

ENRD

m a g a z i n e

Connecting Rural Europe...

Spring
2013

English

MAIN STORY:

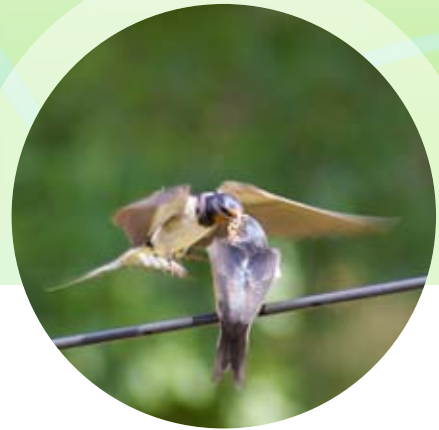
SOCIAL MEDIA AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



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Rural Development



Dear Reader,

Spring is finally here and with it the latest edition of the ENRD Magazine, celebrating all that is new and promising in European rural development!

One of the more exciting changes in recent times has been the rise of social media, which, in all of its many forms, is now said to be the number one online activity! Many ENRD stakeholders - from Local Action Groups (LAGs) and National Rural Networks (NRNs) to Agricultural and Rural Development Commissioner Dacian Cioloş - have been quick to tap into social media and to engage in the rural development conversation through these emerging and evolving online networks. There are great opportunities to interact and to spread the message to new audiences.

So what better time to take the pulse of the EU rural development community's social media presence in our main article in the ENRD Report section of the magazine? And for those of you yet to join the social media revolution, you'll also find some practical advice on how to make the most of social media tools from Facebook to Twitter... so no more excuses!

As you will see, we have introduced a new section to the magazine. The ENRD's online Communicating Rural Development (CRD) Gateway celebrates excellence

in communication. In this issue, we delve further into two inspiring examples from the CRD Gateway to find out more about a successful rural development 'best practices' competition in Finland and an award-winning radio campaign on LEADER from Portugal.

Responding to your calls for more information about the role of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) in the upcoming programming round, our Rural Focus section gives you the inside scoop.

Our EAFRD Projects section profiles interesting projects from Greece and Spain amongst others and complementing this section, for the first time, we are proud to include some 'pull-out and keep' RDP project postcards! In our Over to You section, we turn our attention to educational and farming issues in Hungary and Poland.

And of course, as always, we bring you all the latest ENRD, LAG and NRN news, from all around Europe.

Last, but by no means least, you will see some beautiful, springtime images, selected from the entries to our ENRD Images of Rural Europe photo competition.

Enjoy!

The cover photo by Laurence Chabalier was submitted in the Rural Environment category of the Images of Rural Europe photo competition. It depicts a Beaujolais vineyard in France.





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ENRD *Report*

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union. Read all about our latest activities.

Social media and rural development

Social media has completely changed the nature of communication between organisations, communities and individuals. In fact, it has so altered the digital communication landscape that some now consider e-mails passé! In this issue of the ENRD Magazine, we take the pulse of the rural development community's social media presence ...

Social media refers to a diverse range of web-based, highly interactive tools that allow users to create, share, exchange and comment among themselves in virtual communities and networks. Many have rapidly become household names. Collaborative projects such as Wikipedia, social networking sites like Facebook and content communities such as YouTube are all nestled under the social media umbrella.

The rural development community has been quick to use a variety of social media. By promoting real two-way communication, social media is a great networking tool that helps to extend outreach. "Rural development policy does not only concern

farmers," explains Camillo Zaccarini of the Italian NRN, "we see the ordinary citizen as part of our target audience and social media has been so useful to us for this." "Social media can electrify rural development," agrees Josien Kapma of the Dutch NRN, as "it offers true democratisation of rural communities!"

EU AGRI is the name of the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development's Facebook page, which it set up in October 2010 as a complement to its other communication tools. The page has over 2 500 followers. Agricultural and Rural Development Commissioner Dacian Cioloş also has his own Facebook page with some 3 700 'likes' already collected. Many National Rural Networks (NRNs) use Facebook to further their rural development goals. For example the Bulgarian NRN uses it to involve the general public in discussions on important issues and to engage with experts on specific project or measure-related topics.

Local Action Groups (LAGs) are also embracing social media. According to Makis

Papamichael from the Larnaca LAG in Cyprus, Facebook has been really useful in promoting the group's strategy, getting young people involved and sharing information on networking activities, projects and events. "We use it to promote local regional businesses by sharing links to articles on other websites or disseminating information about events, awards...anything of interest to the rural development community," he says.





LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the online world's largest professional network. It has over 175 million members and growing...

www.linkedin.com/groups/European-Union-Regional-Rural-Development-1996815



Twitter

Twitter is an online service that lets users exchange short messages known as 'tweets'. Created in March 2006, it now has some 500 million registered users worldwide.

www.twitter.com/RDPENetwork



Pinterest

Pinterest is a content sharing service that allows members to pin (virtual) objects, such as images and videos to their pinboard.

www.pinterest.com/epinfographics/



Facebook

Launched in 2004, Facebook is now a social media phenomenon! Its over 1 billion users upload photos and videos, post updates and send messages to each other.

www.facebook.com/EUAgri

YouTube

YouTube lets users upload, view and share videos. It has also now become the world's second largest search engine!

www.youtube.com/user/EURural



Claudio Mura from the Marghine LAG in Sardinia – another LAG that uses social media extensively – values being able “to track opinions on the issues raised by LAGs, develop a dialogue and through this process build a relationship of trust. Social media also allows for better transparency, encouraging active citizenship and participation.” But like other practitioners, the Marghine LAG representative advocates the use of multiple social media tools, including Twitter and YouTube to really maximise the potential they have to offer...

The ‘SMS of the internet’ - Twitter - is growing in popularity amongst rural development activists. For example, the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Network has some 1 000 Twitter followers, i.e. those who have opted-in to receive RDPE information.

“Twitter links us with individuals interested in all aspects of rural development including wildlife, agribusiness, nature science, researchers, communicators, charities and local businesses – in other words the network of the network,” says James Elliott

from RDPE. “We tweet links to funding opportunities and programme updates just minutes after they have been announced,” he adds, noting that ‘event tweeting’ is a way in which followers can stay informed about oversubscribed events that they would otherwise miss.

As a very active user of social media, the Dutch NRN has even published a ‘guide’ on how social media can be used to support rural businesses and the rural community at large. The NRN uses a combination of social media tools, including Facebook and LinkedIn, but most especially Twitter.

“Our Twitter account @GuusNet has over 2 000 followers. We hold a weekly ‘Twitter Chat’ which has really grown in popularity,” says Josien Kapma, who works with the NRN. She remembers how, “it started by role-modelling and encouraging people to share CAP news on Twitter and we requested that they use the tag ‘#toekomstg1b’ (and ‘#CAPreform’ in English). Two lively streams now exist for these tags, which have been contributed to by diverse stakeholders. A

dairy farmer in the north of Holland can directly share and interact with his MEP in Brussels, and they do!”

And social media stimulates the rural development community network. “The interesting thing is that relations do not necessarily need to follow institutional lines. With our initiative FoodPolitics.eu we are building our social network relations over the EU. The UK’s #agrchatuk on Twitter is the counterpart to ours, so we are constantly in touch,” explains Josien Kapma of the Dutch NRN.

It’s important to choose the right social media tool for the task at hand. The Wallonian Rural Network in Belgium runs an online discussion forum for LAGs offering and seeking cooperation partners, which is proving very successful. “For a well-defined topic, a blog can allow for more detailed information than other social media tools,” says Cecile Schalenbourg, from the Belgian NRN, who also uses Facebook. And video-blogging is also proving popular with the Dutch and Greek NRNs already having worked together on a video-blog series.

Social media has clearly become an indispensable tool for rural development networks. So, what are the potential pitfalls? Aligning social media into the communications strategy requires work. The RDPE Network limits its use of social media tools

to those the organisation feels it can manage effectively. "We have thought about using more but time is a big factor for us – we only have a small team. To get around this we sometimes 'piggyback' on other people's social media channels," says James Elliott.

deciding on which social media platform(s) your organisation should be using.

Ulrika Holmström from DG AGRI agrees, "be sure to follow-up on replies or comments received. If people realise an account is simply being used as a notice board, they quickly lose interest. And it's equally important to update regularly," she says. But perhaps our Dutch colleague Josien offers the best parting advice, "it does involve work but it's also incredibly rewarding. Our advice? Start soon! Social media is not going away."

Check out other great examples of social media communication on the CRD Gateway on the ENRD website: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/communicating-rural-development/eafrd/>

A cautious approach is advisable, especially when starting out. "You can't just enjoy the praise that Twitter or other social media might bring - you have to be prepared for criticism and be ready to defend your position," warns James Elliott, adding that it is essential to "know your audience," when

The ENRD and social media

Like others in the rural development community, the ENRD has embraced social media. Established tools such as discussion forums remain just as relevant as more fashionable arrivals when reaching out to the network...

opENRD

opENRD is the European online rural development forum. It allows everyone to join the conversation about the latest rural trends. It has been re-vamped to allow for easier access and a more user-friendly format.

"The preparation for the LEADER Event 2013 is an excellent example of how opENRD can really engage stakeholders and give everyone a voice at the table," says Fabio Cossu of the ENRD, "we launched the discussion forum at the end of October 2012 to find out what topics people would like the event to deal with and we received many valuable responses that then informed the preliminary discussions with the LEADER Sub Committee in November. Moreover, this forum stimulated so much discussion and interaction that opENRD users have also spontaneously launched their own discussion threads!"

