

ENRD

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Connecting Rural Europe...

Winter
2013 / 2014
.....
English

MAIN STORY

NETWORKS: A NEW GENERATION



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European Network for
Rural Development



Dear Reader,

As the winter approaches its important to wrap-up well! Being prepared means not being left out in the cold and as the new programming period approaches that is something everyone in the rural development community is well aware of...

Preparation was the watchword at the ENRD's recent peer-to-peer session on resource planning held in Gdansk, Poland. The event brought together representatives of national and regional Network Support Units to share knowledge about planning, setting up networks, optimising resources and evaluating progress. We report on the interactive session and highlight some of the insights that arose throughout the day.

With Rural Development Programme (RDP) preparatory work nearing completion, it's time to start engaging target audiences. In this edition of the ENRD Magazine, we delve into two examples of effective rural development communications with mass appeal - taken from the ENRD's online Communicating Rural Development (CRD)

Gateway. We feature a popular mobile application that allows nature lovers to find out more about German forests and a well-loved TV campaign from Malta.

Young people are essential to the social and economic vitality of rural areas and to the long-term sustainability of rural development policy. That's why our Rural Focus section investigates what can be done to make programmes more accessible and responsive to the needs of rural youth.

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

Finally, as you may know, 2014 is the International Year of Family Farming¹. To celebrate this fact, we have selected a couple of great images of contemporary European family farming for you to enjoy. The images are taken from an exhibition organised by the European Commission as part of its high-level conference on family farming held in Brussels on 29 November 2013. They are but a simple reminder of the diverse nature of the family farming model that typifies the agricultural experience in Europe and around the world.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en/>

The cover image depicts three generations of the Talty family who harvest seaweed on the west coast of Ireland. This picture was part of an exhibition held during the European Commission's conference on family farming held in Brussels on 29 November 2013 and contributes to the launch of 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming. For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/family-farming-conference-2013_en.htm





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The ENRD CP in the wild, during a team-building day in Wallonia, Belgium!



© European Commission

The Baugiano Farm, a family-run business in Tuscany, Italy.

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.

National Rural Networks: A new generation

With Rural Development Programme (RDP) preparatory work well underway in the Member States, many are in the throes of designing the structures and operational set-ups that will be used to deliver the expanded and strengthened role of the National Rural Networks (NRNs) in accordance with the CAP Reform proposal.

Alongside the main elements of the NRN action plan, management and budgetary allocation, the planned roles and responsibilities must foresee the provision of a 'consultation platform' for the new RDPs, support for the improved governance of

processes, the fostering and brokering of innovation, the interpretation of complex policy concepts and language for the wider public, and so on.

To help NRNs tackle this complex task, the ENRD organised a peer-to-peer training event on network resource planning, held in Gdansk, Poland in September 2013 in conjunction with the 19th NRN meeting.

The peer-to-peer session brought together representatives of national and regional Network Support Units (NSUs) to share knowledge about resource planning for NRNs. Guided by a facilitator the 60 participants used a hypothetical case study to

facilitate the development of deeper insight and learn from each other throughout the day. There was a generous flow of perspectives, experiences, and tips on what to do and what not to do!

Participants left the session feeling energised, informed and in much better shape to tackle the task ahead. They identified the major steps in building a future NSU. Ongoing peer-to-peer support for the resource planning process continues via the ENRD's Virtual Think Tank on resource planning. This forum is one of the many resources available to support learning and exchange among stakeholders involved in preparing future NSUs and NRNs.

Resource planning: top tips



© ENRD Contact Point

Interactive participation during the peer-to-peer session.

The ENRD peer-to-peer resource-planning exercise revolved around a hypothetical NRN. By building on real-life experience of planning for 2014-2020, the participants shared thoughts and invited questions from their peers.

Each group had to prepare an overview of the principal tasks and decisions involved in resource planning for an NSU that will further support and animate the National Rural Networks. They also had to suggest the optimal use of resources when creating and running a network.

The groups considered a vast range of issues, such as outsourcing requirements, levels of expertise required, Managing Authority (MA) input and the support unit's resource planning autonomy. By the end of the day a number of top tips emerged on nine aspects of resource planning:

Governance: The establishment of a governance group to plan resourcing is recommended. It would play a key role in performance evaluation by ensuring the processes are correctly implemented. The group would also have an advisory role throughout the programme, for example giving guidance on preparing the terms of reference for NSU set-up and functioning. All those with a governance role should receive the right training to be able to do a good job.

Flexibility: Resource planning for the whole period is a significant challenge. And it is important that plans are not too rigid to miss evolving opportunities. 'New thematic initiatives and other activities appear throughout the period,' notes Edgars Linde of the Latvian Rural Network Support Unit, 'the trick is to build in the flexibility so that you can adjust and bring some of those activities on board.' A method to achieving this is advocated by Riccardo Passero of the Italian Managing Authority, 'establish your overhead cost upfront for the full seven-year period but limit your activities action plan to two years with performance reviews throughout,' he explains.

People: Budget is often the first thing that comes to mind when considering resources. But good budget management needs to be paired with good people management. 'Having the right people in the right job is crucial,' affirms Edgars Linde, adding 'it is much more resource effective to have members of the team work in areas where they can put their skills to best use, and where they continue to learn and grow in their jobs.'

Outsourcing: There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to outsourcing. Levels differ greatly between countries. For example, in Slovakia and Italy the Managing Authorities operate the NRN, whereas in Bulgaria and Poland subcontractors are used for specific requirements.

An advantage of outsourcing an NSU is that the perceived objectivity of the network among stakeholders is boosted. If outsourcing is used, it is recommended to shape outsourcing around an existing model.

Autonomy: Working with the right level of autonomy for subcontractors is important. With good governance and trust, the subcontractor can be given a good deal of freedom to operate, and in turn this stimulates the subcontractor's creativity and flexibility.

Performance review: Regular reviews of processes, people and subcontractors are critical. MAs must factor in the time needed to monitor and evaluate performance. While this can be time consuming, the resulting pay-off in terms of clear goals, motivated stakeholders, common understanding



© ENRD Contact Point

between all stakeholders, and keeping projects on track is well worth the time invested. Riccardo Passero sees scope for a more merit-based allocation of funds, 'financial planning should earmark amounts that can be used to increase funds for high-performing projects.'

Risk-taking: Risk doesn't sit comfortably with many stakeholders throughout the networks. However, to open the door to new perspectives and creativity all stakeholders - particularly MAs - should be prepared to take some degree of risk.

Trust: Building and maintaining trust with all stakeholders requires effort but it should not be overlooked or taken for granted. Trust between all parties, from MAs to NSUs is essential for commitment, common purpose and quality results.

Key references

NRN Tool-Kit

A dynamic resource providing relevant information and guidance for NSUs, Managing Authorities and other rural development community stakeholders.

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networks-and-networking/nrn-toolkit/>

Virtual Think Tank

Online discussion sessions where NSUs can ask questions, share tips and experiences, and open wider discussions about resource planning and other relevant topics. Contact: [Marina Brakalova@enrd.eu](mailto:Marina.Brakalova@enrd.eu)

Peer-to-peer learning and exchange

The ENRD CP regularly organises peer-to-peer training events for the rural development community. All the latest information is available online: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networks-and-networking/nrn-toolkit/pilot-nsu-training-programme/>

New perspectives: 'Always be open to new perspectives and ideas on doing things differently,' urges Jody Fleck from the Scottish National Rural Network. 'This injects energy into teams and helps to maintain motivation and enthusiasm throughout the seven year programming period.' Simply involving new stakeholders and checking out the tools and ideas used by other multi-stakeholder networks can lead to inspiring new perspectives.

Desk officers networking event

The ENRD CP organised a workshop for the geographic desk officers from the European Commission's Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development on 10 October 2013.

Desk officers support rural development policy delivery by assisting and providing feedback to national authorities regarding programming and implementation of RDPs, according to EU rules.

The day-long session held in Brussels had a dual purpose: to ensure everyone was aligned in their understanding of the function and the value of rural networking; and to learn from each other's real experience of networking in practice.

The day's discussions began with some key insights gained during the 2007-2013 programming period presented by the ENRD Contact Point and the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development. The huge diversity of the rural network landscape and the network's main achievements as policy tools were acknowledged and potential interaction with desk officers' daily work were discussed.

In a 'show and tell' session, NRN representatives from Belgium (Cécile Schalenbourg), Italy (Riccardo Passero), Finland (Juha-Matti Markkola) and Latvia (Edgars Linde) presented real-life examples of networking and analysed its impact as a policy tool. The afternoon session focused on innovation and the scope and objectives of the recently-created European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability and the EIP-AGRI network.



© ENRD Contact Point

The concluding discussions highlighted the need for stronger and more focused interactions between desk officers and Network Support Units, and for a widening of the scope of networking to allow for a more active involvement of rural development managers across the EU.

Reference:

For more information about this event visit:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/the-value-of-rural-networks/>



The European Rural Parliament in session.

European Rural Parliament

The first-ever European Rural Parliament (ERP) - held on 13 November 2013 - was a landmark moment for the flourishing rural community movement across the EU.

