

NEWS AND UPDATES

- **THE CAP BEYOND 2020**
- **SMART VILLAGES IN THE SPOTLIGHT**
- **THEMATIC WORK ON RESOURCE EFFICIENCY**

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

- **LAG SURVEY RESULTS**
- **A PATHWAY TO TECHNOLOGY-LED FARMING**
- **ON THE ROAD TO PEACE IN RURAL COLOMBIA**

FOCUS ON...

GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

European Network for Rural Development

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 (RDPs) by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and co-operation across rural Europe.

Each Member State has established a National Rural Network (NRN) that brings together the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. At EU level, the ENRD supports the networking of these NRNs, national administrations and European organisations.

Find out more on the *ENRD website* (<https://enrd.ec.europa.eu>)

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**Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11**

(* The information given is free, as are most calls
(though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

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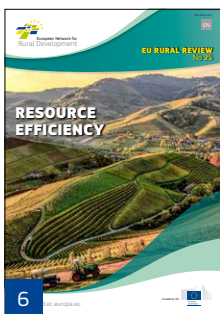
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EDITORIAL



The Rural Connections magazine you have in your hands or are reading online is being published at a formative time for Rural Development policy. The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) which has been taking shape over the past months is crystallising – with the European Commission's proposals for the future EU budget published on 2 May, followed shortly afterwards by the legislative proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2020 on 1 June 2018.

The latest metamorphosis of the CAP will energise the network over the months ahead. We cover the latest developments in our regular round-up of **News and updates** (pp. 4-11) which also includes details of a series of 'smart villages' initiatives, recent events and other network news.

Speaking of change, our **Focus on...Generational Renewal** (pp. 25-38) examines what is being done to welcome and support a new generation of farmers. As signalled by the European Commission's Communication on the Future of Food and Farming, generational renewal features prominently in the new CAP. In this edition of Rural Connections, we get the Commission's view on why it is so important and what the CAP legal proposals say on it, we hear from the CEJA President on how young farmers see their future and we delve into good practices of dealing with the triple challenge of access to land, access to capital and access to knowledge. Rounding off the section, we profile some initiatives that are increasing the attractiveness of rural areas.

There are plenty of other actors transforming the rural development landscape. In the **Rural Issues, Rural Perspectives** (pp. 12-24) section, we hear from stakeholders throughout the network who are helping to shape the future of rural development.

Looking beyond the EU, we hear from Colombia where rural development projects are instrumental in helping the country rebuild after many years of violent conflict. A new national network in Turkey, which includes 25 Local Action Groups (LAGs), is profiled – perhaps it will soon spark joint projects with members of the network.

Within the EU, we hear from a diverse range of networkers including about how a transnational Erasmus+ project has created a LEADER educational qualification, as well as news about the largest ever LEADER survey which the ENRD recently completed. We also get some insight into the new performance-based delivery model that will be rolled out in the new CAP.

In an ever-changing world, Rural Connections helps you sort the wheat from the chaff.

Do you have any comments on something you have seen in this magazine? Or would you like to contribute some ideas for future editions? If so, please do get in touch.



Derek McGlynn

Publications Manager, ENRD CP
editor@enrd.eu

NEWS & UPDATES

ENRD NEWS

Smart villages in the spotlight

The rural development network is excited about smart villages. Individual projects are already showing exactly how to boost the provision of services, jobs and growth in rural areas. As the smart village concept gains momentum, many initiatives have kicked off around the rural development community, including from European and international policy-makers, to understand exactly what makes a rural area 'smart'. Here are some of the recent highlights.

Network seminar

The ENRD gathered over 140 rural development practitioners and policy-makers at a pan-European seminar in Brussels on 22 May 2018 to identify the drivers and practical steps for creating an enabling environment for smart villages, with a specific focus on rural services.

Showcasing the rich variety of social and digital innovations that are springing up across Europe, the event highlighted the importance of rural communities taking the initiative to boost the provision of services such as health, social care, education, energy, and mobility in rural areas.

Explore in detail how rural communities are taking advantage of digital and social innovations through the numerous ENRD channels and products.

**i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Visit the smart villages page on the ENRD website: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages_en

Browse through the smart villages portal: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages/smart-villages-portal_en

NEWS & UPDATES

EU-level initiatives

- The **Bled Declaration** for a 'Smarter Future of the Rural Areas in EU' calls for innovative and inclusive use of digital technologies, strengthened knowledge and entrepreneurship, and complementary support under EU funding instruments. The Declaration was signed on 13 April 2018 during a conference in Bled, Slovenia. It was delivered by Members of the European Parliament Franc Bogovič and Tibor Szanyi to European Commissioners Phil Hogan (agriculture and rural development), Violeta Bulc (transport) and Mariya Gabriel (digital economy and society).
- An EU **pilot project** 'Smart eco-social villages' kicked off in December 2017 and will work to map out challenges and opportunities in rural areas, provide a definition of smart villages, and identify good practice examples and case studies.
- An **Opinion** of the Committee of the Regions (December 2017) calls for 'Revitalisation of rural areas through smart villages'.
- An **Opinion** of the European Economic and Social Committee (October 2017) expresses support for 'Villages and small towns as catalysts for rural development'.
- The **'EU Action for Smart Villages'** of April 2017 outlines a series of initiatives on rural development, regional development, research, transport, energy, and digital policies and was a catalyst for the above-mentioned initiatives.



International perspective

The importance of empowering local communities to take action and make the most of rural innovation opportunities for job creation, economic growth, and service delivery was reiterated at the 11th OECD Rural Development Conference of 9-12 April 2018, Edinburgh, UK.

The event highlighted **ten key drivers of rural change** and the development of an integrated policy approach to capitalise on these. It concluded with the adoption of the **Edinburgh Policy Statement on Enhancing Rural Innovation** which, along with **OECD's Rural 3.0 policy**, calls for an integrated package of policies to support rural innovation and the future competitiveness and sustainability of rural economies.

The ENRD Contact Point designed and facilitated six **pre-conference workshops** which showcased inspiring project examples on topics including: global value chains; smart rural communities; technologies to face climate change; skills of the future; business support; and future governance.

The conference was co-hosted by the Scottish Government, European Commission and UK Government (DEFRA), and saw an active involvement of the European and UK rural networks.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

11th OECD Conference website: <http://www.oecd.org/rural/rural-development-conference/>

Scottish Rural Network: <http://www.ruralnetwork.scot/news-and-events/news/oecd-rural-development-conference-2018>

For information on the pre-conference workshops:

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/11th-oecd-rural-development-conference-enabling-rural-innovation_en

NEWS & UPDATES

Thematic work on Resource Efficiency

The broader ENRD thematic work on 'Greening the Rural Economy' has produced a set of useful outputs related to 'Resource Efficiency' and 'Sustainable Management of Water and Soils'.

It has identified approaches to effective and efficient management of natural resources and how the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) can be used strategically to support this.

Work on this theme has included meetings of two dedicated Thematic Groups, running for a year each between July 2016 and July 2018, editions of the EAFRD Projects Brochure and EU Rural Review, and two European Seminars.

EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURE 'RESOURCE-EFFICIENT RURAL ECONOMIES'



This edition explores how RDP funding helps to support the sustainable use of water and soil by rural communities, highlighting examples that create greater economic and environmental value from fewer inputs.

The selected projects showcase how a more resource-efficient agricultural sector can be achieved in practice, as well as how natural resources can be managed more sustainably with support from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

EU RURAL REVIEW 'RESOURCE EFFICIENCY'



Issue No 25 explores the resource efficiency challenge and examines what the concept of 'doing more with less' means for rural development. It overviews resource-efficient rural practices and highlights how the EU's Rural Development policy can be best used to support an improved management of soil and water.

Additionally, it profiles the EU's LIFE programme whose pilot projects provide many inspiring examples of sustainable practices that can be replicated by the agricultural and other rural business sectors.

OTHER THEMATIC OUTPUTS

Additional outputs of the Thematic Groups include:

- Briefings on collective approaches, results-based agri-environment schemes, and nutrient management plans;
- Good practice examples and case studies;
- Synthesis report on resource efficiency in 6 RDPs;
- EU level overview of relevant RDP support;
- Meeting and final reports of both Thematic Groups.

ENRD SEMINARS



Two European seminars of June 2017 and June 2018 examined practical opportunities, examples and key factors for resource efficiency in rural areas, with a particular focus on enabling sustainable management of water and soils through the RDPs.

Bringing together a wide range of rural development stakeholders, the two events emphasised the importance of using and strategically combining relevant RDP Measures to support resource-efficient land management practices, knowledge transfer, advice, cooperation and physical investments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the 'Resource Efficiency' and 'Water and Soil Management' pages on the ENRD website:

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-work/greening-rural-economy/resource-efficiency_en

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/greening-rural-economy/water-and-soil-management_en

NEWS & UPDATES

Networking highlights

A roundup of the latest meetings of the National Rural Networks (NRNs) in the 2014–2020 period:

- The joint 11th NRNs' meeting and communication workshop (31 May–1 June 2018 – Prague, Czech Republic) discussed ways of reinforcing networking opportunities and improving communication activities at both the national (NRN) and European (ENRD) levels.
- The 'Vibrant Rural North' workshop (16–18 April 2018 – Saaremaa, Estonia) exchanged on Rural Development Programme (RDP) implementation in Estonia, Sweden and Finland and related networking activities.
- The 10th NRNs' meeting (20–21 March 2018 – Neuhardenberg, Brandenburg, Germany) exchanged inspirational project

examples around the topics of rural mobility, smart supply chains and digital villages.

- An ENRD workshop on improving rural policy delivery (13 February 2018 – Rome, Italy) specifically looked at EU Member States with regional-level RDPs and how these are coordinated at the national level, what the links are between regional RDPs, and how networks can support delivery.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the 'Past events' section of the ENRD website:
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/past_en

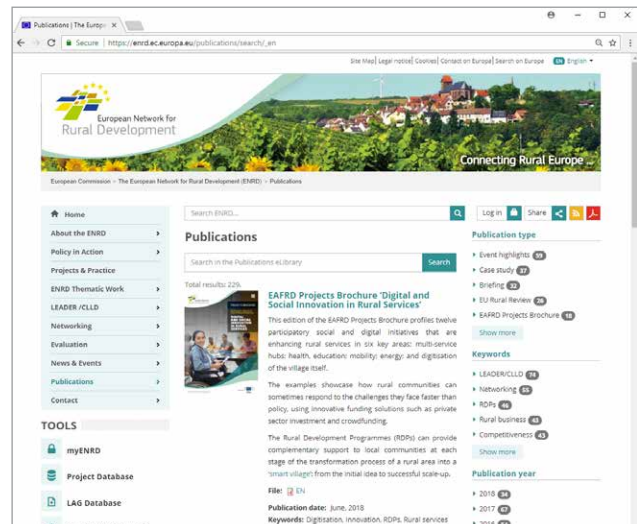
ENRD publications library

Browse through the updated ENRD publications library which has now been expanded to include over 230 case studies, factsheets, event highlights and briefings produced by the ENRD Contact Point since 2014.

The publications are searchable by type, keyword, year and free text, and cover the main work topics of the ENRD, including: smart villages; rural businesses and supply chains; water and soil management; resource efficiency and green economy; social inclusion; and LEADER/CLLD.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the ENRD publications library:
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search/_en



ENRD resources on LEADER innovation

A new webpage on the ENRD website brings together various resources related to LEADER innovation, including guidance, practical examples, ENRD events, EU support mechanisms, and relevant research.

The webpage is based on the input of the dedicated ENRD Practitioner-led Working Group (PWG). We want your feedback too!

To share your practical examples of LEADER-supported innovation, write to: leader-clld@enrd.eu.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the 'LEADER Innovation' page on the ENRD website:
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/leader-innovation_en

NEWS & UPDATES

Attractive rural areas for young people

A recent ENRD workshop (3 May 2018 – Brussels, Belgium) brought together young farmers, entrepreneurs, and policy-makers to explore ways of creating employment opportunities and services for rural youth.

The event showcased inspiring examples of youth initiatives presented by young leaders in areas such as entrepreneurship, rural-urban linkages, communication, and digitisation.

Additionally, it discussed how various policy tools, funds, and their strategic combination could be used to improve the attractiveness of rural areas for young people. This included success factors, transferability of ideas and projects on a wider scale in areas such as exchange schemes for young farmers, LEADER/CLLD, and EU support mechanisms for young people in rural areas.

The event is part of the broader ENRD thematic work on 'Social Inclusion' and 'Generational Renewal'.



© ENRD Contact Point, 2018

i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the thematic work pages on the ENRD website:

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-work/social-inclusion_en

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-work/generational-renewal_en

European Rural Networks' governance meetings

The latest meetings of the EU Rural Networks' (RN) governance bodies discussed recent and upcoming ENRD and EIP-AGRI activities and exchanged ideas for future work.