@ENRD_CP

The number of ENRD Twitter account followers grew by 25% in the second half of 2012. As the number of tweets increase, so too the 're-tweets' grow, i.e. the forwarding of an ENRD tweet by another user. Re-tweets are a great way to spread the message throughout the virtual rural development community.

Tell us what you think?

A conversation about the social media activity of LAGs, NRNs and other organisations has popped-up on opENRD. Tell us what you think by joining the debate: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/myenrd/myenrd/en/login_en.cfm?



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The rise of social media!

- › Social media is now the #1 activity on the web
- › Every second 11 new Twitter accounts are created
- › YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world
- › If Wikipedia were a book it would be 2.25 million pages long



Rural development policy ..in figures!

Ever wonder about Rural Development Programme (RDP) performance? Are certain measures more popular than others, are overall targets being attained, or how well are policy priorities being achieved?

Well, wonder no more, because the ENRD website gives you access to a comprehensive and unique series of regularly-updated information tools that provide a practical overview of programme delivery in each country, throughout the EU.

The Rural Development Policy in Figures

(<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-in-figures>) section of the ENRD website, which is based on data made available by the European Commission, provides a breakdown of the implementation progress of each RDP and measure.

The 'RDP Monitoring Indicators Tables' summarise the facts and figures using charts and graphs to illustrate the RDP performance by measure, financially and in terms of output. The monitoring indicator data is complemented by RDP and measure 'Information Sheets' which analyse policy delivery and

establish connections between resources and actual outcomes.

Finally, the 'Thematic Information Sheets' provide a brief summary of the conceptual framework behind the policy intervention and describe the measures through which priorities are to be implemented. They give a clear picture of rural development policy intervention by theme and highlight linkages between policy priorities, the implementing measures and the actual outcomes on the ground, complete with illustrative examples of actual beneficiaries. A 'must' for anyone interested in EU rural development!

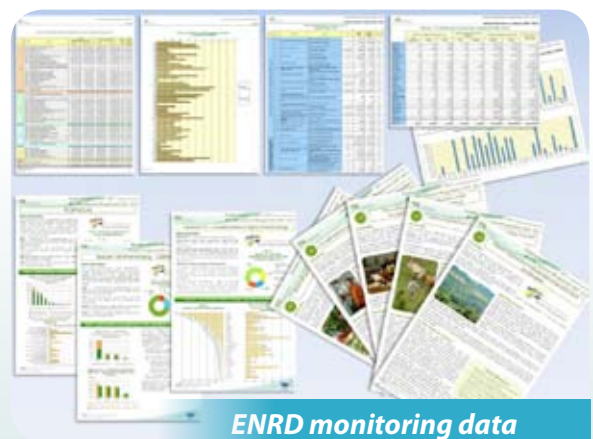
Example: €11 billion to improve quality of life in rural areas

Most EU Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) have allocated resources to improving quality of life in rural areas, according to the latest ENRD Thematic Information Sheet. A number of Axis 3 measures specifically aim to contribute to improving quality through support of cultural and leisure activities, village renewal and development and actions concerning the rural heritage.

For instance, up to 2010, under the measure supporting village renewal and development (Measure 322) interventions concerning local road works, renovation of buildings, and

environmental upgrades (parks etc.) have been supported in more than 20 000 villages across the European Union.

The overall budget allocated by the EU Member States to these measures is €11.4 billion for the period 2007-2013, with €7.8 billion contributed by EAFRD. This is equivalent to 7.4% of the total public expenditure for rural development in this period at EU27 level.



ENRD monitoring data

Local Development Strategies included in LEADER Tool-Kit

The ENRD's online LEADER Tool-Kit - offering a range of practical advice on the key elements of the LEADER approach - has been enhanced with a new section dedicated to Local Development Strategies (LDS), which you can find in the 'strategy design and implementation' section of the LEADER Toolkit: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/en/leader_en.cfm

LDS are an essential component of the LEADER approach. The LEADER Tool-Kit aims to assist LAGs with their preparation, design and implementation. This guidance is based on recommendations coming from the work undertaken by the ENRD Focus Group on 'Better Local Development Strategies'.

LEADER has achieved great successes – so much so that the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) approach, foreseen for the next programming period (2014-2020) will apply LEADER principles to other funds and development areas. Yet, LAGs also face real challenges, one of which is getting their LDS right. No two LAGs are identical, but they all have to bring together diverse partners, build consensus and deliver a strategy that reflects local needs and capabilities. LAGs are expected to design and implement local strategies that reflect their unique combination of assets, resources and aspirations.

The LEADER Tool-Kit outlines the factors to consider when designing and implementing a strategy and it also contains inspiring video messages, illustrations, presentations – as well as documented cases from experienced LDS practitioners.



The graphic displays the LEADER Tool-Kit logo at the top left. Below it is a grid of six colored boxes, each representing a different resource: 'LEADER Tool Kit' (purple), 'Local Action Group Database (LAG)' (grey), 'LEADER Focus Groups' (blue), 'Further Information' (yellow), 'Media & Events' (brown), and 'Transnational Cooperation (TNC)' (green). Each box contains a white icon: a signpost, a map of Europe, a magnifying glass over people, an information 'i' icon, a camera, and two hands shaking. At the bottom right of the graphic is the URL http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/en/leader_en.cfm.

Seminar on Community-Led Local Development

Some 100 representatives from EU Managing Authorities attended a seminar on Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) on 6 February 2013, in Brussels. The seminar provided guidance and advice on CLLD regarding the programming aspects within the parameters of the Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020.

Representatives of the European Commission outlined their expectation that CLLD is a key tool for cohesive territorial development and is instrumental for job creation and economic growth in the near future. Practical examples were presented to highlight how CLLD is already working in certain real-life cases. Reference was made to integrated approaches used in fisheries and maritime, approaches which could be of relevance to rural development in various Member States.



Participants were also given expert advice on the elements Member States need to build into their Partnership Agreement; on how to build delivery models to make CLLD operational; and on how to put in place simple and robust procedures to ensure strategies that are of good quality, effective and have minimal associated risk. Participants were then given the opportunity to discuss their plans at national level for CLLD, its structure and delivery.

For more about CLLD, check out the Rural Focus section of this edition of the ENRD Magazine and visit: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/experts_documents_en.cfm#3

Community-led local action in the Questembert commune in Brittany, France.

Focus on youth...

The number of young farmers in Europe is falling: currently just 6% of farmers across the EU are under the age of 35! In some Member States young people represent less than 3% of the entire farming community. And so, young people and - young farmers in particular - are at the centre of two new initiatives that aim to redress this worrying trend.

ENRD Thematic Initiative on Youth

The first official meeting of an exciting new ENRD Thematic Initiative on Youth and Young Farmers in Rural Areas was held on 7 February 2013. The initiative saw representatives from NRNs, LAGs, Managing Authorities, European and youth organisations come together in a joint effort to raise awareness of the need for rural development policy to effectively assist young people and farmers in rural areas. The initiative also aims to understand what worked well and less well in the implementation of RDPs with regards to supporting young farmers and rural youth and to explore ways in which young people can be involved in the design and implementation of rural development policy at EU, national and regional level. The initiative has placed a special emphasis on the views of young people in this regard. The initiative will culminate in a major event to be held later in the year. For further information check out the related online gateway: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/youth-and-young-farmers-gateway/>

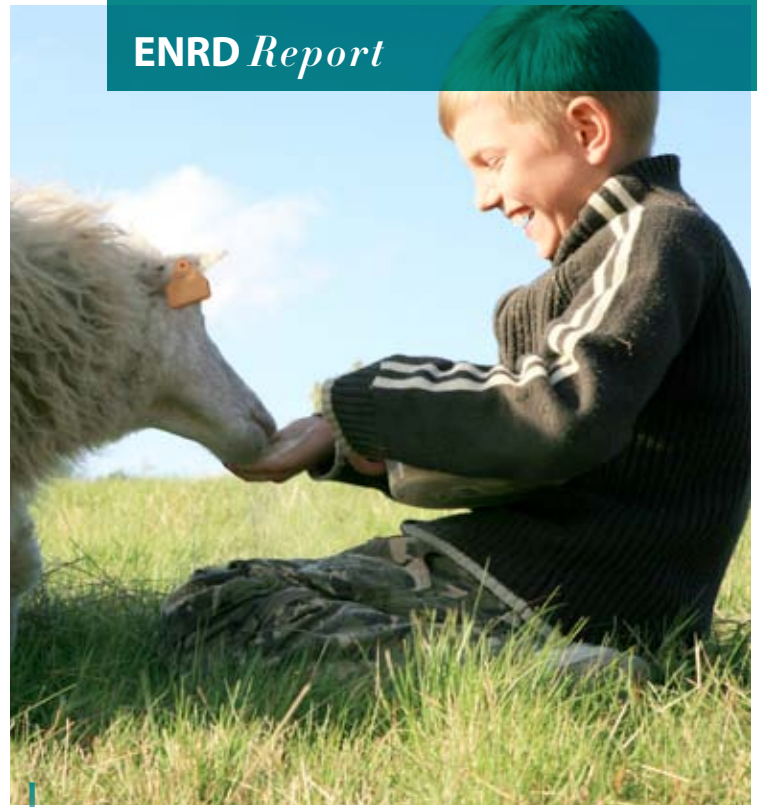


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Insight into successful programming

Member States' Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) for the 2014-2020 period should be demand-led; results-oriented; error-free; and fully integrated with other development support for rural areas! That is according to the outcome of a major ENRD seminar on 'successful programming' held in Brussels, in December 2012.

