

# Summary of outcomes 19<sup>th</sup> NRN Meeting



Jakub Roszak (8 years, PL)

11-12<sup>th</sup> September, 2013  
Gdańsk, Poland

## Agenda Item **Opening of the Meeting**

Renata Zielioska, Deputy Director of Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Poland, gave a warm welcome to the representatives of the NRNs, ENRD, Polish Regional Secretariats and other stakeholders from the Pomeranian Region. She highlighted the increasing appreciation that the National Rural Network is gaining among authorities of the provinces and the stakeholders who are becoming real partners in their everyday job, and hoped that the discussions taking place during the following two days would contribute to this integrating process.

Following this welcoming words, Edina Ocsko, from ENRD CP, introduced the overarching theme for this event: planning NRN structures, activities and resources for the next programming period. During the NRN meeting, participants were provided with specific information on the new regulatory framework, possible NRN involvement in partnership agreements, and how different NRNs (national and regional networks) are structured and are organizing their activity in order to reach out to local stakeholder groups.

## Agenda Item **Morning session**

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### Discussion Points

**State of play of the 2014-2020 regulatory framework (I) and Guidance on Networking (II), Antonella Zona/ Riin Saluveer, DG AGRI**

Within this session, DG AGRI representatives reviewed together with the participants the Regulatory Framework for 2014-2020, particularly: the European dimension of rural networking; the National Rural Networks' tasks and objectives; and the implementing provisions and guidance for setting-up and operating the National Rural Networks, currently being prepared by DG AGRI.

The opening slide illustrated the winning picture from ["What is the forest for me" - Drawing competition 2013-](#), which winning picture, by a Polish 8-year old kid illustrates the "networking spirit" that is becoming a reality across Europe.

The presentations focused on the following messages emerging from the provisions for rural networks at the EU and National level:

- Improved coordination of rural development networks at EU level (ENRD, including networking on Evaluation and EIP)
- The reinforced role of NRNs towards the realization of the

partnership principle. For further information please click [here](#)

- The more detailed list of tasks for NRNs linked to four main objectives. Following [previous NRN meeting](#), held in Tomar, communication aspects were further clarified. A compulsory and specific communication plan will be one key component of the NRN activity plan (in close coordination with Managing Authority's general communication strategy).
- The provisions towards stronger cooperation and involvement of NRNs with the EU level.

In line with this, DG AGRI presented the draft NRN Commission Guidance (under development) based on the experience that has been gained during this programming period, aims at contributing to the development of the networks in future programming. The guidance will focus on the following content:

- Definitions
- Structure and governance
- Resources
- Tasks and Action Plan
- Cooperation with other networks
- Monitoring and self-assessment
- Cooperation with ENRD

Participants at the 19<sup>th</sup> NRN meeting look forward to receiving the guidance draft, which may improve quality of implementation by contributing to clear intervention logic. Some participants raised the need for reinforcing links between all NRNs and receiving guidance on innovation since this is a concept that concerns all EU policies and there is still a need to clarify what is exactly expected from NRNs on this respect. Following the framework presentations from DG AGRI, participants were split into small groups to discuss:

- i) the proposed objectives
- ii) the set of proposed tasks for NRNs
- iii) the necessary support and capacity building to implement the above stated objectives and tasks.

Please see Annex I within this document to see a summary of the outcomes of these exercise.

### Action points

The Guidance document is a developing document, so interested NRNs and all interested parties can provide contributions for improvement at any time. NRNs are also invited to visit the NRN Toolkit within the ENRD website. Identified needs will be followed up by targeted activities from

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ENRD CP, especially linked to the Training Programme throughout the year and the remaining NRN meetings. For further information please click [here](#).

### **Italy: Progress on NRN planning and involvement in the Partnership Agreement– Riccardo Passero, Italian NRN**

The presentation focused on the progress achieved in the process of preparing the NRN for the next programming period and involvement of stakeholders at national level in the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and 2014-2020 National Rural Network Programme.