- The Steering Group (25 May 2018 – Brussels, Belgium) discussed recent and planned network activities, including ideas for 2018-2019 to be led by the ENRD Contact Point, and reflected on the outcomes of the 11th OECD Rural Development Conference of 9-12 April 2018 in Edinburgh, UK (for more information on the event, see p. 5).
- The LEADER/CLLD Sub-group (8 March 2018 – Brussels, Belgium) put forward recommendations and priority actions for improving LEADER/CLLD implementation in the current programming period. Discussions were based on the extensive

EU-wide survey among Local Action Groups (LAGs) carried out by the ENRD Contact Point in December 2017 (for more information on the survey results, see pp. 12-13).

- The 4th meeting of the RN Assembly (14 December 2017 – Brussels, Belgium) provided guidance for improving and prioritising network activities in light of the first comprehensive self-assessment exercise carried out in the autumn of 2017.

i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the European Rural Networks' governance pages on the ENRD website: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/about/european-rural-networks-governance_en

NEWS & UPDATES

UPDATE FROM THE EVALUATION HELPDESK

EUROPEAN
EVALUATION
HELPDESK
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Multi-fund LEADER/CLLD evaluation

In Sweden, 48 LAGs have been selected to implement CLLD strategies during the programming period 2014-2020. Roughly 88% of them are being implemented through a multi-fund approach across the different European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). Given this unique situation, the RDP Managing Authority, and specifically the secretariat for RDP evaluation, has decided to assess how the multi-fund approach is working.



© Mickan Thor, 2018

Analysts Madielene Wetterskog (from the Secretariat of Evaluation) and Tina Wallin (from the RDP Managing Authority, the Swedish Board of Agriculture) explain how Sweden is evaluating LEADER/CLLD in a multi-fund context.

How are you preparing the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD across multiple ESIF?

All evaluations within the RDP are coordinated by the Secretariat of Evaluation. Consequently, we can make sure that the evaluations do not overlap too much. They can even complement each other and provide insights that can be used for our future operations.

Concerning CLLD evaluations across multiple ESIF, these are planned in a collaborative forum where the Managing Authorities of other funds are actively participating. In this way, the collaboration across funds and organisations should ensure relevance and complementarity between all evaluations related to CLLD.

How are you preparing the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD across levels of governance?

Within this joint effort, the secretariat plays a crucial role in providing methodological support for LAGs as well as ensuring that they do not evaluate the same things across different levels of governance (e.g. RDP and local).

What evaluations are currently ongoing?

There are several, but the evaluation primarily targeted at the RDP level is the 'Evaluation of the impact of CLLD'. For this evaluation, we plan to use mainly quantitative methods that can separate CLLD and, among other things, geographical and demographical aspects. This evaluation is currently in the start-up phase and we expect preliminary results by the end of 2018.

What would you recommend to other Member States based on your experiences?

The evaluation of LEADER/CLLD requires a great deal of communication and coordination between stakeholders across and within the funds, as well as across the multiple levels of governance. We believe that it is vital to involve all stakeholders in the evaluation process and for that reason we established dedicated biannual meetings on the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD. We also suggest involving the National Rural Network, especially with regard to the dissemination of evaluation findings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Read the full interview in the Evaluation Helpdesk's Rural Evaluation NEWS Issue N°9:
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/publications/en?f%5B0%5D=im_field_enrd_publ_ehd_content_t%3A20151

Learn more about LEADER/CLLD evaluation in 'Guidelines: Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD':
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/publications/evaluation-leaderclld_en?pk_campaign=TWG3&pk_kwd=LEADER,%20CLLD

NEWS & UPDATES

EU NEWS

The CAP beyond 2020

The European Commission published on 1 June 2018 its legislative proposals for modernising and simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the 2021-2027 programming period.

NINE OBJECTIVES

Based on nine clear objectives, as outlined in the accompanying graphic, the future CAP will continue to ensure access to high-quality food and strong support for the unique European farming model with an increased focus on the environment and climate, supporting the transition towards a more sustainable agricultural sector and the development of vibrant rural areas.

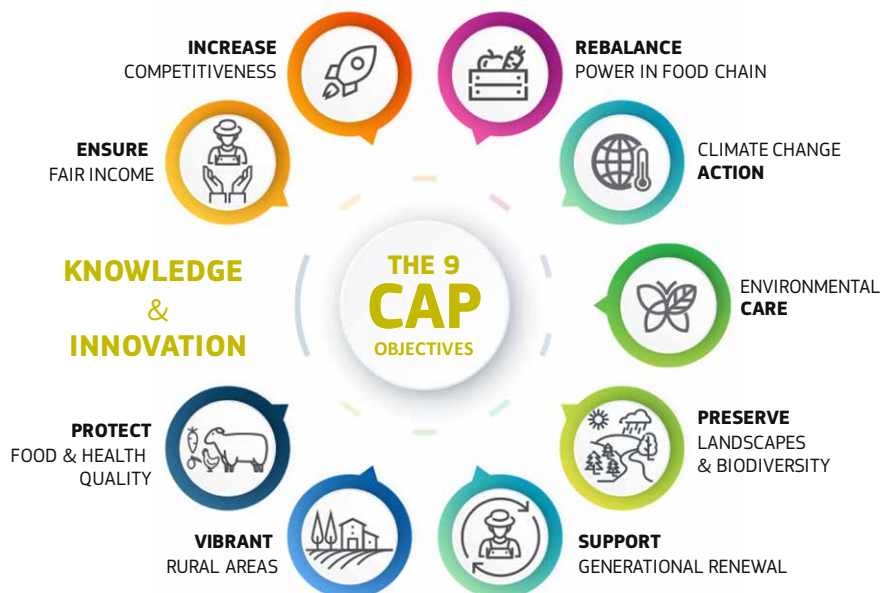
A NEW WAY OF WORKING

The Commission proposes a more flexible system, moving away from a 'one-size-fits-all approach' with detailed prescriptions set at EU level, towards increased freedom for Member States to tailor support to their specific needs.

The new policy will be implemented through 'CAP Strategic Plans', defined at the national level and agreed with the Commission.

Member States will have greater flexibility in choosing the most appropriate tools from a broad list of interventions agreed at the EU level. For example, the new CAP defines eight broad areas for action within rural development – such as environment and climate, young farmers, risk management, knowledge and information – rather than the current 69 Measures and sub-Measures.

Rather than rules and compliance, the focus will shift to results and performance. Moving to a tailor-made approach will bring the policy closer to those who implement it on the ground.



Member States will thus have greater freedom to decide how best to meet the common objectives and at the same time provide for their own specific needs. For more about the new delivery model, read the related article on p. 24.

CAP BUDGET

According to the Commission's proposal for the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, the CAP would be allocated €365 bn. This includes €265.2 bn for direct payments, €20 bn for market support measures, and €78.8 bn for rural development.

NEXT STEPS

The proposals for the MFF and the new CAP 2021-2027 have now been sent to the European Parliament and the Council. The co-legislators will in the coming months draw up their respective positions in relation to the Commission's proposals.

From its side, the Commission is encouraging early decisions. An agreement on the next long-term budget in 2019 – before forthcoming elections for the European Parliament – would provide for a seamless transition between the current long-term budget (2014-2020) and the new one and would ensure predictability and continuity of funding to the benefit of all.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

European Commission's legislative proposals:
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/natural-resources-and-environment_en
 Factsheet: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-18-3974_en.htm
 Multiannual Financial Framework, 2021-2027: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-modern-budget-may_2018_en.pdf

NEWS & UPDATES

Learning materials on sustainable farming

A selection of useful resources related to agriculture and farming produced by EU projects:

- A set of **case studies and a toolkit** by the Horizon 2020 project PEGASUS: guidance on building collective initiatives to increase the environmental and social benefits from **land management**. <http://pegasus.ieep.eu/resources/toolkit>
- An online **training platform** by the Erasmus+ project REVAB on restoration and re-use of **farm buildings** as a means of diversifying the rural economy. www.revab-erasmus.eu
- A **platform**, including a database of **smart farming technologies**, best practices, recommendations and policy briefs, by the Horizon 2020 Smart AKIS thematic network. www.smart-akis.com

Report on ESIF implementation

The strategic report 2017 by the European Commission on the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) provides details on the achievements of the rural development (EAFRD), fisheries (EMFF), cohesion (CF), regional (ERDF) and social (ESF) funds, since the beginning of the 2014-2020 funding period.

The report reveals that, by October 2017, some €278bn – almost half of the five Funds' overall budget – had been committed

to concrete projects in various fields such as the low carbon-economy, climate change protection, social inclusion, improving digital services in rural areas and supporting SME's competitiveness. Further information is available from the related press release and factsheet. A video profiles five of the two million projects that have been selected for funding since 2014. The featured project from the EAFRD is the WAB, a rural high school for digital transition.

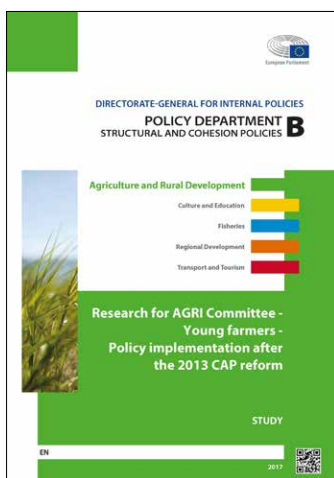
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ESIF strategic report: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/strat_rep_2017/strat_rep_2017_en.pdf

ESIF video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpmKeR3RKDY

The WAB: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/wab-rural-high-school-digital-transition_en

EU guides and publications



ISBN 978-92-846-2028-9

A study on Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) tools and support mechanisms for young farmers, how these are implemented across Europe and recommendations for improvement.



A briefing paper analysing key data and trends relevant to Europe's agricultural and rural areas, the current CAP, and implications for the post-2020 policy.



A report on the use of financial instruments in the implementation of Rural Development policy, based on practical experiences in EU Member States.

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

LAGs calling for simplification

John Grieve, Susan Grieve and Peter Toth

The ENRD Contact Point has published the results of the largest ever LEADER survey.



John Grieve,
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The ENRD launched a survey of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in November 2017 to explore experiences on the ground of implementing LEADER. With over 2 200 LAGs contacted and 710 responses, this is the largest and most extensive LEADER survey ever conducted.

The survey had four sections covering basic data, LEADER principles, LEADER operations and LEADER improvement. The results significantly deepen understanding of LEADER implementation. The findings validate the objective previously articulated by the European Rural Networks' Steering Group of promoting simpler and more effective LEADER/CLLD implementation.⁽¹⁾

The results also reinforced often heard LEADER stakeholder feedback about the challenges of managing the administrative burden, available resources and time available for local animation and innovation support. Supporting local projects and local development was the clear overall priority for LAGs.

LAGs from 19 national and 70 regional Rural Development Programme (RDP) territories responded. Five EU Member States provided over 50% of total responses: Germany (143 responses), France (86), Spain (83), Czech Republic (53) and Austria (43).

“ Programmes must remember the basic elements of LEADER – unfortunately many people see just the projects and funding, and not the process. Animation should be strengthened. ”

Survey respondent

LEADER LAGs prioritise the local development aspects of their work. This is evidenced by the results regarding LAGs' top operational priorities ('achieving LDS objectives'), most important LEADER principles ('bottom-up approach with decision-making power') and most

important activities ('supporting project development'). Animation, cooperation and local innovation also feature prominently in the responses.

LAGs perceive constraints due to the level of administrative and reporting requirements and current national/regional delivery systems. Many consider that higher levels of autonomy and responsibility would positively influence their outcomes. Key support needs identified by LAGs relate to simplification (application procedures, forms, controls, application of Simplified Cost Options) and better coordination and cooperation among LEADER stakeholders throughout LEADER delivery systems.

“ Quality management work should be done in all (F)LAGs to ensure the improvement of LAGs' operations. ”

Survey respondent

A summary report of the survey results will be published in the LEADER section of the ENRD website. Survey results will also be widely disseminated to help improve the LEADER implementation framework.

The ENRD Contact Point wishes to thank the LAGs that responded to the survey and the Managing Authorities and National Rural Networks that encouraged such great participation.

(1) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/sg3-final_report_151020.pdf

LEADER in the EU Selected findings from the LAG survey

BASIC DATA

- 72 % of responses came from LAG Managers;
- 78 % of respondent LAGs operating since before the 2014-2020 programming period;
- 67 % of LAGs had launched project calls before the end of 2016;
- 32 % of LAGs used more than one European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF);
- 94 % of LAGs have a budget >€ 1m (44 % between € 2-4 m, 2 % >€ 10m);
- 89 % of LAGs allocate >14 % of total budget to running costs and animation, with 31 % allocating >21 %.