Some 250 people attended the seminar, from all EU Member States. The seminar acted as a springboard for the European rural development community as RDP preparations begin in earnest and it brought together a number of different work-streams the ENRD has been leading, such as strategic programming and monitoring and evaluation, Community-Led Local Development, the future of rural networking and financial instruments.



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Recent initiatives are tackling the falling number of young farmers in the EU.

Future... Food... Farmers

The European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) has launched a European-wide campaign entitled 'Future, Food, Farmers,' which aims to raise public and political awareness of the impending age crisis in European agriculture. CEJA believes action must be taken now to guarantee that European agriculture will deliver the quality and competitiveness European society expects in terms of food production. It is calling for the prioritising of generational renewal in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) towards 2020. For more about the campaign: <http://www.futurefoodfarmers.eu/campaign>



Participants at the successful programming seminar.

The ENRD will continue to support rural development programmers during what will be a formative year for the future of rural development in Europe. For more information visit the dedicated 'successful programming' webpage, which includes the official newsletter summarising the conclusions of the December seminar: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/successful-programming_en/

© ENRD Contact Point



© Ana Nechita

Cooking demonstrations on the European Commission stand during Green Week.

International Green Week

Over 400 000 visitors made their way through Berlin's snow-covered streets for the 78th edition of the International Green Week ('Grüne Woche'), which ran from 18-27 January 2013.

With 1 630 exhibitors from 67 countries, the largest agriculture, food and horticulture fair in Europe was more international than ever. The ENRD Contact Point took the opportunity to team-up with representatives from a range of EAFRD co-financed projects to showcase rural development in action!

On the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development's stand, project presenters explained how LEADER is driving local communities' climate action in the Black Forest. Over some delicious snacks from the province of Małopolska delegates learned how food branding is strengthening local producers in Poland.

Other highlights included the 'Open Farms' initiative, where over 20 different partners, from farmers to shopkeepers, come together to strengthen the local food supply chain in the Nuthe-Nieplitz region. And children and parents alike were entertained by the team from the 'Fantastic for families – from Burgenland to Saxonia' initiative (read more about it on the RDP Database - http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view), which featured magical creatures,

no less! The audience learned in a playful way how this Austrian and German transnational cooperation project can support the collaborative development of local recreational facilities for families in rural areas.

"We are absolutely delighted to be attending such a prestigious event and to be asked to represent Scotland's LEADER programme in this way is quite an honour," said Liz Ramsay, Project Manager of Savour the Flavours, the region of Dumfries & Galloway's food group, who also joined the DG AGRI stand to promote Scotland's wide-ranging activities in food and drink networking. The audience was certainly impressed by the lively presentations, music, tasty products and the infectious enthusiasm of project holders for their work in rural areas.

Amongst the Grüne Woche events was a two-day conference about the future of rural development that gathered 80 agricultural ministries. With a wide-ranging programme, the conference offered much food for thought and allowed the ENRD CP to present the work of the European network. You can find out more about the workshops online (in German): www.zukunftsforum-laendliche-entwicklung.de/

Environmental services workshop

An environmental services workshop was held in Brussels on 4 March 2013. The main objective was to tackle the design of quality Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) so as to address environmental and climate change concerns and the smart application of a range of measures in this regard.

The workshop was one of a series of ENRD preparatory activities for the new programming period (2014-2020). The event was based on

the specific programming guidelines and measures prepared by the European Commission, as well as the conclusions of the work of the ENRD Focus Group on the delivery of environmental services.

For more information about this event: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/quality_design_measures

Pilot training programme for rural networks

A pilot Network Support Unit (NSU) Training Programme has been launched at the ENRD, aimed at enhancing the management and operation of National Rural Networks (NRNs). A kick-off meeting attended by 33 representatives of 15 networks was held in Hungary in February and a second training module was held in conjunction with the 17th NRN meeting in Sweden in March.

This peer-to-peer model involves the sharing of knowledge within a group of equals from similar social or professional contexts. "We hope this programme will capitalise upon the networking experience and skills that exists within the ENRD and is available to be shared amongst peers," says Marina Brakalova of the ENRD CP, one of the organisers of the training programme.

"It is hoped that this flexible approach to capacity building will further improve interaction and the sharing of knowledge and ideas, as well as the generation of new knowledge," she says. The initial pilot phase of the programme will focus on more informal activities including an online discussion forum on opENRD and an exchange programme for NSUs.

The programme potentially aims to feature formal training modules including workshops, seminars, thematic study visits and a proposed ENRD Summer School. Informal activities may include one-to-one mentoring, phone-based 'think-tanks', exchange visits, online discussion groups and training videos. For further information about the programme contact: Network-Events@enrd.eu

ENRD Contact Point Visits



Students from the French agricultural business school at the ENRD CP in Brussels.

Students from French business school

A group of 12 masters' students, working on CAP and environmental Policy, from a French agricultural business school - Centre international d'études supérieures en sciences agronomiques, Montpellier SupAgro - visited the ENRD Contact Point as part of a Brussels study trip on 29 November 2012. They were keen to learn more about the second pillar of the CAP and in particular about all the coordination activities between Member States. They also wanted to get an understanding of how CAP reform will impact on ENRD activities in the next programming period.

Finnish LAG representatives

On 30 November 2012, the ENRD Contact Point welcomed representatives from four Local Action Groups (LAGs) from Northern Ostrobothnia in Finland. Rural development policy changes and networking were top of the agenda for this group which is involved in economic development, transport and environmental issues.

Missouri university

The role of the ENRD in policy development, monitoring and developing information systems and the network's relationship with Member States, local government and NGOs, were the subjects discussed with an academic and a group of four students - studying public affairs and economics - from the University of Missouri USA, who visited the ENRD Contact Point on 17 January 2013.



LAG representatives from Finland at the ENRD CP in Brussels.

Project winners in the category 'LEADER: admirable local action' at the gala ceremony in Tampere, Finland in November 2012.



Communicating Rural Development

The ENRD's online Communicating Rural Development (CRD) Gateway celebrates excellence in communication. Here, we delve into some great examples...

Finland: Sharing good practice via the web

The Finnish National Rural Network runs an innovative online competition known as 'Rural Network Best Practices'. The competition gathers together inspiring project ideas and good practices that have received funding and been implemented throughout Finland.

To enter, the candidates feed their proposals into an online database. The 2012 edition saw nearly 200 projects submitted and the prizes for winning entries were awarded at a gala ceremony in Tampere, Finland. Categories included best rural enterprise, best environmental effort and best LEADER LAG.

The inside story

Kirsi Hakoniemi, Information Officer with the Rural Network Unit from the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, explains the rationale behind this successful Finnish communications project:

"We know that there are great projects helping to build vibrant rural communities. To boost knowledge about these Finnish rural development success stories, we used a web-based participatory approach to uncover and promote some great projects!"

The competition, "answered an identified communication need and supported a central aim of our network activity, which is to showcase the development results and to pass on best practices. It also contributed to our network's self-assessment and analysis needs and delivered useful feedback about the measures financed by the RDP."

The original idea for the competition - the first of which was held in 2010 - highlights the benefits of networking: "we were impressed by a competition organised by the

Swedish rural network. As we further developed the concept in our working groups, we also benefited from the experience of our Austrian colleagues.

The campaign required detailed planning, "we communicated about the competition prior to launching it at our network events. Targeted communication was carried out online, in newsletters, press releases and to email groups. We also developed e-brochures, advertisements and social media support."

The campaign also leveraged support from the network, "regional communicators played a vital role as ambassadors for the competition. They helped attract entries, generated publicity about the selected finalists and they helped the finalists prepare their presentations for the gala ceremony."

The Finnish NRN was happy with the outcome of this coordinated communications effort: "we achieved our goal of promoting good rural development practices nationwide. We have received a lot of encouraging and positive feedback and we look forward to another edition in 2014."

The campaign was not just about communications, it was about "networking with rural community actors in order to find real Finnish rural development gems!"

And finally a key lesson? "Accurate planning and allocating sufficient resources to preparation are essential!"

For more about the Finnish network: www.maaseutu.fi/en/



Portugal: 'Living Land' radio campaign

MINHA TERRA, the Federation of Portuguese Local Action Groups Associations, produced an engaging radio broadcast series about LEADER-financed rural development projects. Thirty short programmes were produced in all; each of which brought to life the story of a LEADER project through the voice of an experienced journalist, accompanied by interviews with the project owners who explained how the project began, how it evolved, outlined the current state of play and highlighted the importance of LEADER support.



© 123rf



Access inspiring examples of rural development communications on the CRD Gateway:
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/communicating-rural-development/eafrd>

The Portuguese 'Terra Viva' (or Living Land) campaign was one of the winners in the 'communication to the public' category of the Communications Awards 2012 organised as part of the 50 years of CAP celebrations. The award jury highlighted the campaign's communication for its "short, easy-to-understand, personal testimonials."

The inside story

Luís Chaves, coordinator of MINHA TERRA, which worked on the campaign, explains why Living Land was a success:

The creative execution of the concept was one of the campaign's real strengths, "we used a journalistic approach to effectively communicate the reality of the rural world and people really connected with it."