Main points discussed in the presentation:

- Preparing the Partnership Agreement: state of play of the process in Italy;
- Specific activities of the Italian NRN supporting the dialogue with the stakeholders and their involvement in the process of preparing the Partnership Agreement;
- Involvement of national stakeholders in the preparation of NRN 2014-2020 (undertaken steps: first interviews in 2012; more targeted interviews on the actual drafting of the 2014-2020 NRN Programme in February – March 2013; envisaged meeting with national stakeholders in October 2013);
- Points currently under discussion on the future NRN 2014-2020 Programme strategy:
  - The 2014-2020 NRN programme (proposed simpler structure, easy to communicate, less “omni comprehensive”);
  - Introduction of NRN biennial action plan (transfer from annual to biennial action plan with stronger emphasis on building up and identification of the activities);
  - The NRN strategy (strong identification of NRN axis and targets with clear communication of the NRN goals and Rural Development Policy to the broader public)
- Proposal for future activities in the framework of the ENRD (proposal to organise meetings with NRN managers in the period October 2013 – June 2014 in order to facilitate the drafting process of the 2014-2020 NRN Programmes).

A point for clarification was raised regarding the approach used to involve stakeholders in the dialogue – is there an umbrella organisation or membership is open? The Italian NRN answered that stakeholders are involved using the website which gives two levels of access – one for RDP

managers and one for RDP stakeholders. There are no restrictions on the website; the system is open to everybody who is interested to participate.

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### Engaging with stakeholders through different Network structures

**Poland: NRN structure and operation at regional level (I) – Beata Szybińska, Polish NRN/Justyna Durzyńska**

**Poland: NRN structure and operation at regional level (II) , Justyna Durzyńska, Director of Department for RDP Marshal Office of Pomorskie Voivodeship**

The Network Support Unit (NSU) of the Polish NRN was established within - and is managed by - the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It is assigned to coordinate national network operations, draft action plans and coordinate their implementation. Sixteen regional secretariats have been established (one for each Voivodeship/ province), to enable information exchange and coordinate network operations at Voivodeship level.

There are more than 2.200 entities working with the Polish NRN and a lot of effort is done to look for reliable partners that are able to represent, disseminate and productively contribute to the discussions from working groups (each region runs their own working group).

Through all different activities it's very much promoted a change of values to improve the perception that the society in general has towards rural areas.

Different examples on region values promotion were described, like photo competitions, events highlighting the importance of local products and cuisine, good practices dissemination, etc.

To learn more about the Annual work plan, the priorities and the activities carried out by the Polish National Rural Network, please check the Polish NRN profile fiche [here](#).

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**Scotland: Opportunities and challenges from a Regional Programmed Network– Jody Fleck, Scottish RN**

After providing with some general context on the Scottish Rural Network within the UK operational framework, Jody Fleck, explained the different

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channels that the four Regional Networks in UK are using to communicate (ranging from formal activities, to informal exchanges).

This regional set-up provides the opportunity for each of the Regional Networks to work closer to their stakeholders and with clear alignment to their Rural Development Programmes (and, in their case, to the Scottish Government priorities). This alignment creates opportunities to pool resources, especially on a time where available budget is decreasing.

Still, some challenges related to this model were also explained. Different delivery models between Networks in that context are something to be mindful of, as well as the different availability to operate in the field, depending on the individual resources. Also, a lot of effort has to be done in order to ensure that information towards activities of common interest flows.

The Scottish Rural Network has started the preparations for next programming period by carrying-out a thorough evaluation that aimed to establish intervention logic with allocated funding according to the needs and that ensures a closer relation to stakeholders and other UK networks.

To learn more about the Networks in UK, please check their full profiles [here](#).