LEADER PRINCIPLES

- The bottom-up approach ranked as the most important principle (73 % considered it essential) to ensure decision-making power for LAGs to design and implement their Local Development Strategies (LDS).
- Most LAGs can also use qualitative criteria and local knowledge to inform project selection decisions.
- A majority of LAGs can implement the elements of the LEADER approach mostly or fully, with cooperation projects and innovative approaches being the most challenging elements.
- 84 % of LAGs think that their ability to implement the LEADER approach is constrained by bureaucracy and administrative burden.

LEADER OPERATIONS

- National/regional delivery frameworks were seen to limit most LAGs freedom to pursue their operational priorities.
- Difficulties with LEADER implementation from the LAGs' point of view mostly relate to Managing Authority/Paying

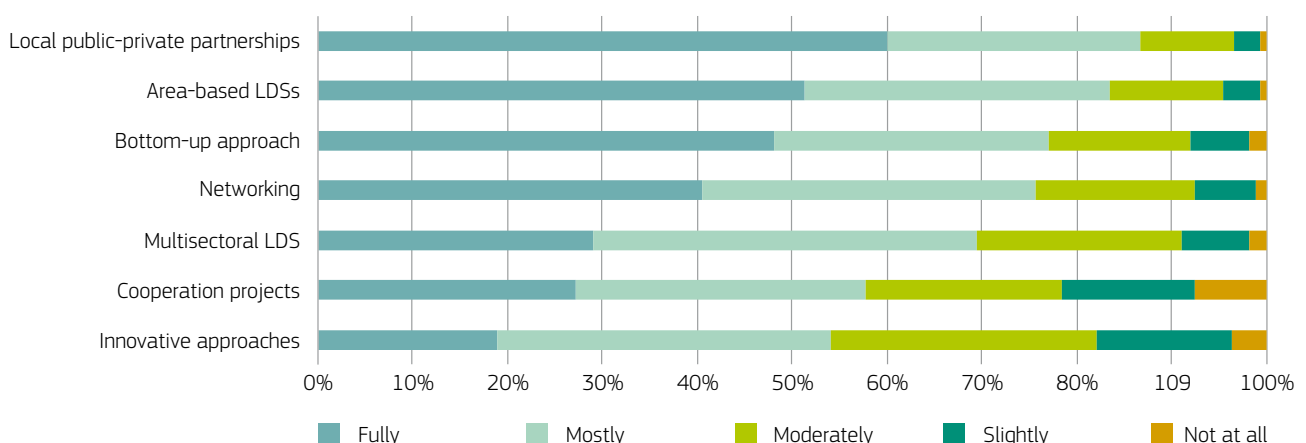
Agency requirements, implementation procedures and RDP-level limitations.

- The activity LAG staff spend most time on is 'supporting project development'. Given the choice, they would devote more resources and time to this, along with animation, cooperation and innovation.
- LAGs' main operational priority is to achieve their LDS objectives – all high-ranking operational priorities are linked to local development, solutions and capacities.
- 63 % of LAGs report increased levels of Managing Authority/ Paying Agency requirements since 2014.
- 48 % of LAGs are responsible for project selection only, whilst 19 % conduct selection, approval and make payments to local project holders.

LEADER IMPROVEMENTS

- 78 % of LAGs think that increased levels of independence and responsibility would increase their level of achievement.
- Over 50 % of LAGs consider simpler application processes/ forms and more proportionate systems of controls as important improvements needed.
- LAGs' priority support needs from RDP authorities and/or NRNs are for better understanding of audit expectations and improved coordination and cooperation in the LEADER delivery system at EU and national levels.
- Most LAGs want to be involved with ENRD activities. Support is sought for applying Simplified Cost Options, LAG-level financial and administrative management of LDS implementation, strengthening innovation in LEADER, and networking and cooperation.

Extent to which LAGs are able to implement the seven LEADER principles



RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Rural development on the road to peace

Anna Parizán

The EU Trust Fund for Colombia is supporting rural development projects to help the country rebuild after years of violent conflict.



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Colombia had been afflicted by violent armed conflict for more than 50 years. The conflict has destabilised the country, killed over 200 000 people and forced the internal migration of more than 5 million Colombians. Throughout this time, Colombia's rural areas have been subject to illicit drug production and its related violence. In some areas, the delivery of public services has not been possible due to the absence of government control.

The recent peace agreement now offers hope. The Colombian government wants to reinforce the peace process by encouraging the economic and social development of the country. The European Union continues to offer its support.

POST-CONFLICT SUPPORT

Following the signature of the peace agreement, the EU established a post-emergency Trust Fund for Colombia, which promotes rural development projects in post-conflict zones to be jointly implemented in cooperation with local Colombian actors (including non-governmental organisations and the private sector). The €95-million fund focuses on agricultural policy and on stimulating economic activity and productivity in remote rural areas, as well as on reinforcing the state presence and restoring the social fabric in remote and conflict-affected areas.

“Through the development plans the post-conflict territories have a big chance for long-lasting peace and development. It is important to involve all sides, notably the victims, the coca and non-coca growers, as well as the former guerrillas. Alternative crops for marijuana and coca production could be cacao, coffee or other indigenous fruits.”

Francisco Garcia Garcia,
Director of the EU Trust Fund, Colombian post-conflict
area at the Delegation of the European Union in Bogotá

The trust fund is a development tool that brings together resources from different donors in order to enable a quick, flexible, and collective response to the different dimensions of an emergency or post-emergency situation.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN PUTUMAYO

The EU Trust Fund is providing practical help by financing rural development cooperation projects. One of these, in the region of Putumayo, is using European expertise to help capitalise on the findings of Colombian research in order to deliver sustainable agriculture and viable rural areas.

The project involves a Colombian lead partner – Corpoamazonia – and a group of Hungarian partners coordinated by the Colombian Office of the Hungarian National Trading House. It is helping local farmers move away from illicit production by encouraging the transition to alternative products and the sustainable use of natural resources to improve the quality of life of communities.

The project is being undertaken through assessments, research, capacity building and training. It covers a wide range of activities such as: the development of agroforestry systems, including traditional land-use systems based on natural resource management; establishment of nurseries producing seedlings from indigenous species; implementation of community-based value chains; development of tourist trails; and set-up of potable water supply. The initiative is emphasising the importance of involving local communities and especially women in the decision-making process, helping the re-integration of ex-combatants into civilian life and strengthening local SMEs. The two-year project will be finalised in April 2020.



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A WEEKEND IN A TRANSITION ZONE

ZVTN Urias Rondón is one of 26 transition zones established in rural regions previously controlled by the guerrilla movement FARC 'Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army', FARC-EP. In the transition zones, the residents received a territory with basic infrastructure such as drinking water, sanitation, internal roads, a dining hall, kitchen and accommodation. The zones are intended to re-integrate former FARC guerrillas into civilian life.

I visited ZVTN Urias Rondón as part of a small delegation of European rural development experts on a fact-finding mission. We received a very warm welcome. The camp currently houses 220 guerrillas, both men and women, as well as seven newborns. Since their arrival in January 2017, the ex-combatants have made numerous improvements. One of the most significant was the launch of farming activities. The community now has chickens, pigs, and is growing banana, Inca peanut and other crops, alongside a vegetable garden, composting area and two small lakes where they would like to start aquaculture activity.

Production not consumed locally is sold in the region. A small carpentry workshop was established to meet the needs of the camp as well as those of the surrounding area. Some community areas were also built by the residents, such as a soccer field and a roof-covered area to host events. A fledgling rural tourism project has recently begun. The zone's residents can access educational services – many of the ex-combatants have not previously finished elementary school.

While the camp was busy, it was explained to us by a community leader that "there is a high demand for more activity in order to expend their energies". Many ex-combatants are less than 30 years old and are in search of a purposeful future for their lives.

The Colombian government will subsidise the residents for two years. The zone now has less than a year to go and become self-sustaining. The EU rural development projects, being implemented in cooperation with the zone's residents, are playing an important role on the road to peace.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

EU Trust Fund for Colombia: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-trust-fund-colombia_en

EU Trust Fund for Colombia, operational criteria for the submission of proposals: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eutf-operational-criteria_en.pdf

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Educating LEADER

Dr. Shane O'Sullivan and Krzysztof Kwatara

A transnational Erasmus+ project has created a new and innovative LEADER educational qualification. The first batch of students will soon attain their 'Certificates in LEADER Programme Management'.



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Transnational Education in LEADER Implementation (TELI2) is a multi-actor transnational project which seeks to develop or further enhance the knowledge, skills and competences of staff and board members within Local Action Groups (LAGs) and Local Development Companies (LDCs).

The up-skilling of key actors involved in the delivery of the LEADER programme is supporting and enhancing the transfer of best practices with respect to rural development initiatives. Ultimately, it can contribute to the overall socio-economic development of rural areas.

The 30-month project which is funded by the Erasmus+ programme – the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe – commenced in September 2016 and is being co-ordinated by the Limerick Institute of Technology, a higher education institution in Ireland. The project consortium includes another higher education provider, the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia.

The first output of the TELI2 project was a research report providing an overview of the delivery mechanisms associated with the LEADER programme in the respective partner countries. The report also identified the essential skillsets, knowledge and competencies required by rural development officers and LAG board members to effectively implement the LEADER programme within a pre-defined territory (LAG area) and the challenges encountered by various stakeholders in delivering LEADER. The report findings were utilised by the project partners to develop an educational qualification: the 'Certificate in LEADER Programme Management'. The certificate is accredited by the Limerick Institute.

Students pursuing this course are required to critically analyse theories, conceptual frameworks and best practices pertaining to rural development in Europe and to identify and discuss key characteristics pertaining to the LEADER method and its application at various spatial scales: European, national, regional and local.



TELI2
Transnational Education in
LEADER Implementation 2

TELI2 OBJECTIVES

- Research into the delivery of LEADER in EU Member States and training needs of LEADER staff and board members.
- Deliver a best practice-based training course on the implementation of the LEADER programme to LDC / LAG management.
- Promote shared learning between countries that have established LEADER programmes and those that are relative newcomers to delivery.
- Deliver an accredited programme through a blended learning model comprising online learning, workshops and work-based learning.
- Up-skilling of LEADER delivery organisations through life-long learning.
- Enabling LEADER staff mobility in a transnational project and potential future collaboration in rural development initiatives.





TELI2 mixes theoretical concepts with site visits to innovative LEADER projects.

The inaugural 'Certificate in LEADER Programme Management' commenced in October 2017 with a 'Teaching, Training and Learning' workshop which was hosted by Irish LDC, SECAD in Midleton, County Cork. In total, 16 students from Ireland, Portugal, Croatia, Slovenia, Poland and Romania participated in the course.

All of the participants are employees or board members of LAGs, LDCs or a national agency. Key topics covered in the first week-long workshop included: LEADER project management and IT systems; key principles in endogenous development; creating inclusive communities; communication skills; and socio-economic planning for LAGs. During the workshop, the students visited local projects funded through the previous LEADER programme. These included the Titanic Experience (Cobh), Millennium Gardens (Cobh), Clock Gate (Youghal); and wildlife and bird trail (Ballyvergan).

The second 'Teaching, Training and Learning' workshop was hosted by the ADRIMAG LAG in the municipality of Arouca, Portugal in February 2018. Key topics covered included: LEADER programme management; forging successful partnerships through LEADER; perceptions of LEADER; capacity building and democratisation of decision-making processes. These theoretical concepts were further explored through a series of site visits to innovative projects funded by the current and previous LEADER programmes within the ADRIMAG LAG territory. Prominent examples included: Ervital (herbal tea producer); Capuchinhas de Montemuro (garment production); Association for the Integration of Disabled Children of AROUCA (disability care provider); and Mirtilusa (co-operative of fruit and vegetable producers). The participants enjoyed these applied learning opportunities in both Midleton and Arouca.

In April 2018, the final workshop took place in LAG Gościńiec 4 Żywiołów and LAG Dolina Raby, southern Poland. This workshop focused on the use of locally grown food within food business incubators. This enabled students to learn techniques related to the promotion of local jobs, sustainable production, and local cultural traditions. In between the 'Teaching, Training and Learning' workshops, all participants engage in course material which is delivered through online blended learning methodologies.

The accredited LEADER certificate is aimed at professionals and policy-makers. It is providing stakeholders with the knowledge and skills to implement successful LEADER programmes and projects. The next cohort of students to be recruited for the 'Certificate in LEADER Programme Management' will commence in autumn 2018 in the Limerick Institute of Technology, with online classes beginning in January 2019.

i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: <http://teli2.eu>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/TELI2-1343600152427341/>

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Baltic Sea region embraces the bioeconomy



EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION

Darius Liutikas and Katarzyna Panfil

A recently formed network is working to align the contribution of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) to the bioeconomy within the overarching 'EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region' (EUSBSR).



