

ENRD webinar

## 20th NRN Meeting

### Highlights report

The 20th NRN Meeting took the form of a webinar on 15 June 2021.

The aim of this meeting was to cover recent actions in the consultation process on the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas (LTVRA), reflecting on NRN activities during Rural Vision Week (RVW), and the role of NRNs in supporting communication and stakeholder involvement around the Rural Vision. Participants were updated on the Conference on the Future of Europe and their own potential involvement.

Recent rural networking activities and the ongoing development of national CAP networks were discussed. The event also provided the opportunity to reflect on specific activities from preceding NRN meetings and workshops that can add value to future networking.

#### Event Information

**Date:** 15 June 2021

**Location:** Webinar

**Organisers:** ENRD Contact Point

**Participants:** 65 NRN representatives from 24 Member States (MS)

**Outcomes:** Recommendations for future activity, reflecting on successful networking actions; updates on the Conference on the Future of Europe and the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas

**Web page:** [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/20th-nrn-meeting\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/20th-nrn-meeting_en)



### Setting the Scene

Helen Williams, DG AGRI introduced the topics of the meeting and provided an update on preparations for the European Commission's Communication on the Rural Vision foreseen to be adopted on 30 June. She also touched upon the state of play of the legislative processes related to the future CAP, including for the EU and national CAP Networks. John Grieve, ENRD Contact Point noted that the meeting would help particularly by taking stock of useful previous actions and outcomes from earlier NRN meetings and in looking to reflect success through future activity.

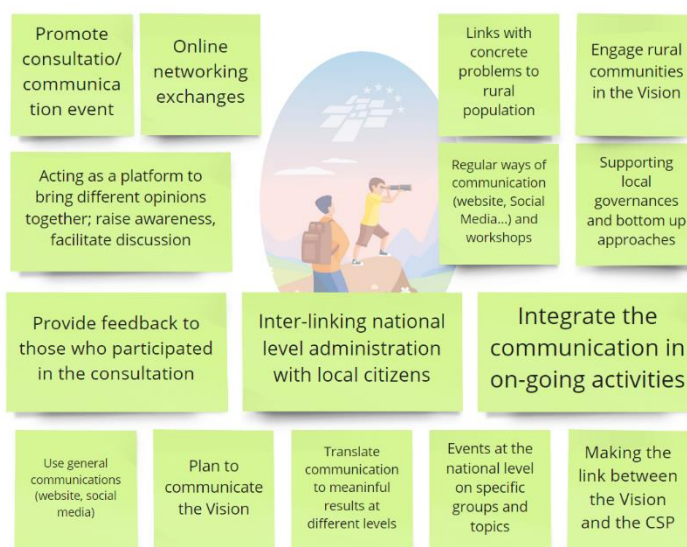
### Feedback on Rural Vision Week and the LTVRA



[Paul Soto](#) from the ENRD Contact Point presented the summary of the stakeholder input gathered during Rural Vision Week as well as the outcomes of the stakeholder workshops supported by NRNs informing the Vision which were summarised in the ENRD [Rural Voices report](#). Key highlights from the report were introduced, including common strands and a framework for action.

NRNs have played a crucial role in involving stakeholders in the Long-Term Vision. Michael Fischer from the Austrian NSU, [Dominika Długosz](#) from the Polish NSU and Juha-Matti Markolla from the Finnish NSU contributed with their views on the process. NRNs reflected on lessons learned and actions raised from the Vision process through stakeholder workshops at Member State (MS) level and through the RVW components (including the Marketplace, Fringe workshops, Rural Inspiration Awards, Youth testimonials etc.) highlighting practical aspects and helping to understand MS level specificities.

#### What are the most important actions that your NRN can take in supporting communication and ongoing stakeholder involvement around the Vision?



The [breakout sessions](#) that followed focused on collecting the most relevant RVW outcomes such as future-oriented mindsets, holistic approaches and rural youth to mention some. Outcomes from the exchanges on how NRNs might support communication and ongoing stakeholder involvement around the 'Vision' are summarised in the graphic (also available [online](#)).