The objective was to raise awareness of the LEADER approach, conveying the message that it promotes the integrated development of rural areas from entrepreneurship to environment, to local products, etc. The two-minute radio programmes emphasised the

dynamism of rural areas - Terra Viva - and the concrete results of LEADER-supported projects. "Each story explains how the money is invested to create jobs, to help diversify the rural economy and to improve quality of life."

The outcome was impressive. By presenting LEADER projects from different regions, the public understood the diversity inherent to LEADER and the impact of EU funds in terms of local development and job creation.

"By broadcasting on TSF, the main news radio station, we were able to maximise the campaign's impact. The 30 programmes were all aired at peak listening times. It is estimated that we reached around 400 000 people!"

All the 30 programmes are still available to stream from the TSF radio webpage. The radio station also broadcast more than 60 thirty-second trailers to promote the programmes.

The campaign, which was run on a modest budget, was part of a wider communication strategy of the MINHA TERRA network, as well as part of a wider project financed under the Portuguese Rural Network Programme, which involved other communications channels including newspapers and seminars.

For more information:

MINHA TERRA: www.minhaterra.pt

50 Years of CAP: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/50-years-of-cap/communication-awards-2012/index_en.htm



One of the many projects promoted during the radio campaign was the 'Fantasticable' over the Vale da Ribeira, in the Algarve, Portugal. The cable is 1 538m long and is suspended 125m above the ground!



Staff working at the information desk in the LEADER tent at Farmari.

NRN Focus

National Rural Networks (NRNs) are set up by Member States to bring those involved in rural development together to help implement EU rural development policy. This section features all the latest NRN news.

Finland: Consistent LEADER branding

In late 2012 a partnership of four LAGs in Satakunta province in Western Finland working with the Finnish National Rural Network Unit launched a pilot LEADER branding project. The initiative has been developed in response to feedback from LAGs that indicated that the LEADER message has not been as effectively conveyed to politicians, rural actors and the wider public as it could be.

The intention is to develop a LEADER brand identity and to create a number of marketing tools to encourage consistent branding, for example for websites and social media, which can be used by all LAGs. The project will improve awareness and understanding of LEADER, as well as the uptake of funds, as groups move forward into the new programming period. A public relations company is helping the LAGs to develop the branding and the new look will be unveiled as part of the LEADER stand at Finland's national agricultural show – Farmari - in July 2013. Further information is available from www.rural.fi

Netherlands: NRN hosts View on 2020 Conference

On the 13 and 14 December 2012, Network Platteland - the Dutch NRN - hosted a truly participatory rural development event in Wageningen to explore future rural development priorities. In developing a joint understanding of rural life in 2020, the 200 participants focused on four themes: social capital; local supply chains; new collaborative communities; and smart land use in the new economy.

The interactive conference was built around the participants' input: over two days a shared learning process was developed in a series of prototyping sessions. A new methodology - called the U-Process - was used to encourage participants to find new ways of doing things, to create new solutions to challenges and to build new partnerships.

The whole process has been a great experience for all involved. The NRN received very positive feedback about the innovative approach used. This approach will now be replicated around the Netherlands. Further information on the conference is available from: www.netwerkplatteland.nl/plattelandsconferentie/



Conference participants post their ideas during a prototyping session.

Lithuania: International conference on social entrepreneurship

Over 130 delegates from six neighbouring countries came together for an international conference on social entrepreneurship facilitated by the Lithuanian National Rural Network in Trakai. Social entrepreneurs generate business solutions to address social problems and/or to generate social benefits.

The event which ran from the 13-15 November 2012 heard interesting case studies from Lithuania, Estonia and Ireland and explored the opportunities and challenges associated with this increasingly relevant business model. Of particular interest were some issues around financing social business.

Conference participants took part in working groups on the tax base of non-governmental organisations and examined practical examples such as the social business programme 'social taxi' (www.socialinistaksi.lt) and projects based in the community of Smalininkai, western Lithuania. Delegates were also able to visit the Bank of Food, (www.maistobankas.lt), a social enterprise established in 2001 in the Vilnius region to distribute food to those in need, either directly or through other organisations who work with specific target groups. Further information is available from www.leaderlietuva.lt



Presentations during the evening event (from l-r): Tomas Didžiulis (Head of LEADER unit, The Centre for LEADER Programme and Agricultural Training Methodology); Lina Gumbrevičienė (Director, The Centre for LEADER Programme and Agricultural Training Methodology); Vita Janavičienė (Head of Širvintos LAG).

© Marius Kairys

Germany: Promoting local shops and local supply chains

Over 70 participants got together to address issues around local supply chains and rural shops, whether they be private, co-operative or community run, at a workshop coordinated by the NRN. Titled 'local and well-stocked,' the workshop included individuals directly involved in running local shops, people living in rural areas and representatives from local authorities.

Topics covered included feasibility studies, financial instruments for rural retailers, legal issues and securing local support. In addition there were presentations on many interesting case studies from Aidhausen and Heckenbeck and a study trip to a rural shop in Otersen. Further information about the event, held on the 11 and 12 December 2012, in Verden, Lower Saxony, is available from the NRN website, which also has some good case study material on innovative community-based responses to market failure in the provision of local services: www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/service/veranstaltungen/dvs-archiv/2012/nahversorgung/



Workshop participants visit a rural shop in Otersen.

© Isabell Friess



France: **Aquitaine regional network tackles climate change**

On 12 February 2013 in Le Pays de la Haute Gironde the rural network in Aquitaine hosted the latest in its series of events on climate change. The region is seeking to address a range of issues around a growing population, increasing transport demands and the need to ensure CO₂ emissions are reduced.

The workshop, which was attended by 45 representatives from all 13 'Pays' (local public-private partnerships), including elected representatives and professionals, delivered sessions on raising the awareness of climate change issues as well as sharing examples of good practice with a focus on practical actions.

The main conclusions highlighted the importance of pedagogy and the need to communicate effectively about often complex issues regarding climate change. Participants stressed the need to link the issues to the everyday concerns of citizens - from travel to food to housing - so as to make them more immediately relevant.

Further information is available from www.aquitaine-pqa.fr

Belgium - Wallonia: **Farmers' fact finding visit to the Netherlands**

On the 23 and 24 of November 2012 a group of 16 farmers and members of agricultural associations from Wallonia in Belgium took part in a study trip to the Netherlands to look at good examples of multifunctional farms. In all, they visited four farms, each of which demonstrated the range of productive uses to which an agricultural holding can be put. The visited farms had diversified into activities such as social farming, development and retailing of regional food products, nature and landscape conservation, education and visitor accommodation and recreation.

The visit enabled the participants to explore the practicalities of diversification strategies, such as what percentage of land should be kept in agricultural production and how much to set aside for new activities, the additional rules and regulations around various activities and the new skills that may have to be acquired. A full summary of the visits and the issues explored can be found in a detailed briefing note that can be downloaded from: www.reseau-pwdr.be/compte-rendu/compte-rendu-des-visites-de-fermes-multifonctionnelles-aux-pays-bas.aspx



Discovering breeds of cattle on an urban farm.

© Trame SCRL



A workshop breakout session in Linz, Austria.

Austria: Workshop examines environmental economics

The Austrian NRN (Netzwerk land) organised an informative one-day seminar that highlighted the correlation between good environmental performance and economic saving. Traditionally, the expectation is that environmental projects are funded by the public sector because of market failure. However, the event, held in Linz on 12 February 2013, explored the growing environmental economics evidence-base that demonstrates the savings or additional income that can be made by good environmental management. Real-life examples, such as Nature Parks in Styria, Austria were used to highlight notable economic approaches.

A new publication was also launched at the workshop, which was attended by 50 participants from across Austria. Entitled, 'Why it Pays Off: Nature Conservation on Farms,' the brochure - available in German here: www.netzwerk-land.at/umwelt/betriebswirtschaft-naturschutz-broschuere - provides a number of case studies that demonstrate the economic added value arising from a range of initiatives. Further information is available from: www.netzwerk-land.at/lum/veranstaltungen/2013die-oekonomie-hinter-der-oekologie-2013-wie-sich-umweltschutz-rechnet201c

Greece: 2nd national conference for LAGs

On 14 December 2012 the Greek National Rural Network held its 2nd national conference for LEADER LAGs. The meeting was attended by representatives from 34 LAGs. Among the topics under discussion were progress on the implementation of LEADER, the provision of technical support by the National Rural Network and the identification of LAG training and capacity-building requirements.

Peter Mouchas, head of the Greek NRN support unit explains the objectives, "we wanted this meeting and those that will follow to give the LAGs an opportunity to share their concerns and to exchange practices, so as to both mitigate difficult administrative procedures that lead to delivery delays and to encourage the use of available programme resources in the most efficient way. It is essential to have good management in an adverse economic environment that discourages any development activity."

Further information is available from: www.ead.gr



Representatives from 34 LAGs attended the Greek NRN conference.



© Máté Csuták

Various types of honey are sold at the market.

Hungary: Farmers' market in downtown Budapest

The 11th of January heralded the first farmers' market of 2013; a regular Friday event coordinated by the Hungarian NRN. Based in Kossuth Square adjacent to the parliament buildings in Budapest these are popular events attended by both local inhabitants and visitors seeking to buy food and craft products from across Hungary.