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The 'EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region' (EUSBSR) is a European macro-regional strategy to improve the environmental condition of the Baltic sea, tackle transport bottlenecks and stimulate energy interconnections, as well as facilitate the development of competitive markets across borders and common networks for research and innovation in the region.

Enhancing the combined effects of the RDPs in the region is part of the strategy. The realisation of EUSBSR objectives takes place in joint transnational actions, projects and processes. The EUSBSR's Policy Area Bioeconomy is seeking to reinforce the sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fisheries by promoting an integrated approach in the transition towards an optimal use of biological resources and towards sustainable primary production and processing systems.

Last year saw the launch of the 'Baltic Sea Network for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development' (BSN-EAFRD). The aim of the network is to facilitate and strengthen transnational cooperation in order to invigorate the link between the EAFRD and the EUSBSR.

The core members of the new network are officials involved in the implementation of RDPs, primarily from Managing Authorities in the Baltic Sea region: Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The network also welcomes representatives from other countries around the Baltic Sea.

The BSN-EAFRD is also open to other relevant stakeholders engaged in rural development in the Baltic Sea region, the implementation of the EUSBSR or the bioeconomy in general. Participants can join in as full members or affiliated partners.

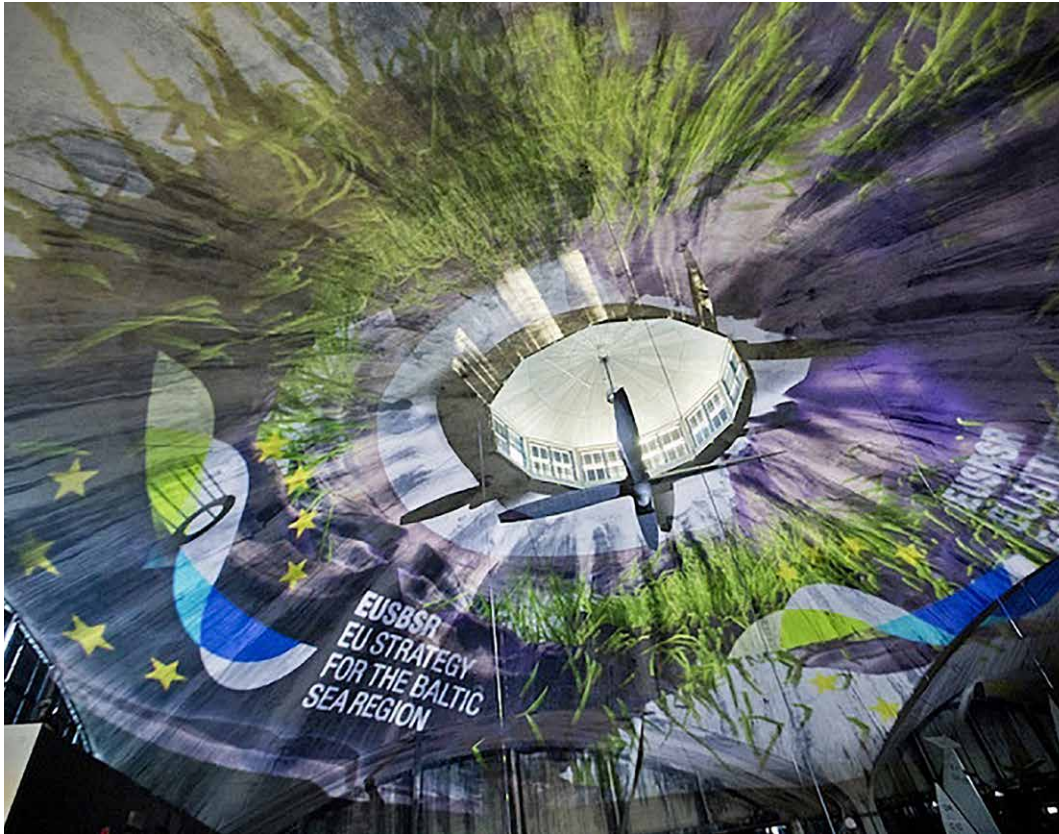
BIOECONOMY

“The bioeconomy offers an integrated approach to incorporate economic prosperity, social and environmental (on land and in the sea) aspects of sustainability in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture – and more than that: it also offers an approach for enhancing sustainability, entrepreneurship, competitiveness and growth – in cities and rural regions alike – by building on circular thinking; and an approach that aims to enable a transition from a fossil-based to a sustainable bio-based society. In other words, a sustainable bioeconomy is linked to all parts of the green and blue economy.”

EUSBSR Action Plan

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, which acts as the coordinator responsible for rural development within the EUSBSR Policy Area Bioeconomy, has undertaken the role of a facilitator and promoter of the BSN-EAFRD. Their role is to coordinate the network's activities and promote the results at the local, national and EU levels.

The main activities are the organisation of bi-annual meetings by using existing platforms such as EUSBSR strategy forums, international conferences or seminars. The purpose of the meetings includes exchange of ideas about common actions to develop bioeconomy projects, sharing information on RDP implementation, as well as discussion on the future of the bioeconomy and rural development.



During their first meeting in Finland, the BSN-EAFRD members shared their experiences on the implementation of RDPs, analysed possible scenarios to facilitate international cooperation and possibilities for ensuring coordination between RDPs. The second meeting coincided with an international scientific conference held at the Aleksandras Stulginskis University in Kaunas, Lithuania. The network members and scientists agreed that to achieve sustainable development of the European economy and society, faster development of the bioeconomy is necessary. The BSN-EAFRD is a way to create the conditions for and to accelerate change.

The main bioeconomy targets of the network are: improved recycling of nutrients in agriculture; creation of cooperation synergies between RDPs; better involvement of the business community; and increased knowledge of sustainable forest management.

More generally, the Baltic Sea region is making progress in its transition to a full-fledged bioeconomy. There are now growing examples of:

- good farming practices (innovative technologies for animal feeding and housing, processing, storage, improved water quality and quantity, handling of fodder, fertilizer and manure);
- good marine practices (macroalgae harvesting and cultivation, mussel cultivation, reed harvesting, large-scale microalgae cultivation, and sustainable fish aquaculture);

- good practices in waste-water management;
- good health practices (boosting the engagement of smaller biotechnology companies and commercialisation of clinical inventions);
- good circular economy practices (such as through industrial symbiosis);
- and more generally, many good practices on technology chains and business innovation.

The BSN-EAFRD network held its most recent meeting in Tallinn on the occasion of the 9th EU Baltic Sea Strategy Annual Forum in June 2018. The participants discussed the implementation of the RDPs, challenges in relation to bioeconomy and the forthcoming revision of the EU's Bioeconomy Strategy.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://zum.lv/lt/tarptautinis-bendradarbiavimas/baltijos-juros-regiono-strategija/baltic-sea-network-for-eafrd>

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

A new rural network for Turkey

Iwona Lisztwan

The launch of the Turkish Rural Development Network signals a new mentality for rural development policy in Anatolia. Expectations are high.



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A new National Network for Rural Development in Turkey was launched in November 2017. At its launch event in Ankara many different stakeholders, including 25 Turkish Local Action Groups (LAGs), came together to discuss future priorities.

The European Union is facilitating the establishment and activities of the network in Turkey via the 2014-2020 pre-accession programme for agriculture and rural development (IPARD).

A number of key priorities have been agreed for the network and are currently being rolled out. Interestingly, the new Turkish network is also seeking to establish cooperation with its EU counterparts.

PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- More LEADER networking: the new network wants to consolidate the already much appreciated LAG work and to help share experiences.
- Increased stakeholder involvement: the network wants to broaden and deepen its reach into public organisations, private sector organisations, NGOs, and universities.
- Better programming and evaluation of rural development support, including the identification of best practices.
- Boosting social cohesion: the network wants to enhance the livelihoods of women and young people in rural areas, especially those who are in a disadvantaged position. The objective is to increase access to social rights and to help rural people to diversify their livelihoods. Initially, this process involves creating awareness and thereafter, the gradual and more active inclusion of women and young people in rural development.



© Turkish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Livestock

“Rural areas are affected by rapid change and uncertainty. As a door opening to the East and West, Anatolian rural areas form the fabric of our national culture. Increasing the economic and social welfare of rural inhabitants requires a multi-dimensional and human-focused approach, multi-sectoral public policies and inter-institutional cooperation.”

Muhammed Adak,
Head of the Turkish Managing Authority

LAG PERSPECTIVE

As a Turkish LAG from Birecik explains, the expectation is that the network will, "lead innovation by providing regular training, information, visits, examples from the EU and it should help implement activities. LAGs have countless regional and traditional products to promote."

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.ipard.gov.tr

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

A pathway to technology-led farming



Dr. Spyros Fountas

The Smart AKIS thematic network is putting farmers in touch with the latest research and technology to encourage a more sustainable, resource-efficient and competitive European agricultural sector.



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Wide-scale application of the latest digital technologies – ones that facilitate a more precise and resource-efficient approach – can deliver a more productive and sustainable agricultural sector. What's more, smart farming applications are not only of interest to large-scale, conventional farming. They are equally applicable in small-scale settings and to organic farming.

Smart AKIS is a European network mainstreaming smart farming technologies among the European farmer community and bridging the gap between practitioners and research on the identification and delivery of new solutions to meet farmers' needs.

Smart AKIS has developed a Smart Farming Platform, an online open database that profiles more than 1 200 smart farming solutions and that is being used by more than 3 500 farmers in Europe. The platform showcases commercial products, scientific papers and research related to smart farming while indicating the technologies' readiness level for users.

Smart farming technologies tend to focus on three interconnected fields: management information systems that collect and process data regarding a farm's operations and functions; precision agriculture that manages use of inputs; and agricultural automation and robotics, including use of drones.

Smart AKIS, one of the multi-actor thematic networks⁽¹⁾ funded under Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation programme, is coordinated by the Agricultural University of Athens. Its 12 partners represent farmers, advisors, research and the agricultural equipment industry. The network was created in 2016 and will run until August 2018.

To get insights about farmers' perception of smart farming, more than 270 farmers have been interviewed and more than 700 actors, farmers, researchers, advisors and industry representatives have been engaged in 14 innovation workshops in 7 European countries.

Smart AKIS has now gathered a wealth of knowledge about the barriers and incentives to the uptake of smart farming in Europe, which will lead to the delivery of policy recommendations and briefs for the further support of smart farming in the new programming period policies, including the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The workshops have identified the barriers, needs, interests and successful approaches to smart farming adoption. As a result of this process, more than 60 project or collaboration ideas are being pursued by Smart AKIS in fields such as variable rate technology, sensors, and smart irrigation. Looking ahead, data ownership, exploitation and usability remain an area of much interest. Ownership of agronomical data has been brought into focus by the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Smart AKIS: www.smart-akis.com

Facebook: [@SmartFarmingNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/SmartFarmingNetwork)

Twitter: [@smart_akis](https://twitter.com/smart_akis)

Smart Farming Platform: <https://smart-akis.com/SFCPPortal/#/app-h/dashboard>

(1) For more about Horizon 2020 thematic networks, see the EIP-AGRI brochure 'Thematic Networks under Horizon 2020': <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/publications/eip-agri-brochure-thematic-networks-under-horizon>
The complete list of thematic networks is available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/about/thematic-networks-%E2%80%93-closing-research-and>

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Seed databases boosting organic production

Xenia Gatzert

Organic farming is reliant on the organic seed market. Databases are increasing knowledge of seed availability and are strengthening the sector in Europe.



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According to the current EU regulation on organic farming⁽¹⁾ which sets out the principles, aims and overarching rules of organic production, the use of organically produced seed and vegetative propagation material (plant reproductive material) is mandatory. Indeed, it is considered to be a fundamental principle of organic farming itself.

Despite efforts undertaken to ensure the availability of a wide range of organically produced seed or vegetative propagation material, for various reasons, there is still not enough organic plant reproductive material accessible for some species.

In such cases, derogations can be granted by national authorities for the use of untreated, conventionally produced seeds and vegetative propagated plant material. The use of chemically treated seeds in organic agriculture is however prohibited. According to the upcoming revision of the organic Regulation,⁽²⁾ these derogations are expected to expire by 2036.

ORGANIC SEEDS CATEGORISATION

An increasing number of EU Member States categorise organic seeds and vegetative propagation material into three categories, depending on the availability of seed. Member States are also required to set up a database to register and publish available organic propagation material in the country.

Based on this system, authorities can define in which cases derogations may be granted. Where there is sufficient diversity of cultivars and quantity of seeds available on the market at the national level, derogations are not granted for commercial purposes (Category I),

Table: National Annex categorising plant material depending on availability⁽³⁾

National Annex	Availability of organic seed	Derogation
Category I	●●●	No derogation
Category II	●●	Individual derogation
Category III	●	General derogation

whereas in cases of no or a very limited variety of species available as organically propagated seed, a general derogation (Category III) is to be granted. All crops where organic seed is available, but not in sufficient quantity to introduce an obligatory use of organic seed, fall within Category II. Categories can be changed by an expert or stakeholder panel according to a changing market situation and information from the database.

