Clarify Value

Clearly communicate the benefits of participation for each stakeholder group.



Ensure Transparency

Be open about goals, limitations, and available resources.



Define Roles

Establish responsibilities, governance structures, and decision-making processes.

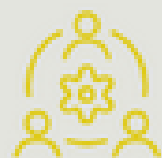


Treat Inclusion as Practice

Ensure that participation is meaningful and well-structured.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MULTISTAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE MODEL



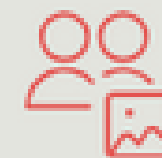
Continuous Facilitation

Assign dedicated coordinators to manage communication and organise activities.



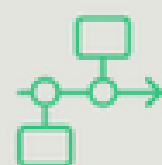
Co-decision and Co-creation

Enable stakeholders to actively participate in decision-making processes, fostering ownership and commitment.



On-site Engagement

Organise site visits to improve understanding, and enhance the practicality of decisions.



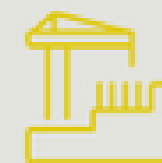
Link Participation to Action

Translate discussions into tangible results such as pilot projects.



Integrate Community and Expertise

Combine local knowledge with technical expertise.



Build on Existing Structures

Strengthen and connect existing local initiatives.



Institutionalise the Model

Embed the governance process into formal municipal structures.

CONCLUSION

Multi-stakeholder governance model represents a **critical approach to addressing the complex and interdependent challenges** inherent to rural areas. By systematically integrating the perspectives and capacities of public authorities, private sector actors, civil society, and local communities, it facilitates more comprehensive, context-sensitive, and evidence-informed decision-making processes. This collaborative framework enhances coordination, fosters mutual trust, and enables the effective mobilisation of local knowledge and resources.

Furthermore, the model contributes to **strengthening institutional capacity**, promoting social cohesion, and ensuring greater legitimacy and accountability in governance practices. In the context of rural development—where resource constraints, demographic decline, and service limitations are prevalent—such an inclusive and participatory approach is indispensable. Ultimately, the multi-stakeholder governance model provides a **robust foundation** for fostering resilient, adaptive, and sustainable rural communities.





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