Over 150 community organisers from 30 countries came together in Brussels to brainstorm, exchange experiences and network and, above all, to inspire each other to continue to build active rural communities.

Organised by the European Rural Alliance, the European Rural Community Association and the Partnership for Rural Europe (PREPARE), the European Rural Parliament wants to position rural movements as significant players at a European level. Policy-makers and politicians from EU institutions joined the ERP throughout the day for lively discussions about rural and local development policy touching on aspects including Community-Led Local Development, gender equality in rural development and the village movement and its impact, which were illustrated by

the participants' stories regarding the practical implementation of Rural Development Programmes.

Because rural community movements are at different stages of development in different countries, the opportunity to learn from each other was appreciated. A series of presentations showcased experiences, leading to useful questions and ideas and provoking future plans.

Steps are being taken to move the European rural community movement forward. As Inez Abrahamzon, project manager of the ERP explains, 'an initial summary was presented to MEPs the morning after the event. We now have members working hard to drive on progress: we are organising workshops around key issues that will all feed into the final report of the first ever European Rural Parliament, complete with future recommendations, which we will present in January 2014.' Find out more about the event at: <http://europeanruralparliament.com>

Call for stronger organic agriculture standards

The European Union has to, 'move to a new stage in organic farming,' declared European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Cioloş² at the close of the European Commission's recent public consultation on the future of organic agriculture. And with the results now in, it seems that Europeans are ready and willing to move forward.

An impressive 45 000 responses were submitted to the online consultation that ran from January until April 2013. The results indicate that consumers trust organic products (71%), that they buy them mainly out of concern about the environment (83%) and because they are free from GMOs and pesticide residues (81%). There was a strong call for a harmonised approach to organic products: 86% of respondents want uniformity of rules in EU countries for organic producers and 74% want European organic standards to be strengthened.



© George M. Groutas

Organic Farming, Kampia, Cyprus.

The vast majority of respondents (78%) indicated that they were prepared to pay more for organic goods. While willing to pay more, respondents also expect rigorous standards: for example almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) said that pesticides should not be allowed for use in organic farming.

With a new measure earmarked for organic farming in the CAP reform agreement and with a new organic agriculture strategy to be put forward early in 2014, European organic farming products will take a big leap forward in the coming years. More details about the European Commission's consultation report, which was published in September 2013, are available online: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/news_en

2 Speech to Meeting of the Advisory Group on Organic Farming/Brussels, April 2013
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-13-302_en.pdf

LEADER Sub-Committee & financing workshop

A host of rural development stakeholders gathered in Brussels on 11-12 November for a back-to-back LEADER Sub-Committee and workshop meeting that focused the sharing of best-in-class financing practices for LEADER/Community-Led Local Development (CLLD).

LEADER/CLLD financing is multi-layered and involves many players. The major significance of financing systems for RDP efficacy implies that they should be regarded as an inherent part of the planning and delivery process. The workshop objective was therefore to identify and exchange practices on effective funding mechanisms for LEADER/CLLD and to see what Member States can consider integrating into the relevant policy mechanisms.

The workshop brought together rural development experts from Paying Agencies, Managing Authorities and LAGs, amongst others. After an overview of the financial aspects of the regulatory framework for LEADER/CLLD programming and implementation, the debate focused on the RDP possibilities as regards simplified cost options (such as standard scales of unit cost, lump sums or flat-rate financing) and included the auditors' perspective.

The presentations - from Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Malta, Portugal and Sweden - focused on how to put in place smart systems for effective approaches to upfront funding of LAGs, umbrella projects as a way to simplify administration, crowd-funding and the role of LAGs in resource pooling. The ensuing debate reemphasised the necessary balance between simplification and accountability.



© ENRD Contact Point

The delegates discuss financing solutions.

Preceding the workshop, the 11th LEADER Sub-Committee focused on the current state-of-play of LEADER implementation - including pertinent findings from the 2007-2013 evaluations, on issues related to the transition to the next programming period, and the on-going future preparations. Multi-funding, simplification possibilities and ensuring continuity between programming periods were among the issues highlighted by the experts who took part.

Reference:

11th Meeting of the LEADER Sub-Committee
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/committees/leader-subcommittee/en/11st-leader-subcommittee_en.cfm

Financing for LEADER/CLLD: Opportunities and relevant practices
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/financing-for-leader-clld/en/financing-for-leader-clld_en.cfm

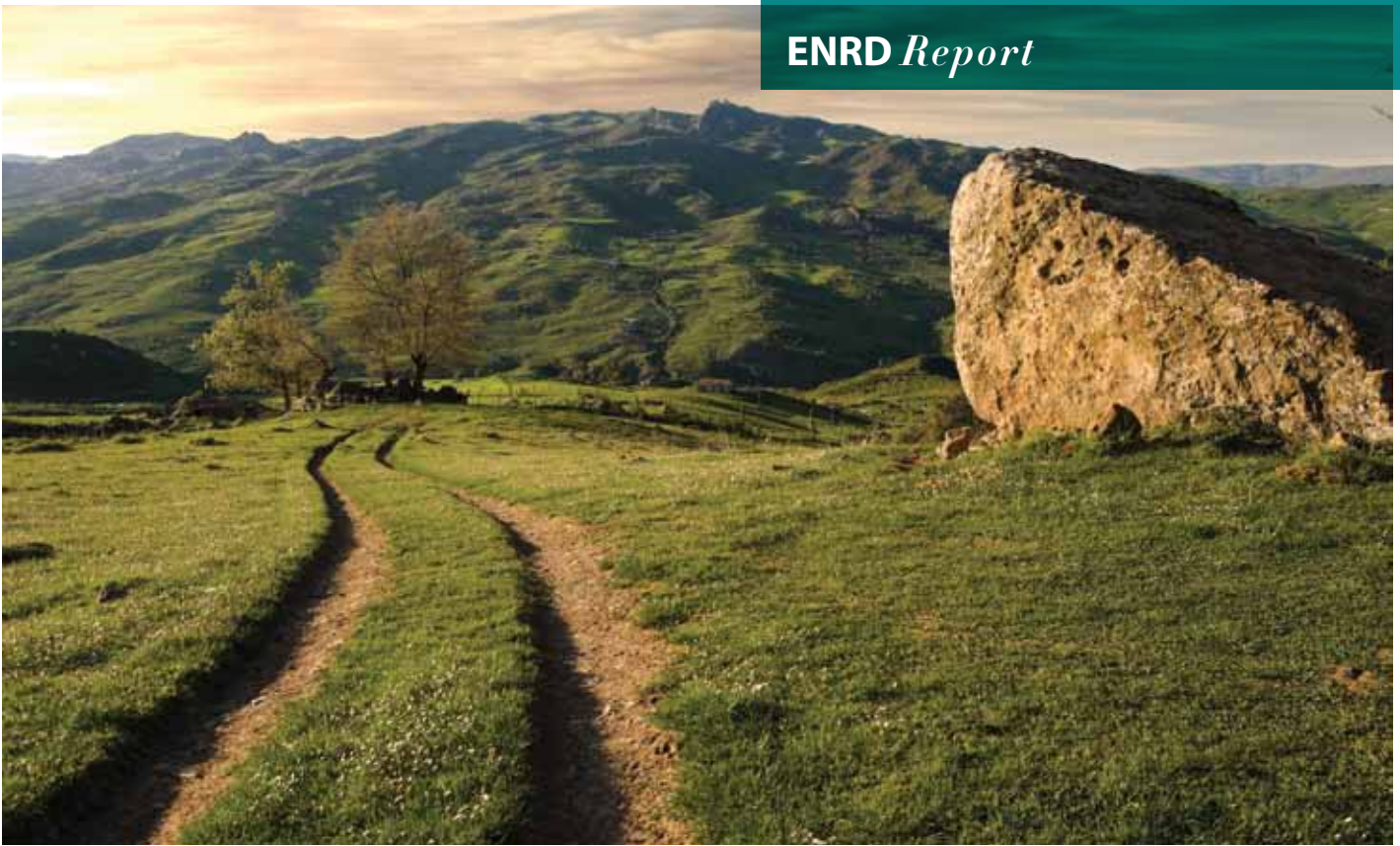


LEADER Tool-Kit

The revamped LEADER Tool-Kit tells you everything you need to know about the LEADER approach. This comprehensive online resource is intuitive and easy to navigate. So, whether you're a novice or a LEADER expert, you can find what you need quickly and easily.

The different aspects of LEADER - from strategy design to improving implementation - are explained and illustrated with interviews, case studies, short videos and tips. The LEADER Tool-Kit delves into more than 20 years of LEADER experience and is full of insight that is highly relevant to Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) as the LEADER approach will be known during the 2014-2020 programming period.

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/leader/leader-tool-kit/en/index_en.cfm



CLLD: Mapping the road to success

Stakeholders across the rural development spectrum are working together to tackle information gaps and prepare for the future application of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). The new NRN Cluster on CLLD, launched in June, is channelling the efforts of NRNs, Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies, ELARD and Local Action Groups (LAGS) from 13 countries.

