



# **EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

## **ACTIVITY REPORT**

**2008-2010**

*June 2010*

# **Activity report of the European Network for Rural Development (EN RD)**

**[July 2008 - June 2010]**

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## I- Setting-up the strategy and the structures of the EN RD

- ⇒ **The strategy** of the EN RD was outlined in October 2008 in the Cyprus conference on "Facing the new challenges: Climate, energy, jobs and growth - Europe's rural areas in action"

### Extracts:

*"Most of us are only too well aware that a policy runs partly on money. But it also runs on **good ideas and experience**. Ideas have the advantage that, if you share them around, their total value increases. They also tend to multiply. And experience helps us to grow ideas into success stories. These facts have been well illustrated in the networking that has been such a large part of the "Leader approach" to rural development. Now we want to spread the benefits of networking more widely. **The European Network for Rural Development will set off chain reactions of ideas and will quickly prove its worth in the policy-making process.**"*

*"The EN RD will have to provide real incentives for achieving the objectives established within the framework of the **Community strategic guidelines** for rural development, which have been defined by the Council in 2006."*

*"The EN RD will cover **all the axes of European Rural Development Policy** and bring together **all the stakeholders concerned by this policy.**"*

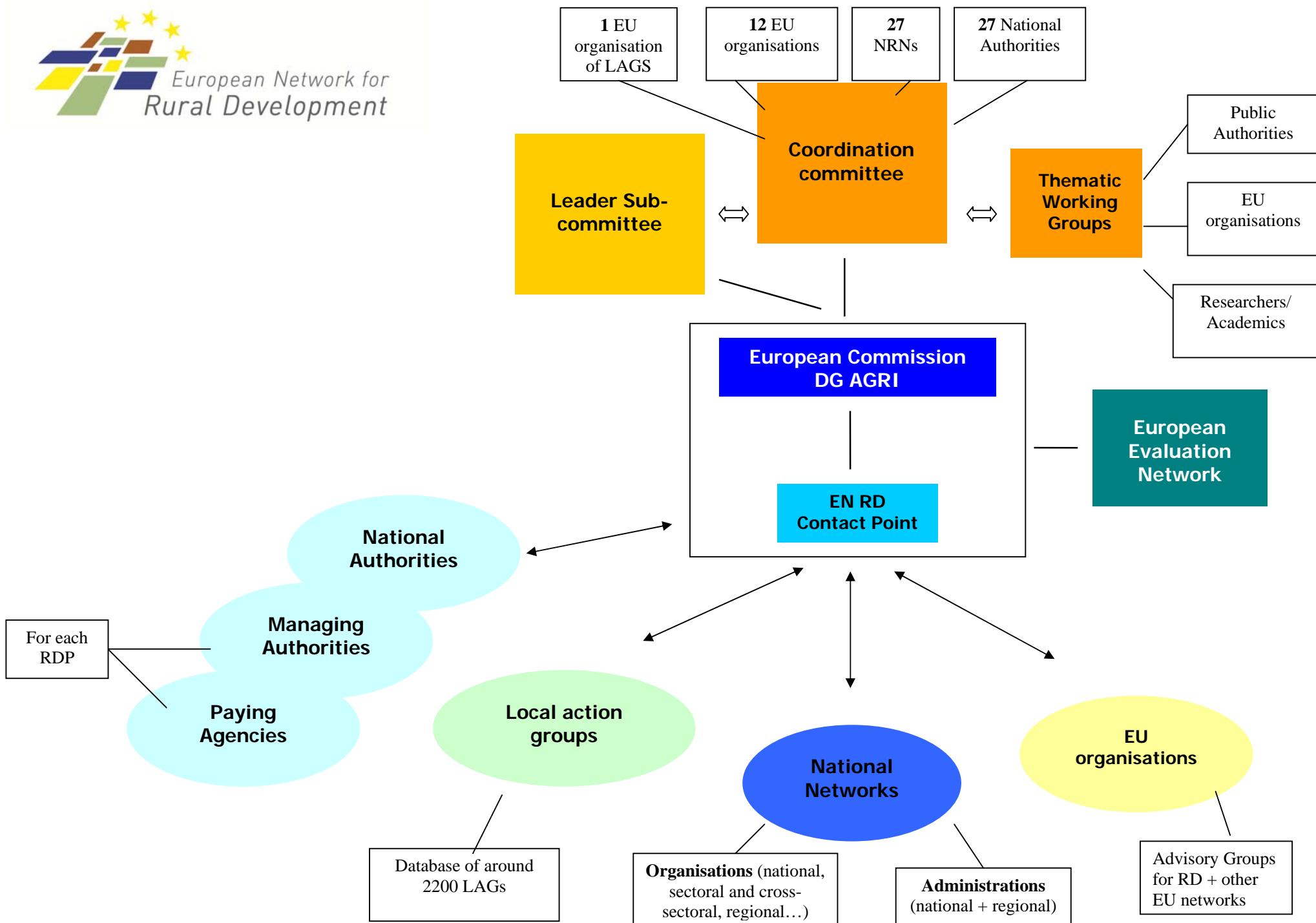
*"By drawing on **lessons from experience on the ground**, this will assist decision-makers to make the choices that are still to be made when implementing their strategy and their rural development programme."*

