

## 2<sup>nd</sup> NRN Meeting: Starting-up NRNs

### Report of the Meeting

*Jurmala, Latvia  
12-13 May 2015*



## Table of Contents

<b>Summary</b> .....	3
<b>Day 1</b> .....	4
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> .....	4
<b>NRN State of Play</b> .....	4
<b>NRN Intervention Logic &amp; Action Planning at this stage of the Programming</b> .....	5
<b>Workshop 1: Rolling out NRN Action Plans</b> .....	7
<b>Identification of open space topics for Day 2 and introduction to exchange fora</b> .....	8
<b>Exchange Fora on core elements of NRN tasks and Action Plans</b> .....	8
<b>Workshop 2: NRN Self-assessment: how to measure success</b> .....	10
<b>Identification of further open space topics for Day 2</b> .....	10
<b>Day 2</b> .....	11
<b>Recap and Introduction to the day</b> .....	11
<b>Open Space interactive session</b> .....	12
<b>Planned European Rural Networks' activities most relevant to NRNs</b> .....	16
<b>Next steps and conclusions</b> .....	17
<b>Study Tour</b> .....	18
<b>Annexes</b> .....	20
<b>Annex I – WS 1: Rolling out NRN Action Plans</b> .....	20
<b>Annex II - Exchange Forum 1 on 'Operational Groups'</b> .....	21
<b>Annex III - Exchange Forum 2 on 'NRN Communication Plans'</b> .....	22
<b>Annex IV - Exchange Forum 3 on 'Communicating the RDPs'</b> .....	24
<b>Annex V – WS 2: NRN Self-assessment: how to measure success</b> .....	27
<b>Annex VI – Open Space Discussions</b> .....	30
<b>Annex VII – Participants Feedback</b> .....	36
.....	41

## Summary

The second NRN meeting (2014-2020), entitled ‘Starting up NRNs’ was held in Jurmala, Latvia, 12-13 May 2015. It was co-hosted by the Latvian Rural Network and supported by both the ENRD Contact Point and the EIP-AGRI Service Point, with strong inputs from a number of NRNs. The meeting was well attended, with 63 participants from over 20 EU Member States.

The morning of the first day was built around the NRNs’ current work on drawing up their intervention logic and action plans for the new period. Discussions and exchange moved through the following elements, involving some presentations, interactive elements and discussion in small groups:

1. State of play of creation of the national rural networks (NRNs) and their network support units (NSUs) across Europe
2. Progress in defining the intervention logic for each NRN (which seeks to guide when, where and how the NRNs should be active)
3. Progress in elaborating the NRN Action Plans
4. Rolling out the NRN Action Plans

Discussions confirmed a good correlation between the priority themes of the NRNs and those being tackled by the European networks. NRNs also highlighted three main types of tool they are prioritising: a variety of communication methods to improve understanding of the RDPs; thematic exchanges; and more tailor-made guidance. Overall, a consensus was that the national and European-level networks should seek to be more demand-led in their approaches to improving RDP quality.

The first afternoon saw a set of three parallel ‘exchange fora’ on pre-identified topics important for the beginning of the new period: (i) EIP-AGRI Operational Groups; (ii) NRN Communication Plans and; (iii) Communicating the (launch of the) RDPs. These went into more detail about what NRNs are doing and can do around these elements. It was followed by a plenary discussion on NRN self-assessment, which highlighted the need for more work to define appropriate indicators for the period.

The second day started with a set of ten open space discussions on topics that had emerged from the first day’s discussions. These covered the specific themes of ‘ethnic and social inclusion’, and ‘multifund LDS’ as well as elements within the broader topics of ‘communications’, ‘innovation and EIP-AGRI’, and ‘self-assessment’.

Concluding remarks from Matthias Langemeyer and Paul Soto highlighted the value and breadth of the lively discussions, stressing the need for even more co-operation and exchange between NRNs to go even deeper into many subjects. The ENRD is looking to support even more face-to-face meetings.

Participants’ evaluation of the meeting was extremely positive. The sessions were rated as ‘excellent’ by 50% of respondents and ‘good’ by a further 40%. The most appreciated sessions were the most interactive, namely the open spaces and exchange fora. All respondents rated the venue organisation and networking opportunities as being either good or excellent.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their contribution to making the event successful, most especially the Latvian Rural Network.

## Day 1

Note: Presentations can be directly downloaded by clicking on the title-link:

### Welcome and Introductions

9.00 – 9.20  
**Liene Jansone,**  
Head of RD Support  
Dpt, LV Ministry of  
Agriculture

Liene Jansone welcomed participants. She stressed that NRNs play an important role in providing information to rural populations, supporting innovation and promoting exchange of good practices. The Latvian NRN has been successful and will continue in the same format. She encouraged participants to be “creative, active and inspiring”

**Martins Cimermanis,**  
Chairman of the  
Board LV Rural  
Advisory and  
Training Centre

Martins Cimermanis mentioned that the key challenge of Latvian rural areas is depopulation. The Latvian NRN must work to improve income parity, help create jobs and SMEs. The Network works with more than 1 000 partners in Latvia. Its key objective is to generate knowledge and ensure it is shared.

**Matthias Langemeyer,** DG  
AGRI

Matthias Langemeyer highlighted that this meeting takes place at a crucial moment: NRNs are developing their intervention logic and plans, while at the EU level the full cycle of governance meetings has discussed key networking themes and priorities. This meeting brings together ENRD Contact Point and EIP-AGRI Service Point - this co-operation will continue in the future.

**Paul Soto,** ENRD CP  
Team Leader

Paul Soto said the meeting, attended by representatives of all but 5 MS, should help create links between EU and national level and contribute to challenges faced by rural areas. He also presented the aims and agenda of the meeting.

### NRN State of Play

9.20 – 9.35  
[Presentation on the  
NRN State of Play  
by Inés Jordana,  
ENRD CP](#)

The ENRD CP has carried out, during the beginning of the 2014-2020 programming period, a mapping report in co-operation with Network Support Units. The aim of this report (the draft version of which was circulated prior to the event) is to assess when and how the 2014-2020 rural networks are set-up and how NRNs identify and work with their members.

An extract of the findings of this mapping exercise was presented to participants. Rural Networks were asked to provide feedback on the different sections to the report, which can now be found through the following [link](#).

## NRN Intervention Logic & Action Planning at this stage of the Programming

9.35 – 10.30

[Presentation on the NRN Intervention Logic by Edina Ocsko, ENRD CP](#)

The main purpose of this introductory session was to present the framework of the meeting, with particular focus on the development of the NRN intervention logic and NRN action planning (as two pieces of a puzzle of NRN planning), as well as self-assessment (third piece of the puzzle). Each stage was introduced by the ENRD CP, and demonstrated through practical examples of the NSUs of Slovenia, England and Sweden respectively.

At end of the session, networks were asked 'to complete the pieces of their puzzle'. The first exercise concerned the NRN intervention logic. Participants representing each NSU, ENRD CP and EIP SP were asked to stand along a starting line and make steps forward depending on their progress with regard to the development of their intervention logic and action planning (based on specific questions). The 'most advanced' networks were awarded 'intervention logic stars' that they placed on their countries on a map.



As a second exercise, NSU representatives were asked to complete the colouring of the map of Europe according to the 'state-of-play' of their action plan (some countries were coloured prior to the event based on a recent survey result).



## Workshop 1: Rolling out NRN Action Plans

11.00-12.30  
Summary

The workshop allowed participants to discuss and come up with answers to three key questions: 1. What are the most important rural policy challenges that the NRNs are focusing on at this point in time and how does these relate to the ten themes identified by the Rural Networks Steering Group?; 2. What are the most effective NRN actions and tools for dealing with these challenges?; and 3. What recommendations can be made for strengthening these tools?