To date, 16 Member States have implemented online databases to facilitate the organic seed market by increasing transparency around the availability of organic seeds in real time. Farmers are obliged to use organic seed of a certain variety if it is entered into the database and marked as available, thus the database provides the legal foundation for granting derogation in cases of absence of organic seed and vegetative propagation material of Category II. The remaining Member States tend to provide a downloadable list with available organic seeds.

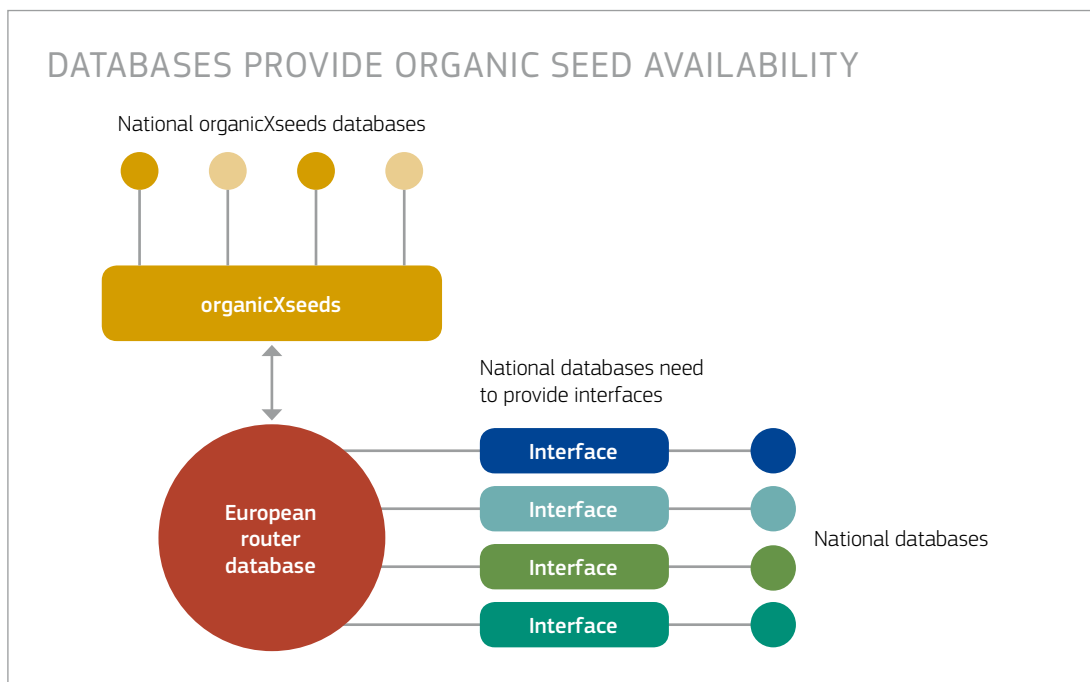
DATABASE PROFILE

The most commonly used organic seed database is FiBL's organicXseeds which is implemented in

(1) European Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and its Commission Implementing Regulation (EC) No 889/2008.

(2) https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/news/new-organic-regulation_en

(3) Kurrig et al., 'Organic seed databases for increasing the transparency and use of organic seed in Europe', 2018. www.liveseed.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Kurrig_-_organic-seed-databases-2018.pdf



six EU Member States (Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden, the UK) and Switzerland. The real-time availability of organic seed is made possible by providing online accounts for each user (farmer, seed supplier, control body and competent authority). It is utilised by seed suppliers to publish their offer, by farmers to find seeds and apply online for derogation permits, by control bodies or local authorities to evaluate and approve demands for derogation permits, and by authorities to extract statistical data about derogations and availability of organic seeds.

BEST PRACTICE FROM GERMANY

A good practice example can be found in Germany which has been using the organicXseeds database since 2005. Two expert groups, one on arable crops and one on vegetable crops, consisting of stakeholders from the organic seed supply chain (including farmers' representatives, organic control bodies, breeders) advise the national competent authority on all issues related to organic seeds. During the annual meeting of the expert groups, the categorisation of crops, as well as the yearly derogation report are discussed to improve the availability and use of organic seeds. At present Category I encompasses 16 arable and 8 vegetable crops.

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

The Liveseed project with 49 partners in 18 countries is looking to increase the availability of cultivars adapted to organic growing conditions in Europe. One of

the aims of the project, funded under the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, is to develop a European Router Database. The database will allow seed suppliers to enter their offers and ask for approval in multiple countries. By linking national databases, Liveseed wants to help establish a level playing field in the organic seed market and improve transparency, performance and harmonisation.

Another aim of the Liveseed project is to foster organic plant breeding, improve the guidelines for cultivar testing and develop innovative seed health strategies. Liveseed will therefore help to develop much needed concepts and strategies adapted to the needs and principles of organic farming. Those interested in organic seed and plant breeding can become stakeholders in the project and receive first-hand information.

FiBL is an independent, non-profit research institute aiming to advance cutting-edge science in the field of organic agriculture.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

FiBL: www.fibl.org

FiBL organicXseeds database:
www.organicXseeds.com

Liveseed project: www.liveseed.eu

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

A new delivery model

Christiane Kirketerp de Viron

Proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2020 will prioritise results-based performance.



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[@christianeEU](https://twitter.com/christianeEU)

The European Commission (EC) recently adopted its proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2020. The new CAP will reflect many recommendations from the Cork 2.0 Declaration, such as the call to introduce a single strategic framework for the whole CAP based on local needs and targeting all interventions to well-defined economic, social and environmental objectives.

A main feature of the new CAP will be a results-based delivery model. Member States (MS) will develop a single plan covering both CAP pillars, i.e. rural development actions will be planned alongside actions funded under the first pillar, such as income support and sectorial programmes.

The CAP plans will be strategic and result-oriented. They will be developed around common EU objectives and based on a territorial and sectorial needs assessment. The toolbox at the EU level sets out broad types of intervention such as investments, cooperation, management commitments or types of direct payments. It will be for the MS to design and develop schemes that make the most sense for them whilst delivering towards our common objectives.

Intervention strategies will reflect the nine CAP specific objectives (see p.10) with targets expressing expected results and with financial allocations for each intervention. It will then be the job of the EC to approve the CAP plans and to check progress on an annual basis.

CAP plans will have to be concise and accessible to beneficiaries and citizens so that clear information is available to them about what the CAP is doing in their countries.

When we first started discussing the new delivery model and the strategic plans, many people thought that we were simply imposing the rural development model on the entire CAP. Although it is true that Rural Development policy utilises strategic programming, there will certainly be significant differences.

Whereas current policy is based on compliance, the future CAP will be based on performance. The focus will be not only on whether we are doing things right, but also on whether we are doing the right things. We currently have a list of detailed Measures and sub-Measures in the Rural Development Regulation with accompanying detailed eligibility rules for beneficiaries. This one-size-fits-all approach hampers the innovation potential of the policy and makes it unnecessarily complex.

In the future, rules and requirements for beneficiaries will be set by the MS, allowing for tailor-made schemes that truly reflect farming and other local conditions. That in itself should lead to better performing schemes and to rules that make sense on the ground.

Strategic plans covering both pillars of the CAP are uncharted territory for all. It is clear that the earlier we launch discussions on what they will look like in practice, the better.

Networking, mutual learning and information sharing will become key elements in the planning process. This was also one of the conclusions of the workshop on the new delivery model which the ENRD organised for Managing Authorities in January 2018. Further outreach events, workshops and debates will be organised across the EU to help foster strategic CAP plans that deliver positive change and real results.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en
- https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-future-cap-performance-based-delivery-model_en

A FOCUS ON... GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

INTRODUCTION

Generational Renewal

With over 30% of Europe's farmers beyond retirement age and not even 6% under 35 years old, the rate of generational renewal needs to accelerate. Farmers' organisations, Member States and the EU are honing their strategies to encourage a new generation of talent that can meet the growing expectations for the agricultural sector.



As older farmers retire, is the next generation of farmers ready and able to replace them? Many in the rural community are signalling that more needs to be done to boost the numbers of new entrants into the agricultural sector.

While the proportion of young farmers is low in most Member States, the replacement rate does not need to match the natural decline rate for older farmers. In fact, the oldest farmers tend to have the smallest farms, thus the creation of an average-sized new farm would – in land area terms – equate to more than 2.5 farms held by older farmers.

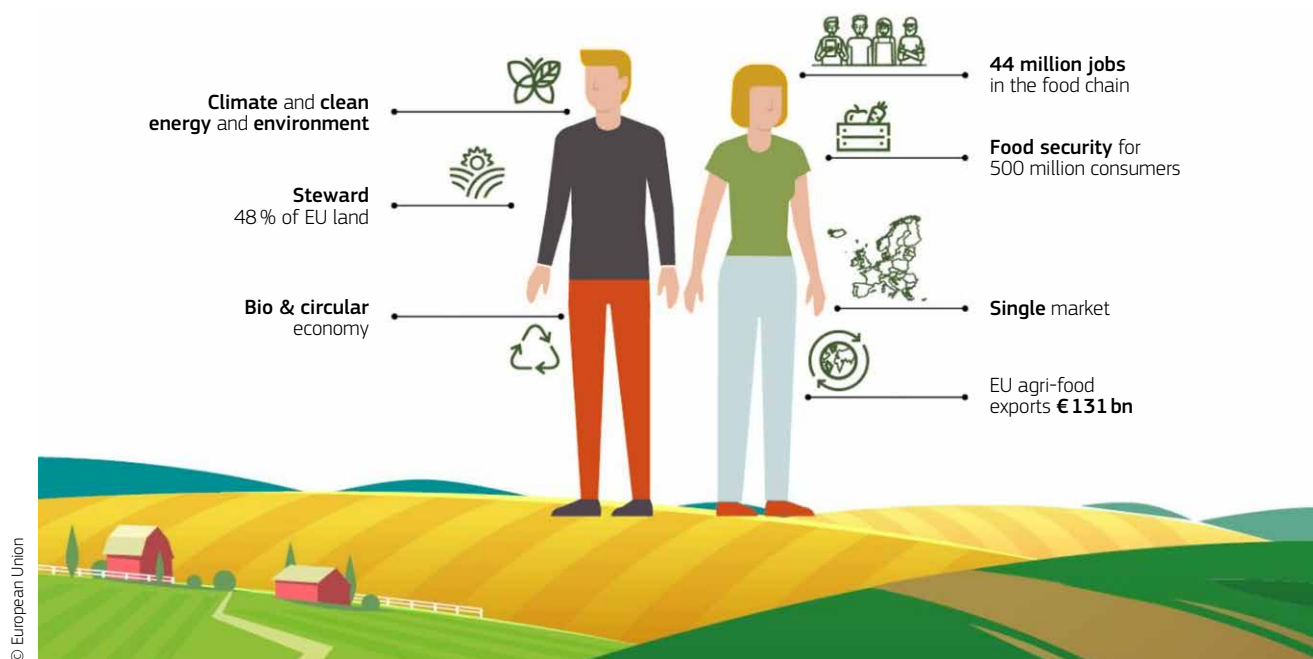
Although average farm sizes have been increasing, utilised agricultural area has remained largely stable over the last decades. Most agricultural land is managed by middle-aged farmers.

Looking beyond food security for EU citizens, generational renewal is widely seen as being essential for the future competitiveness of the agricultural sector, environmental sustainability and the vibrancy and attractiveness of rural life.

Young farmers and new entrants are best placed to embrace the new and innovative agricultural activities that boost competitiveness. They are more likely to have been trained in the latest techniques than their older counterparts and thus stand ready to enhance the sector's role in the sustainable use of natural resources. Agriculture is key to rural life, as farms also contribute to the wider rural economy, for example via tourism.

Young farmers have long faced challenges to pursuing their chosen career, such as difficulties in accessing land or capital. Building on the existing Rural Development

THE CONTRIBUTION OF EU AGRICULTURE TODAY



Measures to support those who are setting up in business for the first time, the current CAP has considerably strengthened the support available to young farmers. For the first time in its 50-year history, the CAP introduced a specific instrument under the first Pillar to support young farmers.

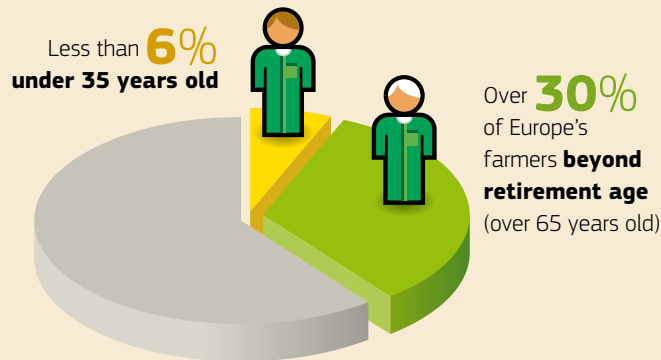
Higher direct payments and specific help with setting up a farm business help address the perennial challenge of making it easier for a new generation to enter the farming business. This is very much in Europe's interest – motivated new entrants will keep European farming progressive and competitive.