*"The role played by **national networks** will be fundamental given that their mission also is to support European Rural Development Policy. The European network will also rely on the **authorities** responsible for the management of rural development programmes, **European organisations** that are involved in the rural development sector and also the **Local Action Groups of the Leader axis** that will contribute their know-how, which is essential in terms of local development."*

*"Apart from the establishment of a **framework of information exchange**, the EN RD will have another mission: it will have to carry out a number of **common analyses and develop expertise** at European level, based on the strategies and on the rural development programmes for the period 2007-2013."*

*"The work of the EN RD will be closely coordinated with the activities carried out within the framework of the **European Evaluation Network.**"*

- ⇒ **The organisational structure of the network**, as set out in the Commission Decision 168/2008, was put in place progressively in 2008 (see next page).  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-structure/en/enrd-structure\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-structure/en/enrd-structure_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **The Contact Point**, which is a central support service for the network, started its work in July 2008. Its staff assists the Commission in running the EN RD by delivering a series of services for a successful achievement of the aims of the network.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/whos-who/about-en-rd/en/about-en-rd\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/whos-who/about-en-rd/en/about-en-rd_home_en.cfm)



## II- Capacity building for the EN RD and the National Rural Networks

### 1. Seminar on "Capacity building for Rural networks", March 2009

The kick-off seminar of the EN RD, "Capacity building for national rural networks (NRN): the challenges of NRNs to efficiently support the implementation of EU rural development policy", which took place on 30 and 31 March, aimed to examine the role and strategies of networks, and how the links between all rural development actors – both practitioners and policy-makers – could be built as inclusively and efficiently as possible. The agenda was designed to inform and motivate those involved in EN RD: representatives of the NRNs, regional networks, Local Action Groups, EU organizations active in the field of rural development and national administrations.

As a result, the seminar gave better understanding of quite diverse expectations towards rural networks on all levels and more ideas on networking (such as different tools and approaches). The need for a more strategic approach was emphasised: prioritising, responding to the real needs of stakeholders and focusing on effective contribution to RD policy objectives. It was also concluded that links and trust need to be built between different levels and actors.

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/enrd-seminars/en/capacity-building-seminar-for-national-networks\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/enrd-seminars/en/capacity-building-seminar-for-national-networks_en.cfm)

### 2. Coordination with, and support to, the National Rural Networks (NRN)

The National Rural Networks started up their activities at different speed, depending on countries, past experiences and on the existence of active relays. In any case these rural networks were new organisations and they needed to pursue the development of inter-links with and between stakeholders.