A table summarising NRN answers to the first question can be seen in Annex I. It shows that the largest number of NRNs are working on advisory services, knowledge transfer and innovation (17/21 answers). This is followed by multifunding and CLLD (14) and local food and small farms (13).

Twelve NRNs referred to the environmental priorities identified by the Steering Group –the green economy (6) and climate change (6) - and a further six NRNs mentioned linkages between Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 - which also has important environmental repercussions. Demographic change and social inclusion were mentioned by 11 NRNs.

Finally, a cluster of NRNs referred to the challenges of starting up the networks (11) and evaluating networks (8). Only six NRNs were explicitly considering the simplification agenda. This information will help all networks to co-operate with others that are working on similar issues.

The Networks are using three main types of tools to improve rural policy. The first consists of a general set of communication tools to help people know about, understand and use rural development programmes. The second involves thematic exchanges and working groups where the strengths and weaknesses of the policies can be analysed in more depth by diverse groups of institutional and/or grassroots rural stakeholders. Finally, networks design tailor-made workshops and provide more technical guidance on how to improve specific measures or procedures. Sharing and transferring good practice is common to all three types of tool.

One of the most interesting recommendations concerned the need for networks to consider more flexible customer- or demand-led approaches to improving RDP quality - including the use of service packages and other forms of tailor-made support to initiatives led by stakeholders themselves. The discussion was enriched by presentations and examples from the German, French and Latvian NRNs.

## Identification of open space topics for Day 2 and introduction to exchange fora

12.30 – 13.00

Before lunch, the framework for the following day's open space discussions was explained to participants, namely that they would provide a space in which interested parties could discuss specific issues, related to the content of one or more NRNs' action plans. Based on the action planning session and in particular workshop 1, participants nominated the first five open space topics.

## Exchange Fora on core elements of NRN tasks and Action Plans

14.00 – 16.00

### Summary of Corner 1 'EIP-AGRI Operational Groups'

Corner 1 worked around three presentations from Germany, Poland and Portugal, which have different implementation arrangements for the Operational Groups. The chosen format worked well and participants appreciated the variation of approaches, showing interest to know about further examples.

While discussing about possible interactions between NRNs and EIP SP, there was an important request to make the work of Focus Groups (FG) more appealing at MS level by explaining how the results can be taken up by the national/regional authorities. It was suggested to produce short movie clips featuring the results and interviews with the coordinating expert and members of the FG.

A specific request was made to make available the contacts of FG members on the EIP AGRI website.

Participants highlighted that a collaborative area for NRNs/NSUs is needed in order to conduct surveys with questions related to the implementation of Operational Groups and the structure put in place to facilitate innovation in the Member States. A screening is needed for the approved RDPs to have a better overview on the implementation of Operational Groups.

On the EIP AGRI website, participants expressed willingness to make test groups and provide feedback. For this purpose, organising a forum and a webinar could be good possibilities. The Service Point should facilitate this by creating a feedback group and circulating an e-mail asking for membership.

See Annex II for more details.



### Summary of Corner 2 'NRN Communication Plans'

Corner 2 saw exchange between NRNs on the elaboration of the NRN communication plans. The session was broken up into four sections which each saw short interventions from one or two NRN representatives followed by questions and discussion bringing in other NRNs' questions and ideas. Interventions were heard from France, Wales (UK), Wallonia (Belgium), Croatia, Spain, Portugal and Scotland (UK).

There was clear interest from NRNs to exchange and discuss on this topic given that the NRN communication plan is something they are working on currently. Several participants stayed in this corner for the whole session.

Exchanges reflected on how to make sure the MA Information and Publicity Strategy and the NRN Communication Plan complement rather than duplicate each other and how to promote the specific identity and recognition of the NRN itself. It was felt that NRNs could usefully think more about making the most of social media and their own web presence.

Some interventions highlighted the value of bringing in specific communications expertise to help develop the plans and to think through how to measure impact over time, including improved use of web-based monitoring data (analytics). Finally, there was an appetite amongst participants to keep sharing ideas and approaches around NRN communications planning and implementation via a dedicated forum provided by the ENRD. (See Annex III for more details on the topics and ideas discussed.)

### Summary of Corner 3 'Communicating the RDPs'

Corner 3 dealt with methods and strategies adopted by NRNs in communicating the content of the RDPs, with particular focus on the activities marking the launch of the programmes.

Six short interventions from NRNs provided examples of current communication practices and fuelled the discussion with very practical lessons. Presentations were heard from: the Czech Republic; Flanders (Belgium); Estonia; Finland; and Sweden (see Annex IV for more details). After each set of presentations, participants were asked to put forward their comments, highlighting challenges and strategies adopted in their working context.

The examples brought by NRNs highlighted a number of key success factors for effective RDP communications. These include, among others: the early assessment of information needs expressed by RDP stakeholders and potential beneficiaries; the importance of creating synergies with the network of 'rural development communicators' (e.g. professional organisations) and generating multiplier effects; creating a recognisable and catchy brand to be used consistently; making use of mass media for a wider outreach and of testimonials to add a 'human face' to institutional communications; directly involve stakeholders in communication activities..

## Workshop 2: NRN Self-assessment: how to measure success

### 16.00-17.15 Summary

During this session the ENRD CP delivered a [presentation on the network self-assessment framework](#), which represents the third and final ‘piece of the jigsaw’ making up the key elements of network planning (i.e. intervention logic and action planning) presented during the NRN Intervention logic session in the morning. The main purpose of the session was to:

- Start discussion about the NRN self-assessment framework
- Discuss common output indicators that networks may collect
- Start discussion about wider achievements and results of NRNs.

During the first part of the session **suggested common output indicators** were presented to participants (see Annex V) and participants were asked to discuss whether these indicators are considered to be ‘SMART’ (i.e. specific, measurable, available, relevant and timely), and if not why.

The outcomes of the discussion (see Annex V) showed that NRNs have a number of concerns and questions concerning quantitative indicators, and their added value in assessing network activities. At the same time, there seems to be an agreement among several networks that the collection of a relatively limited number of output indicators that can be cumulated at the European-level will be needed. Further exchange is needed on the topic.

The discussion (and short interventions from the Finnish NSU and a Swedish farmer) stressed that the focus should be on discussing **how to assess more qualitative results of the networks**. The discussion (with further suggestions on this aspect) continued during the Open Space session during Day 2.

## Identification of further open space topics for Day 2

### 17.15 – 17.45 Summary

Following the exchange fora and the workshop session on self-assessment, participants completed the nomination of the open space topics to be discussed on the morning of the second day.

Ten topics were agreed on, with every topic having an agreed host (See Day 2 report below).

## Day 2

Note: Presentations can be directly downloaded by clicking on the title-link:

### Recap and Introduction to the day

8.30 – 9.00

Mike Gregory recapped the main points of the first day and introduced the Open Space discussion session.