Looking ahead and as signposted by the European Commission's Communication on the Future of Food and Farming,⁽¹⁾ attracting young people into the farming sector is one of the main priorities of the Commission's recently adopted post-2020 CAP proposals.

In this section of Rural Connections, we ask a European Commission insider for his view on why generational renewal is important, we hear from the CEJA President on how young farmers see their future, we highlight good practices in dealing with the three access challenges (new entrants need access to land, access to capital and access to knowledge) and we look at some inspiring rural development initiatives that are increasing the attractiveness of rural areas.

(1) https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/future-of-cap/future_of_food_and_farming_communication_en.pdf

THE AGING PROBLEM



The majority of farmers (56%) are more than 55 years old

FUNDING SOURCES & BENEFICIARIES

The **CAP** supports more than
300 000 young farmers
every year via direct payments

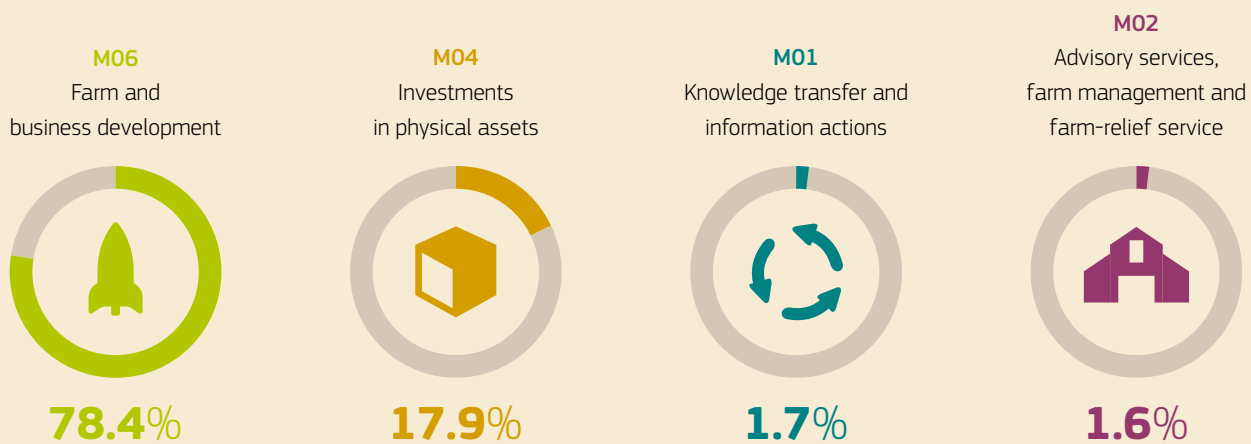
Under the **EAFRD**, more than
176 000 young farmers
are due to benefit from start-up aid

Rural Development support for young
farmers is primarily provided under
Focus Area 2B

FOCUS AREA 2B

Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and generational renewal

€6.9 bn of planned public expenditure on generational renewal which is primarily supported under:



ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Financial Instruments co-funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) can be set up by Member States and regions. fi-compass is the knowledge hub for such new financing opportunities.

A FOCUS ON... GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

INTERVIEW

© Ricard Ramon



How is generational renewal being addressed at European level?

Ricard Ramon

Deputy Head of Unit responsible for 'policy perspectives', in DG AGRI, European Commission, gives his view on the challenge and how to address it.

Why is generational renewal on your agenda?

Only 6% of farmers in the EU are under 35 years old, while the majority (56%) are over 55 years old. Our aging agricultural community needs new blood to make the sector more dynamic, innovative and open to technological change. That is why generational renewal was identified as an essential component of the European Commission's recent Communication on the Future of Food and Farming⁽¹⁾ and is a central priority in the legal proposals we have just presented.

A new generation of farmers can embody the shared aspiration of a viable farm sector delivering food security for over 500 million European citizens, sustainable management of our natural resources, care for the environment and ensure prosperity for rural communities.

What obstacles do young farmers face?

Young farmers face considerable obstacles when seeking to start up farming activity. At the European Commission we have extensively analysed these obstacles and there is a wide consensus that access to land, access to finance and access to knowledge are the three most significant barriers when starting a business in the farming sector. These were highlighted by the 2017 workshop, jointly organised by the ENRD

and CEJA, which focused on identifying how various Rural Development Measures could encourage generational renewal.

The public consultation on the future CAP confirmed the same ideas, while adding an important dimension: the profitability and the image of the sector. Indeed, only if the sector is perceived as dynamic and profitable will it be able to attract more people in the future. Administrative burden is also a barrier identified in the different analyses. This finding echoes the Cork 2.0 Declaration on the future of EU Rural Development, which favoured a more effective and straightforward implementation of the CAP.

The future CAP, thanks to the new legal framework we have just proposed, will help young farmers overcome these barriers. It will modernise and encourage simplification: the next generation of farmers will benefit greatly from the changes we are preparing.

How are you encouraging generational renewal?

Generational renewal has been a long-standing challenge for Rural Development policy. In fact, support for young farmers has been an integral element of it for over a generation now. Since the last CAP reform, young farmers also benefit from additional income support under the direct payments.

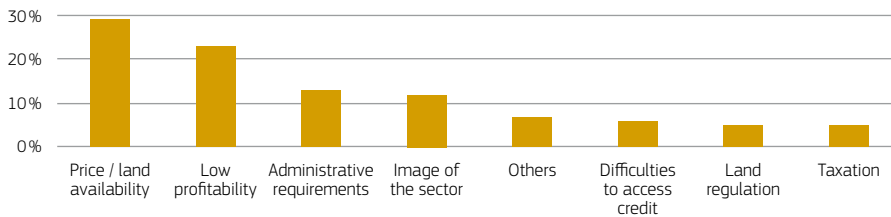
Rural Development support is primarily provided under Focus Area 2B (Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and generational renewal). The scale is impressive. More than 176 000 young farmers are planned to benefit from start-up aid under the current period. Furthermore, over 300 000 benefit every year from the additional support under direct payments.

In addition, new financing opportunities, such as favourable loan conditions and bank guarantees for young farmers have been promoted via fi-compass. It should be noted that the resources allocated to Focus Area 2B vary substantially across EU Member States and regions, as does the relative share of younger and older farmers.

Generational renewal will be further mainstreamed under the new policy framework. The future CAP will give flexibility to Member States to develop tailor-made schemes for their young farmers. In fact, generational renewal is an area where there is a strong need to advance on the synergies between what the EU does and what the Member States do: beyond the CAP support, Member States can do a lot to stimulate generational renewal if they apply coherently their powers on land regulation, taxation, retirement, inheritance law or territorial planning. For this reason, in the future CAP strategic plans, Member

(1) https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/future-of-cap/future_of_food_and_farming_communication_en.pdf

What are the main barriers to becoming a farmer?



Source: Modernising and simplifying the CAP - Summary of the results of the public consultation, DG AGRI, European Commission, July 2017.

States will have to provide a generational renewal strategy which sets out both the related EU and national actions.



What changes could the future CAP deliver?

The new CAP will put generational renewal at the centre of the policy: one of the nine objectives that will shape the future CAP is precisely "to attract young farmers and facilitate business development in rural areas."

Setting up in agriculture implies large capital requirements and an uncertain income. The CAP will continue to help mitigate this risk for newly set-up farms by providing an EU-wide system of support in a more targeted way. As from 2021, at least 2% of the national envelopes for direct payments will have to be devoted to this objective and allocated either in the form of a complementary support under direct payments and/or lump sum installation grants under the second Pillar.

We are also improving the design of the tools: Member States will have the possibility to better tailor the complementary support for young farmers under the first Pillar; and we propose to significantly increase the maximum amount of aid for the installation of young farmers, up to €100 000 (from the current €70 000).

The future policy will require Member States to better analyse their needs and formulate a more coherent set of solutions when using the tools of the first and second Pillars.

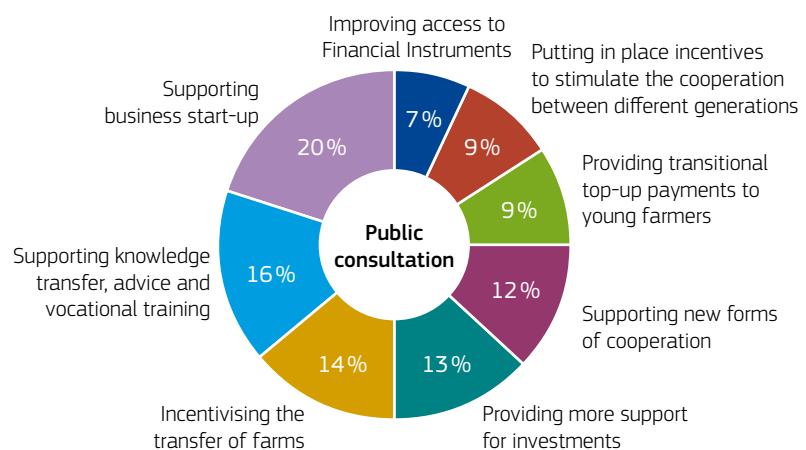
To facilitate access to credit for young farmers, important efforts are being made. Financial Instruments will be used not only for farm investments, but also for working capital. Such financial products need to be adapted to the investment needs and the higher-risk profiles of young farmers.

Furthermore, the CAP will pay even greater attention to skills development, knowledge, innovation, business development and investment support. This will include actions that stimulate the transfer of knowledge among generations through partnerships and other new business models. In this area, specific attention will be paid to land mobility in all its dimensions, thus, support for the new generation of farmers could be combined with incentives to facilitate the exit of the older generation, as well as mentoring and the preparation of farm succession plans. Member States will be

able to use Rural Development funding to stimulate transnational learning mobility of young farmers, in line with the Erasmus programme actions.

Last but not least, we should not forget that generational renewal is a broad concept: it goes beyond the renewal of human capital. It includes a renewal of physical capital and the driving force to advance towards a more knowledge-based and more sustainable agricultural sector. Only with new blood, will we be able to integrate the digital revolution into our agricultural sector and cope successfully with the economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

How can the CAP better help young farmers?



Source: Modernising and simplifying the CAP - Summary of the results of the public consultation, DG AGRI, European Commission.

A FOCUS ON... GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

OPINION

Jannes Maes

President of European Council of Young Framers (CEJA)

Agriculture puts food on the table, a process in which farmers are instrumental and invaluable. The problem is fewer and fewer young people are entering or remaining in the agricultural sector. According to the most recent Eurostat data, less than 6% of EU farms are run by farmers under the age of 35. This result is distressing because if young people aren't taking up the agricultural reins from their older counterparts who will feed Europe's citizens in the future?



© Arno Mikkor (EU2017EE)

Farmers do more than just produce food. Their way of life means that they must be willing to innovate and think outside the box in order to improve their activity. Farmers are entrepreneurs and make important contributions to Europe's rural areas by keeping them animated and preserving their cultural heritage. Many farmers are also passionate about their profession and dedicated to farming sustainably.

It saddens me to see some throw in the towel and others consider the hurdles so insurmountable they cannot begin to contemplate setting up a farm. While the CAP has undoubtedly contributed to ensuring the continuation of EU agriculture, I hope the intended reforms to be implemented after 2020 will allow it to better adapt to the times we live in.

While it is easy to say that more must be done to guarantee generational renewal in European farming takes place, coming

up with concrete proposals based on verifiable facts is another matter. At CEJA, the European Council of Young Framers, this is what we have strived to do over the course of the organisation's history. Now in its 60th year, the necessity is arguably more pressing than ever before.

One such project CEJA embarked on came to fruition in September 2017. The organisation worked in partnership with DeLaval, a leading producer of dairy and farming machinery, to publish a report called 'European Young Farmers: Building a Sustainable Sector'. The evidence gathered was based on a survey completed by 978 young farmers from across the EU. The structured questions in the first part of the survey focused on the needs of young farmers, their attitude to the environment and whether they saw a viable future in the profession, among other issues. The second part dealt with the characteristics of the respondents.

Interesting findings emerged, offering relevant and timely information about young farmers in the EU. The top three factors respondents chose in terms of what they would need to develop their farm in an economically sustainable way were a fair income level (59%), access to land (51%) and the simplification of administrative procedures (42%). Access to land, therefore remains among the most significant barriers to young people wishing to enter or remain in the agricultural sector. A solution to this would be to encourage the creation of more land mobility schemes between the generations and training for succession planning.



