

1. Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2012: priorities supporting RDP implementation

1.1 Priorities of the current AWP:

The Austrian NRN maintains an annual work programme. The current AWP was approved at the end of 2011 and it is based on the following main priorities:

- Axis 1: Agriculture and market: competitiveness of the agricultural sector and farmers; female farmers; innovation and cooperation; food quality; local food; and value added/ value added chain;
- Forestry: combination of forest and economy; forestry post 2013
- Axis 2: Environment: Improve the implementation of the agri-environmental measures concerning Biodiversity in the context of intensive and extensive fruit production, protection of surface water, technical handling of environmental measures in the RDP, regional approaches to nature protection; Further topics: Less favorite areas & environment, Natura2000, protected areas; nature protection on farms & Economy; participation of citizens
- Axis 3: Inter-municipal Cooperation (thematic focus on rural mobility)
- Leader: Know-How and "best practice" Transfer (national and international)
- Leader: Training for LAG managers
- TNC
- Fostering the participation of youth in rural development processes
- Running of the project database and the website

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1.2 NRN's activities implementing the above mentioned priorities

• **Axis 1: Agriculture and market:**

- Competitiveness of the agricultural sector and farmers:
 - » Due to increasing calls for reduction in intensity of farming practices as well as more environmental and landscape preservative farming the NRN organised one seminar called "Economy behind ecology"
- Innovation Cooperations in rural areas:
 - » Cooperations within the horizontal and vertical level of supply chains are a possibility for farmers to e.g. reduce costs, develop products and in the end to generate more quality of life. It is why the NRN organised one seminar called "Cooperation is good: Who together and how?"
- Food supply chains:
 - » The up-coming Common Agricultural Policy will put an emphasis on the topics "Local Products", "direct sales" and "Short Supply Chains" ("SSC"). These issues are also important elements of the EU quality package. That's why the NRN together with the Austrian Association of Farmers' Women invited to the international seminar on "Farmers' Women, Local Products and Short Supply Chains – Practical Experience, Strategic Perspectives".
 - » The NRN also organises together with the Austrian food industry a seminar focused on "Security of commodities and volatility of prices"
- "Livestock building price 2012" powered by Netzwerk Land:
 - » Already for the second time the NRN supports an livestock building price. The first price in 2010 awarded "contemporary and economic solutions for livestock buildings – dairy units" (for cattles, sheeps and goats). The price is executed by the Austrian curatorship of agricultural engineering and land development (ÖKL). The price 2012 will be awarded for trendsetting and economic livestock buildings in the category "fattening units" (for cattles, pigs, sheeps, goats, poultry)

• **Forestry:**

- Combination of forest and economy; seminar "Forestry: 2014-2020 RDP"

- **Axis 2: Environment:**

- Improve the implementation of the agri-environmental measures concerning Biodiversity in the context of intensive and extensive fruit production, protection of surface water, Technical handling of environmental measures in the RDP, regional approaches to nature protection:
 - » Four workshops organized
 - » Addressing farmers, agricultural chamber, environmental experts, controlling agency, ministry as well as further experts
 - » Workshop on Fruits and water combined with a study trip
- Less favorite areas & environment
 - » Workshop held addressing LFA specialists and environmental experts
- Natura2000 & Rural Development
 - » International conference
 - » Cooperation with the German Network for Rural Development
- Implementation of protected areas & participation processes
 - » National Conference with workshop
 - » Addressing managers of protected areas as well as people living in protected areas and being concerned by management plans
- Nature protection on farms & Economy
 - » Brochure published stating 9 examples how farmers can be economically successful while protecting nature
- Participation of citizens
 - » First Austrian-wide Wisdom Council to get non-farming citizens' point of view on farming and farmers
 - » Topic: Future of Agriculture
 - » Two days lasting Wisdom Council
 - » Presentation of the outcome to the public

- **Axis 3: Inter-municipal Cooperation (thematic focus on rural mobility)**

- Conference and workshop organized.

- **Leader Know How Transfer:**

- Study Tour with LAG managers and other related persons to Luxembourg (October)
- Annual Leader Conference with special focus on "LEADER 2014-2020"
- Thematic support group: The NSU regularly exchanges views with a representative group of LAG managers. Especially concerning the annual work program they deliver useful insights that help the NRN initiatives are getting a better fit.

- **Best practice Transfer:**

- 2012 RD-Award: EAFRD funded projects, that foster equal opportunities for women, youth, migrants and disabled
- Online project database, embedded in the NRN website
- Writing articles about relevant projects in the NRN periodical "ausblicke"

- **LEADER Training for LAG managers:**

- Seminar/workshop on strategy development and monitoring, impact oriented rural development
- Training on "Intervision". This method helps LAG managers, to find solutions on current problems within their own community by using the expertise of colleagues.