The following initiatives were developed to support their capacity building:

- ⇒ **Mapping of NRNs:** providing information on the different NRNs, showing their structures, their strategy, their first activities. The information was collected through questionnaires, visits on the spot, presentation in various meetings etc. and will continue to be updated and developed on a regular basis.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/national-rural-networks/nrn-information/en/nrn-information\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/national-rural-networks/nrn-information/en/nrn-information_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **NRNs joint activities:** Regular meetings of all NRNs took place. They generally had a thematic focus, and offered the possibilities of workshops or focus groups where NRNs can exchange experience on specific issues, conduct a joint reflection, or receive practical information. "NRN thematic clusters" were set up during the second year on: social inclusion, rural entrepreneurship and forestry.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/national-rural-networks/joint-nrn-activities/en/joint-nrn-activities\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/national-rural-networks/joint-nrn-activities/en/joint-nrn-activities_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **Creating more synergies between NRNs:** some activities were initiated on common issues, like the monitoring of networking activities, and the collection of relevant examples / good practices. These will be further developed in the course of Year 3.

### 3. Specific support to LAGs and Transnational Cooperation (TNC)

Leader was undergoing an important transition due to the start of the new programmes and its mainstreaming. The Leader subcommittee of 28/04/09 identified several challenges that LAGs, but also Managing Authorities and National Rural Networks, were facing to ensure an efficient implementation of this horizontal axis and a real capitalisation of its pilot experiences for the benefit of all the stakeholders of the RD policy. The EN RD brought specific support to this method, in particular by facilitating the transnational cooperation between LAGs.

- ⇒ **A guide for Leader transnational cooperation**: providing both practical and administrative information for LAGs and project holders.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/2007-2013/tnc-guide/en/tnc-guide\\_home.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/2007-2013/tnc-guide/en/tnc-guide_home.cfm)
- ⇒ **A database of Cooperation Offers**: This consists of a list of project ideas where project promoters are seeking to identify additional partners from other countries.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/cooperation-platform/partner-search-tool/en/partner-search-tool\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/cooperation-platform/partner-search-tool/en/partner-search-tool_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **Leader Focus Groups**: The Leader subcommittee launched 3 focus groups at the beginning of 2010 to examine key aspects of the implementation of LEADER in the programming period 2007-2013, the first results of which were reviewed at the subcommittee meeting in May 2010. The focus groups are composed of representatives of National Rural Networks, Local Action Groups, Managing Authorities, NGOs, under the co-chairmanship of different NRNs or organisations.
  - FG1 – Implementation of bottom-up approach
  - FG2 - Preserving the innovative character of Leader
  - FG3 – Transnational CooperationShortly on: [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/thematic-activities/en/thematic-activities\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/thematic-activities/en/thematic-activities_home_en.cfm)

### 4. Promotion of exchanges and cooperation between all stakeholders of the rural development policy

The EN RD should encourage exchanges and cooperation between all actors of the RD policy beyond the NRNs and the LAGs: groups of beneficiaries of the RD policy, actors involved in the delivery mechanisms including administrations and advisory services, etc.

As a start, the following tools have been put in place:

- ⇒ **A calendar of events**, providing information on all major RD events in Europe.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/events-and-meetings/events-calendar/en/events-calendar\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/events-and-meetings/events-calendar/en/events-calendar_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **A "Who's who"**, to be further extended, respecting the data-protection provisions.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-structure/en/enrd-structure\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-structure/en/enrd-structure_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **A "links" section**, giving access to various sources of information on rural development.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/links/en/links\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/links/en/links_home_en.cfm)

### III- First thematic and analytical activities

#### 1. Thematic Working Groups (TWG)

The TWGs are Commission's expert groups of maximum 15 members. They work on specific topics, following a mandate proposed by the Coordination committee of the EN RD. They are chaired by the Commission, and can benefit from the support of expert work (analysis, studies, literature review etc). These groups have a key role to play in identifying what works well – and what does not work well – in the current RD policy, and thus in identifying possible improvements, solutions or guidance for the present and for the future. Their work plan is of maximum 2 years.