The following table shows the ten topics chosen for the discussions and which part of the earlier agenda they most directly relate to:

No.	Topic	Of particular relevance to
1.	Ethnic and social inclusion	Workshop 1: Rolling out NRN Action plans
2.	Knowledge transfer, innovation and other tools	Exchange forum 1: EIP Operational groups Workshop 1: Rolling out NRN Action plans
3.	Tailoring NRN support to multi fund LDS	Workshop 1: Rolling out NRN Action plans
4.	Social media positioning	Exchange forum 2: Communications plans
5.	Results – qualitative indicators	Workshop 2: NRN Self-assessment
6.	NSU involvement in rural innovation: EIP or wider?	Exchange forum 1: EIP Operational groups Workshop 1: Rolling out NRN Action plans
7.	Thematic co-operation between OGs, innovation databases and knowledge management	Exchange forum 1: EIP Operational groups
8.	NSU and EIP – Ongoing activities	Exchange forum 1: EIP Operational groups
9.	Evaluating communications impact	Exchange forum 2: Communications plans
10.	Meeting language needs	Exchange forum 2: Communications plans

## Open Space interactive session

9.00 – 10.30  
Open space  
interactive session,  
specific issues  
related to NRN  
action plans

The participants were free to join and leave the individual open space discussions which were held in three different rooms. At the end of the discussions everyone reconvened in the plenary room and a short feedback session was held on each of the ten discussions.

The key messages of each discussion are set out below. For more details of the full discussions, please see Annex VI.

<b>Topic 1</b>	<b>Ethnic and social inclusion</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Maria Gustaffson (SE NRN) and Lina Gumbreviciene (LT)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall framework of empowerment of disadvantaged/marginalised groups within the context of rural renewal</li> <li>CLLD and Leader is central but there are other RDP measures that are important as well – basic services and village renewal, farm and business support, co-operation...</li> <li>There are several potential discreet but interrelated strands of work connected to different target groups that affect different clusters of MS. Newcomers and asylum seekers for Sweden, Germany, Italy, Greece; Roma for Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia; marginalised local people for Lithuania and others.</li> </ul>	

<b>Topic 2</b>	<b>Knowledge transfer, innovation and other tools</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Ed Dyson (UK NRN)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge transfer is a process: it needs a combination of tools (package)</li> <li>NRNs need a range of skills and resources to use multiple channels (e.g. production of videos)</li> <li>Knowledge Transfer does not concern only farmers and not just innovation, so there is the need to find opportunities across RDP stakeholders and measures and ensure ‘cross-fertilisation’</li> </ul>	

<b>Topic 3</b>	<b>Tailoring NRN support to multi funds LDS</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Alistair Prior (UK-SCO NRN)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b> NRN can support implementation of multi-funded CLLD by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building the capacity of existing and potential CLLD actors (including new players), both at the LAG/LDS level and at the level of the programme (Managing Authority, Paying Agency etc.).</li> <li>▪ Building a common information system and IT tools to support CLLD implementation.</li> <li>▪ Facilitating simplification (and harmonisation between Funds/MAs) of CLLD delivery (rules and practices), helping LAGs and beneficiaries work with a complex delivery system.</li> </ul> <p>One of the key issues is: can the NSU, which is funded from EAFRD, support activities related to other EU Funds? The bottom line is always the focus on RDP, this is the primary objective of the NSUs.</p>	

<b>Topic 4</b>	<b>Social Media positioning: how to do it</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Joelle Silberstein (FR NRN)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for statistics to convince the management.</li> <li>▪ Integrate social media as structural tools in your communication plan and set up a social media plan.</li> <li>▪ Good practices on measuring tools and social media handling tool (TweetDeck, Hootsuite, Owly, Bit.ly, Engagor); reports and agreements.</li> </ul>	

<b>Topic 5</b>	<b>Results and self-assessment, qualitative approaches</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Teemu Hauhia (FI NRN)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Output indicator values are essential as a common base position. These could be enhanced and made smarter, deliver the reporting essentials but contribute to the next level of analysis whilst ensuring a consistent specification and application.</li> <li>▪ NRNs should contribute their result and self-assessment methods and approaches to the CP. CP to analyse them and supplement with other examples to inform and feed into a community of practice.</li> <li>▪ CP and participating NRNs should develop a pilot project to inform and involve NRNs. Possibly an event or component thereof – as part of process of continuous improvement. There may be potential for a future link to the evaluation helpdesk.</li> </ul>	
<b>Topic 6</b>	<b>NSU involvement in rural innovation: EIP or wider ?</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Fay Collington (UK-ENG NRN)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NSUs must support initial set up of OGs, offering links to partners and experts; providing information about EIP and other measures.</li> <li>▪ Advisors' Networks are essential to support NSU in the set up of OGs + supporting the formation of OGs and disseminating knowledge once projects are complete.</li> <li>▪ Dissemination is most important role for NSUs: to share learning through website, case studies, video clips (YouTube) + Networks.</li> </ul>	
<b>Topic 7</b>	<b>Thematic Co-operation between OGs, Innovation databases, Knowledge management.</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Sergiu Didicescu (EIP-AGRI SP)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mapping of where OGs are being implemented and how.</li> <li>▪ Need to harmonise the themes that OGs are working with – make database work.</li> <li>▪ Multi fund approach – end user orientation.</li> <li>▪ Share failures too.</li> <li>▪ Mapping needs to include info about national/regional databases being built – need to ensure coordination also at EU level SP-CP.</li> </ul>	

<b>Topic 8</b>	<b>NSU and EIP ongoing activities</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Juha-Matti Markkola (FI NRN)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Definition of Operational Groups differs among Members States, more information is needed.</li> <li>▪ Information about eligible actions for EIP OG needed.</li> <li>▪ Information needed also on publishing calls for OG.</li> <li>▪ Suggestion to carry out RDP / MS screening exercises by EIP-AGRI together with NSUs.</li> </ul>	
<b>Topic 9</b>	<b>Evaluating communications impact</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Ed Thorpe (ENRD CP)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The principles of how to self-assess the impact of communications work are already laid out in the 2011 ENRD publication “Communicating EU rural development policy” (Chapter 5 “Evaluating EAFRD Communication”).</li> <li>▪ Nevertheless, there is an ongoing need to exchange experiences and information on how to implement these principles in practice.</li> <li>▪ A specific need was identified in making better use of analytics to gather more and better data on communications outreach and to monitor impact.</li> </ul>	
<b>Topic 10</b>	<b>Meeting Language needs better</b>
<b>Lead person</b>	<b>Matthias Langemeyer (DG AGRI)</b>
<p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Move from supply driven to demand driven</li> <li>▪ More evidence-based decisions</li> <li>▪ Privilege shorter, more readable materials</li> </ul>	

## Planned European Rural Networks' activities most relevant to NRNs

**11.00 – 12.15**  
[How networks should support each other by John Grieve, ENRD CP, and Sergiu Didicescu, EIP-AGRI SP](#)

The session involved presentations on the key areas of Contact Point and Service Point work where strong interaction between the European and National Networks and Support Units could strengthen the value of our respective work. The CP inputs focused on Good Practices, Ruralabs, CLLD, Co-operation and Communications. The SP input covered their work programme and in particular the use of Focus Groups and Operational Groups.

Participants were asked to consider those activities and the nature of the involvement sought before raising questions where they sought clarification or offering a further contribution.

Some NSU participants were keen to understand more clearly the expectations for NSUs regarding their involvement in Ruralabs and, linked to this, how they can interact with the CP Geographical Experts. A brief explanation was provided and a short text is to be made available by the CP to NSUs.

Following discussion of whether good practices would be themed, their linking to seminars and events was explained. There then followed a discussion on ENRD Thematic Groups which explored how NRNs could feed in to the CP thematic work and how these links could be strengthened e.g. developing national-level links.

The discussions concluded by considering the range of shared tools, including communication tools and how these could be used to strengthen CP and SP engagement with NRNs and stakeholders. Priorities identified here included strengthening EIP/ENRD coordination, proactive social media management, the use of webinars, supporting NRN participation (CP and SP) e.g. through training in techniques or tools. A particularly useful suggestion was that the EIP SP compile a list of the national lead person in their NRN who could link to the Operational Groups.



