

## **A Multi-Actor Framework for promoting agri-environmental governance in rural areas in the EU**

**Topics:** Agricultural Geography, Land Use, Rural Geography

**Keywords:** Multi-actor Platform, Transdisciplinary, agri-environmental measures, rural areas

**Session Type:** Virtual Paper

**Day:** Saturday

**Session Start / End Time:** 4/10/2021 08:10 PM (Central Europe Daylight Time) - 4/10/2021 09:25 PM (Central Europe Daylight Time)

**Room:** Virtual 12

### **Authors:**

David Miller, *Janes Hutton Institute*

Gerald Schwarz, *Thünen-Institut, Germany*

Katherine Irvine, *James Hutton Institute, United Kingdom*

George Vlahos, *Agricultural University of Athens, Greece*

Alexandra Smyrniotopoulou, *Agricultural University of Athens, Greece*

### **Abstract**

Producing enough food and biomass while preserving public goods (e.g. biodiversity, soil, water) requires changes from conventional agricultural approaches. The dilemma is how to promote agroecological transitions whilst maintaining private goods, securing economic and social sustainability for farms and rural areas without being overly dependent on public funds. A more holistic approach to agri-environmental governance is required, which integrates environmental, socio-economic and sectoral concerns and stakes of farmers and wider rural actors. Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs), adopted by the EU agricultural research and innovation strategy, provide a mechanism to take account of local contexts and the needs, knowledge and initiative of rural actors including farmers, local policy-makers and civil society actors, and the planning and design of measures. The EU-wide projects 'Sustainable Hub to Engage into Rural Policies with Actors' (SHERPA) and 'Under-standing and Improving the Sustainability of Agro-Ecological Farming Systems in the EU' (UNISECO) are using these new governance approaches to co-construct approaches to public good provision and rural development. The MAPs are designed to enable ongoing involvement of actors at European and local levels and the two-way exchange of ideas for co-learning and co-creation of knowledge. The paper presents experiences and results from case studies in Germany, Greece, and Scotland, with analysis of the social dynamics in the Multi-Actor Platforms to prepare recommendations for future agri-environmental governance and visions for rural areas of Europe. Acknowledgements: The projects SHERPA and UNISECO have received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreements 862448 and 773901.