



Summary of the outcomes of the 17th NRN Meeting

15th March, 2013

Åre, Sweden

Compiled by the ENRD Contact Point

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Agenda Item **Opening of the Meeting**

Discussion Points

Deputy Director-General Christina Nordin, from the Swedish Ministry for Rural Affairs gave a welcome speech stressing the usefulness and importance of the Swedish National Rural Network both for implementation of the current Rural Development Programme (RDP) and their contribution to the programming of the future RDP.

Riin Saluveer from DG AGRI introduced the first item on the agenda: Strategic programming of the National Rural Networks and their role and function in preparing the new RDPs. She stressed that until the new Regulation is finalized it is still not possible to make any definitive statements on networking in the next programming period. However, the ENRD Contact Point has started to develop an online 'NRN Tool-kit' which will be the main source of guidance to complement the final Regulation and Implementing Rules.

Agenda Item **Strategic programming “of and by” NRNs**

[Click here for presentation](#)

Discussion Points

“The NRN Toolkit - Introduction to the tool and its use”- Mark Redman, ENRD CP

The “NRN Tool-kit” is a dynamic on-line resource to address the information / guidance needs of NSUs, MAs and other relevant NRN stakeholders for strengthening and enhancing EAFRD-financed National Rural Networks.

It centralizes and organizes information already available in the ENRD publications and website, and will add new and relevant information as it becomes available - for example, outcomes from the peer-to-peer training programme which generates an important resource based on relevant knowledge from the experience of the existing NRNs.

Whilst focused on preparations for the next programming period, the Tool-kit will also be a useful resource during the remainder of the current programming period, particularly for the more recently established NRNs / NSUs.

Action points

NRN are invited to send comments on the NRN toolkit to contribute its development over the coming months.

[Click here for presentation](#)

Discussion Points

“Demonstrating the “added value of networking”- state of play and work in progress - Edina Ocsko, ENRD CP

In order to enhance the newly developed web section on the added value of networking the contact point is working with NRNs to source more networking stories related to the 6 key activity areas of networking namely effective stakeholder engagement, building a common understanding of policies, facilitating exchange of practice and experience, capacity building and training, support for cooperation and joint actions and exchange of experience and know-how.

In addition the work also focuses on improving the information related to common network statistics which were initiated in Year 4. More has been carried out to develop clear guidelines for NRNs on the indicators identified and how these should be reported. This work aims to provide relevant stakeholders with practical information and examples of networking output and result indicators whilst illustrating the current state of knowledge regarding the added value of networking in rural development policy.

Action points

NRNs are invited to contribute to the collection of new networking stories and common statistics that will complement the current web resource on the **“Added Value of Networking”**. This information can be viewed [here](#).

[Click here for presentation](#)

Discussion Points

“The role of NRNs in the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and Rural Development Programmes- Jean-Michel Courades, DG AGRI

The Partnership principle continues to grow in relevance and potential as an effective tool for successful RDP programming.

Formalized partnership arrangements are anticipated as a new legal requirement for the 2014-2020 RDPs, and a common code of conduct has been drafted by the European Commission to specify how the principles laid down in Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation for the ESI funds can be implemented by the Member States.

Article 5 of the proposal for a Common Provisions Regulation lists the main categories of partners to involve in Partnership Agreements and programme preparation namely competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities; Economic and social partners; Bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organizations, and bodies responsible for promoting equality and non-discrimination.

Action points

NRNs should play an important role on the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and RDP as they can organize discussions, working groups, disseminate consultations documents, etc. to be an exchange platform for rural stakeholders and key decision makers.

NRN were encouraged to take an active role in the programming process. As information at this stage is key, NRNs are invited to facilitate adequate information through their communication channels for the preparation of the programme and disseminate the outcome of any consultation process that takes place.

Discussion

Some participants to the meeting explained how the NRN is involved in programming. In some Member States NRNs are active in meetings organized by the MA to debate and provide information to the process of formulating the next RDP. The main consultation platforms seem to be seminars and meetings with stakeholders.

A point about the importance of positioning the network in the next programme for a more-effective delivery was also made. NRNs are perceived by some MS as the right channel to turn complex messages simple and understandable to stakeholders and to respond in a positive way by providing the Commission clear feedback on policy implementation.