## Next steps and conclusions

12.15 – 13.00  
NRN information  
points, upcoming  
events and activities

[Next steps & events  
by Riin Saluveer, DG  
AGRI](#)

Closing  
observations

### NRN Events and Information Points

- **Estonian** Nationwide Open Farm Day - Sunday 19 July 2015 - Contact Ave Bremse [ave@maainfo.ee](mailto:ave@maainfo.ee)
- **Spanish** NRN organising workshop - last week of May - involving Spanish LAGs and MA on the development of LDS, with some public participation. Conclusions (in English) will be in monthly newsletter.
- **Portugal** - 9 June – Seminar, within national agricultural fair, on Operational Groups and innovation. EIP SP invited to participate.
- **Croatia** – end of June - LAG event on Adriatic Coast. All details on the website of the LAG 'LAURA'.
- The **Swedish** NRN monthly Review communicates what is happening in the Swedish network each month in English. Subscribe on website.

### EU events

- **EIP-AGRI 'biomass' workshop** in Sardinia – 27-28 May
- **ENRD Thematic Group meeting on stakeholder involvement** – 28 May
- **New EIP-AGRI Focus Groups** launched in June
- **ENRD Seminar on RDP Implementation** – 11 June
- **Rural Networks' Steering Group** – 12 June
- **Rural Networks' Assembly Innovation Subgroup** – 23 June
- **Workshop/conference on NRNs and LEADER/CLLD** - 24-25 September
- **Rural Networks' Assembly** – 26 November

Matthias Langemeyer stressed how valuable the meeting was and that it represented a good example of what it means to work together at European level and to 'do Europe'. He argued that twice a year is maybe not frequent enough for such valuable meetings, with so many topics to be discussed. Discussions were lively and interactive and hopefully helped develop people's thinking. The issue of NRN self-assessment is one where there was not quite enough time to make sufficient progress and more is needed.

Paul Soto (ENRD CP) highlighted how many issues had been covered by the meeting, but that even this was just scratching the surface of the potential to work together. The CP wants to be demand-led in its work, so the input of the NRNs is crucial. It is also important to develop the relationships, to know the faces of who we are dealing between European and national level to improve the two-way information flows. We hope to have more face-to-face meetings in the future, with the possibility of clusters of NRNs coming together to work on specific topics – such as a co-operation taskforce. The CP will also continue to develop tools to support NRN work, including evolution of the toolkit, training and other resources, such as an updated LAG database for the new period.

## Study Tour

### Visit 1: Rundāle Palace



*Rundale Palace – internal court*  
© ENRD CP

It was built in two periods during the second half of the XVIII century under the direction of an Italian-Russian architect (the same who conceived the Winter Palace in St Petersburg!)

The beautiful Rococo-style interiors are the fruit of the collaboration of Italian painters and a German stucco plasterer.

Rundāle Palace (*Rundāles pils* in Latvian) is one of the two major baroque palaces built for the Dukes of Courland. It is situated at *Pilsrundāle*, 12km west of *Bauska* municipality



*Rundale Palace – view form the garden*  
© ENRD CP



*Rundale Palace – Golden hall*  
© Chris Bathgate

Once Russian property, until the revolution in 1917 (including *Catherine The Great*), during WWI the building was badly damaged.

With the Latvian agrarian reform it became property of the State and in the 1920s was converted into an agricultural school.

Nowadays - and after intensive restauration - the palace is a national museum.

## Visit 2: Vaidelotes farm



*Arnold Jātniek welcomes visitors at his farm*  
© Chris Bathgate

**Arnolds Jātniek's** family farm **Vaidelotes** is situated in *Bauska* municipality. Starting with 16 ha it was the first farm established in the area. As every other farm in Latvia, it has a troubled history made of deportations to Siberia and 'reconquered' land propriety after almost a fifty-year time span.

Today Arnolds' farm counts on 180 ha of farmed land mostly dedicated to the production of wheat and rapeseed oil



*Traditional clothes, food and songs for the guests!*

Arnolds' wife and children are involved in the daily management of the farm. His wife in particular is engaged in the rediscovery and marketing of local traditions and food both on-farm (through e.g. farm-visits) and through a local shop in *Bauskas*.

Arnolds' activities also include farming on neighbourhood land and co-operation with the *Latvian rural advisory and training centre* in advising students and young farmers.

Vaidelotes is part of a co-operative of 28 people and received SAPARD support for modernisation of farming equipment



*Vaidelotes farm's fields*  
© ENRD CP

## Annexes

### Annex I – WS 1: Rolling out NRN Action Plans

NRNs<sup>1</sup> addressing the 10 themes selected by the Rural Networks' Steering Group:

	AT	BE (FI)	BG	CZ	DE	EE	FI	FR	GR	HR	LT	LV	NL	PL	PT	SI	SK	SE	UK (En)	UK (Sc)	UK (W)	Total
1. Simplification			✓	✓			✓			✓		✓								✓		6
2. Advisory services, knowledge transfer & innovation	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	17
3. Local food & small farms		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	13
4. Pillar 1 & 2						✓	✓												✓	✓	✓	5
5. Demography and social inclusion					✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	11
6. Multi-funding			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	14
7. Green economy							✓	✓					✓						✓		✓	5
8. Starting up NRNs		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		11
9. Evaluating networking		✓		✓			✓	✓				✓			✓				✓	✓		8
10 Climate change							✓	✓					✓					✓			✓	5

<sup>1</sup> The Networks that are not listed here were either still in the process of deciding on priorities or were not present at the meeting.

## Annex II - Exchange Forum 1 on 'Operational Groups'

See page 8 of the main report for a summary of the main findings and key messages from this Exchange Corner. The session was based around three rounds of discussion following interventions from NRN representatives around their work on innovation, EIP-AGRI and the Operational Groups:

Interventions
<p>Custodia Maria Correia, <b>Portugal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">“Portuguese Rural Network and activities for EIP AGRI”</a></li> </ul>
<p>Agata Markuszewska, <b>Poland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">“NRN and EIP in Poland”</a></li> </ul>
<p>Jan Swoboda, <b>Germany</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">“German Rural Network Unit (DVS) and activities for EIP AGRI”</a></li> </ul>

Participants focused on the following key questions in their discussions:

- Does your RDP include support for EIP-AGRI Operational Groups?
- What themes (if any defined) will be covered by EIP-AGRI Operational Groups?
- What are the main challenges you are facing concerning EIP-AGRI Operational Groups?
- Is the support of EIP-AGRI Operational Groups one of the priorities for your network in the coming year?
- What are your support needs from the EIP-AGRI Service Point?

## Annex III - Exchange Forum 2 on 'NRN Communication Plans'

See page 9 of the main report for a summary of the main findings and key messages. More details of the discussion are provided below.