- **TNC:**

- NRN: Cooperation with European NRNs and the ENRD by fostering information flows.
- LEADER: Connecting LAGs which are looking for international cooperation partners by e-mailing project fiches, presenting projects at co-operation fairs, supporting initial meetings of (potential) project partners by moderating etc.

- **Fostering the participation of youth in rural development processes**

- One-day workshops in Leader-regions, which should help to unveil not only the views and concerns of the regional youth but

also possible projects and activities which can be implemented within the local development strategy.

- **Running the project database and the website:**

- Website: Redesigning of the homepage plus providing keyfacts about the Austrian NRN in English, news, as well as the contact persons within the different axes;
- Project database: In winter 2010 the database of 'good practice' examples and projects was put online. These good practice examples highlight aspects e.g. for innovation in rural development. The current duty is to increase the offer of best practice examples in the database; maintaining and improve the usability for external and internal users; working on an database of projects translated into English and published at <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/englisch>

2. Thematic Initiatives launched by the Network

The 2012 thematic focus of the Austrian NRN work is on equal opportunities, with a special emphasis on youth. In this respect a "sub-working group" of the national rural development committee was established and moderated by the NSU.

- **Status info and plans about continued thematic initiatives**

Thematic support groups (TSGs) have been established for each of the thematic sections - "agriculture and market", "forestry", "agri-environment", "Leader". The objective is to provide support for planning and implementation. Each TSG focused on its particular aims:

- Agriculture and market: A "competitiveness" theme was launched by the TSG and implemented through different seminars (training, mountain farming, business management, entrepreneurship);
- Agri-environment: Meetings were held with a small group of selected experts from different backgrounds (administrations, Chamber of Agriculture, biodiversity and organic farming experts; scientists; and external experts);
- Leader: Leader integration - meetings with Leader Managers, external experts, ...; Gender and equal opportunity - established by the Advisory Committee for Rural Development prepared and launched by the Austrian NRN

- **Issues addressed by the events:**

- Two meetings of the TSG 'agriculture and market' have been held;
- One meeting of the TSG for 'forestry' has been held;
- Three meetings of the TSG for '(agri-)environment' have been held;
- Two meetings of the TSG 'Leader' have been held;
- One joint thematic support group-meeting; held together with all TSGs and the Managing Authority; the purpose was to discuss the working program of the following years;
- Equal opportunities in rural development (Annual NRN conference in combination with project award – see above)
- Leader 2014-2020 (as part of the Leader annual conference)

- **Issues addressed by committees/steering groups:**

- Employment and rural development
- Youth and rural development

- **Information about thematic initiatives available on:**

- www.netzwerk-land.at (German only)
- www.netzwerk-land.at/englisch (Two brochures and informations about some best practice projects in English provided)

2.1 LEADER-related activities

LAGs in Austria are supported by the ÖAR, one of the tri-partite Austrian network. It is especially responsible for Leader-networking.

The NSU organizes trainings and events for LAGs (see section 2.2). Information about the event are sent via email to the LAG managers and communicated via the website (www.netzwerk-land.at).

NSU furthermore fosters information transfer about possible cooperation projects (inbound and outbound). LAGs which are preparing a cooperation can call upon a "start up" moderation to clarify substantial questions.

The NSU and the MA do plan to participate in events abroad: a study visit in October to Luxembourg, and the participation of NSU in fairs (f.ex. Lyon/France, Nitra/Slovakia, etc) have been planned.

3. Relevant Experiences/Good Practices

- **Identification of EAFRD-funded projects representing relevant experience:**

Every year the NSU organizes a project competition in combination with an award ceremony, each year with a different topic. A committee of experts assesses the projects and awards the prizes.

In addition the NRN website contains a project database, where the awarded projects are presented and where the LAGs have the possibility to upload their projects on their own. The selection criterion is the LAGs own perception of the project's "relevance".

- **Communication and dissemination of relevant experience:**

During the annual NRN conference the awarded projects are communicated. The NRN's website homepage presents randomly selected projects from the database. Projects from the database are also presented in the NRN's periodical "ausblicke".

Relevant experiences/good practices are available on:

- Project database: <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/netzwerk/projekte-gute-beispiele/projekt Datenbank-le-07-13>
- English translations of a couple of projects are on the way; they can be found at <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/englisch>
- Periodical "ausblicke": <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/netzwerk/magazin-ausblicke-1>
- Brochure about best-practice examples in the field of nature protection (concerning the implementation of the M323, based on article 57 of the current legislation): http://www.netzwerk-land.at/umwelt/m323-broschuere/m323-broschuere_english

4. Monitoring and evaluation of networking

- The NRN was evaluated as part of the RDP Mid-Term Evaluation.
- Not having a national rural network programme, the network doesn't assess network performance through an NRN-P evaluation.
- The network performs self assessment/evaluation activities by implementing an evaluation procedure for every event organized.
- Qualitative/result-oriented assessment reviewing feedback of network constituents are collected especially via feedback forms from our thematic support groups.

