

# ENRD Workshop on Rural Networks' Self-assessment

19 October 2015, Brussels



## I. Ensuring appropriate monitoring and assessment of ENRD and EIP activities – the role of the Assembly and Steering Group

### 1.1 Objectives of the session

This session focused on implementing the monitoring and assessment mandate and roles which the Commission Implementing Decision (2014/825/EU) gives to the Rural Networks' Assembly (Article 3d) and Steering Group (Article 8c). Respectively, these are:

- To ensure appropriate monitoring and assessment of the activities of the ENRD and of the EIP-AGRI networks with regard to the objectives, set-up and tasks listed in Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013<sup>1</sup>.
- To assess on an ongoing basis the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities of the ENRD and the EIP-AGRI networks.

There were two main objectives of the workshop:

- To develop a common understanding of the purpose and role of the **Rural Networks' Assembly and Steering Group** in ensuring appropriate ongoing monitoring and assessment of the activities of the ENRD and EIP-AGRI networks.
- To **confirm the necessary elements** to inform a detailed and achievable assessment of the activities of the ENRD and EIP-AGRI networks.

### 1.2 Main outcomes

The main outcomes from the working groups were drawn together within a common reporting framework under four main headings. These headings and the associated main findings are as follows:

What is the **purpose** of Assembly and Steering Group involvement?

- To assess progress towards objectives and results.
- To improve the Network activities.
- To show the results of Networks' activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Articles 52(3) and 53(3)

What is the **scope** of this activity?

- The Rural Networks' tools and activities from the Strategic Framework.
- The benefits / value which this provides to stakeholders, target groups.
- Assessment of the extent to which their needs are met.

How should **the Assembly and Steering Group** be involved?

- The Steering Group prepares the monitoring and assessment proposals, questions etc., the Assembly amends and approves these.
- The Network Support Units focus on their operations and activities.
- The support units provide evidence, analysis, methods, guidance to support the monitoring and assessment processes.

What are the roles and tasks?

- The Assembly should act as the self-assessment champion, a relay through which participation in the activity is promoted.
- Assembly members should prepare material for the Assembly meeting.
- A task force within the Steering Group should be established to develop the approach and framework.
- The outputs from the monitoring and assessment activity should feed into the annual activities of the networks.

### 1.3 Next steps

The findings from the workshop were presented to the Rural Networks' Steering Group meeting on 20 October with a proposal that a monitoring and assessment task force within the Steering Group be formed. This recommendation was adopted with the agreement that a small group be coordinated by the Contact Point to develop initial proposals.

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## II. NRNs' self-assessment

### 2.1 Objectives of the session

The afternoon workshop addressed NRNs' self-assessment, with the aim to:

- Work jointly with NSUs in designing NRNs' self-assessment frameworks, with a specific focus on methods and indicators for results;
- Plan future joint work of networks on NRNs' self-assessment and possible links with NRNs' evaluation.

## 2.2 Main outcomes

The **discussion on 'From outputs towards results'** addressed the need of NSU representatives to work together and exchange about methods and indicators for assessing network results. The session focused on the effects of three types of common networking activities: *events*, *communication tools* and *thematic groups*. The discussion was introduced by NRNs' and ENRD representatives who presented what self-assessment methods they plan to use, and was followed by small-group discussions on existing tools and methods.

The discussion showed that **NRNs are facing common challenges** with regard to assessing (in line with the NRNs' objectives) the wider results of activities. Some have started or are planning to develop relevant tools, e.g. carrying out stakeholder surveys to assess the results of events; or systematic analysis of the outreach of communication tools and larger campaigns. However, there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of identifying and sharing the most suitable methods and tools.

During the final session on **'Conclusions & next steps'** the ENRD Contact Point presented the refined set of Common Network Statistics that will be collected by the CP across Member States. It was stressed that the statistics are developed in such a way as to contribute to the collection of mandatory monitoring indicators. The Evaluation Helpdesk informed participants about the *Guidance on NRN Evaluation* that they are currently developing.

## 2.3 Next steps with regard to NRNs' self-assessment

- The ENRD Contact Point will continue to support NSUs/NRNs on an on-going basis, based on the specific requests received.
- The **tools** identified during the workshop (and later) will be developed further in cooperation with NSUs and will be uploaded under the tools of the **'Network Self-assessment' section of the website**.
- The ENRD CP will circulate the latest version of the **Common Network Statistics for final comments** and will allow around one month for final feedback from NSUs. Following the finalisation of the Common Network Statistics (and definition of indicators), the final CNS will be circulated to all NSUs.
- The CP will consider the possibility of developing a publication on the 'Added value of networking' towards the end of 2016. This will be based on the statistics collected (including visuals and analysis), and short case studies on demonstrating the added value / results of networking.
- The Evaluation Helpdesk will share the draft **Guidance on NRN Evaluation** as soon as possible (this could be possibly presented during one of the future NRN meetings). The first meeting of the NRN Evaluation Taskforce on this subject is expected to take place around January 2016 (but this may be earlier).