## Information on the Conference on the future of Europe

Anguel K. Beremliysky of the Common Conference Secretariat presented an overview of the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) noting opportunities for the NRNs to contribute to the Conference's consultation processes. The Conference provides an opportunity to put Europe's rural communities and their sustainable development at the heart of the forward-looking debate around the future of Europe. NRNs were encouraged to participate in this debate through sharing their (and their stakeholders) ideas and proposals and registering their self-organised events on the multilingual digital platform and registering their self-organised events on the multilingual digital platform (<https://futureu.europa.eu>). Options are also available through the Conference's online platform to comment on ideas from other people or organisations involved in this bottom-up dialogue. The presentation concluded noting hyperlinks to a number of [useful toolkits](#), campaign (<https://futureu.europa.eu/pages/campaign-materials>), and information material (<https://futureu.europa.eu/pages/information-material>) that NRNs could take advantage of in order to engage actively in the Conference, including on organising events and reporting from them on the platform.



## Update on rural networking activities

David Lamb and Veronika Korcekova from the ENRD CP provided a review of key findings from this year's [Common Network Statistics and survey of NRN needs and opportunities](#). All MS took part in both processes which highlighted the success of NRNs in overcoming challenges linked to the pandemic. Networking at national and regional levels was sustained throughout the lock-down periods and substantial capacity was built through the use of online networking toolkits. There was a specific request for a platform / forum for exchanges between NRNs to be set-up by the ENRD.

Myles Stiffler from the ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk gave a presentation featuring [planned and upcoming activities for the Helpdesk](#) until the end of 2021. This included an event in June titled 'A journey through evaluation plans: learning from past experiences for the future CAP'. New resources in the Helpdesk's pipeline include an Evaluation Knowledge Bank which will become part of the ENRD website.

Magdalena Mach from DG AGRI presented the highlights from a recent series of online EIP-AGRI webinars "[Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans – the role of innovation networking in the Member States](#)". The webinars, organised by the European Commission for the Member States' representatives of Managing Authorities, NRNs, farm advisory organisations and the Horizon Europe national contact points, provided guidance for the innovation strand of the future CAP networks on supporting the new CAP cross-cutting innovation objective of modernising agriculture and rural areas.

NRN representatives from [the Netherlands](#) and Latvia updated the meeting on progress in their MS with planning for the new national CAP networks and CSPs. Edgars Linde explained that Latvia's NSU is involved with communicating on the new CAP in order to raise awareness, while Tamar Kok presented the objective in the Netherlands to go beyond coordination and have a 'co-operative network', also implying the need to reinforce the NSU's resources.



## Summary of NRN meeting actions and follow-up

Through a [virtual tour](#) across the EU in the form of videos, NSUs recalled the previous actions, themes and formats of NRN meetings, with some observations on the highlights of those meetings. These included more recent virtual formats and the networking interactivity that promoted learning and development. In the breakout discussions that followed, a series of recommendations for future networking activity were made by four groups.

- The [first group](#) highlighted interaction between EU and MS networks, and the success of multi-actor networks. They suggested that 'niche networking groups' featuring thematic topics of interest should remain active.
- The [second group](#) suggested continuing with a blend of networking methodologies using e.g. facilitation skills, good practice sharing, digital communication skills, new kinds of animation e.g. innovation camps, and keeping competitions such as the Rural Inspiration Awards. They also emphasised the benefit of field visits that can produce much more detailed learning by involving practitioners.
- The recommendations from the [third group](#) centred on having informal communication with rural stakeholders, and developing communication chains between NSUs, LAGs and other grassroots stakeholders. Benefits from both virtual and physical meetings were considered to be of value, both were needed.
- The focus of the [fourth group](#) was on continued collaboration between NSUs, including more connections between MS with regionalised RDPs, antennae or networks. The AKIS network was seen as having greater importance in the new CAP Network. More regional events were suggested to engage local stakeholders.

## Conclusions and next steps

In closing the event, John Grieve reflected that the NRN meetings have been a shared journey and recently the change of working circumstances has shown the resilience of rural networking. This was seen to be important in helping MS to navigate the CAP transition period, as well as in developing CSPs and the new CAP networks in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. There are lessons for the future in the new ways through which networking has been explored, and how NRNs continue to adapt, innovate, reflect and find new solutions together.

Helen Williams closed the meeting, underlining that although this is the final NRN meeting delivered by the current ENRD Contact Point team, ENRD support to MS would continue. She thanked the CP team for all their support in delivering a useful range of networking activities and NRN meeting participants echoed her thanks.