Coordinated by a highly committed team at the Hungarian National Rural Network, the Cluster is consolidating the work done by individual Member States on CLLD planning and implementation. 'The CLLD Cluster is a central information and guidance resource for all those involved in rural development,' notes Agnes Kiss of the Hungarian NRN. The Cluster wants to dispel the uncertainties that exist about applying the CLLD approach. 'We want to ensure that people understand how to use the multi-fund approach by providing tools, practical guidance and acting as a hub for exchanging experience and co-operating,' she explains.

The CLLD Cluster's fast-paced activity programme is already delivering results. A recent milestone was the international conference held in Budapest in July 2013 with representatives from 13 different Member States, the European Commission and the ENRD Contact Point. While preparation for the 2014-2020 programming period is well underway, there was still a lot of uncertainty about how CLLD will work in practice. Echoed by many participants throughout the day was the fact that the LEADER experience is particularly relevant. The conference successfully demonstrated the added value of locally-led initiatives by profiling the LEADER experience to policy-makers and other key stakeholders.

Following intensive working group discussions about the areas in which progress is needed to stimulate successful uptake and implementation of CLLD, future actions

were identified, such as: determining the structures for coordinating funds; preserving the bottom-up LEADER spirit; ensuring that CLLD adds value in addressing specific local challenges; and defining criteria for LAG and Local Development strategy selection.

A working structure has been set up to press forward with the CLLD Cluster's work. Working groups have been set up on common issues, such as: administrative structures; demonstrating the socio-economic added value of CLLD; and LAG & LDS evaluation. Additionally, an updated mapping exercise was launched in October – in a brief survey NRNs were asked about the decisions made on multi-funded CLLD as well as the funds targeted. A cluster meeting was held in Dijon (France) on 27 November 2013, prior to the 20th NRN meeting, where the results of the mapping exercise were presented.

Reference:

Stay up-to-date with the CLLD Cluster activity via the ENRD website.
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/clld/nrn-thematic-initiative-on-clld/en/nrn-thematic-initiative-on-clld_en.cfm

Promoting good practice in rural development

Towards Best Practices 2.0' - a seminar jointly organised by the Finnish NRN, the European Rural Alliance and the Finnish Rural Policy Committee in Helsinki in early October 2013 - examined how to advance the collection, analysis and transfer of good rural development practice.

Building on this knowledge and improving good practice dissemination is one of the main concerns of rural networks, both at national and European level; a fact that has added resonance as networks gear up for the 2014-2020 programming period.

'With so many successful activities happening in networks throughout Europe, there is a huge resource that we can tap into,' said Juha-Matti Markkola, Network Coordinator at the Finnish NRN, so, 'we wanted to really drill down into what we can do to best harness and share these methodologies and structures.'

The interactive seminar brought together experts from across Europe including managers of rural network projects, NRN representatives, the ENRD Contact Point, Managing Authorities and academic specialists.

The participant-led sessions discussed the lessons learnt from collecting and analysing good practices, in particular the criteria used to spot such practices, the methods and tools used to disseminate them and the criteria used to transfer good practices to other areas.

'The participants provided excellent food for thought for the challenge of making best practice sharing really effective,' said Juha-Matti Markkola.

It was acknowledged that defining common criteria for the identification of good and transferable examples was challenging due to the contextual nature of good practices. Identifying good practices should thus be linked to the needs of rural areas and on themes of specific interest and the lessons learnt should inform the RDP planning and implementation process. In terms of dissemination of good practices, a wide range of dissemination channels was recommended, including social media.

Furthermore, in the search for good practices a distinction should be made between 'projects' and the 'processes' through which RDPs are delivered. The ENRD CP is currently working on identifying process-related success stories - covering different aspects and themes of the current programmes - that can inform the implementation of future policy priorities.

Reference:

For more information about 'Towards Best Practices 2.0': www.rural.fi

For more about the ENRD CP success story project: Mara.Lai@enrd.eu

Rural innovation on the move

Regional authorities are thinking about how best they can boost research and innovation in agriculture and agribusiness. At the 'rural innovation on the move' conference organised in early October by ERIAFF - European Regions for Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Forestry - and hosted by the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, 170 like-minded stakeholders came together to identify common innovation priorities that can help regional authorities to concentrate their efforts.

'Given the crucial role played by regions in the context of development and innovation policy, we set out to join forces and develop ideas that facilitate the important synergies between innovation and research in agriculture and the collaboration among EU regions,' said Gianni Salvadori, the Regional Minister for Agriculture of Tuscany Region, Italy, who coordinates the ERIAFF network.

Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation is a cross-cutting priority of rural development policy for the 2014-2020 programming period. The ERIAFF conference's expert panellists examined two main areas: climate change; and food systems and safety. The debate encompassed issues such as bio-economy opportunities, financial resource scarcity and optimising interregional collaboration.



Commissioner Dacian Cioloş' video address to the ERIAFF conference.

The conference ended with an affirmation of the ERIAFF network members' commitment to supporting the creation of interregional Operational Groups linked by common priorities and goals, under the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability; and to submitting projects of common interest to the upcoming calls for interest under HORIZON 2020.

For more about ERIAFF and the EIP: <http://eriaff-eorg.eventbrite.com> & http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/index_en.htm

Transnational cooperation event in Auvergne

Auvergne, a region that typifies rural France, was the setting for a recent event hosted by the Auvergne Rural Network. The meeting was organised to address the opportunities and challenges of LEADER cooperation both at a national/inter-territorial level and at transnational level.

The ENRD CP led the session on transnational cooperation (TNC), taking the group through the different tools that can be used when cooperating with other organisations throughout Europe. The outcomes of the LEADER Event 2013³ were considered helpful in getting cooperation started.

Remarks from the audience included the clear benefits of multi-funded local development strategies (using the CLLD approach) for cooperation activities. Participants expressed the hope that a tendency at national level to opt for a 'one fund' option will be dissuaded.

Awareness of the timings of calls of interest for cooperation in different countries, so that resources can be planned appropriately, was highlighted as a success factor for TNC. Finding partners in the same situation regarding the timing of cooperation calls and

budget allocations increases the probability of success and the necessary longevity to ensure synergies. Likewise technical assistance support is extremely important and the level of that can vary substantially between countries.

Séverine Bressaud from the French Rural Network Support Unit spoke about LEADER cooperation among French regions. Technical support, particularly for the preparatory phase, is extremely important. The participants were convinced of the value of inter-territorial cooperation but found the impact hard to measure and found it prone to political sensitivities.



Following a presentation from the Bon Villiers delegation (Wallonia, Belgium) on the differences, barriers and opportunities for TNC, two workshops were held. Cooperation between a local Auvergne commune and Huedin, Romania was showcased to highlight the value of cooperation for the territories and their local businesses and populations.

All participants underlined the importance of being creative in a TNC project and keeping the communication going between actors to create linkages with future projects. The event organisers received positive feedback suggesting that the event gave people good ideas for future cooperation.

ENRD Contact Point Visit



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Bosnia-Herzegovina

Five representatives of the initiative Citizens for Europe⁴ in Bosnia-Herzegovina visited the ENRD CP on 14 October 2013 to discuss rural networks. Citizens for Europe aims to improve the European integration process and to intensify the implementation of the required reforms in Bosnia-Herzegovina through networking and advocacy. The ENRD CP representatives presented key networking lessons learnt. The discussion focused on the building and sustaining of rural networks and the necessary emphasis on developing trust among different stakeholders (e.g. public officials, civil society, private sector).

³ <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/leader-event-2013>

⁴ For more about the Citizens for Europe Initiative: <http://www.europa.ba/News.aspx?newsid=5895>



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Communicating Rural Development

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

Germany: A high-tech walk in the woods

The Forest textbook ('Die Waldfibel') is a highly popular mobile and tablet application developed by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection that allows nature lovers to find out more about German forests. The educational app enables multimedia walks in the woods, meaning that local forest heritage information is readily available. The goal of the mobile app - which is a fun way to make contact with the local fauna and flora - is to raise awareness and knowledge of forestry matters. Alongside a regular and visual forest dictionary, the app provides a library of sounds related to various species described. Other features include games and a tree identification tool!



The inside story

Christine Bauer, from the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, explains the origin of the mobile forest application:



'The application, which was launched in November 2011, was the first ever application to be offered by the German government. The origin of this mobile app was in the realisation that most people would have their smartphones rather than a copy of the 'Little Forest Textbook' to hand when hiking through the woods. That is why we wanted to offer useful information, at any time and at any place. The application does not need to be connected to the Internet to run and it offers some interesting and fun extras, such as a tool to measure the height of a tree.

The main challenge of such an app is that it is expected to run properly all the time. In other words, an application has to be state-of-the-art and run on every smartphone and tablet. The links to app stores are provided on the Ministry's website and the tool itself is regularly updated.

Forests and forestry are important rural development resources. The added value of

the app is that it builds awareness of sustainable forest use and helps to establish wider understanding of these parts of the rural landscape.

