



ENRD webinar

Fourth meeting of the Thematic Group

Highlights report

This fourth and concluding Thematic Group meeting focused on local and territorial environment and climate initiatives in promoting the green transition. These play an important role in generating collective action and local ownership, and provide an effective way to promote the uptake of environmental schemes among rural actors.

Cooperation and exchanges between different stakeholders, the availability of expertise and advice, and sufficient economic incentives for farmers were recurring success factors in the cases presented. A number of complementary EAFRD/CAP interventions can be made available to facilitate cooperative and territorial environmental initiatives. Public support measures need to be flexible and simple enough to ensure uptake. Local authorities' recognition and support is also key to enable territorial schemes.

Event Information

Date: 20 May 2021

Location: Webinar

Organisers: ENRD Contact Point


Participants: RDP Managing Authorities (MA) and representatives of national ministries, EU institutions, representatives of farmer associations, environmental organisations, advisory organisations, local and territorial organisations.


Outcomes: Exchanges on CAP interventions that can support local and territorial approaches contributing to CAP and EGD environmental and climate objectives.

Web page: [4th meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group on the European Green Deal and Rural Areas](#)

Examples of territorial approaches to the green transition

IfaS [Zaira Ambu](#) (Institut für angewandtes Stoffstrommanagement - [IfaS](#), DE) presented [MUNTER](#), an EIP-Agri Operational Group that helped municipalities in Germany's Rhineland Palatinate prevent soil erosion and flooding. The participating municipalities, research institute, farmers, water managers and nature conservation bodies tailored landscape management and agroforestry on the farmers' plots to address the issues. A financial model was developed whereby the municipality pays the farmers for energy crops produced by the new land management systems. Participating farmers benefited from CAP support for Short Rotation Coppice, but the shift to agroforestry would require more significant long-term investment support.

 **FUNDATIA ADEPT** [Razvan Popa](#) ([Fundatia Adept](#), RO) presented a pilot initiative that tested a Results-Based Payment Scheme (RBPS) for high-nature-value grassland management with farmers in two Romanian regions. The payment rates applied were higher than those received by farmers under national AECM contracts for the same types of grassland. Participating farmers appreciated the flexibility of the scheme which, instead of imposing fixed management interventions, focused on the evolution of biodiversity indicators such as occurrence of certain flower species on the meadows. As a result, farmers also became more aware of biodiversity on their land. Similar schemes within the CAP, for example in Natura2000 areas and also in other MS, could be effective and help in achieving CAP environmental performance targets. Managing Authorities need to identify and apply specific expertise to design RBPSs.

 **LOKALKRAFT** [Alexandra de Haas](#) ([LEADER Åland](#), FI) explained how the MA and the Local Action Group (LAG) addressed low uptake of non-productive investments for environment in the Åland islands through applying an environmental emphasis under their Local Development Strategy. This led to specific environmental themes being reflected in more than half of local LEADER-funded projects, including wetland rehabilitation, clearing wood pastures with hiking trails, creating sedimentation ponds at the end of ditches to reduce nutrient leakages, and beekeeping activities. The continued and close support the LAG provided to project owners – farmers and local enterprises - was a key success factor, implying that for further upscaling, more human resources are necessary.



[Sebastien Quennery](#) ([Natural Park of Gaume](#), BE-WA) presented the [AGRINEW](#) project that aimed to valorise abandoned or marginal agricultural land in the Gaume area. The project facilitated land use agreements between owners of unused land and new farmers looking for farmland, and tested and introduced biodiversity preserving practices. It facilitated public/private and private/private partnerships to restore 67 ha of agricultural land and the installation of six new farmers. An economic analysis to understand and improve the economic profitability of the environmental practices was a key element of the project. Support for the project and its actions was made available through RDP measures for LEADER and M 7.6 for restoring habitats.



[Clément Charbonnier](#) (National Federation of Organic Farming [FNAB, FR](#)) and Julien Roy ([Avesnois Natural Park, FR](#)) presented the French [network](#) of pilot territories that upscale organic farming. This network gathers municipalities, natural parcs and water providers to share experiences and promote bottom-up initiatives. In the Avesnois Natural Park the municipal authorities' initial goal for organic agriculture was to improve tap water quality. Presently, the territory supports farms' organic conversion, reinforces local organic value chains for example via school catering contracts and aims at 30% of the cultivated area becoming organic to improve local water and food quality.



[Nicola Lucci](#) (adviser, IT) and Enrico Lanciotti (vice mayor of Altidona, IT) presented the [Agri-Environmental Agreement](#) for Water Protection in the Aso Valley, Italy. Most of the fruit producers from the 19 municipalities involved have collaborated since 2016 in the agreement to reduce pesticide use. The agreement benefits from the coordinated use of several RDP measures supporting advice and capacity building, incentivising sustainable land management (organic measure and the AECM) and farmers' collaboration.



[Urška Hojnik](#) ([Eko Prlekija](#) social enterprise, SI) and Vesna Čuček ([Agricultural and Forestry Institute Celje, SI](#)) [told](#) members about the success of Eko Prlekija, the first Slovenian organic farmer group organising direct sales. Originally made up of eight farmers farming 200 ha of land, the group currently sell diverse organic products from 47 farmers covering 800 ha, with annual sales of EUR 190 000. Selling via the group provides the farmers with a better margin than through other marketing channels. RDP support for the establishment of producer groups (M9.1) and the development of short supply chains and local markets (M16.4) helped launch the activity.



[Ad Vlems](#) ([Ecodorp Boekel](#), NL) presented the ecovillage which he and a group of likeminded people had launched in Boekel, Netherlands. This ecovillage community applies and develops sustainable and climate neutral practices in farming, housing, water treatment and energy. Innovation and networking are key elements of their vision, and the village wants to set an example of fully sustainable living, which other localities can potentially adopt. A key factor enabling the initiative is a Dutch law that provides a special status for sustainable innovations and can potentially upscale them.

Opportunities to support local ownership of the green agenda in the CAP Strategic Plan



[Stefan Østergård Jensen](#) (DG AGRI) explained how local ownership of projects supported by CAP Strategic Plan interventions can be strengthened. Besides involving stakeholders in the planning process to ensure coordination between all levels of governance, building on existing structures to implement locally tailored solutions is important. Designing the right package of CAP support options that responds to local needs, e.g. support for cooperation and trainings in combination with green investments, and also networking, will help ensure local ownership. The successes of the LEADER method and Smart Villages approach can be upscaled in the CAP Strategic Plan for that purpose.

Wrapping up the Thematic Group (TG)



Previous events:

- [1st meeting](#) to set the 'rural' scene of the European Green Deal and define group's priority topics
- [2nd meeting](#) on ways to upscale sustainable agricultural and forestry practices via CAP
- [3rd meeting](#) on rural areas' transition to clean energy and related CAP opportunities



TG publications:

- [Scoping paper](#) taking stock of European Green Deal actions with specific relevance for rural areas
- [Effective approaches for facilitating a transition to clean energy in the agriculture and forestry sectors using the CAP](#)
- [Using the CAP to upscale sustainable agriculture and forestry management practices](#)