



# ENRD

*Connecting Rural Europe*

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## Rural development in the European Union ...

... is part of the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** and it is a **vital policy area: over 56 % of the population in European Union (EU) Member States lives in rural areas, which cover 91 % of the territory.**

The EU has 500 million consumers and they all need a reliable supply of healthy and nutritious food. The CAP has long been a key EU policy area and it continuously evolves to address new challenges, such as climate change, sustainable management of natural resources and keeping the rural economy alive.

Rural development policy for 2007 to 2013 is focused on three objectives. These are:

- improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector;
- improving the environment and the countryside; and

- improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy.

Cutting across these themes, the policy also seeks to involve local communities more strongly in the development of their own areas. Local Action Groups (LAGs) bring together local partners and create and implement development strategies for their communities using the LEADER methodology\*.

Every Member State creates national or regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs), which guide the implementation of rural development policy.

\*The acronym LEADER comes from the French phrase for 'links between actions for developing the rural economy'. The idea is to create strong partnerships and encourage cooperation, which leads to innovation and the best local solutions to local problems.

## The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ...

... is the EU fund that supports the **implementation of the RDPs across the European Union.**

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), which is overseen by the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, provides almost half of the over €200 billion funding made available for RDPs. This approach allows EU co-financing for rural development to focus on the commonly-agreed EU priorities, while leaving sufficient flexibility at Member State and regional level.

You can find examples of different types of rural development activity that received co-finance in the EAFRD projects brochures produced by the ENRD: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eafrd-project-brochures/>





## The European Network for Rural Development ...

... was set up by the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission in 2008 to help improve the implementation of RDPs.

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) does this by generating and sharing knowledge on how rural development policies are working in

practice and how they can be improved, as well as through facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe. The ENRD brings together a range of rural development stakeholders; notably, National Rural Networks (NRNs), Member State authorities, and rural development organisations active at European level.

The ENRD Contact Point supports the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development in running the network and provides the focal point for ENRD activities. The Contact Point is based in Brussels and works on the three main elements of the ENRD strategy, namely:

- policy analysis;
- communication; and
- networking.



## ENRD policy analysis ...

... seeks to improve the implementation of EU rural development policy. This analytical work is designed to:

- increase understanding of how policy is working in practice;
- assess what works well and what can be improved; and
- provide insight to the decision-making process in Member States and at the European level.

The ENRD's analytical work involves:

- working groups which bring experts from different Member States together to share perspectives on topics such as rural finance and EAFRD delivery mechanisms;
- initiatives, together with NRNs, on topics such as forestry and rural entrepreneurship; and
- analysis of how rural development works in practice.



A broad array of topics are analysed, ranging from links between agriculture and the wider rural economy to environmental services, innovation, Community-Led Local Development, social inclusion and youth in rural areas.

The ENRD's policy analysis work can be accessed from the ENRD website. The information available includes working group findings and recommendations, policy areas information sheets and statistics. To find out more visit: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/>

The *RDP projects database* features hundreds of examples of how rural development policy is being put into practice throughout the EU. Explore the projects at [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)

## Communicating rural development...

... is a key priority of the ENRD. Various communications channels are used to showcase rural development policy in action and to share information with a range of audiences about what is happening in rural Europe.

The ENRD engages with the rural development community about research findings, policy developments and local success stories. The ENRD website is the principal communications tool and it brings together all ENRD activities.

- To get an overview of rural development policy in each Member State, explore our interactive map at: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/country/>
- The audio-visual media gallery hosts photo albums from various events and videos about interesting rural development projects: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/>
- The Communicating Rural Development Gateway provides examples of successful communications tools that promote rural development in the EU. Check it out:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/communicating-rural-development/eafrd/>

ENRD publications are available in six languages (DE, EN, ES, FR, IT and PL) and include:

- *EU Rural Review* - which takes an in-depth look at different rural policy areas;
- *ENRD Magazine* - which gathers all the latest stories from the ENRD, NRNs and LAGs across Europe;
- *EAFRD Project Brochures* - which highlight successful examples of EAFRD-funded projects;
- *Rur@l Newsflash* - an online newsletter with the latest network activities.

The ENRD is also active on social media: on facebook ([www.facebook.com/EUAgri](http://www.facebook.com/EUAgri)); Youtube ([www.youtube.com/user/EURural](http://www.youtube.com/user/EURural)); and Twitter (@enrd\_cp).

To subscribe to ENRD publications or to join the online discussion forum opENRD, visit: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/myenrd/myenrd/>

## Networking...

... is at the heart of the ENRD's activity: by bringing together a variety of rural development actors in formal and informal ways, the ENRD facilitates the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of expertise and innovation.

The effectiveness of networking, to both engage stakeholders and enhance the implementation of rural development policy, is increasingly recognised. As a 'network of networks', the ENRD has a special role to play. To find out more about the ENRD's seminars and meetings which use participatory methodologies to stimulate interaction, visit: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networks-and-networking/>

LEADER is a focal point of our networking activities. An annual LEADER conference brings together LAGs from all Member States to share best prac-

tices and discuss issues such as how to improve the implementation of local strategies for rural development and how to set up transnational cooperation projects. The *LEADER Gateway* on the ENRD website is a key resource in support of these activities, featuring a toolkit for LAGs, information on cooperation offers, publications, videos and much more: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/>





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Publications Office

To find out more about the ENRD visit:  
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DOI 10.2762/49846

ISBN 978-92-79-27964-5



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