There has been great interest in the app – by September 2013 there had been over 315 000 downloads. That said, such an application should not be seen as a standalone or replacement for other communication tools. In fact, printed information is still very much accepted and requested – more than 600 000 forest textbooks have already been distributed. However, the app is a useful and modern way to expand outreach by providing a tailored and intuitive communications solution.

The app feedback has been really positive: the application is rated as one of the top applications in Germany and not just in terms of downloads; the application is also top rated for its educational impact.'

Malta: Television campaign boosts outreach

When the Maltese NRN decided to promote rural development to a broader public it turned to the mass medium of television. Mad-Daqqa t'Ghajn (or 'At a Glance') is a weekly magazine programme aired on the most popular TV station in Malta. Twenty editions of the programme - which has 18% audience share at primetime - featured a 'rural development corner' that profiled local rural development projects supported by the RDP and selected by the NRN. This national sponsorship campaign has increased awareness of the results achieved to date by the RDP and the potential benefits of the EAFRD for local communities.



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



A heritage trail funded under measure 313.



Enhancing the visitor experience in Zurrieq under measure 313.

The inside story

Carla Ciscaldi, from the Maltese NRN, outlines how a popular television show is helping to promote rural development:

'The Maltese NRN felt the need to promote the results achieved through projects supported from the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. This emanated from an observation that in general there is a lack of awareness of the CAP and what it does through rural development funding to support growth of the Maltese rural economy.

Television was the ideal tool to disseminate information and promote the achievements and benefits of Malta's RDP. It is such an effective medium when targeting a broad range of stakeholders

and potential beneficiaries. And the choice was natural when considering the country's size, the costs of other tools and media, as well as the anticipated impact. The NRN identified the key target audience which comprised potential beneficiaries, such as farmers and rural entrepreneurs, as well as young people, non-profit organisations and the general public.

The campaign consisted of interviews with project holders in which the support and benefits obtained were clearly highlighted. Subjects featured included LEADER, farm modernisation, adding value to agricultural produce and encouraging rural tourism.

By working with this visually-rich communication medium the NRN has been

able to explain how rural development funds are being utilised, who benefits and why such projects are being supported. Furthermore, the TV programmes aimed at promoting these projects and encouraged the general public to visit and appreciate these sites.

We have received much positive feedback for this communications initiative. The Managing Authority was highly satisfied with the outcomes achieved by the television sponsorship. A real added value of this campaign is that we could deliver the message directly into people's homes. We envisage using this communications channel again when promoting the future programme.'

Celebrating great communications

For more great communications ideas check out 'Telling the Story - Communicating European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020'. Gathering around 600 participants from all 28 EU countries, the two-day conference focused on how to better tell the story of Europe, through its achievements on the ground via the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, as well as through the other European Structural and Investment Funds. The December event also hosted the awards ceremony for the 2013 edition of the CAP Communication Awards.

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/telling-the-story-2013_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-communication-network/awards/index_en.htm



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. Here we feature a selection of great NRN initiatives.

Pupils discovering their region during the 'Made in Murtal' initiative.

Austria: Celebrating rural social diversity

In September 2013, the Austrian NRN Netzwerk Land launched a publication about social diversity and equal opportunities in the countryside. The brochure highlights the contribution of women and men, those with and without disabilities, young and old, migrants and indigenous people to the continued development of rural areas. Twenty-six case studies, based on projects submitted as part of the NRN's 2012 innovation awards,

demonstrate how rural diversity is now widely recognised and supported through the Rural Development Programme.

One such case study is 'Made in Murtal' – an initiative involving pupils from 33 schools who created a book about their region's economic, cultural, historic and geographical points of interest. By raising regional awareness, the project hopes to encourage young people to remain in the area and it has even led to the development of the Made in Murtal brand, which promotes local products and services (www.made-im-murtal.at). The publication can be downloaded from: www.netzwerk-land.at

Netherlands: Learning exchange on social care with German region

On 10 September 2013, 50 policy-makers, administrators and representatives of village councils participated in a visit to Legden in the North Rhine-Westphalia region of Germany. The visit, which was organised by the Dutch National Rural Network Netwerk Platteland, facilitated a discussion on the challenges facing rural areas with ageing populations.

In the morning participants heard how the regional administration in North Rhine-Westphalia has been working to support cities and towns in tackling the changing demands of the population. After lunch Mayor of Legden Friedhelm Kleweken introduced the 'growing older in the future village' initiative, which allowed participants to look at practical examples of remote care, such as a project to support people with dementia and special housing targeted to the needs of older people. Further information is available from: www.netwerkplatteland.nl/kalender/standplaats-de-verbindingen-tussen-formele-en-informele-zorg-in-duitsland and www.gemeinde-legden.de/cgi-bin/baseportal.pl?ht.x=/regionale2016



Friedhelm Kleweken, Mayor of Legden, Germany addresses the Dutch learning exchange participants in Legden.

Germany: Promoting good practice in forest management

On the 18-19 September 2013, Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle Ländliche Räume (DVS) - the German NRN - hosted a symposium on 'environmental services in the forest' in Mannheim in south-western Germany. Attended by almost 80 participants from local and regional authorities, forest owners, researchers and other forestry and environmental sector stakeholders, the event covered topics including habitat management plans, societal demands on the forest, forest owner perspectives, tensions between economic and ecological priorities and established good practice from both publicly- and privately-owned forests.

The conference heard from Tamas Szedlak from DG Agriculture and Rural Development who spoke about the EU Forest Strategy⁵ and forestry in rural development policy post-2013. More information about the event is available here: <http://www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/service/veranstaltungen/dvs-archiv/2013/umweltleistungen-im-wald/>



Ireland: Joint CLLD conference with Northern Irish network

The Irish National Rural Network and the Rural Network for Northern Ireland (RNNI) held a joint conference on 17-18 October in County Laois. The conference, titled Investing in Our Rural Future: Facilitating the Role of Volunteers, focused on stimulating energy and enthusiasm for Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) in advance of the new Rural Development Programme.

The 92 participants from Local Action Groups engaged around three key themes: participation; planning; and promotion. They considered how to strengthen the role of volunteers in both shaping and delivering the new CLLD strategies and in transferring good practice from LEADER.

Prior to the workshop sessions participants from the RNNI delegation went on a field visit to the Ashbourne Visitor Centre in County Meath, which is supported by the RDP and incorporates good practice in terms of eco-friendly building techniques, use of renewable energies and support for local food producers. More information is available from: <http://www.nrn.ie/events/> and from: www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk



The joint conference: 'Investing in Our Rural Future: Facilitating the Role of Volunteers.'

5 <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/strategy/>



© Rural Network Unit of Finland

The winning team poses after the regional innovation camp held in Forssa, Finland during September 2013.

Finland: Regional Innovation Camps

The Finnish NRN is supporting a new approach to regional development. Regional Innovation Camps bring experts from within a region together with external specialists for intensive brainstorming and planning sessions focused on different aspects of rural development, typically over a three-day period. The NRN's call for proposals resulted in 10 regions agreeing to deliver camps in 2013 and 2014.

Each Regional Innovation Camp reflects the needs and priorities of the host area, for example the focus in Central and North Karelia is on broadband and organic production while in Fell Lapland one of the key themes is the role of civil society and social economy. Kirsi Hakoniemi from the Finnish NRN notes that, 'the starting point of the innovation camp is always the same - the need for both internal and external development. It is a novel approach to regional development, and camps have proven to be a successful working tool in identifying new ideas for regional cooperation.' Further information is available from: <http://innovaatioleirit.blogspot.fi> and www.maaseutu.fi

Sweden: Addressing the local financing challenge

The Swedish NRN's Working Group on Local Financing, established back in 2008, has developed many resources for businesses and project promoters seeking financing, including publications on 'Capital Supply for Development and Conversion in the Countryside', 'Crowd Equity' and 'Local Financing; Local Development Factsheets'. Next up on the group's agenda is a workshop on local funding to be held as part of the Nordic Council of Ministers' (www.norden.org) conference on the bio-economy in December 2013 and the production of a book on 'Local Economy' in January 2014.



Thomas Norrby

©Swedish NSU

Rural development expert at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and Working Group member Thomas Norrby explains that the group, 'identifies local solutions already in place and connects these initiatives to the network, spreading the most innovative approaches.' Progress takes time however. He notes that, 'it is not yet the case that rural entrepreneurs have more access to local funding than before. But early on the group saw the need to address not only the demand side, but also the supply side of capital. Thus the need to identify, develop and spread technical and organisational tools for crowd-funding has become an important pathway. Our work is contributing to this discussion at local, regional, national and European level.' Further information is available at: www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/huvudomraden/omnatverket/arbetsgrupper/gruppkapitalforsorjning



Belgium – Wallonia: Networking around agroforestry

The Agroforestry Working Group of the Walloon Rural Network has been actively promoting the merits of forestry. In July 2013, the group launched its second book on agroforestry in Wallonia, which details the group's work, ranging from field visits to agroforestry projects in France and Belgium to a wide range of initiatives both in Wallonia and elsewhere.