The initiative, launched by Zsolt V. Németh, Hungarian Secretary of State for Rural Development, began in June 2012. The market enables small rural producers to have direct access to customers that they normally would not reach and it also acts as a great promotional tool for Hungarian products. To participate, producers submit an application to the National Agricultural Advisory, Educational and Rural Development Institute – home to the NRN's secretariat – where it is evaluated by a panel.

Produce on display at the popular farmers' market includes fruit and vegetables, traditional Hungarian meat products such as salami made from Mangalitzta pigs and Hungarian Grey cattle, various cheeses, jams, honey and home-made beer. Further information is available from www.mnvh.eu



A steady stream of visitors and city-dwellers go to the market to find the best produce.



© Máté Csuták

Pears, plums, grapes and other fruits are also available at the market.



'Mother and Calf' by Eugene Carey, Co. Clare, Ireland

This image of rural tranquility depicts cattle relaxing in a field near Quilty in Co. Clare, Ireland. It was submitted in the Rural Environment category of the Images of Rural Europe photo competition by the Clare Local Action Group (LAG) in Ireland.



Joining forces to tap into forest biomass

RDP Projects Database

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/



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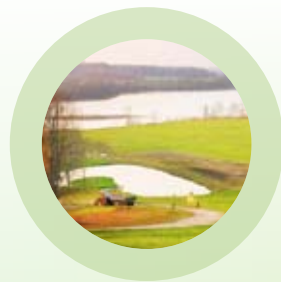
CONNECTING RURAL EUROPE

ENRD Contact Point:

Rue du Marteau, 81 Tel: +32 2 235 20 20
B - 1000 Brussels Fax: +32 2 280 04 38
Belgium E-mail: info@enrd.eu



RDP Project Postcards



Investing in equipment; helping local partners

RDP Projects Database

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/



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Rue du Marteau, 81 Tel: +32 2 235 20 20
B - 1000 Brussels Fax: +32 2 280 04 38
Belgium E-mail: info@enrd.eu

Joining forces to tap into forest biomass

Coordinated approach to energy production

AUSTRIA

The use of forest biomass is an increasingly important energy source. A farmers' cooperative contributed to the diversification of the energy supply in the Styrian region of Austria, by consolidating regional biomass and reducing dependency on other sources. From 2007-2010, this biomass facility sold about 7,000 cubic meters of wooden chips and 400 cubic meters of firewood. Moreover, the project helped to reorganise the region's energy production sector by promoting a collective approach through the coordinated management of the farmers' cooperative.

Measure 122: Improvement of the economic value of forests

Total project cost: € 85 000
EAFRD contribution: € 25 500

Find out more about this project:
<http://www.biomassehof-stmk.at/>

RDP Projects Database

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/



Investing in equipment; helping local partners

Working with local producers to maximise investment value

POLAND

By renovating its premises, upgrading equipment, enhancing storage facilities and establishing a transport network, a Polish vegetable processing company has been able to improve its competitiveness. In seizing the opportunity to increase the range and quality of its products, the company emphasised its partnership with local producers, who also stood to benefit from enhanced efficiency and a reliable market for their products. The positive result of the investment is not only confirmed to operational improvements; the company's relationship with producers has also benefited.

Measure 123: Adding value to agricultural and forestry products

Total project cost: € 882 000
EAFRD contribution: € 230 000

Find out more about RDP projects:
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/

RDP Projects Database

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/



Revitalising the Cosenza fig!

RDP Projects Database

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/

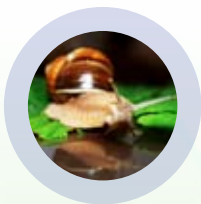
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ENRD Contact Point:

Rue du Marteau, 81 Tel: +32 2 235 20 20
B - 1000 Brussels Fax: +32 2 280 04 38
Belgium E-mail: info@enrd.eu



Discover EAFRD co-funded rural development projects from across Europe in the ENRD's RDP Projects Database!

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/



Young farmers go organic in Transylvania

RDP Projects Database

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/

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Rue du Marteau, 81 Tel: +32 2 235 20 20
B - 1000 Brussels Fax: +32 2 280 04 38
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Revitalising the Cosenza fig!

Increasing the competitiveness of an iconic regional produce



ITALY

Fig production in Cosenza has been falling. This major project is reversing this trend through supply chain reorganisation, the introduction of new production methods and the fostering of a newfound cooperation between the different parties involved in the fig production sector. The creation of a Protected Denomination of Origin label – 'Fichi di Cosenza' – has led to greater knowledge transfer and to the creation of new market opportunities, which has improved the economic viability of many farms.

Measure 124: Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies

Total project cost: € 17 300 000
EAFRD contribution: € 8 916 818

Find out more about this project:
<http://www.fichidicosenza.it/home.html>

RDP Projects Database

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/



Young farmers go organic in Transylvania

A working model for small-scale organic farming



ROMANIA

An enthusiastic young couple decided to realise their dream of setting up a model for organic farming on a small scale in Romania. They received support for the purchase of agricultural machinery, eight dairy cattle and the construction of two greenhouses. The new machinery has eased the workload and is improving the farm's efficiency and productivity. The new greenhouses and cattle are expected to help the farm expand its array of organic food products. The farm's produce is already sold in many shops and markets across the country.

Measure 112: Setting up of young farmers

Total project cost: € 25 000
EAFRD contribution: € 9 300

Find out more about RDP projects:
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/

RDP Projects Database

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/





'Robky on the Bikes' by Cyril Gajdík, Czech Republic

Members of the 'Robky ze Sěčky' choir (older women from the street of Sěčky) cycling between the villages of Šardice and Ratíškovice, to take part in a religious festival in South Moravia, in the Czech Republic. Although the Moravian costumes are traditional the sight of so many bikes is very much still part of daily life in the area! This photo was submitted in the Rural Diversity category of the Images of Rural Europe photo competition by the LAG Kyjovské Slovácko in motion, Czech Republic.



‘Voralpenpanorama’ by Heinz Engl, Austria

This poetic shot of the Austrian alpine foothills was submitted to the Rural Environment category of the Images of Rural Europe photo competition by the LAG Lokale Aktionsgruppe Auerbergland-Pfaffenwinkel e.V.

Over to You!

In this section, we ask ENRD stakeholders to share stories that matter to them and which have relevance for everyone in the rural development community.



Children get first-hand experience of food production at the Hungarian Farm Pedagogy Programme.

Learning on the farm in Hungary



© Tamas Cseloszki

This article was contributed to the ENRD Magazine by the Hungarian National Rural Network (www.mnrh.hu). The author of the article was Tamás Cselószki.

What colour is a cow? Where are potatoes grown? Are chickens round? These questions are not jokes. Today most children do not have the opportunity to get personal experience of food production in rural life. They increasingly live in a virtual world, in virtual communities and encounter food products only in stores, neatly shaped and packaged. The Hungarian farm pedagogy programme aims to bring children closer to real life by educating them about traditional farming in the countryside. The programme is an NGO initiative and had its pilot phase in 2012.

Conscious consumers and future farmers

The rural way of life and animal rearing are disappearing in Hungary, traditional farming methods have fallen out of favour and villages are increasingly becoming suburban areas. Agricultural trends are towards intensification,

food is mostly produced by industrial agriculture and consumers largely go for cheap mass produced options. The result is that children rarely get to know animals or plants and the tools and methods of food production.

Civil organisations in Hungary began the farm pedagogy programme so that every schoolchild could be familiarised with the traditional farming methods still in existence, through a down-to-earth educational programme. Participants benefit from practical experience in food production, get closer to rural people and livelihoods - and learn to respect them. The programme also aims to improve children's work ethic through collective activity and to help develop conscious consumers and farmers for the future.

This type of education has been practiced by several organisations in Hungary for many years, but a national-level system as yet has not been developed and introduced. Colleagues behind the farm



pedagogy initiative defined values, objectives and methods, thus creating the basis for the pilot year with practical workshops. The programme was drafted in close cooperation with the Hungarian National Rural Network and the National Federation of Rural and Agro-tourism.

The pilot year included five elementary schools from several Hungarian cities, 150 schoolchildren, five farms from different regions and 20 workshop days facilitated by six animators. The experience exceeded expectations: the participating children and teachers were all very enthusiastic and the farmers and animators were able to develop substantial programmes together in each venue.

How were the workshops designed?

There were workshops during spring, early summer and autumn, thus several working phases of farming were tested. Each element of every workshop was designed in advance by the animators in cooperation with the farmers, adapting the programme to the local conditions. As a result, days were well scheduled and these schedules were kept, engaging the whole group and minimising idle phases.

For workshop venues family farms using traditional farming methods and tools were selected. The farms kept animals and were able to host a group of 35-40 people (including media people).

The 30 schoolchildren were divided into three groups, each led by an animator. The groups switched among the different fields, which made the whole day colourful and exciting. The subjects covered sowing, planting, treatment of the plantation, harvesting, cow milking, cheese production,

looking after animals, maintenance works at a countryside house and garden, travelling by horse and carriage, cutting and processing meat, baking bread and other dishes in the furnace, cooking and having lunch together.

For catering, a preference was given to local products. Both breakfast and lunch meals consisted of simple, traditional dishes, some of them prepared together with the participants.

The work phases and all the relevant information were first presented by the animators and then children could try them. At the end of each day the group had an overview of the activities they had been familiarised with, and there were summaries of the previous days every morning, given by the children themselves.

