



ENRD webinar

2nd meeting of the Thematic Group on Rural Proofing Highlights report

This second meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on Rural Proofing built on the previous TG discussion and aimed to further develop the focus on the practical implementation of rural proofing mechanisms.

TG members discussed how to put in place the actions needed for the successful implementation of rural proofing in practice and jointly worked on a framework of priority actions for different administrative levels (national, regional and local).

In addition, the links between rural proofing and Territorial Impact Assessments (TIA) were identified and explored.

Event Information

Date: 19 May 2022

Location: Virtual meeting

Organisers: ENRD Contact Point

Participants: 46 participants from 20 EU Member States, including MAs, NRNs, European organisations, the European Commission, Local Action Groups (LAGs), national/regional stakeholders and researchers.

Outcomes: Exchange of knowledge and experiences on rural proofing; suggestions on how to design and implement rural proofing.

Web page: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/2nd-meeting-enrd-thematic-group-rural-proofing_en

Rural Proofing & Territorial Impact Assessment



Eleftherios Stavropoulos (DG REGIO/ European Commission) moderated this session. In his opening remarks he pointed

out that rural proofing is an integral part of TIA. It is foreseen by the EU [Better Regulation Communication](#) and the [Better regulation: guidelines and toolbox](#). Last but not least in the [annual work programme of the European Commission for 2022](#) there is for the first time the following reference: *'Territorial impact assessments and rural proofing will be strengthened, so that the needs and specificities of different EU territories are better taken into account'*.



Patrycja Artymowska (Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland) presented the [pilot action](#)

on TIA developed in the framework of the Territorial Agenda 2030. The project aims to better understand how different sectoral policies can shape spatial imbalances through undertaking research in several cross-border regions of Czechia, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia and comparing existing TIA tools and methods. Patrycja highlighted that tailored-made methodologies and exchanges of experience are needed rather than a standard method for all. Cooperation between different national ministries is crucial for both TIA and rural proofing.



Roland Gaugitsch (OIR/Austrian Institute for Regional Studies) provided insights into the [European Committee of Regions' study on TIA](#). He highlighted the links between TIA and rural proofing

and pointed out that TIA is a specific assessment focused on the geographical level. Recommendations for the 'TIA quick check' include improving the checklist method with clear guidance and past examples of application. At the EU level a 'TIA necessity check' should be carried out according to the EU Better regulation: guidelines and toolbox in order to define if TIA –Rural Proofing is relevant and that should be done by the relevant Commission services when deciding which impacts to analyse as part of the overall impact assessment as part of developing new EU legislation. Capacities and resources, networking and existence of support structures are crucial for the successful implementation at national, regional and local level.

Rural proofing actions



Dr Jane Atterton (Rural Policy Centre, SRUC) and Veronika Korcekova (ENRD Contact Point) jointly introduced the [framework of Rural Proofing actions](#) based on the [synthesis of success factors](#) discussed during the first TG meeting. The framework is intended to support policy-makers and stakeholders involved in designing or implementing rural proofing in their own specific context. It includes six actions, that were explained in detail during the TG meeting:

- **Action 1 - a clear statement of strong and real political will and commitment.** This was acknowledged as the most essential priority action and is applicable not only to rural proofing but to the visibility of rural areas in general.
- **Action 2 - a positive shared vision of rural areas** ensuring there is maximum buy-in. Rural proofing is regarded as a means for achieving that positive vision.
- **Action 3 - clear, coordinated roles and responsibilities** with adequate resources to enable all actors to play their part in rural proofing. Leadership from within government is essential.
- **Action 4 - templates and guidance** need to be clear and robust and include all sorts of useful information. Understanding whether rural proofing is a requirement for all policies or for some policies is important.
- **Action 5 - monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.** Impacts need to be measured against the long-term vision for rural areas.
- **Action 6 - longer-term work in support of rural proofing.** This includes aspects such as collective learning, capacity building or integrating different policies.

The plenary discussion provided the feedback from TG members. It was stressed that rural proofing in a domestic setting must be synchronised with the EU-level approach.

Group work & Next steps

During the discussions in smaller groups, TG members exchanged about the role of the [national](#), [regional](#) and [local](#) level actors for each of the six actions. This created a complex picture of responsibilities of different stakeholders. The valuable input from the groups was [summarised](#) in a final overview and feed into the [framework of rural proofing actions](#), a key output of the TG.



Betty-Ann Bryce (OECD) invited TG members to the pre-event on 'Rural proofing for rural health' organised in September 2022 in the framework of the OECD Rural Conference in Ireland.



Alexia Rouby (DG AGRI/European Commission) highlighted the role of the [Rural Pact](#) - a framework for interaction among all levels of governance and stakeholders - and its links with rural proofing. She stressed the importance of follow-up work on rural proofing mechanisms at national and regional level using the results of this ENRD Thematic Group and the need for improving data and statistics on rural areas. Alexia also mentioned the [Rural Pact Conference](#) (15-16 June 2022) which will also provide several interventions relevant for rural proofing.