© Bearfotos, Freepik

The report reveals that European young farmers are conscientious about the environment with an overwhelming majority (90%) answering that they feel responsible for ensuring a sustainable agricultural sector. Many young farmers therefore consider themselves to be custodians of the countryside and are aware of their role in protecting the environment for future generations. However, to safeguard the environment through farming practices, 68% of the respondents answered that they needed measures that are practical to implement on the ground and 55% wished for civil society's recognition of the provision of public goods by farmers.

Farming today is subject to a wide range of demands and pressures, both on a professional and a personal level. When asked whether they considered their future as young farmers viable, the majority of the respondents (62%) answered that a viable future in the sector was possible for them only under certain circumstances. Coming full circle, then, this result explains,

to some degree, the very low share of EU farms being run by farmers under the age of 35.

So what can be done to improve the situation for young farmers and those considering entering the agricultural sector? As a young farmer myself and President of CEJA, I believe that a strong EU is the driving force necessary to help us face these challenges. I believe it because this Union, with its flaws and limits, is not a brake, but the engine of so much that we endeavour to do. Unwavering support at the EU level is necessary to make generational renewal in agriculture a reality and the CAP post 2020 is the moment to set these reforms in stone.

We live in a time when the barriers young farmers come up against can be almost impossible to face without assistance. At CEJA, we work every day to ensure that help is provided. Despite the difficulties, though, I continue to be hopeful. Stakeholders

in Brussels and further afield show interest in what we do and are willing to collaborate with us. Most importantly, perhaps, our members, young farmers from all over Europe, continue to meet, discuss and reach agreements through their differences. This, in my eyes, is the reason why the EU and European agriculture should be cherished and celebrated.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.ceja.eu

'European Young Farmers: Building a Sustainable Sector' report:
www.ceja.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CEJA-DeLaval-Survey-European-Young-Farmers.pdf

A FOCUS ON... GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

REPORT

Providing access to a new generation

The European Commission's CAP Communication and subsequent legal proposals identify generational renewal as a key priority in the new policy framework, with a range of related instruments to attract young farmers, some mandatory and others voluntary. The rural development community is already hard at work road testing new ideas and initiatives to address the aging problem facing the farming population in Europe and to usher in a new generation of farmers.

As last year's ENRD workshop on generational renewal – jointly held with the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) – noted, Europe's young farmers and new entrants face three significant hurdles to realising their ambitions: access to land; access to finance; and access to training and knowledge. Below you will find a selection of successful approaches to increasing access for the next generation of farmers.

ACCESS TO LAND

A COOPERATIVE APPROACH

Belgian farmers are often very dependent on their landlords. It is not unusual for a farmer to own a small proportion of their land with the majority of the utilised area being rented. When land comes up for sale, small farmers can easily lose access to land. Such losses negatively impact farm viability.

'Terre-en-vue' is a Belgian cooperative, non-profit organisation that is helping farmers and new entrants access land. It has a strong ecological ethos and is looking to stem the decrease in farm numbers and the subsequent decline in farm diversity and the food resilience of local communities. Terre-en-vue's core business is sustainable access to land, but as it is founded on a strong network, it also offers access to knowledge, know-how and financing options.

The cooperative entrusts land to farmers and supports them to maintain or settle down and develop agroecological farms that give priority to short food chains and direct sales systems and local farmers' networks. Farmers looking to benefit from support propose projects that have a viable and well-structured business plan.

The cooperative has raised almost €2 million to support 14 different farms. Moreover, support for the implementation of three additional projects has been granted where land owners and project owners deal directly with each other.

Terre-en-vue has acquired 76 ha of farmland for these 14 farms, 3 projects are under way to acquire a further 35ha. Every time a new project is proposed, it is showcased on Terre-en-vue's website and potential citizen investors can take shares in the cooperative to buy the land. The return on investment consists of social and environmental benefits. Terre-en-vue organises conferences, debates, concerts, farm visits and trainings as part of its engagement with shareholders.

The organisation operates in French-speaking Belgium, i.e. in the Walloon region and Brussels Capital region. Terre-en-vue supports farmers based on their project proposal rather than on their farming experience. In the Brussels region, farmers looking for support are younger and typically new entrants.

"If you have only money without a social [safety] net, you are not very resilient," explains Maarten Roels, Terre-en-vue co-founder. Networking is at the core of the approach.

Since 2015, Terre-en-vue is also active in the field of (peri)urban agriculture as a partner of the Brussels-based European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project 'BoerenBruxselPaysans'. Its role is to find land for the development of small-scale, high added value and diversified farms that are well-integrated in the city's social fabric. The work opens a new pathway for access to land, that of 'intermediation',

bringing landlords and new farmers together to agree sustainable leases.

Terre-en-vue is also co-founder of the EU network 'Access to land'. The network includes 15 organisations around Europe.

The aim is to share experiences, ideas and practical tools to support farmers in accessing land for agroecological transition and generational renewal and engaging in good land stewardship.

More information at:

- www.terre-en-vue.be/presentation/la-cooperative/prendre-des-parts
- www.accesstoland.eu/

ACCESS TO CAPITAL

INVESTING IN YOUNG FARMERS

In Ireland, support for the next generation of farmers is organised under the 'Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme II'⁽¹⁾ (TAMS II). The modernisation scheme includes a specific strand targeting young farmers ('Young Farmers Capital Investment Scheme'). Interestingly, the primary EAFRD sub-Measure to support young farmers (M6.1) has not been activated under the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP). Instead, support to young farmers is given primarily through sub-Measure 4.1 (support for investments in agricultural holdings). The Irish strategy also combines Measure 4 (investments in physical assets) and Measure 16 (cooperation), which consists of a 'Collaborative Farming Grant Scheme' that enables farmers to engage the help of experts when drawing up a new farm partnership agreement.

TAMS II is co-funded by the EU and the Irish government. The €120 million 'Young Farmer Capital Investment Scheme' supports young farmers by funding the construction, acquisition or improvement of properties and the purchase of new machinery and equipment. Grant support is provided for capital investment at an enhanced rate of 60% for young farmers up to a maximum ceiling of €80000 per holding, compared to the normal aid intensity of 40%. This higher aid intensity is to encourage those wishing to enter the sector or improve their holdings. Farmers can apply to the scheme directly or with the help of an approved agricultural advisor.



© Irish Rural Network support unit

ROLE MODEL

Leo Morrissey is a 28-year-old sheep farmer from Ballinasloe, Galway, Ireland. His experience, he went through a farm transfer process with his parents and brother, is an interesting example and one which the Irish NRN is using to communicate about the RDP to its stakeholders.

“I applied under the 'Young Farmer Capital Investment Scheme' for around 4000 meters of sheep fencing along with associated gateways. I qualify for a 60% grant aid on this project and feel it is going to set a solid foundation for my enterprise going forward.”

Leo did not apply to the 'Collaborative Farming Grant Scheme' under Measure 16, mainly due to the age profile of his parents and because the farm's finances were healthy.

However, he did benefit from the grant-aid funding available under the TAMS II – 'Young Farmer Capital Investment Scheme'.

In looking to inspire younger people and new entrants, the Irish NRN has featured Leo as one of its 'Young Trained Farmer' case studies, which has been communicated widely.

(1) <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmerschemespayments/tams/youngfarmercapitalinvestmentscheme>

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS KNOW-HOW

Financial Instruments (FIs), co-funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), are designed to be an efficient way to invest in the growth and development of people and businesses across the EU.

They can be set up by Member States and regions to invest available ESIF funding through financial products such as loans, guarantees, equity and other risk-bearing mechanisms that support projects on the ground.

For the EAFRD and generational renewal in particular, FIs decrease the pressure on grant aid, can be used in a flexible way (for a wide range of interventions) and, because they have to be repaid, encourage the development of more robust business plans by applicants.

fi-compass – an initiative of the European Commission in partnership with the European Investment Bank – is a platform for advisory services on Financial Instruments under the ESIF.

fi-compass provides practical know-how and learning tools on FIs. These include 'how-to' manuals, factsheets for quick reference, e-learning modules, face-to-face training seminars and networking events.

The specific advice for Managing Authorities, financial intermediaries and other stakeholders – interested in knowing more about the features, design and set-up of FIs – includes information on the use of FIs under the EAFRD.

www.fi-compass.eu/esif/eafrd

INNOVATIVE FINANCING MODEL

Estonia included €36m for Financial Instruments in its RDP as an alternative means of supporting young farmers, producer groups and start-ups. It has developed two types of loans – growth loans and long-term investment loans. Over 50% of the funding has already been awarded, creating 173 new jobs through 80 projects. Most of the projects receiving support are increasing competitiveness, modernising production and increasing resource efficiency.

Under the RDP, loans are delivered through Estonia's Rural Development

Foundation, a state-owned intermediary, that is now receiving referrals from the banking sector when they are trying to support entrepreneurship. The approach is surmounting the difficulties SMEs and start-ups were facing in accessing loans for rural development.

Two such beneficiaries of this innovative financing are the young farmers Linda Pajo and Kermo Rannamäe. Whilst standard loans were unavailable to them through commercial banks due to their lack of experience, when they presented their robust business plan, they were

immediately successful in receiving an investment loan. They have invested in modernising their farm with a hay-drying facility and Estonia's most advanced milking machine. The technology makes the farm a lot more efficient. One result is that Estonia has substituted imported goat milk with domestic production for the first time.

Factsheet on how the SME Initiative can be targeted to the agricultural sector:
www.fi-compass.eu/publication/brochures/sme-initiative-under-eafrd

ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

NATURALLY CURIOUS

The Swedish National Rural Network found new ways of engaging 'naturally curious' farmers keen to learn but often located in remote areas at large distances from each other – first using podcasts to disseminate information, and more recently webinars. This communications approach has been a successful and fun way of engaging young farmers.

Märta Jansdotter is part of the working group on 'young entrepreneurs in green businesses', the second group set up by

the NRN to focus on youth issues. She has set up her own business looking to create regenerative agriculture in order to improve the land while improving the quality of food and fibre. She also runs a company 'Gröna gårdar' (Green Farms) producing grass-fed beef and lamb from 40 farms, which currently has a turnover of €2 million. She wants to short circuit the value chain by supplying food directly to restaurants, school and hospital canteens.

This also means changing the traditional format of farming. Märta is running



a business with eight employees and looking to increase the e-commerce aspect of their sales and expand into other grocery product areas so the operation of her father's farm is being handed over to another business even though the land is retained. The generational change means a new business model to retain value in food production, rather than in larger retail chains.

For Märta, the network created by the working group is important for building a business. The young entrepreneurs group only gets to meet face-to-face once a year and the social aspect builds relationships, so the online format has to be engaging.

PEER-LED ADVISORY SERVICES FOR NEW ENTRANTS

As part of the EAFRD-funded Farm Advisory Service (FAS) in Scotland, a specialist component was set up in 2010 to focus specifically on the needs of new entrants. From four groups initially, these have now expanded to 14 groups across the length

and breadth of Scotland and often based in remote rural areas.

The groups meet twice a year, with discussion topics changing over time, most recently they looked at how to add value (learning butchery skills from a professional butcher and chef) and on contract or shared farming. The groups produce case studies, video clips and factsheets to help build knowledge, but according to Kirsten Williams who manages the programme, the most valuable component is the ability for new entrants to farming to have an environment where they can exchange with their peers: "everyone's at the same level. There are no silly questions and networking is very important for self-help."

A recent conference in Perth, attended by over 100 new entrants, involved "inspirational speakers in addition to professional input," according to Kirsten. It was the fifth year of the conference and attendance continues to grow. The topics

under discussion are decided by the group members. More recent subjects have focused on diversification and on business accounts. There is also the possibility of one-to-one mentoring via the FAS so new entrants can blend the support and networking as they require.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-work/generational-renewal_en

CASE STUDY: THE MAČAJ FAMILY (SLOVAKIA)

In the early nineties, Juraj Mačaj Sr. established a small family farm specialised in potatoes and later on, in other vegetables. When Slovakia entered the EU in 2004, the Mačaj family made the strategic decision to focus on potato quality.

They invested in the production of their potatoes and onions, bringing in grading and packing equipment and the manufacturing of potato by-products, with a focus on taste, using various EAFRD supports.

The children in the family obtained an education relevant to their business. The oldest son, Juraj, now the manager of the agricultural holding, studied economics. His sister, Lucia, studied law and is now in charge of legal issues. The youngest son, Marek, the chief agronomist of the holding, graduated at the agricultural university, as his father and grandfather had done before him.

Nowadays, the Mačaj family is one of the most important potato and vegetable suppliers in Slovakia. Besides the key commodities, potatoes and onions, they have been diversifying into production of other vegetables such as parsley, cabbage and garlic.

Juraj, Lucia and Marek, mindful of the need for continuity in their family farming tradition, are already involving their children in the farm business.