**Latvia: Connecting with national, regional and local stakeholders—Edgars Linde, Latvian NRN**

Presentation from Latvian Rural Network highlighted the long way NSUs have gone since their first set-up, acknowledging the enormous contribution networking has given to their operation. A journey through the steps undertaken from that initial stage, towards realizing that in the Latvian context the NSU structure had to include 26 regional antennas in addition to a central office, was explained to participants. Mapping out stakeholders was also a crucial task that was realized during the first years of Rural Networking, and thanks to which now it has been possible to carry-out broad consultations-as for CAP reform. The Support Unit is playing a role of observer, facilitating exchange of processes and organizing trainings and face-to-face meetings to increase ownership of policy among the stakeholders (much of which is supported through a powerful website).

Some concrete project examples were presented with a special focus on Youth stakeholder's groups. The aim was to increase their participation and feeling of belonging to their territory. By first mapping their needs and assisting them in the developing of entrepreneurial activities, several

business plans were successfully put in place.

To find out more about Latvian NRN, please check their full profile [here](#).

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## Other Networking Activities

### Peer to Peer Training Programme– Marina Brakalova, ENRD CP

The presentation from the CP outlined the proposed annual peer to peer training programme, the main approach to deliver it, main topics to focus on and needed engagement from the NSUs. The aim of the Training Program is to support effective NRN functioning and programming through facilitation of exchange.

The presentation was followed by a discussion with the participants on the relevance of the programme and on possible ways that different activities can be implemented by sharing resources through hosting training modules.

Regarding topics, the biggest interest was demonstrated around innovation and how this is supported from the NRNs, communication and involvement of stakeholders. The following NRNs offered to host next meetings for exchange: France, Belgium, Fladers in cooperation with the ENRD CP and the EIP SP, and United kingdom – England.

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### The CLLD NRN thematic cluster: update and next steps – Edina Ocsko, ENRD CP

The aim of the presentation on the CLLD NRN Thematic Cluster was to provide participants with information on the current state-of-play with regard to the cluster's work. Among others, the presentation summarized the results of the previous mapping report; the work carried out to date (including details of the conference on CLLD organized in Hungary on the 22 July 2013), the key topics of interest identified by cluster members (that forms the basis of future work), the planned structure of the cluster and next steps of its work.

Follow the progress of the new CLLD Thematic cluster by visiting the dedicated webpage [here](#)

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### **20th NRN meeting– Julia Manaquin, French NRN**

The French NRN kindly proposed to host the next NRN meeting in Dijon, France, on November 28th-29th, 2013. The theme of the meeting and of the possible accompanying peer-to-peer training has to be defined, based on the needs expressed by NRNs.

### **Future events– Kasia Panfil, ENRD CP and participating NRN**

The upcoming ENRD events were presented during the last presentation and participants were invited to share with participants the upcoming events and activities with international dimension taking place within their countries. Xavier Delmon (BE Wallonia NSU) invited all participant to the [European Conference on Rural Economy](#), organized 21-22 November 2013 in Belgium – Wallonia. The aim of the conference will be to reflect and exchange towards:

- Financing local projects
- Research and Development / Innovation
- Partnership practices between stakeholders
- Access to land, land management tools

Hans-Olof Stålgren, from Swedish Rural Network shared a relevant pilot event taking place at European level on November 13<sup>th</sup>: the first edition of the [European Rural Parliament](#).

Edgars Linde from Latvian NRN invited all participants to the conference on Youth Entrepreneurship & the Nordic-Baltic Network Meeting held on 22-24 October in Jurmala, Latvia. If interested, please take a look at the [ENRD CP web calendar](#)!

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> NRN meeting, a song composed by Hans-Olof Stålgren, with the title *“How can we do it better together”*, from SE NRN, was performed and sang with all participants. This material will be disseminated through the meeting’s webpage, along with pictures from the discussions and processes on the day!