Interventions
Round 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joelle Silberstein, <b>France</b> &amp;</li> <li>• Stephen Jackson, <b>Wales (UK)</b></li> </ul>
Round 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xavier Delmont, <b>Belgium-Wallonia</b> &amp;</li> <li>• Ivan Ciprijan, <b>Croatia</b></li> </ul>
Round 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mariam Sanchez <b>Spain</b> &amp;</li> <li>• Custodia Maria Correia, <b>Portugal</b>"</li> </ul>
Round 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christopher Bathgate, <b>Scotland (UK)</b>"</li> </ul>

### NRN Communication Plan challenges/objectives

- 1. Coordinating communications plans/strategies between different levels:**
  - between regional and national levels (especially in MS with regional RDPs e.g. FR, ES); and
  - between MA Info and Communication Strategies on the RDPs and NRN Comms. Plans
- 2. Raising awareness of the NRN itself**
  - reaching out to stakeholders is key to promoting engagement in the NRN
  - lots of work to do to raise understanding of potential of NRNs in rural development
- 3. Clarifying consistent NRN messages**
  - what are the NRN's key messages?
  - maintaining control over strong NRN messages amongst the broader RDP messages (especially when NSU is based in the Ministry)
  - defining a clear NRN identity including visual identity for Comms products
  - Also supporting consistency e.g. between LAGs
- 4. Making the most of the potential of social media**
  - time, resources and expertise to develop web presence
  - websites as a first port of call for interested stakeholders
  - realistic expectations from social media channels
- 5. Reaching diverse stakeholders taking account of:**
  - different levels of internet access
  - different information needs
  - different levels of potential engagement
- 6. Using communications to build an NRN community**

- not just sending information out from the NSU, but enabling exchange and information flows between stakeholders within the NRN
- 7. Reaching a broader interested public**
  - including urban populations
  - accessing mainstream media
- 8. Access mainstream media communications to build an NRN community**
  - not just sending information out from the NSU, but enabling exchange and information flows between stakeholders within the NRN
- 9. Measuring and monitoring communications actions**
  - how to harvest and use web-based monitoring data (site visits, downloads etc.)
  - how to assess impact, increased awareness, changes in attitude etc?

### Tips and ideas

- 1. Access specific communications expertise**
  - e.g. France is using Communications consultants to develop its NRN Comms Plan following a three-month study
  - e.g. NSU in Wales has used Comms expertise within Ministry to work on NRN Comms Plan
- 2. Dedicate resources and involve stakeholders** to Comms planning
  - e.g. Wallonia (Belgium) has had a Working Group on Comms involving stakeholders
  - e.g. Scotland has a communications working group for LAGs
- 3. Conduct a detailed stakeholder mapping** so you know who you are trying to reach and why
  - e.g. Wales has conducted user profiling
- 4. Create networks and exchange between Comms professionals**
  - e.g. Spain wanting to create a network of RD Comms people from the regions
  - Possibility of sharing Comms tools between different MS (e.g. news, videos, guidance, explanatory texts etc.)? Allocate resources to translating materials produced by others?
- 5. Make the most of website analytics to monitor outreach**
  - e.g. Scotland brought in a private company to train them on using analytics data from their website etc. Realised they were not making the most of the available info
- 6. Work with local media**
  - e.g. Wallonia (Belgium) works with local TV on programmes on rural people and projects
- 7. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)** to build capacity/expertise
- 8. A very strong representative of NRN interests in meetings within the MA**

### Support needs

- 1. Exchange platform** – private and for NRN/NSU Comms people only for open exchange
- 2. European guidance/workshop on use of website analytics**
3. Explore usefulness of **Europe-wide information campaign** on key topics with common objectives and interests between the NRNs?
- 4. Support meeting diverse language needs**

## Annex IV - Exchange Forum 3 on 'Communicating the RDPs'

See page 9 of the main report for a summary of the main findings and key messages. More details of the individual NRN examples presented are provided below

<u><a href="#">Coordination of communication activities with NGOs when launching the 2014-2020 RDP</a></u>	Irena Štávová	CZ
<p>To coordinate the communication campaign for the launch of the 2014-2020 RDP and ensure the necessary information was provided to stakeholders, the Czech Ministry of Agriculture consulted a range of stakeholder organisations through a survey in November 2014.</p> <p>This allowed to assess information needs and ensure synergies were created with NGOs' planned communication activities, also exploring possible multiplier effects. Results from the survey highlighted information gaps and confirmed the usefulness of providing - even partial - information to potential beneficiaries about the new RDPs, given the programme's current negotiation stage.</p> <p>Another lesson drawn from the exercise was the importance to ensure direct input from the Managing Authority's staff in communication activities (such as workshops or seminars) for farmers run by NGOs. This should be coupled with specific NRN activities to ensure the early exchange of good practices. Overall this coordination effort was very well received by RDP's stakeholders and above all ensured an effective use of resources (including time) for both providers and recipients.</p>		
<u><a href="#">Information sessions on the new CAP</a></u>	Ariane Van Den Steen	BE-Flanders
<p>From September 2014 to March 2015, the Flemish NSU ran ten information sessions all over Flanders to meet farmers and inform them about the new CAP. The meetings mostly focused on Pillar 1-related topics such as direct payments, greening, coupled payments etc. but they were also the occasion to address aspects related to support to farm investment and agri-environment measures, thus communicating about possibilities offered by the regional RDP.</p> <p>Coupling such aspects proved to be very effective in communicating to farmers. Moreover, such a campaign – that reached over 1 500 people overall – provided an excellent platform for the NSU to get the Network and its activities known to an important section of rural development stakeholders. The outreach of this activity was amplified by complementary communication activities such as information on the website, distribution of a newsletter (that has over 20 000 subscriptions) and dedicated brochures on RDP measures.</p>		
<u><a href="#">Travelling exhibitions</a></u>	Reve Lambur	EE
<p>The Estonian NRN created a format of travelling exhibitions to communicate RDP activities and outcomes to a broader concerned public. The campaign was based on a series of eye-catching roll-ups providing information on project examples and typical RDP activities (focusing on LEADER, village development, young farmers). The communication campaign involved partner organisations to ensure a wider outreach. This was also possible thanks to the flexibility offered by the communication tool that allowed to be displayed in potentially any suitable location (e.g. shopping centres) and provide essential information accompanied by eye-catching pictures.</p> <p>As a part of this communication effort, farm visits open to all countries and interested rural development stakeholders (MAs, NRNs, LAGs etc) are being organised around Estonia.</p>		



<b><i>'Liveable' campaign – Communicating Austria's new Rural Development Programme</i></b>	<b><i>Veronika Madner</i></b>	<b><i>AT</i></b>
<p>An award winner at the 2014 CAP Communications Awards ceremony, 'Liveable' is a nationwide communication campaign that uses creative visuals in a well-thought-out strategy with clearly defined objectives and target groups. The campaign involved the combined use of national media and social media channels, information tours and a number of events across the country. It was based on individual testimonies which provided a human and tangible face to the CAP, successfully explaining the impact of the new RDPs.</p> <p>Communications addressed both stakeholders and the wider public with the specific intent to reach potential applicants and provide them with details of the new programme. Figures about events' attendance, website visits and social media interactions demonstrate the national success of the campaign that was also confirmed by the results of a targeted survey.</p>		
<b><i><u>Campaign to launch the new RDP</u></i></b>	<b><i>Joel Karlsson</i></b>	<b><i>FI</i></b>
<p>Pooling from the expertise of a professional advertising agency, the Finnish NRN has planned a rounded communication campaign to mark the launch of the new RDP. The campaign focuses on the coordinated used of e-communication channels, more classical printed communication tools and an intense events plan. The core of the strategy is an effective branding coupling a compelling message and a fresh visual identify that invite the audience to 'update' their country side.</p> <p>The campaign addresses both potential beneficiaries and the wider public stimulating recipients to 'get to know more' about the possibilities offered by the national programme. An intensive planning for the second half of 2015 characterises the Finnish campaign with a focus on fully exploiting synergies with national and local communicators (TV, radio, local authorities and LAGs). As part of the strategy, a new coherent visual identity for LEADER is also envisaged.</p>		
<b><i><u>'Grass is greener than gold' campaign – communicating the RDP role and effects</u></i></b>	<b><i>Patrik Ohlsson</i></b>	<b><i>SE</i></b>
<p>The Swedish example focused on the communication effort undertaken by the NRN thematic group on 'green industries'. In this respect it differs from the previous cases for being an example of bottom-up communication relying on the active involvement of stakeholders (i.e. the members of the thematic group). Both communication needs and messages were generated by the findings of the thematic group itself, which related to the change of farmland use and the benefits of green industries. The communication activities initiated by the group addressed the broader public as well as local and national policy makers.</p> <p>The campaign particularly focused on 'hands-on' experience and direct contact with the target audience through: field visits in different regions to show the effects of the RDP; seminars and meeting with members of the Parliament. Published materials, such as flyers and newspaper articles complemented the communication efforts.</p> <p>The effectiveness of such activities was confirmed by the wide participation at visits and events and by the number of individual website visits. Beyond these immediate outcomes, the most important result was creating a 'common ground' among the full range of agri-food chain stakeholders (policy makers, NGOs, land managers etc.) providing the basis for further common initiatives.</p>		