Lessons learnt in the pilot year

The children and teachers were enthusiastic and the schools indicated that they would be glad to continue the programme. Farmers were also satisfied and appreciated how interested most children were about work on the farm. The animators are the key actors in the farm pedagogy process as they make the connection between the schools and farmers. They design the workshops and manage the whole day; it is their responsibility to involve everybody in the work.

Organising such workshops is rather expensive, as transportation, food and fees (for farmers and animators) are costly, however, the breakfast 'taster plates' and lunches were an excellent opportunity to talk about healthy local foods and to present rustic dishes. Moreover, children enjoyed preparing the food. Local media was present at almost every workshop in each venue to report about the children working on the farm.

National conference

The closing act of the farm pedagogy pilot programme was a conference held at the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development to consider the results and the possible continuation of the initiative. Attendance was high, indicating that this type of educational approach deserves its place in the Hungarian education system. Dr. Sándor Fazekas, Minister for Rural Development and Dr. Rózsa Hoffmann, Secretary of State for Education, opened the conference.

The programme manager, Márta Makra provided an overview of the programme, inviting some of the animators, schoolchildren, teachers, parents, a farmer and a school director onto the stage. Dr. Dávid Mezőszentgyörgyi, Director General of the National Agricultural Advisory, Educational and Rural Development Institute, who is the General Secretary of the Hungarian National Rural Network explained how such a programme could fit with the agrarian subsidy system, currently under consideration for the 2014-2020 programming period.

The programme partners, the rural and agrotourism federation and the federation working for the handicapped, also expressed their connectedness to the programme. A French guest speaker, Marie-Christine Ratto presented the 'welcome to the farm' network and the methods of her pedagogical farm. The final lecturer, Dr. Zsuzsa Horváth, Chief Councillor of the Education Research and Development Institute gave a clear and professional analysis of the farm pedagogy pilot from the perspective of the Hungarian education system.

The discussion concluded that farm pedagogy is timely in Hungary and that all actors are enthusiastic about it and support it. Nevertheless, the creation of a national farm pedagogy programme will be a complex task and all existing, similar initiatives were invited to be part of this new programme.



Polish agricultural producers on the visit to Bavaria.

Polish farmers learn from their neighbours

This article was originally published on 16 October 2012, in Polish, in the breaking news section (Aktualności) of the Polish National Rural Network's website: www.ksow.pl. The author of the article was Katarzyna Frąckowiak.

The action plan of the Polish National Rural Network for 2012-2013 foresaw a study visit to Germany. The trip involved a visit of Polish agricultural producers to Bavaria to investigate innovative technology, direct selling from the farm and bio-energy. The visit was held in early October 2012 and the participants were mostly farmers and entrepreneurs from Lower Silesia, Greater Poland, and Lubuskie province.

The main purpose of the project was to develop contacts and cooperation between Polish and German rural communities, through the exchange of experience and to encourage sustainable rural development. The assumption was that such links can strengthen and support economic development through seeking alternative forms

of income for the agricultural industry, while respecting the environment.

Modern farms and bio-energy

The participants were invited to the farm in the village of Veitsbronn near Fürth. The Schilmeier's family farm is a mixed farm involved in crop and cereal production, beef cattle and biogas. The farm distributes three varieties of potato, which are sorted in a specially-prepared room, peeled, washed, sliced and vacuum-packed. The prepared potatoes stay fresh for three days. Each year the farm sells 40 tonnes of potatoes. Asparagus is also picked and packed before being shipped to large retail chains. An interesting form of asparagus distribution involves a 24-hour vending machine located on the farm. It's an innovative form of direct sales from the farm. The young

farmer bought a broken sandwich-vending machine, fixed it and adapted it to vend asparagus instead! The idea was inspired by the fact that many people wish to buy this delicacy at any time of the day or night when it is in season, but they can't always find someone who is selling it.

A biogas plant has existed on the farm for a year and a half. It uses corn silage, manure and slurry (from the farm and from neighbouring farms). The energy produced is used on the farm and the surplus is sold on.

The farm benefits from EU funding. The share of aid (excluding investment) is varied, as it is a complex business. The basic payment per hectare is around €200. The owners would be happy to exchange direct farming subsidies for a decent market price. One of the Polish farmers asked why a young person would wish to remain on the farm? The farmer answered that the farm where he works has much potential and is a place where he can maintain the family tradition.

Workshop with German farmers

The study group then took part in a workshop led by a representative of the Bavarian Farmers Association, Thomas Zehntera.

During the discussion, the Polish participants had the opportunity to compare their agricultural activities with the experience of German farmers. Mr Zehntera also presented the activities of the Bavarian Farmers Association. Regardless of the size of their business, the association gathers all farmers

from Bavaria. There are two pillars of the association – one professional and one social. Representatives are elected periodically: the central office in Munich is designed to represent the whole association and seven regional offices advise members about social and legal issues. Most services are provided free-of-charge but there are some that require payment. The Association has approximately 800 dedicated tax advisors who help with tax registration and fiscal requirements. A farmer with an agricultural area exceeding 20 ha is required to maintain financial accounts.

Young German farmers (meaning up to 40 years old) are generally willing to take over family farms. They appreciate the opportunity to become self-employed, to invest in new technology and to purchase modern agricultural equipment. However there is a tendency for large farms to become even greater in size.

Production of vegetables for urban areas

The final day of the visit involved a research trip to 'Knoblauchland,' where a family farm run by the Hoefler family is selling vegetables and herbs. The farm uses different forms of distribution, including a leased space at the Nuremberg market. Most of the farm's produce is bought by one of the major German distribution networks. On the farm a properly prepared hall with a cooler allows for cleaning, sorting and packaging of products. A variety of vegetables are sold within a 100km radius of the farm.

Organic products

The last stop on the visit was to an eco-farm that specialises in the production of hops and apples. The Eckert family farm is registered as a partnership between father and son. Organically-produced hops are cultivated on an area of 24 ha, while 10 ha is allocated to the intensive cultivation of apples. The remaining area is 70 ha of grassland. Hops are sold to breweries in Germany and beyond. Part of the harvest is also sold in the United States. However, apple sales have a regional character, led by a specialised company which sells some 100 000 tonnes per year of apples to 16 stores. Apples are sorted and the waste is designated for the manufacture of juice.

During the visit, the participants had an opportunity to taste some regional Bavarian dishes (such as pork-shoulder with dumplings, Bavarian beef and lumberjack steak), prepared using traditional local recipes.

The participants were asked to indicate which of the examples and experiences shared on the trip could be adapted to the Polish way of farming. The participants pointed to a variety of activities, including production techniques, ways to diversify income and the benefits to farmers of direct selling. The Bavarian Farmers Association highlighted the great potential of selling crops directly, creating additional revenue from bio-energy and biogas and diversifying into rural tourism and gastronomy.



© Foundation of Assistance Programmes for Agriculture

LEADER *in Action*



Local Action Groups (LAGs) are local public private partnerships who work to promote LEADER's 'bottom-up' approach to rural development in the EU. Here we feature some notable LAG-related activities.



A typical 'masada' in the Aragón region.

© Gúdar-Javalambre y Maestrazgo Asociación de Desarrollo (AGUJAMA)

Spain: 'Masovera' project safeguards isolated rural farms

In mid-December 2012, the final meeting of the 'Masovera' project was held in Gúdar-Javalambre in Aragón, Spain. The objective was to disseminate the results of this development project which addresses the challenges facing traditional isolated rural farms - 'masadas' - that are typical to the region. The two day event also launched a follow on cooperation project twinning masoveras (sustainable masadas) from different territories.

The four-year cooperation project involved six LAG areas that share a common characteristic, namely, the existence of large tracts of land with scattered communities that do not enjoy the services and infrastructure experienced by the rest of the population. A range of quality of life support initiatives has improved their situation, raising awareness of the need to invest in such territories and assisting owners with small investments in renewable energy and wastewater treatment.

It is hoped that this initiative will ensure the future of the 83 remaining masadas (down from an original number of over 2 000) in the small region of Gúdar-Javalambre. Masadas are a living testament to the ability of humankind to adapt to its environment and a good example of self-sufficiency and sustainability, the likes of which are now seldom found in developed countries. Further information is available from: www.agujama.org



© Gúdar-Javalambre y Maestrazgo Asociación de Desarrollo (AGUJAMA)



© Leaderwerking Hageland VZW

Project partners from the three regions.

Belgium: Flemish and Walloon LAGs meet the neighbours!

Launched in January 2012, the Belgian 'meet our neighbours' project aims to bring together people from the neighbouring regions of Hageland, Haspengouw and the Brabant Hesbaye. Under the initiative, which runs between 2012-2014, six projects have been identified under four themes: tourism; products of the soil; the environment; and agriculture.

Three LAGs (two from Flanders and one from Wallonia) came together on 14 December 2012 in Jodoigne, Wallonia to present their collaborative actions. Projects include the development of a trans-regional bicycle route and the development of appropriate fruit varieties to support cultivation in the region.

The partners are also currently recruiting participants for trans-regional tourism training. The bus tour training programme will promote contact and exchange between professionals active in the field of tourism and enable them to discover and refine their knowledge of other regions, thus enabling an improved overall service offering to visitors to the three regions. Further information is available from www.hagelandplus.be, www.culturalite.be, www.regiohhh.be (Dutch) and www.regionhhh.be (French).



© Leaderwerking Hageland VZW



At work during the Colours of Cooperation event.