5. Communication

- The Austrian NRN has a communication plan as part of the annual working programme.
- The communication tools utilized by the network include:
 - » For agriculture and forestry: Website (easy to handle and well-known)

- » For environment: Website (easy to handle and well-known) and email (quick)
- » Leader: Website (easy to handle and well-known) and email (quick)
- » Magazine 'ausblicke' (twice a year)

6. Documents

- List of your publications, info materials, videos, etc:
 - » Periodical "ausblicke": <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/netzwerk/magazin-ausblicke-1>
 - » Event documentations: <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/netzwerk/veranstaltungsueckblick>
 - » Brochures concerning environmental and agri-environmental issues (available in German and English): <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/englisch/downloads> (English), <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/umwelt/downloads> (German)
- Latest version of the NSP and RDP available on:
 - » http://www.lebensministerium.at/land/laendl_entwicklung/programmtext.html

7. Events

Netzwerk Land Events 2012



by October 2012

Thematic field	Date	Event	Place
Agriculture and Market	26. March 2012	Work Group „Value added + Quality“: Future milk market 2020	Salzburg
Agriculture and Market	4. May 2012	Work Group „Value added + Quality“: Future meat market 2020	Landzeit Voralpenkreuz Sattledt/Upper Austria
Agriculture and Market	13. November 2012	Seminar "Security of commodities and volatility of prices"	Linz/Upper Austria
Agriculture and Market together with agri-environment	December 2012	Seminar "Economy behind ecology"	
Agriculture and Market	8. + 9. October 2012	Seminar "Farmers' Women, Local Products and Short Supply Chains – Practical Experience, strategic Perspectives"" + Excursion	Eisenberg an der Raab/Burgenland
Agriculture and Market	November 2012	Seminar "Cooperation is good: Who together and how?"	
Forestry	9. November 2012	Seminar „Forestry: 2014-2020 RDP“	Salzburg
Agri-environment	23. February 2012	Conference „Creating acceptance instead of conflicts – Participation processes in protected areas“	Klagenfurt/Carinthia
Agri-environment	29. March 2012	Seminar „Technical handling of environmental measures in the RDP - uncertainty, barriers, problem-solving approaches“	Vienna
Agri-environment	26. April 2012	Seminar „Nature protection and local approaches – existing concepts, used methods and possibilities for a new ÖPUL-Programme“	Graz/Styria
Agri-environment	11. April 2012	Seminar „Payments for Less favourite areas & environment“	Salzburg
Agri-environment	18.-19. June 2012	Conference „Natura 2000 & rural development in context of the European strategy for Biodiversity 2020“	Salzburg
Agri-environment	4.-5. June 2012	Seminar „Biodiversity in the context of intensive and extensive fruit production“	Hartberg/Styria
Agri-environment	21.- 22. September 2012	Wisdom Council: "What do you expect from farmers?" Public Presentation: Future of Agriculture	Vienna
Agri-environment	1.-2. October 2012	Seminar „Buffer strips – ecological effects, acceptance and options for the realisation“	Ried im Innkreis/Upper Austria
LEADER	24. January 2012	Work Group „participation of youth in rural development processes – Leader“ (Come together, work order, discussion current situation and positions, measures and ideas for the ongoing period)	
LEADER	21. March 2012	Work Group „participation of youth in rural development processes – Leader“ (Introductory presentation for the joint knowledge extension and experience transfer, measures and ideas for period 2014-202)	
LEADER	28.-29. March 2012	Innovative Factory "Development and implementation of innovative strategies: Methodes and Processes"	Enns/Upper Austria
LEADER	25. April 2012	Work Group „participation of youth in rural development processes – Leader“ (finalise the measures and ideas, working on a joint report, reflection with the managing authority)	
LEADER Netzwerk Land organises the participation of Austria	27.-28. April 2012	ENRD Event: Local Development Strategies and Co-operation	Brussels
LEADER NWL is partner	12.-14. June 2012	LINC: Participation and voluntary work in the rural development	Tartu, Estonia
LEADER/Zukunft Land	26. November 2012	Conference: "Mobility in rural areas"	Baden bei Wien/Lower Austria
LEADER	09.-11. October 2012	Leader-Excursion Luxemburg	Luxemburg
Netzwerk Land – LE07-13	7. November 2012	Annual NRN conference: Equal opportunities in rural development; incl. awards' ceremony	Schloss Seggau/Styria
LEADER	8. November 2012	Leader-Forum: Future of Leader	Schloss Seggau/Styria

Information available on: <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/netzwerk/veranstaltungsueckblick>