The following summarises the main discussion points and key factors ensuring the success of communication activities

### Methods to communicate the RDPs with particular focus on their launch

- Look for *strategic combination of communication activities*, for example combining a wide-scale launching event to reach broader audience and follow-up with more targeted communications through website and newsletter.
- Be very clear on the content of the communication *avoiding possible overlaps* with parallel communication activities dealing with the past programme.
- *Joint CAP Pillar 1 - Pillar 2 communications* can bring a number of benefits: a more effective engagement and information provision to farmers; reaching a wider audience of stakeholders; generating budget savings.

### Sustaining engagement with rural development stakeholders

- Making information and resources available through *complementary e-communication channels and tools* (e.g. web-conferences material) have proved to work well in engaging with the stakeholders' audience, for example in LV and Flanders.
- *Mass media and specialised press* (e.g. farming magazines) can increase the outreach and sustainability of communication activities. In BG for example, communication campaigns made extensive use of TV channels
- The *direct involvement of stakeholders* in communication activities, for example through direct collaboration with professional organisations, will increment synergies, avoid conflicting messages and provide the ground for a more thorough assessment of real information needs.
- Consider exploiting the direct involvement of stakeholders (e.g. through 'stakeholder committees' or working groups) as a vehicle of communication, especially in *reaching farmers*.
- If communications are carried out by stakeholders directly (as in the SE example) take care of *establishing feedback mechanisms* towards policy makers and creating the connection with RDP implementation aspects.

### Reaching a broader concerned public

- Think about *effective 'branding'* of communications (like in the examples offered by AT and FI) to ensure consistency of intention and message among different activities and institutional levels (national – local).
- Assess the added value brought by the *general communication campaign* and the possible use of external communications professionals (FI) vs. internal communication departments (AT).
- *Clarify the position of the NRN* in the communication strategy: is the Network's task to reach the broader public or should it focus on the 'network of communicators' (multipliers)?

## Annex V – WS 2: NRN Self-assessment: how to measure success

### Proposed NRN self-assessment statistics 2014-2020

#### Working document

#### Communication

1. Number of network events organised		Local/regional	National	EU	with focus on LEADER/LAGs	with focus on innovation	with focus on M&E	with focus on farming/forestry/agriculture	with focus on environment	Other
	Year									
2. Number of people participating at events		Local/regional events	National events	EU-level	with focus on LEADER/LAGs	with focus on innovation	with focus on M&E	with focus on farming/forestry/agriculture	with focus on environment	Other
	Year									
3. Number of communication tools developed		Infoclines	Webpages	Email groups	Publications	Social media channels	Videos	Other	Other	Other
	Year									
4. Number of people reached through tools		Infoclines	Webpages	Email groups	Publications	Social media channels	Videos	Other	Other	Other
	Year									

Separate indicators for websites/ social media?

#### Collection of good practices

5. Number of examples collected & disseminated		Through website	Through publications	Through events	With focus on LEADER	With focus on innovation	With focus on farming / forestry / agriculture	With focus on environment	Other	Other
	Year									

#### Exchange of relevant good practice and know-how

6. Number of thematic exchange platforms established		Thematic groups	On-line forums	Other	With focus on LEADER/CLLD/LAGs	With focus on innovation	With focus on farming / forestry /	With focus on environment	Other

							agriculture			
	<i>Year</i>									
<b>7. Number of people involved in exchange platforms</b>		Thematic groups	On-line forums	Other	Out of which MA/PA	Out of which LAG reps	Out of which innovation support services	Out of which stakeholder reps	Other	
	<i>Year</i>									
<b>8. Number of ENRD CP activities in which the NRN has participated</b>		No of thematic groups	No of workshops / training	No of seminars/ conferences/ meetings	No of case studies shared	No of information items/ articles for ENRD publications				
	<i>Year</i>									

#### Capacity-building & training

<b>9. Number of training activities</b>		Training / workshops	Training documents / guidelines developed	Study visits	Other	With focus on LEADER/ CLLD/LAGs	With focus on innovation	With focus on farming/ forestry/ agriculture	With focus on environment	Other
	<i>Year</i>									
<b>10. Number of people participating in training activities organised</b>		Training / workshops	Training documents / guidelines developed	Study visits	Other	Out of which MA/PA	Out of which LAG repres.	Out of which innovation support services	Out of which stakeholder repres.	Other
	<i>Year</i>									

#### Support for cooperation initiatives & partner-search

<b>11. Number of cooperation initiatives &amp; partner-search offers</b>		Number of cooperation events	No of people involved in cooperation events	Partnership offers collected and shared	Number of cooperation inquiries answered					
	<i>Year</i>									

Suggested indicator	Comments by participants
1. Number of network events organised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus: broad enough to make it comparable, but has to be more specific</li> </ul>
2. Number of people participating at events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is useful to know who are first-time and who are regular participants</li> </ul>
3. Number of communication tools developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not relevant?</li> <li>Sometimes updates are made to the website continuously – but it is not a new ‘webpage’ as such</li> </ul>
4. Number of people reached through tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult to define the number of people reached by publications</li> <li>Separate infoline is not always in place – ‘what is infoline?’</li> <li>Rather “potential” for publications and email groups</li> </ul>
5. Number of examples collected & disseminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of examples collected is not that important, their quality is</li> </ul>
6. Number of thematic exchange platforms established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Categories difficult to separate out</li> <li>Difficult to be specific at the level of categories</li> </ul>
7. Number of people involved in exchange platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to measure?</li> </ul>
8. Number of ENRD CP activities in which the NRN has participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include also EIP</li> </ul>
9. Number of training activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of training days is more relevant</li> </ul>
10. Number of people participating in training activities organised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific comments</li> </ul>
11. Number of co-operation initiatives & partner-search offers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to define what we mean by ‘co-operation’</li> <li>Number of co-operation inquiries answered: responded to, but not necessarily answered</li> </ul>

*Additional indicators & further suggestions:*

- There are too **many categories** within indicators (artificial)
- Main use of output indicators is that they are comparable over time
- Simplistic output indicators are needed** for quantitative measurements
- As far as events are concerned, feedback questionnaires are useful
- Assessing quality (results and impact is important) - The focus should be on **priorities**

## Annex VI – Open Space Discussions

The information below provides more details on the open space discussions. The key messages for each discussion are set out on pages 12-15 of the main report.

### 1. Ethnic and social inclusion

Participants: Sweden, Bulgaria, Germany, Lithuania.

Different Member States are especially concerned with the integration of specific target groups and the situation is quite different for each.