In the period 2008-2010, the following groups have been set-up:

- ⇒ **TWG 1: Targeting territorial specificities and needs in RD programmes.** The objective was to help achieve an efficient targeting of territorial specificities and needs in RD programmes and a more balanced development of rural areas across Europe. It started in Spring 2009 and the 3 main working steps are to be achieved in the autumn 2010. [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/twg1/en/twg1\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/twg1/en/twg1_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **TWG 2: Agriculture and the wider rural economy.** The objective was the identification and description of the relationships and potential synergies/conflicts between, on the one hand, agriculture and, on the other hand, the wider rural economy. It started in Spring 2009 and its four main working steps are to be achieved in the autumn 2010. [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/twg2/en/twg2\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/twg2/en/twg2_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **TWG 3: Public goods and public intervention.** This group was to investigate how RD interventions can enhance the provision of public goods for the benefit of society. It started in Spring 2009 and its main working steps are to be achieved by autumn 2010. [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/twg3/en/twg3\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/twg3/en/twg3_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **TWG 4: Delivery mechanisms of EU Rural Development Policy.** The aim of the working group is to contribute to ensuring that EU rural development policy has the most efficient and effective delivery system possible. The working group will review experience of programme implementation and identify those aspects which are operating well, those which may require improvement and what concrete improvements might be made. It was launched in February 2010. [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/twg4/en/twg4\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/twg4/en/twg4_home_en.cfm)

#### 2. Complementary analysis of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) and of monitoring indicators.

In order to better support the implementation of the RDPs, the EN RD has a role to play in providing information on them, and in supporting their monitoring.

- ⇒ **A set of summaries of the RDPs,** taking into account the Health Check and Recovery Package revisions. [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/rural-development-policy/country-information/en/country-information\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/rural-development-policy/country-information/en/country-information_home_en.cfm) (*publication still ongoing*)

- ⇒ **'Screenings' of the RDPs as regards the way they address climate change** (both mitigation and adaptation). The final output will be in the form of fiches per country. (*publication planned for July 2010*).
- ⇒ **The RDP's and Mountain Farming:** a review of the support currently available through Rural Development Programmes in support of Mountain Areas and Mountain farming was undertaken.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/thematic-topics/en/thematic-topics\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-initiatives/thematic-topics/en/thematic-topics_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **Technical support for the monitoring of RDPs.** Analysis of the databases of Monitoring Indicators were conducted, for both the 2007 and the 2008 Annual Progress Reports, allowing the correction of mistakes. Monitoring indicators are also used to publish "snapshots" of the state of implementation of the RDPs (*first publication planned for July 2010*).

### 3. Thematic events

Beyond written analysis, the EN RD should offer the possibility to discuss thematic issues with a broad range of stakeholders. These events should be focused on key topics, and bring together the relevant experts and rural actors. As much as possible, these events should use targeted documentation and thematic material should be developed in the process of preparation and of follow-up.

- ⇒ **Preparation of a seminar on semi-subsistence farming in Romania.** [*initially planned for April 2010, but postponed to October 2010, due to closure of airports*] The seminar aimed at discussing the current situation and the prospects for semi-subsistence farming in Europe. A background paper has been prepared to feed in to the discussions of the seminar.  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/enrd-seminars/semi-subsistence-seminar/en/semi-subsistence-seminar\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/enrd-seminars/semi-subsistence-seminar/en/semi-subsistence-seminar_home_en.cfm)
- ⇒ **Events related to the Thematic Working Groups.** A joint meeting of the TWG 1-2-3 took place in March 2010, and a meeting with all TWGs and the members of the Coordination committee was organised in June 2010.  
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/index.cfm?AB936F0C-CEE5-06D6-DB98-C1190024354E>

### 4. Identification of relevant experiences / interesting cases studies ("good practices")

This activity is one of the core tasks of the EN RD: to identify examples of projects and delivery mechanisms (measures or schemes) developed under the RD policy which can illustrate interesting lessons to be learned by administrators or by project holders (whether a failure or a success) or which can contribute to a better understanding of the Rural Development policy for the broader public.