© Marek Štrauch

A FOCUS ON... GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

REPORT

Attracting and retaining the next generation

Making rural areas attractive for younger generations is imperative for the continuity of rural life. With many rural areas in Europe facing the dual challenge of depopulation and a greying population, what can be done to counterbalance such trends?

The attractiveness of rural life is contingent on a mix of economic, environmental, and social factors. The migration decisions of the young are influenced by a wide range of factors such as the provision of social services, the degree of accessibility, local employment opportunities, infrastructure development and by the specifics of family, friends and social networks⁽¹⁾.

Activities that can make rural areas more attractive for young people involve: training and education (including business skills); involvement in local community activities; improvement of services;

high-speed internet access and co-working spaces; support for business start-ups (e.g. accelerator programmes); and better communication about the advantages of rural areas as places to live and work.

YOUTH OUTREACH

The ENRD event on 'Social Hubs in Rural Europe' (9 February 2018)⁽²⁾ recommended that rural development practitioners seek direct involvement of young people in rural initiatives that are looking to improve their socio-economic situation. A prerequisite for designing activities for young people is to understand their needs.



© Craig Stephen

LISTENING TO RURAL YOUTH

The LEADER-funded project 'Young people in Meetjesland', started by asking young people aged 15-16 about their experience with living in Meetjesland (Flanders, Belgium). This covered 13 different towns in Meetjesland and focused on sports, cultural activities and mobility, as well as the influence of nearby cities such as Bruges and Ghent. The survey led to recommendations for future local government policy designed to address young people.

Another example is the 'Rural Youth Project', an initiative designed to research and better understand rural young people, aged 18-28, launched in January 2018 in Scotland, the UK. Coinciding with the 2018 Year of Young People, a Scottish initiative, the project will combine an online survey, a year-long series of video logs (vlogs) featuring 15-20 rural young people and a rural youth ideas festival.

"With so much emphasis on youth this year, we want to make sure that rural young people have a voice that will be heard, what better way is there to share their outlook?" said Rebecca Dawes, co-manager of the project⁽³⁾.

www.ruralityouthproject.com

(1) European Parliament, Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, 'How to promote the role of youth in rural areas of Europe', 2010.

(2) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-social-inclusion_en

(3) The first results of the 'Rural Youth Project' survey were presented at the ENRD Social Inclusion event of 3 May 2018.

INTEGRATED APPROACH

EAFRD policy tools are supporting projects that target rural youth and that seek to enhance the quality of life in rural areas. Under the RDPs, LEADER, alongside M1 (knowledge transfer and information actions) can support training and education activities, as well as the development of social spaces. Measure 6 (farm and business development) provides support, including start-up funding. Measure 7 (basic services and village renewal in rural areas) support includes broadband and digitisation, leisure and recreational infrastructure, healthcare and transport.

Beyond the EAFRD, other possibilities to tailor projects that address the needs of young people in rural areas include the European Social Fund (especially for training and education of young people), Interreg, the European Solidarity Corps (a new initiative of the European Commission targeted at young people), Erasmus+ and other exchange schemes available for young farmers that exist in the EU and beyond (an overview of exchange schemes, collected within the framework of the 'Pilot Project: Exchange programmes for young farmers' conducted in 2015, can be found on the ENRD website⁽⁴⁾).



© Baba residence

GRANNY KNOWS BEST

The 'Baba Residence' (baba meaning grandmother in Bulgarian) is an initiative bringing young urban entrepreneurs and elderly people in low-density and remote villages together. The Bulgarian project is helping to pass on traditions, make villages more attractive and tackle the urban-rural divide.

Participants spend one month living and learning in the participating villages. An 'ideas camp' is organised with mentors over two days at the end of their stay to identify new innovative social business models. Ideas for products, services or events are developed that both attract interest in the respective villages and allow the young participants to develop their crafts and skills.

For more about the project see the Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas (SIMRA) website. SIMRA is funded under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

www.simra-h2020.eu/index.php/2018/03/14/baba-residence-an-initiative-to-attract-young-people-in-depopulated-villages-in-bulgaria/

(4) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-work/generational-renewal/exchange-schemes-young-farmers_en

BETTER COMMUNICATION

Improving communications about rural areas can help both retain and attract young people. Positive role models can be used to improve the perception of rural areas and their advantages. Role models – such as successful young entrepreneurs who are thriving in rural areas – need to be showcased.

The ENRD Social Inclusion workshop⁽⁵⁾ (16 November 2017 – Nicosia, Cyprus), organised with the participation of the National Rural Networks (NRNs) and other relevant stakeholders, highlighted that communicating to young people requires more innovative and inspiring approaches using the communication channels that younger generations prefer, including video blogs (vlogs).

For the latest on making rural areas more attractive to young people, see the report⁽⁶⁾ on the May 2018 ENRD workshop.



© Odisseu

A WAY HOME

A good example of an integrated approach to attracting young people back to rural areas is the LEADER-funded 'Odyssey' project in Spain. Odisseu supports young people interested in learning more about the opportunities of living in rural areas.

This is achieved through a combination of activities that support young entrepreneurial talents already in the area and actions for young people who live or study in surrounding urban areas. For example, the project provides start-up training and organises visits to innovative companies for students living in rural areas. Young people originating from rural areas are surveyed to understand what factors would make them return to rural life. The project then identifies suitable opportunities for them.

www.odisseujove.cat

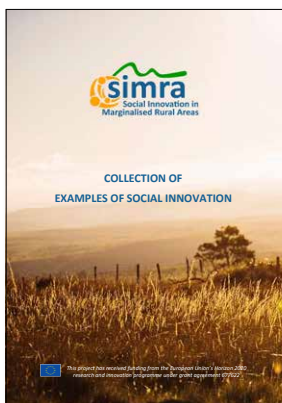
(5) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/nrms-workshop-social-inclusion-attractive-and-inclusive-rural-areas_en

(6) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w20_social_inclusion_report.pdf

Books & publications

Collection of examples of social innovation

Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas, SIMRA project



The two brochures have been published by the Horizon 2020 research project SIMRA which is working to identify good practice of social innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural development in marginalised rural areas.

Both publications showcase the diversity of social innovation across Europe and the Mediterranean region and are selected from the project's database of good practices. The second brochure highlights initiatives which are improving basic rural services such as health, education, energy, and mobility.

OECD Rural Policy Reviews: Poland 2018

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)



Part of a series of comprehensive reviews of rural policy and its various aspects in individual countries, this study examines the range of policies and aspects impacting rural development in Poland.

It profiles the country in terms of rural economy across

regions and enabling factors for growth and development through an integrated rural policy. It concludes with a set of recommendations on how to boost agricultural productivity, support economic diversification, enhance inter-municipal coordination, deepen decentralisation, and improve multi-level governance.

ISBN 9789264289925

Thinking CAP

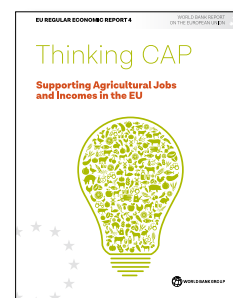
Supporting Agricultural Jobs and Incomes in the EU

World Bank Group

This publication examines economic developments, prospects, and economic policies in the European Union in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

It assesses the impact of the CAP on inclusive growth and argues that the process of structural transformation in the EU is largely on track, with the CAP playing a positive role in poverty reduction and job creation.

The report concludes that about half of EU Member States have turned agriculture into a key sector for shared prosperity in rural areas. While the other half still need to ensure basic conditions such as roads, advisory services, secure property rights, and access to health and education in order to achieve a more efficient use of CAP resources.



Organic farming in 2014-2020 Rural Development Programming

Italian Rural Network support unit

The publication overviews and analyses the strategies implemented by Italian regions and provinces to

support the development of the organic sector through the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes (RDs).

It draws comparisons between agri-environment-climate payments, focusing particularly on integrated production and conservation agriculture, and organic farming.

It argues that an updated framework on organic farming

and other production methods would illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of regional RDs' environmental interventions and provide a basis for improvements during the next programming period.

ISBN 9788899595821



Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture

Best practice catalogue

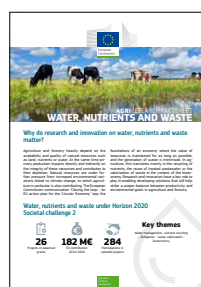
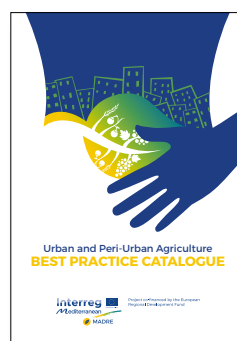
MADRE

'Metropolitan Agriculture for Developing' an innovative, sustainable and Responsible Economy (MADRE) is a

European territorial cooperation project, funded under the EU's Interreg Mediterranean programme. It wants to change the metropolitan food supply model by capitalising on existing good practices, by empowering the different stakeholders in metropolitan and

peri-urban agriculture, and by initiating a dynamic of transnational cooperation.

The catalogue highlights the best practices identified in the six metropolises associated with MADRE, in terms of farmers' innovation, social innovation, consumer innovation, academic research, territorial innovation and transnational innovation.



Factsheets on agricultural and rural innovation

European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI)

A set of factsheets on topics such as: digital transformation in rural areas; human capital; sustainable value chains; public goods; soils; water, nutrients and waste – and including ongoing research projects and upcoming funding opportunities.

The factsheets were produced for the AgriResearch Conference 'Innovating for the future of farming and rural communities' of 2-3 May 2018, Brussels, Belgium. They are available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/news/agriresearch-conference-innovating-future-farming-and-rural-communities>

ENRD PUBLICATIONS

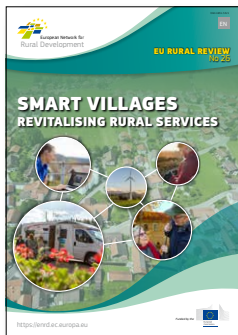
Keep up to date with all the latest news, views and developments in European rural development by reading the various ENRD publications.

These are available on the *Publications* section of <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu> or you can subscribe by emailing subscribe@enrd.eu. For further information write to info@enrd.eu.

EU RURAL REVIEW

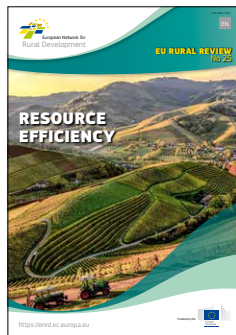
The EU Rural Review is the ENRD's principal thematic publication. It presents the latest knowledge and understanding of a particular topic relevant to rural development in Europe. Themes range from rural entrepreneurship and food quality to climate change and social inclusion. It is published twice a year in six EU languages (EN; FR; DE; ES; IT; PL).

No.26 – Smart Villages: Revitalising Rural Services



KF-AJ-18-001-EN-N

No.25 – Resource Efficiency



KF-AJ-17-002-EN-N

No.24 – Re-imagining rural business opportunities



KF-AJ-17-001-EN-N

EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURE

The ENRD publishes brochures presenting good and interesting examples of EAFRD-funded projects. Each edition highlights successful project examples around a particular rural development theme. The brochures aim to showcase the achievements of the EAFRD and inspire further projects. They are published in six EU languages (EN; FR; DE; ES; IT; PL).

Digital and Social Innovation in Rural Services



KF-AP-18-002-EN-N

Resource Efficient Rural Economies



KF-AP-18-001-EN-N

Supporting Rural Business



KF-AP-17-002-EN-N

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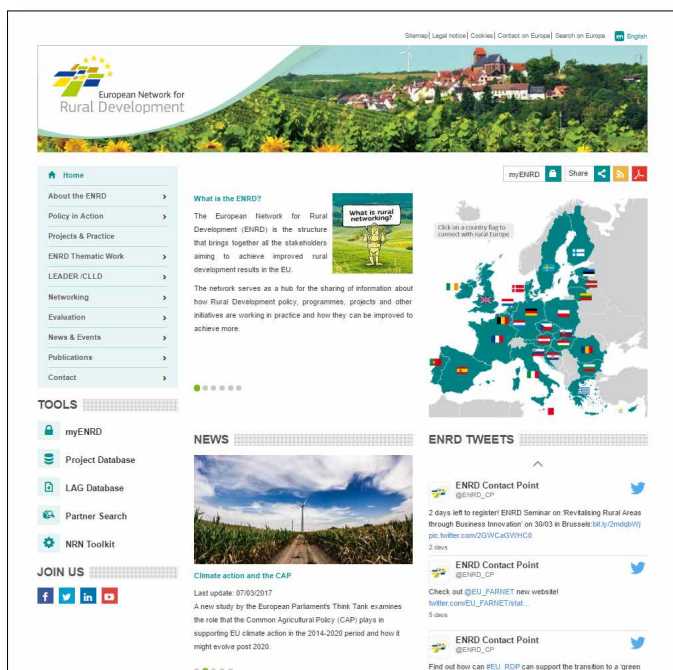
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