For example, certain countries like Sweden, Germany, Greece and Italy are accepting large numbers of asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East. Sweden has accepted 90 000 asylum seekers this year - the equivalent of a medium-sized town. These people are nearly all sent to rural areas which have empty buildings that are funded to act as reception centres. There are two stages to the process of getting entry: firstly the asylum process which takes roughly a year and which mostly takes place in rural areas. About 70% of asylum seekers get through this stage and are allowed to stay. At this point they go through the establishment process where they receive assistance for finding employment and housing. Only about 10% of those that are allowed to stay in the country remain in the rural areas where they arrived – the rest move to the city. The aim of the Swedish NRN Thematic Group on this subject is to increase this to 30 % and ensure that new entrants contribute to the maintaining the basic services and jobs in many rural areas that are losing population. This means a series of steps to integrate them into rural society. The Swedish Thematic Group works with NGOs and many organisations that are involved with the social fund as well as the EAFRD – especially Leader and the municipalities through the measures for basic services and village renewal

The Bulgarian NRN mentioned that they were particularly concerned with the issue of how CLLD can deal with Roma groups. The Commission has insisted that action be taken to ensure that Roma are taken into account more fully in LDS. In this context there is an interesting EU wide initiative led by an EU Roma NGO called ERGO which recently brought together representatives of the World Bank, EU Desk Officers and Managing Authorities and Roma NGOs from Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia to examine how CLLD can be better adapted to support Roma Communities.

In Lithuania, the problem was more to do with the local population that was left behind when some of the more skilled and educated young people left. There are problems of destructured families and marginalised youth that can be very difficult to solve and can erupt in resentment to badly needed newcomers.

The Swedish Thematic group was working on strategies for empowering excluded groups. The EAFRD has some powerful but under-used instruments at its disposal for dealing with some of these issues but it is also essential to co-operate with other funds.

## 2. Knowledge transfer, innovation and other tools

Participants around the table were NSU representatives from HR, BE-Wallonia, AT, LV, PT and GR

Discussions focused on the following question: *How to share knowledge among farmers and what tools can NRNs use to: 1) identify learning; 2) ensure dissemination; 3) record and retain outcomes for future use?*

Participants were engaged in the identification of suitable tools to be used by NRNs in support of knowledge transfer. These tools were assessed against opportunities and possible shortcomings and a list was drawn as main output of the open space session (see table below).

It was suggested that the ENRD could help NRNs by mapping out experiences and tools used across MS and share ideas.

KT tool / channel	Strengths	Weaknesses
Site / study visits	Face-to-face learning/ practical learning experience.	One-off activities requiring follow-up. Need to be brought into a wider, longer-term process (e.g. as part of a seminar or a working group)
Monitor farms (UK)	Strong peer-learning component, continuity	Small number of people involved
Website	Wide outreach	Not used by everyone
Video testimonials	Wide outreach, easy-to-understand messages, very quick transfer	Require more financial resources
Stakeholders networks (professional organisations, chambers of agriculture, advisors) as partners and multipliers.	Based on established and already performing networks.	Often fragmented organisations, vested interests. Relations between NRNs and professional organisations don't work well in every country; this might depend, for example, from a conservative approach of the organisations; there's margin for improving co-operation in this respect.
Seminars	Focused, can be used to create the 'spark' and initiate knowledge transfer processes	One-off events, not effective if not followed up properly. Limited outreach

Interest groups (DK, LV)	Focused, can ensure continuity, allow ongoing discussions, create a sense of 'community'	Needs initiators and support as appropriate (e.g. from advisors).
Working groups	Strong working relationship, can allow in-depth discussions	Need to scale-up the outcomes

As far as the **involvement and networking of advisors and their organisations** is concerned, a number of examples, reflection points and conclusions emerged during the discussion:

- As recognised by the conclusion of the FP7 project PRO-AKIS there has been a general tendency across EU towards the privatisation of farm advisory services. This was also recognised by participants (e.g. Wallonia). Private advisory organisations, on the other hand, are often very different, dispersed or characterised by strong sectoral interest.
- Where do NRNs position themselves in this picture? Both previous conditions open up new challenges and opportunities. Participants suggested that NRNs could work harder to link advisors and – to a certain extent – fill the gap left by public advisory service.
- The task for NRNs is not so much the provision of advice but to use networking tools to share learning, promote the RDPs and, for example, establish local-level co-operation among advisors.
- Seminars (in the experience of Wallonia) or webinars (for example in England, where farm advisory services have organised them under a framework contract from DEFRA) were mentioned as good networking tools for involving advisors.
- Similar in their nature to EIP Operational Groups, 'interest groups' were reported to exist in Latvia (but also in Ireland and Denmark). These are usually born upon initial input from advisors but later on external expert advice is requested only if needed as the group become 'self-sustainable'. In this respect NRN were indicated to have a potential role in facilitating the process e.g. by identifying and inviting experts.



### 3. Tailoring NRN support to multi funds LDS

This was a relatively small but committed group consisting of NSUs from UK (Scotland), DE, SI (later DE was replaced by LV).

These Networks are already carrying out a number of activities to support CLLD, for instance in Slovenia the NSU organised a seminar for all interested CLLD stakeholders (whether EAFRD, EMFF or ERDF, although EMFF authorities are not yet ready to discuss this); there are plans for a Working Group (it is not clear if it will only involve Leader or the whole CLLD) and an association (to be financed from the NRN). In DE the NSU organised a seminar as early as 2013 to inform potential stakeholders (including administration of other Funds) about CLLD. One of the issues that need to be addressed is a common logo for Leader/CLLD for communication purposes.

There are already many examples where rural networks finance activities related to other Funds, e.g. in Latvia the same NSU manages both rural and fisheries network (this was already the case in 2007-2013) and even the same staff members are involved in both types of activities. However, just to be on the safe side from the audit point of view, some NSUs may ask this question explicitly (if an answer is received, it could perhaps be made into an FAQ).

### 4. Social Media positioning: how to do it

Participants: Poland, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Sweden.

- There is a true lack of information.
- How to be on social media? Personal or organisation accounts.

### 5. Results and self-assessment, qualitative approaches

It is important to focus on results, not just outputs.

Outputs have to be useful and consistent.

The database employed by Finland may be worth exploring further, there are also other examples.

NRNs can have a further level of detail below that of the common shared indicators for their own purposes.

The priority is developing the approach to qualitative assessment, this is at the core for assessing NRN performance (outputs relate more to activity. There has been little follow up on NRN activities thus far.

Achieving reliability and comparability are priority considerations.

Concepts of additionality and attribution are also critical in this.

Results tend to be activity specific but if indicators and tools are well developed then these may nevertheless be comparable.

Methods used are therefore critical in their selection and/or design. Timing is also a key consideration. We also need to consider the level and reliability of the responses sought e.g. a census approach is much more reliable than a survey, qualitative effects can take time to emerge or be demonstrated etc.

NSUs would benefit from understanding the pros and cons of different tools and approaches.

It is important to adopt a rolling approach so that valuable information is not lost.

The group agreed the benefits and importance of the discipline of setting measurable objectives and then using them to guide activity and achievement.

## 6. NSU involvement in rural innovation: EIP or wider?

Representatives from six NSUs participated in this Open Space table, some of them not all the time: they were from UK Scotland, Portugal, Netherlands, Lithuania and Latvia, besides the hosting UK England.

Different approaches were discussed on the table. While in Scotland, the NSU will deal with innovation framed within EIP, in England the NSU will work in phases (start with OG and EIP and support broader innovation later) and the NSU in Portugal will support wide innovation while having as main target (priority) the EIP: in this context and at this initial phase, one of the most relevant roles for this NSU is to hold informal meetings to inform / support people interested in the EIP.