One challenge mentioned for this process was the mandate of the NRNS were many a times they are not empowered by the Managing Authority to engage in programming activities.

Agenda Item

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Discussion Points

The Youth Initiative

The ENRD Youth Initiative-Mara Lai, ENRD CP

The thematic initiative on Youth and Young Farmers in rural areas was officially launched in December 2012 at the meeting of the [10th ENRD Coordination Committee \(6 December 2012\).](#)

This initiative aims at highlighting the importance of supporting youths in rural areas and to learn from existing initiatives and activities to: a) improve youth's involvement in designing and implementing the RD policy; b) better use of young people's potential in rural areas; c) better address and value young people's needs.

All group members have been asked to contribute in the collection of case

Action points

studies that will be analyzed and set the basis for discussions at a Focus Group meeting and the update of the Youth and Young Farmers Gateway.

NRNs are encouraged to collect examples of EAFRD supported initiatives related to Youths. All participants in the Youth Initiative will be informed on date of the 2nd meeting (June 2013)

[Click here for presentation on Youth Umbrella Project](#)

“Youth umbrella project and toolkit for involvement of youths in preparing local development strategies for the coming programming period”, Josefina Andersson and Karin Back, youth coaches in LAG Terra et Mare and LAG Halland

and [here for presentation on Toolkit](#)

U-LAND is a Network of LEADER youth coaches that have attracted researchers and public administrations to work with the aim of sharing challenges, findings, experiences and discussing how to work with youths in rural areas.

Discussion Points

To provide support to youths, 49 local areas in Sweden have started what are called “Umbrella projects”. Providing financial support of around 1500-2500€/project they encourage activities that are “led by young people, for young people”. These projects are supported by the LAG youth coach and have developed different initiatives.

These projects have demonstrated to support young people’s engagement in their area. It has been proved that young people develop a higher knowledge and understanding of how society is organized as they get contacts and start a networking culture, believing that their ideas are valued- which improves their self-esteem and confidence. The 331 projects have led to 112 jobs created, a set-up of 9 enterprises, 114 new networks/cooperation’s, and provided many benefits in the rural society as a whole.

A new web Toolkit to improve youth involvement was also developed. It contains a list of stakeholders and organizations to cooperate on the Youth theme, suggestions to arrange rooms and choose different methods for successful meetings, and a section on new ways for collecting project ideas and to approach youths.

Action points

Contact Josefina Andersson or Karin Back (see contact details in Annex II) to get further information on the Youth Umbrella projects or the Youth Toolkit.

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Short Food Supply Chains

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Findings of the survey on Short Food Supply Chains - Julia Manaquin, NSU-France

Discussion

The French NSU has carried out a survey amongst the NRNs on Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) namely trying to identify what are the key issues

Points

and challenges related to this topic in view of the new draft regulatory framework.

During the presentation it was explained that the findings show that SFSCs appear important to maintain an active economy and related services within rural areas, to promote local agriculture and to strengthen social linkages. Multi-funding seems to be essential to structure and integrate projects developing SFSCs.

Some recommendations that emerge from this survey are the need of specific Rural Programming support to structure SFSCs with an integrated dimension and to adjust the definition for short supply chains and the eligibility rules on what can be supported.

Action points

The final version (EN) of the report will be disseminated by the French NRN to all NRNs. A copy of the report will be uploaded on the relevant ENRD web resource.

The Scottish NRN introduced “Foodlinks”, a collaborative project funded by the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Commission with the purpose of evaluating knowledge brokerage activities to promote sustainable food consumption and production: linking scientists, policymakers and civil society organizations. >> [More about Foodlinks](#)

Agenda Item

[Click here for presentation](#)

Discussion Points

3rd LEADER Event

NRN support and follow up actions-Inés Jordana, ENRD CP

The 3rd LEADER event will take place in Brussels on the 17-18th April 2013. One element where ENRD would like an active role played by NRNs is the FAIR. The FAIR will be an important part of the 2013 LEADER event and it will be held in the afternoon of the first day (17 April). The aim of the FAIR will be to create opportunities for exchange, learning and networking with participants.

Besides support is needed for showcasing relevant practices, studies, projects, etc on LEADER. As the date to the LEADER 2013 event is approaching this presentation gives specific follow-up actions and contributions expected from all NRNs to make the event a success.