In the first two years of activity of the EN RD, this exercise was limited to a pilot project, as the implementation of RDPs was just starting, and only few National Rural Networks had started themselves to collect examples of projects. Case studies have been collected and collated in two initial thematic areas (Renewable energy and Investment in agro-processing).  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/national-rural-networks/joint-nrn-activities/nrn-relevant-experience-pilot-initiative\\_en/en/nrn-relevant-experience-pilot-initiative\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/national-rural-networks/joint-nrn-activities/nrn-relevant-experience-pilot-initiative_en/en/nrn-relevant-experience-pilot-initiative_home_en.cfm)



## IV- Communication and information tools put in place

### 1. Development of the website of the EN RD at <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>

The website is bound to be the core tool of the EN RD. It has to offer information accessible to all, and "inter-active" parts restricted to specific groups (for the committees, for the TWGs, for LAGs, for NRNs).

For technical reasons, the inter-active parts of "My EN RD" were made available only at the end of this 2-year period but should gain importance quickly over time.

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European Network for Rural Development

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European Evaluation Network for Rural Development

### European Network for Rural Development

The European Network for Rural Development (EN RD) contributes to the efficient implementation of Rural Development Programmes throughout the European Union (EU). Each Member State has established a National Rural Network (NRN) which brings together the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. At EU level, the European Network for Rural Development ensures the networking of these national networks, organisations and administrations. [Read more about the EN RD.](#)

### EN RD news

**19 April 2010: EN RD Seminar on Semi-Subsistence Farming in Sibiu, Romania has been postponed**

The planned seminar on Semi-Subsistence Farming has been postponed due to air travel disruptions (caused by volcanic ash) [read more](#).

**14 April 2010: CAP Public Debate Post 2013**

An extraordinary meeting of the EN RD Coordination committee was held at which the members of the committee were invited to launch the public debate on the CAP after 2013 in their own country/organisation [read more](#).

**25 to 26 March 2010: NRN Forum, Rome, Italy.**

The latest meeting of the National Rural Networks was hosted by the Italian National Rural Network in Rome; covering a wide range of thematic topics. A report from the forum will be available shortly.

**05 March 2010: Transnational Cooperation Guide (TNC)**

The first edition of an EN RD TNC Guide was launched including details of Member States procedures on Cooperation. [read more](#)

**25 February 2010: Launch of EN RD Thematic Working Group 4**

The Commission launched a new initiative to analyse current Rural Development Programme Delivery Mechanisms. [read more](#)

**CALENDAR**  
Rural Events

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Please note that this web site is only available in English for the moment. Other language versions will be available in the near future.

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## 2. Publications



⇒ **Electronic newsletters.** 9 published and disseminated using a mailing list. 'Rur@1 News' usually contained: contemporary coverage of activities from the rural networks, new policy initiatives affecting the EU rural development world; regular news about EN RD developments; reports from the Member States regarding the implementation of RDPs; reports on recent events of interest to EN RD stakeholders. All editions of the newsletter were made available in six languages (DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL). [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-library/en-rd-publications/newsletter/en/newsletter\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-library/en-rd-publications/newsletter/en/newsletter_home_en.cfm)

⇒ **Rural Reviews.** 'EU Rural Review' was designed as a comprehensive magazine, with topics relevant to the EU Rural Development policy. The magazine aimed to offer something for everyone involved in the development of EU rural areas. 4 numbers produced. It generally contained: interviews and case studies from European rural citizens; series of illustrated articles providing progress with the RDPs actions; expert analysis of contemporary rural policy issues, exploring the challenges in rural Europe today. The magazine is translated in six languages (DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL). [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-library/en-rd-publications/periodicals/en/periodicals\\_home\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-library/en-rd-publications/periodicals/en/periodicals_home_en.cfm)



⇒ **Preparation of a subscription tool.** Interested readers will have the possibility by July 2010 to subscribe online to receive publications from the EN RD.

## 3. Information line and reception of visitors in Brussels

The Contact Point ensured a permanent secretariat of the EN RD, to answer to questions, and to provide information related to the RD policy or the EN RD. They also received individual visitors, or small groups in their premises.

## 4- Promotion and representation of the EN RD

The Contact Point had to respond to direct information needs on the EN RD and on the RD policy in general. Thus CP team members participated and contributed to various events related to rural development, including agricultural fairs.

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