Limited resources (available staff and budget) is one of the main factors affecting such approaches. In order to deal with this, a Working Group has been established in Lithuania, dedicated to Innovation: it has approximately 30 members, representing all relevant sectors. In this case, the role of the NSU is mainly related to the dissemination of information / knowledge.

Other NSUs have identified privileged partners to co-operate / collaborate. For example, the NSU in the Netherlands will focus in supporting farmers to start OGs and to get support from the RDP, in collaboration with the Provinces. The NSU from Portugal told that they are working together with another network named “Rede Inovar”, which they consider to be one of their key partners for innovation.

Other relevant partners were referred, like LAGs: for Latvia they will be key actors in this context; while Lithuania has made a priority for LAGs to include innovation in their action plans. The Portuguese NSU has identified advisors as key actors to disseminate the results of OGs, since they work close to farmers.

A couple of suggestions to all NSUs were made:

- Share Action Plans - NSUs and EIP structures;
- Share selection criteria for projects and definition of innovation.

## 7. Thematic co-operation between OGs, innovation databases, knowledge management

Participants to the discussion: HR, NL, ENRD CP

- Difficulties to coordinate operations under different calls under different measures and sub-measures (timing, evaluation, result dissemination)
- Operational groups should be able to connect thematically, there is scope for the NRNs in the respective countries to bring this information at European level, and for the EIP SP and ENRD CP to facilitate this processes
- The module that EIP SP is preparing (following the annex of the guidelines of the co-operation measure) doesn't expect OGs to report about results, but if there are separate EIP networks

or NSUs with a strong fostering innovation capacity, it could be useful to connect databases (despite language barriers)

A mapping on how each NRN is dealing with EIP would be very useful to work further on this subject

## 8. NSU and EIP ongoing activities

Participants: Estonia, Poland, Spain, Finland

## 9. Evaluating communications impact

- There should be value in having a communications group on the MyENRD space open only to NSU/NRN representatives (LinkedIn group would remain open to a wider group). This group could discuss issues of self-assessment and monitoring.
- Chris Bathgate from the Scottish NSU will forward information on a service they used to improve their understanding and use of analytics.
- Monitoring outreach to a broader public is even harder and requires even more resources than monitoring impact on core stakeholder groups. Proxy measurements may have to be used to provide some idea of impact.

## 10. Meeting language needs better

- What gets translated tends to be path-dependant, mechanistic or *ad hoc* (not evidence based)
- Need to balance standardised vs 100% customised (management and time constraints)
- From an EU perspective there are needs and elements of equality of access (i.e. all languages not just number of people who read them).
- 3 main types of potentially multi-lingual information flow:
  - EIP/ENRD → NRN
  - NRN → NRN
  - NRN → EIP/ENRD

## Annex VII – Participants Feedback

Participants' feedback survey  
**RESULTS**  
2nd NRN-Meeting  
12-13 May Jurmala - Latvia



excellent = 1    good = 2    fair = 3    poor = 4

Number of respondents: **31** (number of participants: 63)

	1	2	3	4
<b>Overall organisation of the event</b>				
<b>How would you rate the organisation of the event?</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>
Communication about the event and prior-planning	13	12	7	
Suitability of the venue	19	10		
Organisation of event whilst in Jūrmala	24	4		
Opportunities for networking and making new contacts during the event	25	4		
'Networking Dinner' on the evening of the 12 May	14	14	1	
'Study Tour' on the afternoon of the 13 May	2	1		

How would you rate the content of Day 1?				12 MAY
<b>Presentation of NRN state-of-play</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>
Relevance and quality of the information presented	16	14		
<b>NRN Intervention Logic &amp; Action Planning at this stage of the Programming</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>
Relevance and quality of the information presented	18	12		
The value of the discussion	11	17	2	
The usefulness of the outcomes	12	15	3	
<b>Workshop 1: Rolling out NRN Action Plans to contribute to the quality of RDP implementation</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>
The relevance of the topics selected for the workshop	14	15	1	
The value of the discussion during the workshop (e.g. gaining new ideas, hearing about practices of others, etc.)	10	15	6	
The usefulness of the outcomes of the workshop for your work	10	15	5	
<b>Exchange fora on core elements of NRN tasks and Action Plans - focus on Communication and EIP Operational Groups</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>
CORNER 1 - Operational groups Relevance and quality of the exchange forum	8	8	1	

CORNER 2 - Communication Plans Relevance and quality of the exchange forum	6	4	1	
CORNER 3 – Communicating the RDPs Relevance and quality of the exchange forum	12	4		
<b>Workshop 2: NRN Self-assessment: how to measure success</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>
The relevance of the topics selected for the workshop	14	8	7	
The value of the discussion during the workshop (e.g. gaining new ideas, hearing about practices of others, etc.)	9	11	8	1
The usefulness of the outcomes of the workshop for your work	6	13	8	2
<b>Content of Day 2</b>				<b>13 MAY</b>
<b>Open space interactive session: Specific issues related to NRN action plans</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>
The relevance of the topics	21	8	2	
The value of the discussions for your work	21	8	2	
<b>Planned European Rural Networks' activities most relevant to NRNs</b>	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>fair</b>	<b>poor</b>
Relevance and quality of the information presented	15	9		
The value of the discussion	10	11	1	
The usefulness of the outcomes	12	9	2	

Comments
Very positive to get/to learn other network experiences (presentations of cases)
Too many subjects and not enough time
Participants should prepare in advance or less topics and more time to discuss
Send the documentation before the meeting
Need more synergies between ENRD and EIP
Intensity of Day 1 was a bit too much
Self-Assessment Session could have been a parallel session of Exchange Fora
Great programme, good discussion and tools, good to have external participants to these events.
Lots of useful info, ideas, contacts
Thanks to own Latvian hosts for great hospitality!
Good to have shared ENRD CP/EIP SP presentations with NRN contributions
Main focus will be on CLLD/LEADER, I understand but feel like we could return to demonstrating impacts of NRNs and ENRD/Rural Assembly... (including self-assessment & evaluation)
Look forward to more focus groups/discussions etc as Paul Soto mentioned
Too much food at the Networking Dinner!
Study tour: lot of travelling!
Thanks it was very useful and well organised!
WS2: time was too short to discuss
Corners 2 & 3 should be in different rooms, difficult to follow!
Could you send pictures of the WS-outcome documents?
Final agenda should be sent before the meeting, there were very important changes from the first draft
Good to have as much as possible information about other NSUs and about their activities
I very liked Corner 3 and short presentations in plenary
Self-assessment is a tool to optimise NRN work and very specific
ENRD aim seems to be a kind of NRN programme evaluation
I didn't receive a programme in advance so I couldn't adjust my flight to the schedule

There is need for something that boosts the energy in the room every now and then (not meaning coffee)
The contact with the GEs is missing, those people are not presented at all and the contact with them is impossible. Not well presented what their real role is and what is expected from them. Maybe more involvement in the process is needed and more presence in the network? What is their contribution to the work of the network? How do they support their geographical area?
Highly appreciate participation of the EIP people, it was really valuable.
<b>Suggestions for main topics you would like to cover during the next NRN meeting</b>
How to communicate inside/with the MA
Highlighting the EU Support (Annex III of 808/2014 regulation)
Continue with organising NRN meetings with EIP SP!
Engagement of NRN members, raising their motivation to take part actively
Mapping of the funding available for rural areas
Self-assessment of LAGs methodology & best practice in MS
EIP (Operational Groups)
Audit (controls aspects of NRN)
Communication with broader public
Exchange innovations---- like-TED-conference
Mapping
Evaluations