Action points

The input of NRNs in the preparation of the LEADER event Fair is required for different elements namely the showcasing session and the FAIR. Information about the event can be found through the following link: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/leader-event-2013/en/leader-event-2013_en.cfm

Agenda Item

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Discussion Points

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Other Networking Activities

18th NRN meeting- Maria Custódia Correia, NSU-Portugal

The next NRN meeting will be kindly hosted by the Portuguese NRN and will be held in the town of Tomar, Portugal, on June 6th-7th, 2013.

The third module of the pilot NRN Peer-to-peer Training programme will be organized on 7th June and the NRN meeting on 6th June. The general theme for the training will be “communication” and it is proposed to undertake a survey to identify specific needs and interest among NRNs.

Presentation of the Bulgarian NRN-Mira Mileva, NSU-Bulgaria

The NRN of Bulgaria has now officially joined the EAFRD Networking community at the end of 2012. In a presentation the structure and programmed activities were introduced to all participants.

Annex I

Results from the feedback form and comments

1. Do you agree with the following statements? (please tick ONLY ONE box per statement)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Communication about the meeting was good	12 (39 %)	18 (58 %)	1 (3%)			31
Organization of the meeting whilst in Åre was good	13 (43%)	16 (53%)		1 (3%)		30
The venue was appropriate for this kind of meeting	11 (38%)	14 (48%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	29
The interactive methods used for this meeting were very effective	13 (45%)	16 (55%)				29
There was enough time for questions and discussions	10 (33%)	18 (60%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)		30
The meeting provided me with new and relevant information	16 (53%)	13 (43%)	1 (3%)			30
I made new and useful contacts during the meeting	15 (50%)	15 (50%)				30
I was able to fully express my comments, questions and ideas	16 (52%)	14 (45%)	1 (3%)			31

2. What is your satisfaction with the following parts of the meeting?

(Please tick ONLY ONE box per session)

	Excellent	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor	Total
The NRN Toolkit - Introduction to the tool and its use– Mark Redman, ENRD CP	16 (52%)	14 (45%)		1 (3%)		31
Demonstrating the “added value of networking” - state of play and work in progress – Edina Ocsko, ENRD CP	9 (32%)	19 (68%)				28

	Excellent	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor	Total
The role of NRNs in the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and rural development programmes – Jean-Michel Courades, DG AGRI	6 (20%)	22 (73%)	2 (7%)			30
The ENRD Youth Initiative – Mara Lai, ENRD CP	16 (52%)	13 (42%)	2 (6%)			31
The youth umbrella project – Josefina Andersson and Karin Back, youth coaches in LAG Terra et Mare and LAG Halland	32 (100%)					32
The toolkit for how to involve youths in preparing local development strategies for the coming programming period – Josefina Andersson and Karin Back, youth coaches in LAG Terra et Mare and LAG Halland	26 (87%)	4 (13%)				30
Presentation by the French NSU on the findings of the survey on Short Food Supply Chains – Julia Mannequin, France NSU	3 (9%)	22 (69%)	4 (13%)	3 (9%)		32
NRN support and follow up actions – Ines Jordana, ENRD CP	16 (50%)	14 (44%)	2 (6%)			32
18th NRN meeting– Ana Pires da Silva, Portuguese NSU	8 (31%)	16 (62%)	2 (8%)			26
3rd NRN training module – Mark Redman, ENRD CP	10 (42%)	12 (50%)	2 (8%)			24
Presentation on the Bulgarian NRN –Mira Mileva, Bulgaria NSU Coordinator	6 (24%)	16 (64%)	3 (12%)			25

“How can we better organize similar events in the future?”

- More time for discussion/workshops, extend the time of the meeting
- Choice of an accessible venue
- Provide in advance the participants with more information about the topic of the training, the methodology or the theory
- More free time during the day to see the area in the middle of the day and not in the evening
- Bigger screen

“What would you like to discuss during next NRN meeting?”

- How to foster innovation
- NRN planning issues for next programming period
- How to foster and inspire other NRN’s work in order to improve it and be more successful
- Youth issues
- Next Programming Period: partnerships
- Integrated CLLD Programmes
- Multi-funding

Annex II

List of participants to the 17th NRN meeting

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