The book was followed by a joint seminar with partners in France on 29 July 2013 regarding the potential of agroforestry. Attended by farmers, landscape experts, hunters, conservationists, land-owners and managers the seminar explored models and innovative approaches to agroforestry, heard first-hand testimonies from farmers and also looked at prospects for support in 2014-2020.

Finally on 30 September 2013 stakeholders from both Flanders and Wallonia came together for an exchange day at the Walloon pilot centre for agroforestry to consider what collaboration may be possible between the two regions. More information on the work of the Agroforestry Working Group and a free download of the publication is available from: <http://www.reseau-pwdr.be/menu-de-gauche/groupes-de-travail/gt-5-agroforesterie.aspx>

Hungary: Supporting rural architectural heritage

The Hungarian NRN is supporting an initiative that values local architecture and teaches participants how to bring disused buildings back to life and serve local development. Goals of the training include strengthening local community organisation and raising awareness of the value of local heritage.

Held in September 2013, the training initiative was delivered through the József Hild Construction School of Győr. The 40 participants, comprising representatives of public organisations and community organisers from villages near Győr as well as students from the school, took part in both theoretical and practical training. They were organised into nine groups, each representing a village or a town. The training was not without precedent: the József Hild Construction School has an extensive network thanks to its annual vernacular architecture camps that bring students to individual rural communities to gain practical experience.

Participants in the September training event learned from those who have already delivered a range of restoration projects. At the end of the training sessions, the teams developed their ideas for projects that they intend to launch in their own communities – these include initiatives to restore unused former school buildings, country houses and granaries. Further information is available at: www.mrvh.eu



Project work during the first training day on 7 September 2013.



© Helfa Gelf Cyf

Artist Sarah Jane Harper at work.

UK – Wales: Helfa Gelf Art Trail

Over 170 studios and pop-up galleries opened their doors to the public over four weekends in September 2013. Having started in 2005, the Helfa Gelf Art Trail is now Wales's largest open studios event. The initiative is supported by the Welsh RDP.

Studio spaces participating took every conceivable form - from disused shops to garden sheds and barns - and this year for the first time there were artists in residence giving demonstrations along with two exhibitions and a number of drop-in workshops. All of the artists and craft-makers participating are also showcased on the Helfa Gelf Art Trail website (www.helfagelf.co.uk) which provides a great shop window for artists in rural areas.

Sabine Cockrill, project coordinator of the Helfa Gelf ArtTrail noted that, 'in 2013 we had over 300 artists taking part, representing a diverse range of art forms, from the traditional to the very contemporary. In 2012 we were very successful with visitor numbers up 20% and a 70% rise in art sales. We are hopeful that when we finalise the figures for 2013 we will see further increases.'



© Helfa Gelf Cyf

Sculptor Nick Eames in his studio.



The Baugiano Farm, Tuscany, Italy

Stefania Corrocher, Andreino Corrocher and Gabriele Marchesini on this mixed family farm that produces crops and dairy products.

© European Commission

The International Year of Family Farming

www.fao.org/family-farming-2014

We hope you enjoy the following portraits which provide a flavour - and a distinctly European one at that - of the diversity inherent to this sector. As you will see, family farming is more than a profession; it's a way of life...

For a more comprehensive picture of family farming as it is practiced in Europe today, be sure to check out the latest edition of the EU Rural Review.

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eu-rural-review>



2014
International Year of
Family Farming







Child care on the farm!

RDP Projects Database

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

© Vladimir Kokes



European Network for Rural Development

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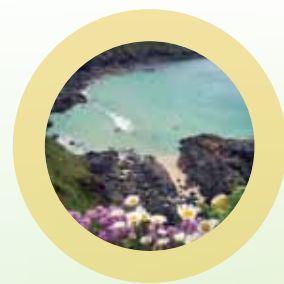
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RDP Project Postcards



Benefiting from a rich rural heritage

RDP Projects Database

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

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Child care on the farm!

Taking advantage of a peri-urban locality

THE NETHERLANDS

Taking advantage of their proximity to several cities, an enterprising dairy-farming family built a child care centre on their farm! The project involved planning, building and managing day care facilities for up to 25 young children and after-school care facilities for up to 70. The project is diversifying the income base of the farm, creating local employment and strengthening the links between urban and rural environments by exposing families to the advantages of farm life.

Measure 311: Diversification into non-agricultural activities

Total project cost: € 974 000

EAFRD contribution: € 44 000

Find out more about this project:
<http://www.kinderopvangtierelier.nl/>

RDP Projects Database

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



Benefiting from a rich rural heritage

Nature and landscape conservation in Finland

FINLAND

Preserving rural landscapes and biodiversity in rural Finland is strongly related to the preservation of cultural traditions. This project involved local people and farmers in an effort to protect and restore the natural environment through the increased use of grazing cattle. It also strongly resonated with Finnish rural heritage. Cooperation between local actors and regional and provincial offices was also strengthened.

Measure 323: Conservation and upgrading of rural heritage

Total project cost: € 666 900

EAFRD contribution: € 295 785

Find out more about this project:
<http://www.ymparisto.fi/ksu/harkaasarvista>

RDP Projects Database

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



Socially responsible wine tourism

RDP Projects Database

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



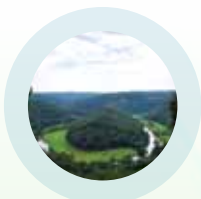
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Discover EAFRD co-funded rural development projects from across Europe in the ENRD's RDP Projects Database!

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



Eco-tourism in practice

RDP Projects Database

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



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Socially responsible wine tourism

Developing a network of regional wine trails



The winemaking industry is an important sector for rural and urban Spain and its influence is felt both economically and culturally. A project to support the sustainability and competitiveness of certain areas is promoting economic diversification and seeking to boost employment through activities such as tourism. The project has led to the development of a 'Socially Responsible Wine Tourism Region' model, and has resulted in creation of a network of popular wine trails.

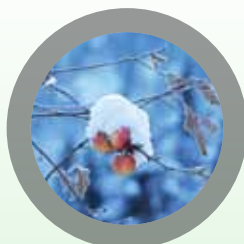
Measure 313: Encouragement of tourism activities

Total project cost: € 588 270
EAFRD contribution: € 112 500

Find out more about this project:
<http://www.enoturismoresponsable.es/>

RDP Projects Database

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



Eco-tourism in practice

Learning to cooperate



The project encouraged training activities to support local and innovative tourism ventures based on natural and cultural heritage. In total 22 people participated in the training, which was 7 more people than the target. All participants achieved the 'Nature's Best' standard. The training is due to be repeated and it has also been requested by other regions. Through education, tourism entrepreneurs are learning to collaborate so as to provide comprehensive eco-tourism solutions involving accommodation, transportation and food.

Measure 331: Training and information

Total project cost: € 33 000
EAFRD contribution: € 15 000

Find out more about this project:
<http://www.vkl.se/artikel.asp?strukturid=969>

RDP Projects Database

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





The Bangala Farm, County Brasov, Romania

The Bangala family pictured on their sheep and cattle farm located on High Nature Value grassland.



The Talty family, County Clare, Ireland

Gerard Talty in a drying room; the Talty family harvest edible seaweed off the West Coast of Ireland and make a range of related products.

Sirguvad
Söögisellid

Sirguvad
Söögisellid

Over to You!

In this section, members of the ENRD share stories that matter to them and have relevance for everyone in the rural development community.



© Toomas Kõrvkin

The 'Growing Astronauts' initiative which strengthens links between schools and local food producers was one of the winners of the Nordic-Baltic LEADER Cooperation Awards.

Celebrating Nordic-Baltic LEADER cooperation

A total of 60 different projects competed in the first ever Nordic-Baltic LEADER Cooperation Awards, held in September 2013. The awards are a collaboration between the seven National Rural Networks in the Nordic-Baltic region and aim to encourage and promote good practice in transnational cooperation.

The National Rural Networks (NRNs) from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden have been meeting regularly since 2008. The Nordic-Baltic NRN cluster is focused on adding value to Rural Development Programmes (RDPs), with a key target being the development of transnational cooperation (TNC) between rural stakeholders.

The inaugural Nordic-Baltic LEADER Cooperation Awards, which took place on 26 September 2013 in Estonia, highlighted the importance of TNC for rural development in the region. By showcasing and celebrating successful projects, the awards help to raise awareness of the diverse themes such cooperation can address.

Preparations for the awards, which were led by the Estonian NRN, began early in 2013. Between April and May 2013, applications were invited under five main categories: youth; tourism; culture; local area development; and local resources and the environment.

'LEADER is a wonderful way to encourage cooperation and the award ceremony provides much needed recognition - as well as future inspiration - for the many enthusiastic people who work every day for the development of their rural areas in Europe,' adds Ave Bremse from the Estonian NRN.

This article was contributed to the ENRD Magazine by the Estonian NRN www.maainfo.ee.