Italy: Colours of Cooperation event identifies new LAG partners

The 'Colours of Cooperation' event, organised by Local Action Group GAL Sulcis in Santadi, Sardinia was successful in its mission to find new project partners. Held on 8 February 2013, the event brought together 40 representatives from seven LAGs from Sardinia, Poland, Finland, Italy, Belgium and France. In addition to sessions to discuss in detail the potential for collaborative working, the participants undertook two field visits to the Santadi Winery and the Rosas Mining Village.

The two new projects, which were discussed in detail, are a 'smarTOURism' project to focus on nature- and outdoor activity-based tourism and an 'AgriSociale' initiative to develop a strong network of social farms that support disadvantaged groups and areas where there is a declining population.

President of the LAG Cristoforo Luciano Piras, who hosted the event, said, "both projects provide opportunities for the development of our territories and will benefit from innovative initiatives to ensure that they are known internationally, thanks to close collaboration with our LAG partners."

More information is available from:
www.galsulcisiglesiente.it

Luxembourg: Popular training guide promotes outreach

The beginning of January saw the publication of the latest edition of the sought-after training brochure Landakademie (Rural Academy). The brochure which was first launched by the Redange-Wiltz and Clervaux-Vianden LAGs in Luxembourg under LEADER+ now covers another two LAG areas.

"We are delighted with the success of this initiative, that has taken on a life of its own beyond the original LEADER project. It is essential to the future sustainability of our rural communities that all citizens are able to participate in lifelong learning opportunities," says Fons Jacques, Manager of the Redange-Wiltz LAG.

The publication provides residents of the four LAG areas with information on courses and training events throughout their regions with the latest edition covering the period from January through April 2013. A further two editions will be published this year. Topics covered include cooking, computing and language courses, amongst many others, with specific sections for children and seniors. Further information is available from: www.landakademie.lu



Cover of the January 2013 edition of the brochure.



© Majjistral Action Group Foundation (MAGF)

Local women prepare traditional dishes at the festival.

Malta: Culinary and crafts festival

The LAG Majjistral Action Group Foundation in Malta held its first Grand Culinary and Crafts Festival between the 7-9 December 2012. The successful festival was the first regional project to have taken place in Majjistral, with 15 local municipalities in north-west Malta joining forces to deliver an event for the whole community.

Around 70 exhibitors were able to display their products for sale and the initiative acted as a showcase for local craftspeople who have benefitted from LEADER support in modernising and upgrading their businesses. Besides the market, the community members were able to enjoy cultural activities, local craft-making presentations, artists' exhibitions, concerts, culinary competitions and other entertainment.

The event was also used to launch a transnational co-operation project, 'MeDIETerranea,' bringing LAGs in Italy and Malta together to give exposure to products and produce from each territory and establishing links between local food producers, tour operators and chefs. Further information is available from: www.leadermajjistral.eu



Children enjoying the festival fun.

Poland: LAGs participate in social capital training

In December and January, the Local Activity Support Centre (CAL) delivered a series of 15, two-day workshops across Poland for staff and board members of LEADER LAGs. The well-attended events covered topics such as animating communities, building social capital and delivering Local Development Strategies (LDS).

The training involved a series of formal presentations and practical workshops focusing on case studies. Participants were able to explore questions such as 'how do you motivate people to action in your area?' and 'how do you work effectively work with partners on projects?'

Lead trainer Boguslaw Pyzocha commented, "the main element of the training was the delivery of methodologies that enable local communities to engage in activities in such a way that social capital, both in terms of skills and knowledge, is built up. In several cases the training is assisting LAGs to start from scratch. Animators rely on training such as this for on-going inspiration."

Further information is available from: <http://ksow.pl>



Training workshop participants in Trzebaw, Wielkopolskie.

UK - England: Measuring the impact of LEADER

On the 19 November 2012, around 50 representatives from over 25 LAGs along with central and local government staff gathered for an interactive workshop in Birmingham which helped them to better understand the impact of their work.

The aim of the workshop, organised by the English NRN (the Rural Development Programme for England), was to exchange ideas, practice and information to help LAGs carry out monitoring and evaluation in a practical way. The event comprised a variety of presentations, discussion sessions and networking opportunities and explored good examples both from England and elsewhere in Europe.

One of the presentations was from the researchers commissioned by the UK government to evaluate the economic, social and environmental benefits of the LEADER approach and the extent to which it demonstrates value for money. Their work is expected to inform the rural affairs ministry's design of LEADER implementation as from 2014, leading to process delivery improvements. For more information: <http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/activities/all-activities/3rd-leader-exchange-group-meeting>



Discussion at the monitoring and evaluation event.

Rural Focus

EU rural development incorporates a diverse range of issues from forestry to rural finance to emerging challenges such as climate change. In this edition, we focus our attention on Community-Led Local Development.



Community-Led Local Development

If you work in EU rural development, then Community-Led Local Development, or CLLD, is a term that you are going to be hearing a lot more about! Though it may seem like a new concept, CLLD is of course synonymous with LEADER - the community-centred approach to rural development that has proved so successful. And now its influence and importance looks set to grow, as we enter the new programming period CLLD is becoming a common local development tool applying to all EU funds.

The Commission expects CLLD to facilitate the implementation of integrated approaches among the European Structural and Investment Funds concerned to achieve at local level the 11 thematic objectives of the proposed Common Provisions Regulation 2014-20¹. The Commission encourages the use of CLLD as it also allows local communities to take ownership of the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. In line with the Commission's proposal for the Common Strategic Framework²: *"Member States shall promote the development of local and sub-regional approaches, in particular via community-led local development [...]".*

Looking forward, CLLD will remain at the heart of rural development policy in Europe. LEADER has already become established as an inherent part of the policy and its use will therefore remain obligatory, with 5% of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) budget earmarked for its adoption by each Rural Development Programme (RDP). Recognition of the value of the LEADER approach is evidenced by the fact that a higher level of public co-financing is proposed for it, in comparison with most of the standard rural development measures. And it's not difficult to understand why...

The proposals for 2014-2020 offer the possibility of both deepening and broadening the CLLD approach in rural areas:

In terms of deepening (or strengthening) the approach, both the Common Provisions Regulation and the EAFRD Regulation contain a number of proposals for increasing local capacity (covering the cost of the preparatory phase, a LEADER start-up kit), higher co-financing rates, measures to improve the quality of local development strategies, more flexibility in eligibility rules and increased

- 1 Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund covered by the Common Strategic Framework and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, COM (2011) 615 final, amended proposal COM(2012) 496 final.
- 2 COM(2012)496, Annex 1, point 3.3.2.

administrative autonomy for LAGs. The aim is to increase the capacity of the partnerships to act as laboratories for new ideas and motors of change in rural areas.

In terms of broadening (or extending), the approach we know that LEADER already covers a high proportion of rural areas. However, the urban-rural split can often cut rural areas off from their natural urban travel-to-work and service centres. It follows that there are major opportunities for new forms of urban-rural cooperation and partnership.

The existing flexibility of LEADER already allows the partnership to fund projects such as support for SMEs and small-scale infrastructure that could be supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or training that could be supported by the ESF. In some countries, such as Spain, the ERDF is already estimated to spend as much money in rural areas as it does in urban areas but most of this is managed at national or regional levels³. There are major opportunities for improving synergy through better local coordination of both funds by local partnerships (for example, by involving LAGs in decisions for certain productive and infrastructure projects financed by the ERDF). Similarly, LEADER groups tend to focus on the most active people within disadvantaged areas. By cooperation with the ESF, they could extend their reach to some of the most disadvantaged people furthest from the labour market.

As regards the strategic approach to be taken for CLLD, rural development actors need to build on current experiences and lessons learnt from implementing LEADER. For example, it will be important to have a clear understanding of precisely the type of area/territory that should be supported through CLLD, which priority areas are to be supported from which fund, etc. as part of the integrated

territorial approach that will have to be described in the Partnership Agreements.

These areas should then draw up a Local Development Strategy, which corresponds in an optimal way to the socio-economic and environmental development needs of the area. The quality of these strategies is vital and should try to incorporate this wider vision of cohesive territorial and multi-sectoral development. The key building blocks of any good CLLD project will remain *innovation* and *cooperation*: across regions and between Member States, as well as between sectors to increase the degree of integration.

In order to achieve this, the approach chosen by Member States should give areas possibilities to complement specific 'CLLD funding' in the predominant fund with additional funding from the other European funds. In the case of LEADER this will allow Local Action Groups (LAGs) to identify further horizontal development challenges in their territory.

However, in order to make this happen, both the Member States' administrations and LAGs will have to put in place appropriate administrative structures, in line with the CLLD approach and requirements. And of course, this will mean that *capacity building* will have to be prioritised. The acquisition of skills at all levels, in each Member State, to help build local expertise will be a pre-condition for the implementation of this approach.

Our past and current experience with LEADER gives us certainty about its usefulness for the social and economic development of rural areas. Though there are some challenges ahead, this is an exciting time for EU rural development and by extension an opportunity to build a better future for all EU citizens, wherever they may live.

“Member States shall promote the development of local and sub-regional approaches, in particular via community-led local development ...”

³ See Ex-post evaluation of Cohesion policy programmes 2000-2006 co-financed by the European Fund for Regional Development. Work Package 9: Rural Development. By Metis/ÖIR for DG Regio, July 2008.



EAFRD Projects

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) co-finances many successful rural development projects all around Europe. We profile some inspiring examples...



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Olive groves in the province of Seville, Spain.

Spanish composting plant adds value to olive waste

Innovative recycling leads to economic and environmental benefits.

