

**ENRD Seminar on
Stakeholder Involvement**

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**Many ways for stakeholders
to get involved in policy
formulation and implementation**

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Some preliminary clarifications

- Participation of stakeholders in **projects** is different from participation in **policy formulation and implementation**:
 - **Role of representation is different**
 - **Formal channels are different**
 - **Political sensitiveness is different**
- **This has implications for NRNs**
 - **A preliminary mobilizing role in formal consultations?**
 - **Contribute to give “voice” to those who don’t have it?**
 - **Facilitating exchanges between similar and different types of rural stakeholders?**

*This is a **new area of activity for networking**: needs reflection, awareness of institutional contexts, coordination*

Institutional Partnerships...

- Intervene in the formulation and implementation of rural policy
- They are **required to consult stakeholders** in all phases of programming:
 - ✓ Partnership agreement (ESI Funds)
 - ✓ RDPs with EAFRD funds
 - ✓ Monitoring Committees
 - ✓ Evaluations

The rationale: formal stakeholder consultations are meant to provide legitimacy to the policy, all voices heard

.... and entry points for public and private stakeholders

- Formal consultations are good opportunities **to influence policymaking**, confront different arguments, negotiate
- Representation regards the **general interest** addressed by the policy: **it needs to be discussed and organized**
 - Between stakeholders with common interest and different interests
- In the **formulation of RDPS**, consultations for **strategies, funding allocation, measures** (now an almost completed phase)
- In the **implementation** of RDPs, mainly in Monitoring Committees **for changes in the programme, delivery procedures, compliance, feedbacks** to MAs (ongoing phase calling for immediate attention)
 - NRNs could play a role in their preparation: gathering and diffusing information, helping to identify issues, actors with weak voices, creating discussion groups
- In **evaluations**

Stakeholder participation takes many different ways:

- Types of actors represented in the different MS have quite diverse configurations
- Institutional contexts are quite specific to each country
- The level of empowerment of stakeholders is influenced by previous forms of organization of interests (farming, environment, tourism, services..)
- The articulation of positions and opinions may be prepared, discussed and negotiated beforehand or not, capacities vary
- Frequency of exchanges and trust between stakeholders and public authorities influence the quality of participation

The mix of these factors explains the diversity of situations, which are little known in their functioning, no one “way” fits all

Some consultation practices work quite well: The example of Ireland

- Draft RDP proposal inviting submissions by rural stakeholders and civil society as early as 2012: received 90 contributions from interested parties
- Results included in SWOT analysis and choice of priorities
- Submissions became an input to the ex-ante evaluators for their consideration and assessment
- Second phase of consultation (mid-July 2013) was built on results from the first round, inviting 80 stakeholders at a workshop, with breakout groups for each priority, contributing improvements and leading to amendments
- In parallel, bilateral meetings with other interested stakeholders (Government departments, NGOs)
- Third phase (2014) for the design of measures
- Publication of results of consultations and bilateral meets
- Results influenced Partnership Agreement and RDP

Lessons from the Irish example

- Start early
- Split up consultation tasks for each stage of programming: priorities, measures, delivery procedures
- Open to all interested parties
- Mix of participatory approaches: good information, consultation papers, meetings, priority/measure sub-groups,
- Publication of all submissions and decisions
- Create opportunities for an exchange of different opinions
- Capacity to listen, adapt, compromise, manage conflict
- What role for NRN? (not mentioned)

Effective influence on preparation of the RDP empowers stakeholders, with a cumulative effect, enhancing further participation

What does not work

- Selecting some stakeholders and ignoring others
- Lack of adequate prior information, no preparatory work before consultations
- Real decisions taken outside of consultations, making them time-consuming formalities, not really influencing policymaking, discouraging stakeholders
- Lack of cooperation between the institutional partnership and stakeholders
- Weak representation capacity, no clear mandates, no feedbacks
- Weak links between different stakeholders

Can networking help? Some possible ways

- In capacity building
- Contributing to the work necessary prior to and after consultations and monitoring committees
- Supporting rural actors to translate needs into policy messages, on the content of measures, on delivery mechanisms
- Using communication channels to attract media support, diffusing information
- Providing opportunities for exchanges of practice, dialogue between farmers and other rural stakeholders,
- Facilitating the achievement of shared perspectives, discussing pros and cons of alternative priorities

*Improving involvement requires **understanding the functioning of national-regional institutional contexts**, that some actors are better organized than others. NRNs could fill such gaps, considering all types of actors (new task, different than in Leader)*

Better involvement through networking

- Stakeholder participation in policies requires a **coordination between MAs and NRNs, mutually supportive of each other**
- Improved stakeholder participation results from a **mix of formal and informal exchanges**, both are necessary, NRNs may have a role to play in both
- **Diversity** in the configuration of stakeholders and institutional contexts implies that **influencing policymaking needs to be adapted**
- ENRD could facilitate exchanges of practice, reporting and mapping of EU situation and progress, approaches, best and bad practices, better identification of rural stakeholders

Thanks for your attention