Nordic-Baltic LEADER Cooperation Award Winners

Best youth project: 'Wind for Youth'

A Finnish and Austrian cooperation project facilitating an exchange on European orchestra music and cultural studies. www.ino.fi

Best tourism project: 'Nature Tourism Project'

Project involving LAGs from seven countries promoting the development of nature and cultural tourism assets in rural areas. www.karhuseutu.fi

Best culture project: 'Medieval Festivals'

A project developed by LAGs in Estonia, Finland, France, Latvia and Portugal creating new opportunities in rural areas by developing activities based around medieval heritage. www.hansamarkkinat.fi

Best local area development project: 'Cross-border Entrepreneurs'

A project promoting contacts between rural businesses in participating LAG areas in Sweden and Poland. www.leaderblekinge.se

Best local resources and environment project: 'Growing Gastronauts'

A project strengthening links between schools and local food producers in partner areas in Estonia, England and France. www.esto-growinggastronauts.webnode.com

Of the 60 applications received, 21 finalists were selected by an evaluation committee and, of these, five category winners were awarded at the ceremony in Tallinn, which formed the centrepiece of a larger LEADER TNC conference. The winning projects were judged on criteria such as: the benefits to the participants; the extent to which partners were involved; the level of innovation; the impact within the participating areas; the added value of the project; the long-term sustainability; and the potential transferability.

Local food in local schools

The winner of the local resources and environment category - the 'Growing Gastronauts' project - scored highly on all selection criteria. It sought to promote

healthier eating habits among school children and develop the market for local food products by strengthening links between schools and local food producers.

The project involved training, event days, an exchange between school chefs in the partner areas, farm visits, as well as gardening workshops and practical language skills development. The result is that children's awareness about local food production and the preparation of healthy school meals using local and organic ingredients has risen. The awards jury commended these achievements and particularly liked the fact that the project addressed some very topical rural development themes: local food; young people; and short supply chains.

Help from Europe's medieval past

The winner of the culture category, the 'Medieval Festivals' project, also scored highly, thanks to its novel approach to creating new opportunities linked to shared heritage. The jury noted that the cooperation succeeded in building 'a wide network across Europe.'

The project centred on the organisation of seven medieval festivals, which incorporated heritage and cultural studies, costume workshops, medieval craft workshops, medieval camps and banquets, and seminars on heritage, historical and cultural subjects. Each festival was different but all focused on engaging young people. The final festival in Ulvila, Finland in August 2013 brought together successful aspects of earlier events including a knights' sword fight from France and an animal park for children as featured at the Estonian festival.

Toomas Abel, coordinator of the project for the LAG Pärnu Bay Partnership from Estonia notes that medieval-inspired handicrafts and performing arts, "are a rich source for rural people in the Nordic-Baltic region and beyond to sell their products and services in Europe. This project has provided us with effective opportunities to learn about how to do this in the best way,"

People's choice and youth

As well as the five category winners, there were also two special awards: a people's choice award, which went to a project on the development of a network of stakeholders in the crafts sector, involving partners in Finland, Estonia and Latvia; and a special prize for the Estonian Rural Network, which was awarded for its 'Youth for Youth' project that held three creative camps for young urban students originally from the countryside in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and that encouraged participants to start rural-based initiatives.



The 'Handicraft' project was the winner of the People's Choice Award at the ceremony.

Key references

For information about the Nordic-Baltic LEADER Cooperation Award and the Nordic-Baltic NRN cluster: www.maainfo.eu/Leader/TNC

The official Nordic-Baltic LEADER Cooperation Award booklet provides an excellent overview of all the projects that were selected as finalists:

<http://www.maainfo.eu/index.php?page=3667>



Mapping rural innovation potential



An ambitious Portuguese project called 'RUR@L INOV - Innovation in Rural Areas' is shining a light on how innovation happens in rural areas.

By mapping real-life experience, RUR@L INOV is helping to identify innovation processes, develop profiles of innovative organisations and other innovation actors, and encourage an innovative-supportive climate in Portuguese rural areas.

This article was contributed to the ENRD Magazine by the Portuguese NRN (www.rederural.pt)

RUR@L INOV

The specific goals of RUR@L INOV are:

- to contribute to a flexible analytical framework that enables the identification and measurement of small-scale and non-technological innovation, be it product, process or social innovation;
- to characterise the innovation process and develop rural innovator profiles;
- to identify the key variables that enhance and constrain innovation; and

- to develop indicators that assess innovation and its effect, both within and beyond the innovative organisations.

Coordinated by the UTAD (University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro) and developed in partnership with the Portuguese Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development, RUR@L INOV is funded by the National Rural Network Programme.

Methodological approach

The RUR@L INOV methodology combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. A questionnaire was designed and used to survey a sample of 120 organisations identified as innovative, between August 2012 and February 2013. RUR@L INOV also utilises focus groups, learning workshops and cases studies. The project uses an interdisciplinary approach to encompass a wide range of innovative stakeholder participation in order to understand their vision and expectations.



© Rede Rural Nacional



Entrepreneurial spirit

The RUR@L INOV research indicates a strong innovation dynamic and desire for internationalisation among Portuguese rural enterprises. This is undoubtedly partially a response to the present economic crisis but also the result of a positive entrepreneurial attitude that seeks to detect opportunity and to mobilise knowledge and capitalise on scarce financial resources.

Think small

The project also uncovered the importance of small-scale and low-technological-intensity innovation, as developed by micro and small enterprises and other organisations, for the competitiveness and sustainability of Portuguese rural areas.

A result of RUR@L INOV is thus the greater visibility and recognition of a large number of innovative organisations that had previously not been contemplated by rural development policy, and that do not have access to research channels (particularly technology-related research) or to systems that incentive innovation.

Innovator characteristics

A key characteristic of the innovative attitude of such organisations is that they are led by people that are highly educated and professionally experienced. Such leaders are associated with the following qualities: a strong opportunity-detecting capability; an ability to mobilise and integrate different kinds of knowledge (scientific, local and traditional); and being qualified to value latent territorial resources (cultural, environmental and heritage).

The right spirit can translate into diverse kinds of innovation, such as new and specialty products or services or the seizure of economies of scale.

The rural innovators also retain a huge untapped export capacity, largely due to small business sizes and scarcity of available capital.

Stimulating innovation

The knowledge acquired by the project points to the value of investing in and promoting innovation systems that, in particular, reach out to those who are currently below the policy radar. Such systems share knowledge and information, encourage co-operation and help to build the critical mass required to get innovations to market.

Other innovation actors, such as public research and development (R&D) units and state organisations, need to review their traditional approach to innovators in two basic ways. Firstly, they should organise themselves to better meet the demands of innovators and to be more aligned to commercial timescales. Secondly, an effort is needed to integrate and mobilise the multiple types of knowledge used in innovation – from tacit knowledge to scientific learning.

This new approach requires a collaborative attitude, whereby the state and R&D units share their traditional space with an increasing and variable number of innovation partners, including suppliers, customers,

RUR@L INOV has revealed the extent of the untapped innovation potential of Portuguese rural areas

consumers, businesses, territorial and sectoral associations, municipalities, and even the media.

The RUR@L INOV results demonstrate the huge rural innovation potential. If the lessons learned through the project are heeded and the appropriate steps employed, it can be predicted that innovative organisations will be unleashed, significantly expanding their contribution to the competitiveness and sustainability of rural areas. The findings of RUR@L INOV can contribute to the design of future policy measures and support tools so that they are best suited to the needs and realities of the organisers of innovative projects in rural areas.



LEADER *in Action*



Local Action Groups (LAGs) are local public private partnerships that work to promote LEADER's 'bottom-up' approach to rural development. Here we feature some recent LAG projects.



Fire juggler Tuomas Vuorinen.

Finland: **Traditional skills exchange provides basis for transnational working**

On 4 October 2013 a Fire Festival took place in the Leineperi Ruuki area of Finland as part of a transnational 'villages full of treasure' project that promotes traditional craftsmanship. The evening event, attended by around 3 000 people, incorporated workshops for children and adults, craft demonstrations – where engravers, candle-makers, farriers and blacksmiths showed their skills, music and a fire show!

Karhuseutu LAG in Finland, Kaunas LAG in Lithuania and four LAGs in the Czech Republic (Říčansko, Podlipansk, Krajina srdce and Zálabí)

have been working together to promote cultural knowledge and tourism within their villages, while inspiring young people to try traditional skills that are being lost.

'The project has been very beneficial; our artisans have learnt new methods and we have also obtained lots of new ideas about how to get more young people involved in our own festivals,' says Rosanna Telaranta, the Finnish Villages Full of Treasures Project Manager. Further information is available at: www.teemaruukit.fi



© Frances Johnson

Participants in the exchange programme at a youth hostel in Vaxjo, Sweden.

Sweden: Youth work placement exchange with UK LAG

In July 2013, a dozen young people from Southern Sweden participated in an exchange programme which saw them visit the Northumberland Uplands, England. They participated in employability and enterprise training which covered communication, work readiness and team-building skills. The following week saw each of the young people given work placements to put some of their newfound skills into practice.

The visit to England followed on from an exchange earlier in 2013 which saw a dozen young people from Northumberland travel to Sweden for work experience. The transnational link between the two LAGs (www.leaderlinne.se, www.nuleader.eu) is about inspiring young people and instilling confidence. Those who participated in the project have maintained contact using Facebook and are now working on producing a booklet detailing the background of the project, individual experiences and the legacy of the exchange.