The province of Jaén in Spain is known for its high quality olive oil. However, the olive oil extraction process results in a by-product, known as olive cake, which can pollute soil and water systems. A cooperative organisation in Los Noguerones decided to build a facility to recycle its olive oil by-products that would allow them to be used as nutrients for organic farmers.

The cooperative built a composting plant, complete with a canal and irrigation system, to process the olive cake at its integrated production mill. The EAFRD contributed over €65 000, or around a quarter of the total investment that is now helping to boost local competitiveness.

A key outcome of this innovative composting technique is the production of nutrients for olive growers who wish to convert to organic farming. Formerly agricultural

waste, these organic by-products are now improving soil quality and helping to make the production system more sustainable in the long run by reducing dependency on chemical fertilisers. The cooperative also benefits economically from recycling. The positive results serve as a great example of innovation in the agricultural production process. To see the project in action, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvzahZ0P6dM>

Adding value to traditional Greek pasta, bread and pastries

Investment drives production process innovation and use of quality local produce.

In Crete, the MELKO company (<http://www.melko.gr/>) was looking to build on the success of its innovative production and packaging unit for fresh and dry pasta products, many of which are certified organic products.

The company, which has received several ISO quality certifications since its creation, wanted to expand production and promote a new range of traditional bakery products including bread, pastries and traditional sweets, primarily made from locally-sourced ingredients. An investment of

almost €300 000 was needed to develop a single production line for the new range of quality bakery products, to tap into renewable energy sources and to extend the company's premises, which now feature easy access for the disabled.

Looking to support local business development, the EAFRD invested €117 000 in the project. The result is that quality traditional food products are now being produced using environmentally-friendly techniques and organic products are being promoted. Employment has also been created and local farmers supply half of the ingredients being used.



© 123rf

Traditional food fresh from the oven!



Danish and Irish LAGs working together.

Readying small islands for sustainable energy

A transnational cooperation project between Denmark and Ireland.

On small northern European islands, energy is traditionally generated from fossil fuel power plants, despite the presence of local renewable energy sources. The result is that islanders and local businesses tend to have unnecessarily high energy costs, coupled with a large carbon footprint.

A transnational cooperation (TNC) project involving Danish and Irish Local Action Groups has addressed this common issue to both countries by promoting sustainable energy planning for island communities. Workshops and training programmes were organised at local, national and transnational level, allowing each island to achieve its individual objectives as well as to enable cooperative work. The main objective was to produce a sustainable energy strategy and implementation plan for each island in the project.

The project, which received €125 000 of EAFRD funding, has succeeded in heightening awareness of energy efficiency and it is driving economic gains, environmental benefits and employment opportunities on the participating islands. It's an example of good practice that can inspire other islands currently reliant on inefficient energy sources.

Read more about the project: <http://www.aktionsgruppe.dk/IRDA.asp>

Forest fire prevention in Slovakia

A smart and sustainable forestry management project.

The EAFRD has supported a project in Slovakia to develop forestry potential by restoring a former reservoir in the Beskidy Mountains. The Borsučie reservoir is located in a forest region which is classified as

having a high fire risk and which is also an environmentally-protected area.

The main activity included reconstruction of the 10m-high reservoir wall, bridge and drainage system. The reservoir tank was drained, silt removed and a firewall was built. A reinforced concrete pump pit and

a new tunnel were also added. The reservoir now provides sufficient water resources to extinguish any fire in the surrounding forests. The reconstruction work also enhanced local biodiversity by supporting hydrophilous flora conditions.

Developing green care in Finland

'VoiMaa!' is an exciting project to boost the development and coordination of the green care sector in Finland.

Green care, which refers to a wide range of activities using nature, animals or the rural environment to create wellbeing - such as riding therapy or therapeutic horticulture - has developed more slowly than expected in Finland.

The €500 000 project, for which just under half of the investment came from the EAFRD, sought to develop a shared understanding of green care at national level and to develop opportunities for rural entrepreneurs to team up with social and health services.

The project undertook research to identify precise quality criteria and the business models needed to deliver green care projects. It defined a national strategic plan for developing green care; and creating a website (www.gcfinland.fi) to communicate information and support joint discussion through web fora.

The project was characterised by a high degree of consultation between all the main stakeholders - including the project engineers, environmentalists and local authorities. It led to successful results, in both technical terms and with regards to environmental protection. In all, some €400 000 - or 80% of the total project investment - came from the European fund.

More information about these projects and hundreds more is available from the RDP Projects Database on the ENRD website:

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en

And check out the related project videos in the ENRD media gallery:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/en>

In Your Own Words

In this section, we pass the microphone to you and hear what you have to say. For this issue we hear your views on wildlife-friendly farming, LEADER and the decline in the number of young farmers in the EU...

"By implementing a more mixed farming system we've introduced new habitats onto the farm; its brought the farm alive!"

Gethin Owen, Nature of Farming Awards Winner 2011, Wales (from 'A Celebration of Wildlife Friendly Farmers' video by Rural Society for the Protection of Birds [RSPB])



"Things may not always go to plan at the start or along the way, but

LEADER groups learn from their mistakes, and this makes them much stronger in the longer term."

Romina Zago, from ELARD (see video clip in the LEADER toolkit on the ENRD website)

"It is important to ensure that the specific problems and needs of the LEADER territory are properly reflected in the Local Development Strategy's selection criteria for awarding project funding. This means only projects that address the agreed problems receive support."

Mireille Groot Koerkamp, Coordinator of the NL LEADER group in Salland and member of the ENRD's LEADER FG 4 (see video clip in the LEADER Toolkit on the ENRD website).



"There's nothing as beautiful as walking in the fields and hearing birdsong. To have that around you is wonderful and is one of the reasons why I'm trying my best to encourage wildlife on the farm."



Jack Kelly, Nature of Farming Awards Winner 2012, Northern Ireland, (from the RSPB video, as above)

"The lack of generational renewal in farming will lead to an array of other problems."

Ingrid Pettersson, Young Farmer (from the Future Food Farmers CEJA campaign video)



To see related videos for the above quotes visit the media gallery on the ENRD website: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery>



© Rural Network of Finland: Mika Kanerva

Practicing best poses!

'Voittajat' Winners of the Best Practices 2012 competition at the Rural Gala in Tampere, Finland in November, 2012

Out & About

Smile, you're on camera! We select some of our favourite photos from the recent networking activities of the European rural development community.

© ENRD Contact Point



Long-distance learning...

University of Missouri Students visiting the ENRD Contact Point in Brussels in January, 2013.



© ENRD Contact Point

Team effort in Hungary!

Participants of the 1st Module of the pilot NSU Training Programme, in February 2013 in Budapest, Hungary.



LEADER in Paris!

French project holders from Île-de-France Region presenting their LEADER project at the Paris Fair in February, 2013.

Belgium united!

LEADER project managers from Flanders and Wallonia - Amélie Janssens, Pierre-Bernard Van Acker and Marie Langhendries - during the 'Meet our Neighbours' project in December 2012.



LAG pride!

Joensuu Region LAG after being awarded the 'Most Effective LEADER LAG' at the Finnish NRNs Best Practice Awards ceremony in Tampere, Finland on 8 November 2012.



Have a rural development question?
Contact our experts at info@enrd.eu!

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: *What projects can a Rural Development Programme fund?*

A: Rural Development Programmes (RDP) funding is available for a wide variety of rural development projects. Funding is made available under four RDP axes. The title of each axis indicates the broad type of rural development actions supported. The four axes are:
Axis 1 - Improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry.
Axis 2 - Supporting land management and improving the environment.
Axis 3 - Improving the quality of life and encouraging diversification of economic activities.
Axis 4 - 'LEADER' rural development methods.

Each RDP axis contains a collection of rural development measures. These measures have budgets for specific types of action. There are nearly 40 different measures...

Check out our website for more FAQs:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/general-info/faq/rd-regulation>

Managing Editor: Rob Peters - Head of Unit - European Network and monitoring of rural development policy, Agriculture and Rural Development Directorate-General, European Commission

Authors: Derek McGlynn, Jacqui Meskell, Michael Gregory

Contributors: Fabio Cossu, Mara Lai, Alexandros Papakonstantinou, Donald Aquilina, Marina Brakalova, Angelo Strano, Amalia Ripea, Ana Nechita, Sabria Regragui, Justin Toland

Over to You contributors: Agata Markuszcwaska, Katarzyna Frąckowiak, Ágnes Kiss, Cselószki Tamás

NRN Contributors: Juha-Matti Markkola, Kirsi Hakoniemi, Marieke Koot, Isabell Friess, Balázs Márton, Cécile Schalenbourg, Marius Kairys, Anne-Sophie Gillion
Hemma Burger-Scheidlin, Michaela Rueel, Petros Mouchas, Chrissoula Koutsafaki

LAG Contributors: Enrique Asin, Nele Vanslebrouck, Pierre-Bernard Van Acker, Natassja Mich, Marisa Marmara, James Elliott, Agata Markuszcwaska, Carla Vacca

Layout and design: Ryoko Abe, Jacqui Meskell

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Check out the brand new NRN Tool-Kit!

The principles
behind EAFRD
financed
networking!



Lessons learnt by
NSUs, MAs
and others!



Insight into
the next program-
ming period!



To learn more log on to:
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Connecting Rural Europe...

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union (EU). The ENRD contributes to the effective implementation of Member States' Rural Development Programmes by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe.



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