Annika Nilsson, manager of LEADER LAG Linné notes, 'our exchange has been very interesting for the participants, the companies that offered internships and the hosting families for our young interns. The young people themselves say that they gained confidence. Many of the Swedes were previously unemployed, but since the internship they have found new jobs either full or part-time.' More information is available at: <http://swedenexchange2013blog.tumblr.com>

© LAG Zielony Pierścień



Landscape shot of Kazimierz Dolny – home to a contemporary artists' colony.

Poland: Transnational cooperation on Impressionism

A seminar about Impressionism, organised by LAG Zielony Pierścień in western Poland in partnership with LAG SOCLE from France, was successful in identifying project partners for transnational cooperation (TNC) in the 2014-2020 period. Held on 6-7 August 2013 in Kazimierz Dolny, the seminar brought together 21 representatives from LAGs from France, Hungary, Poland and Romania. The participants wish to develop an initiative that promotes areas in Europe linked to the Impressionist school of painting.

Zbigniew Pacholik, President of LAG Zielony Pierścień said, 'this seminar was a great occasion for project partners to meet face-to-face. I think that this is not just a project but the beginning for a network of LAGs who want to promote local development in rural areas built on the specific cultural heritage of small towns and villages that inspired Impressionist painters.' LAGs interested in becoming a partner in this TNC should contact Marcel Denis from lead partner LAG SOCLE: mdenis@cg23.fr

© LAG Zielony Pierścień



Seminar participants visit a gallery in Kazimierz Dolny.

Italy: Seminar on the multiple benefits of agriculture

On 28 September 2013, LAG Luoghi del Mito, based in Puglia, hosted a seminar on 'Rural Development and Multifunctionality in Agriculture' in the historic centre of Mottola. The seminar participants heard from expert speakers on topics ranging from regional support for 'multifunctionality' to slow food and from tourism to social farming. The focus of discussion was the wide range of social functions that can be delivered by farming and how these can be further developed and supported.

After the meeting participants undertook a gastronomic journey - 'Tastes of Collina' - which showcased local food and wine, served in completely biodegradable crockery and cutlery. The use of environmentally-sustainable materials was to illustrate that environmental factors and disposal costs are now a key part of decision-making by regional authorities. The seminar brought to a close a week of events dedicated to the environment and agriculture in the region. More information is available from: www.luoghidelmito.it

© Felicitiana Punzi



'Slow Food' sampled during the 'Tastes of Collina' gastronomic journey.



© Ivan Čupić

Waterside stands during the LAG Summer Festival.

Croatia: **LAG Summer festival provides opportunities for promotion of local products**

Croatia's LAG Laura organised a summer festival from 5-7 July 2013 in the heart of the Adriatic Coast. Connecting the 'green and the blue,' the event was a celebration of land and sea.

The participating LAGs' local and artisanal products were exhibited on the Biograd na Moru waterfront, which is a focal point for the 20 000 summer visitors to the area. A cultural programme involving music, wine tasting and other entertainment was also provided during the three-day event. The participating LAGs - 22 from Croatia and 13 international LAGs from Slovenia, Poland, Czech Republic, Italy, Romania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lithuania - took part in a meeting in the Town Hall on 6 July focused on development, financing and the potential of the LEADER approach, complete with a showcasing of inspiring project examples.

LAG Laura manager Ivan Čupić confirms the success of the event, noting, 'we achieved our goal of gathering LAGs in one place to exchange knowledge, experiences and best practice while also giving them a chance to present their customs, traditions and local products to the public. We have already set the date for next year's festival in July.' More information is available at www.lag-laura.hr



© Ivan Čupić

Participants at the welcoming Information Stand.



Cyclists in the Jeruzalem Landscape Park

© Grega Žorž

Slovenia: Improving walking and cycling routes through rural landscapes

From 9-13 September 2013 an enthusiastic group of students and professionals conducted a research project that will enhance the walking and cycling routes linking the two cities of Ljutomer and Ormož in the north-east of Slovenia. Initiated by the Development Agency of Prlekija (PRA) in cooperation with the municipalities of Ljutomer and Ormož and funded by LEADER, the researchers built on earlier consultations with local residents, service providers and walkers and cyclists in the area, about the need for improved facilities within the Landscape Park Jeruzalem.

The seven research camp participants, whose expertise included history, geology, photography and languages, spent the week exploring existing trails and identifying potential new (and safer) routes. They then produced a series of recommendations, in the form of detailed maps accompanied by photos and technical information on terrain, trail conditions and rest areas. The results are now being taken forward by the PRA. Images from the research camp can be viewed at: https://www.facebook.com/bike.prlekija/photos_stream

© Boris B. Voglar



Research camp participants examine a map in the Jeruzalem Landscape Park

Czech Republic: Countryside 2013 conference plans for future of rural areas

More than 400 rural actors from across the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the ENRD CP came together in Hranice in the Olomouc region for the fifth annual national conference on rural sustainability held on 1-3 October 2013.

Organised by a partnership including the national network of LAGs, the National Rural Network and ELARD, the main focus of the event was on Community-Led Local Development for rural areas in the context of the 2014-2020 programming period.

Thematic workshops included 'agriculture and countryside', 'what next for local government', 'experiences from the countryside', and 'services as a way to employment', each of which was supported by a topical field trip to observe existing best practice. A fair of local products was also held and throughout the event a series of LAG exhibitions was staged to encourage networking and development of transnational projects. Further information is available from <http://www.venkov2013.cz/>

© Spolek pro obnovu venkova Olomouckého kraje



The Countryside 2013 conference.

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 youth and rural vitality.

Youth and rural development

Participants in the Lithuanian-led 'Youth for Youth' transnational cooperation project.

The importance of young people to European rural development policy is widely recognised but experience suggests that Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) still need to be made more accessible and responsive to the needs of rural youth.

Demographic change and declining rural populations are important issues in most EU Member States and greatly influence economic performance in many rural areas. Supporting young people is therefore a high priority for rural development policy as it seeks to increase the social and economic vitality of rural areas.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) targets young people by helping young farmers (measure 112) and through Axis 3 and LEADER, which provide support for non-farming projects. Member States also have the option of targeting young people with other RDP measures, by giving them priority in the eligibility or selection criteria.

Youth-friendly support

The absence of references to youth in RDP programmes doesn't prevent the implementation of youth-related projects; however, the active targeting of youth groups can be enhanced by appropriate RDP design. In December 2012, the ENRD launched a Youth

and Young Farmers Thematic Initiative to assess how RDPs are supporting young farmers and rural youth and to explore ways to improve the performance in the next programming period (2014–2020). The incoming policy changes, such as the possibility of direct payments for young farmers under Pillar 1 or the introduction of a new sub-programme for young farmers under the EAFRD, should increase the options available to Member States.

In early 2013, the ENRD initiative launched a study that involved online and face-to-face discussions with over 50 stakeholders from across the EU. The study collected data on RDP support for youth and young farmers in 14 countries and compiled 29 examples of successful youth projects. The initial results indicate that while most RDPs recognise the important role of young people for rural development, many fail to target effectively due to the absence of a clear focus on youth and also fail to acknowledge the need to maintain young people in rural areas.

Of the RDPs examined, only the Swedish programme mentioned youth as a priority across the entire programme. In Sweden, the integration of young people in rural areas is one of the six general priorities of the RDP and as such, youth is considered horizontally, across all programme measures.

Case study: Swedish network gives power to voice of rural youth

The U Land network of rural development youth coordinators is a good example of what can be achieved by network coordination. U Land is a network of youth coaches working with LEADER groups in Sweden. Set up in 2006, it acts as a meeting place for the exchange of experience and the development of competencies. The network organises meetings for rural youth across the country and lobbied successfully for rural youth to be included as a horizontal priority in the Swedish RDP for 2007-2013. U Land's guide on how to engage young people in the preparation of Local Development Strategies now forms part of the programming guidance material that the Swedish Board of Agriculture provides to all LEADER groups and county administrations.

<http://www.u-land.se/>

Shaping the future

To ensure a more effective targeting of young people, the study highlights the need to encourage greater involvement of young people in RDPs at local and national levels. Organisations representing different groups of rural youth (including young entrepreneurs and students) should be involved from the outset of RDP design and the net should be cast widely - 'rural youth' is not a homogeneous group, meaning that appropriate strategies are required to ensure greater outreach.

Networking within and between these groups can help to facilitate the outreach process, especially in terms of ensuring that the needs of young people are articulated in a coordinated way.

Taking ownership

In terms of project implementation, a key success factor is the extent to which young people get involved in and take ownership of projects. The study found that while many projects target rural youth, those that are designed or implemented by young people are less prevalent - even though they were considered to be more successful.

The involvement of young people in projects can be encouraged by youth coaches and mentors who give support throughout the project development and implementation phases. Capacity building is also identified as an important tool for ensuring active and meaningful youth participation in rural development generally.

In addition to a better targeting and promoting greater participation in and ownership of projects, the study also identifies the need to remove financial and administrative barriers for rural youth. Suggestions in this area include an increase in aid intensity for younger project promoters and a simplification of administrative procedures.

The ENRD Youth and Young Farmers Thematic Initiative will present its initial findings at a youth event being held in December 2013. Thereafter, a final report, case studies and other output material will be published.

Youth and Young Farmers Gateway

The regularly updated online gateway contains the output of the ENRD Youth and Young Farmers Thematic Initiative and references a wide range of support activities for young people in rural areas from many EU Member States.

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/youth-and-young-farmers/en/youth-and-young-farmers_en.cfm



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...



© ENRD Contact Point

Challenging the decline of the bee population

Transnational cooperation project benefits biodiversity.

Seven Local Action Groups (LAGs) - from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Slovakia and the United Kingdom - have joined forces in response to a shared concern about the phenomenon of population collapse in pollinating insects. Scientists estimate that the survival of more than 80% of plant species depend directly on pollinating insects.

The transnational cooperation project, being led by the French LAG Pays

Voironnais, is adding value through sharing experience; a process facilitated by ongoing communication and joint workshops. The combined objectives of the diverse LAG projects are to: i) limit the poisoning of pollinators through chemicals (e.g. fertilisers, fungicides, insecticides); ii) ensure the availability of sufficient quality food for at-risk pollinators; iii) support local beekeeping activity; and iv) raise awareness among the general public.

The project - which has received over €252 000 from the EAFRD, or about 57% of the total project cost - is already having a real impact locally. The collective initiative has resulted in the creation of pollination services, planting of flower strips in towns, roads and fields and the dissemination of educational material including a children's book. A project website presenting the project partners, activities and results is now available: www.bee-leader.eu/en/bees-biodiversity-project

Supporting agri-environmental measures in the Scottish Highlands

Improving the local economy while preserving the environment.



The Munro family run an upland livestock farm in the Scottish highlands.

William Munro has been a farmer in the Scottish Highlands for many years. Looking to diversify his business and to remain competitive, he requested EAFRD funding to improve food quality while supporting agri-environmental measures.

The project activities included the management of wetland, water margins, hedges and mown grassland, the fencing of watercourses

and fields to manage grazing pressures and the removal of livestock from parts

of the farm at certain times of the year to protect wildlife, such as during the nesting period.

The total project cost was €31 400, with the EAFRD providing over half the funds. The EAFRD investment has safeguarded biodiversity by strengthening the farm's wildlife habitats. The farm is part of the Cairngorms National Park, which attracts bird watchers to the area, helping the local rural economy. The farm has also been able to improve the quality of its livestock and the efficiency of its operations.

A video postcard about William Munro's farm is available online: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/videos/en/video_033.cfm

Boosting local development in Poland

Modernisation project engages village and supports economy in a disadvantaged area.

Looking to engage the local community and to improve the local economy the Międzychód village in Poland successfully converted an abandoned communist-era collectivist farm into a thriving regional and environmental education centre. An additional objective was to enhance the quality of tourist services.

The EAFRD invested €40 000 to help transform the farm buildings into a conference

facility with sport and recreational areas. The renovation also restored historically-relevant aspects of the farm, where traditional occupations are now demonstrated as tourist attractions.

The centre hosts workshops and classes and attracts more than 8 000 visitors per annum. The success of this project, launched in 2006, is largely due to the widespread participation of the local population.

The project (<http://www.mnieszki.pl/>) has improved the image of the village, which was previously branded a disadvantaged community, provided tourism management services and increased local economic activity. In 2009, Międzychód was even named the friendliest village in Poland!

Italian cooperation project for farm and forestry services

Supporting innovation and efficiency in northern Italy.

The Maschinenring association was set up in 2000 and involves over 5 000 farmers and foresters in the South Tyrol region of Italy. It enables the exchange of agricultural machinery and labour between producers and encourages the use of innovative and modern equipment. It also offers farm and forestry relief services, such as thinning, timber-cutting and log skidding. Services can be booked online (<http://www.maschinenring.it>) and include seasonal packages.

The objective of this project is to encourage collaboration between farmers and forestry managers. It promotes more cost-efficient use of machinery as members have

a reduced need to invest in expensive equipment. Maschinenring's relief services allow members to employ workers for specific jobs or rent machines for a specific time period. The association reimburses the costs sustained by both members and those who offer their services. Members can also benefit from advisory services and training.

Over €529 000 has been invested, with €200 000 coming from the EAFRD. The project has increased productivity and

facilitates the use of relief services in the region. Overall, costs are reduced through optimised machinery use, contributing to healthier farm incomes and improved work safety.



The Maschinenring association provides access to capital-intensive machinery.

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Moving on from semi-subsistence farming in Bulgaria

Developing a semi-subsistence goat farm into a small business.

Marina Dicheva established her farm in the Silistra region in 2002. The farm began to focus solely on goat breeds as of 2005 in an effort to preserve local breeding traditions. Her goal was to transform her semi-subsistence farm into a sustainable business. To achieve this meant increasing the number of female goats from 85 to 200, growing milk and meat production and attaining EU farm breeding standards.

To reach her goal, Marina Dicheva had to improve her skills and knowledge of livestock breeding and agricultural services.

As she explains, 'professional help and assistance are available if the farmer has clear goals. You have to work to develop your farm and to not be afraid of the administrative process linked to European funding.'

This five-year project demonstrates that even a small amount of funding can have a big effect: a €6 000 contribution has allowed Marina Dicheva to transform her farm. Her small business has grown to become sustainable. In all, EAFRD funds amounted to 80% of the total cost of this project.

For more information about these projects and hundreds more visit the RDP Projects Database:

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

We pass the microphone over to hear what you have to say. For this issue we hear your views about rural environmental protection...

Agri-environment projects, funded by Rural Development Programmes are helping to sustain precious biodiversity and to address climate change-related challenges around Europe. We hear from Austria, Malta and Scotland as to what it means to local farmers and rural development actors.



'We see a lot of benefits... such as better understanding and acceptance of agri-environment measures by farmers.'

Daniel Bogner², Austrian agri-environment expert

'The farm has become more effective both in producing food and looking after the countryside.'

'Because we keep the sheep off the fields... these places have become a good habitat for species we are trying to increase in our area.'

William Munro¹, Pitmain Farm, Scotland



'Biodiversity monitoring taught me to see my fields and meadows in a different way. I know more about the role of nature and biodiversity on my farm.'

Sandra Lerner² - Rosenhof farm

'Rural development funds help farmers to use environmentally-friendly agricultural techniques that look after water, soil and energy resources in more sustainable ways.'

Marilyn Tanti³, Maltese Ministry for the environment, sustainable development and climate change



- ¹ http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/videos/en/video_033.cfm
- ² http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/videos/en/video_038.cfm
- ³ http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/videos/en/video_031.cfm

Share your video!

The above quotes are taken from ENRD media gallery:
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/>



'Sweden, 12 points!'

No, it's not the Eurovision song contest, it's Hans-Olof Stålgren from the Swedish Rural Network performing his RDP song at the 19th NRN meeting in September 2013, Gdansk, Poland. Check out the video: <http://www.youtube.com/user/EURural/videos>

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.



Fun on the farm!

In September the ENRD CP ventured outside of Brussels and held a productive team-building day on the Schalenbourg farm (<http://fermeschalenbourg.blogspot.be>) in Wallonia, Belgium.



© ENRD Contact Point

Cow-munication!

Every September, the countryside comes to the city for Bruxelles Champêtre. The European Commission's cow always draws a crowd.



Speaking in tongues...

The European Day of Languages (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/JEL_en.asp) encourages language learning across Europe. Did you know that in the past year ENRD CP translators have delivered over 1 million words about rural development...?



© ENRD Contact Point

In full swing!

Kashubian regional dancers from northern Poland provide local entertainment at the 19th NRN meeting.



A question for the ENRD?

Use the ENRD Infoline at info@enrd.eu
or call +32 2 235 2020



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Family Farming in Europe

How rural is the EU?

Over 77% of EU territory is classified as rural (47% is farm land and 30% forest) and it is home to around half the population.

How many farmers are there in the EU?

There are 12 million (full-time) farmers. Overall, agriculture and the agri-foods industry - which is heavily dependent on the agricultural sector for its supplies - account for 6% of the EU's GDP, comprise 15 million businesses and provide 46 million jobs.

What types of farming are there in the EU?

A wide variety: including intensive, conventional and organic farming. This diversity has become even greater with the arrival of

the new member countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Family farms, often passed on from one generation to the next, are typical. Europe has an average farm size of about 15 hectares (by way of comparison, the US has 2 million farmers and an average farm size of 180 hectares).

For more about farming check out the European Commission's economic brief 'Structure and dynamics of EU farms' (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-area-economics/briefs/pdf/09_en.pdf).

**Source: The CAP and agriculture in Europe – Frequently asked questions: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-631_en.htm*

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Ready for 2014-2020?

The ENRD's brand new RDP Gateway 2014-2020 tells you everything you ever wanted to know about the new programming period but were afraid to ask...!

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/cap-towards-2020/rdp-programming-2014-2020>



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.