## Annex I- Morning Session Discussion Summary

- i) Discuss the proposed objectives of NRNs and indicate which one(s) you find most challenging (to achieve) and why**
- Foster innovation (roles of NRN, EIP, links on National and European level, meaning of fostering)
  - Involvement of stakeholders (still challenges on achieving expectations from MA/NSU on governance issues, gap between the NRN and the Agriculture and Research community for some of the tasks,)
  - Get involved in RDP evaluation in addition to monitoring own NSU performance.
  - Improve the quality of RDP implementation (difficult to measure the impact on RDP quality)
- ii) Discuss the proposed main tasks of NRNs and pick one or two to comment on or ask questions**
- Make a monitoring and evaluation document understandable for broader public
  - How to involve advisory groups for innovation; Reaching stakeholders from food industry and environment towards the advisory services
  - Thematic and analytic exchange between stakeholders
  - Analysis of projects (good, bad projects/relevant experiences)
  - Role of NRNs within the EAFRD contribution to Growth Programme
  - Publicity and communication (many different things happening at the same time)
  - Information and communication activities (so that it reaches the beneficiaries and broader public)
  - Participation in ENRD (hard to involve stakeholders on this, lack of resources and language skills)
  - Training and networking activities for LAGs (duplication of curricula, coordination with MA required, new legislation and LAGs)
- iii) Discuss what kind of support future NRNs may need and indicate two areas where NRNs need most capacity building /support with regard to future objectives/tasks**
- Guidance on monitoring, self-assessment
  - Support to advocate for investments in Rural Networking (Commission guidance for National discussions)
  - Support to elaborate a intervention logic
  - Clarification on innovation aspects and the linkages to NRN activities
  - Techniques to do a stakeholder mapping

- Favour joint activities among networks of different kinds
- Ensure continuity in ENRD CP
- Ensure proper linkages between EIP service point and the ENRD CP
- Be trained on animation techniques to be able to involve stakeholders
- Details in the guidance
- Learn which communication activities can be carried-out through NRN

## Annex II- Evaluation of the Meeting

### 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	23 (60%)	15 (40%)				38
Organisation of the meeting whilst in Gdańsk was good	24 (63%)	14 (37%)				38
The venue was appropriate for this kind of meeting	22 (58%)	15 (39%)	1 (3%)			38
The interactive methods used for this meeting were very effective	13 (34%)	24 (63%)	1 (3%)			38
There was enough time for questions and discussions	14 (38%)	19 (52%)				37
The meeting provided me with new and relevant information	13 (36%)	21 (38%)	2 (6%)			36
I made new and useful contacts during the meeting	10 (27%)	24 (65%)	1 (3%)			37
I was able to fully express my comments, questions and ideas	21 (55%)	17 (45%)				38

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
Welcome address –Renata Zielińska, Deputy Director of Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	13 (36%)	21 (38%)	2 (6%)			36
State of play of the 2014-2020 regulatory	19	17	1			37

framework and guidance on Networking– Antonella Zona/ Riin Saluveer, DG AGRI	(52%)	(46%)	(2%)			
Italy: Progress on NRN planning and involvement in the Partnership Agreement– Riccardo Passero, Italian NRN	23 (60%)	14 (37%)	1 (3%)			38
Poland: NRN structure and operation at regional level – Beata Szybińska, Polish NRN/Justyna Durzyńska, Director of Department for RDP Marshal Office of Pomorskie Voivodeship	10 (27%)	22 (60%)	5 (13%)			37
Scotland: Opportunities and challenges from a Regional Programmed Network– Jody Fleck, Scottish RN	13 (35%)	21 (57%)	3 (8%)			37
Latvia: Connecting with national, regional and local stakeholders–Edgars Linde, Latvian NRN	24 (67%)	10 (27%)	2 (6%)			36
Peer to Peer Training Programme– Marina Brakalova, ENRD CP	24 (67%)	13 (35%)				37
The CLLD NRN thematic cluster: update and next steps – Edina Ocsko, ENRD CP	19 (51%)	18 (49%)				37
20th NRN meeting- Julia Manaquin, French NRN	21 (57%)	14 (38%)	2 (5%)			37
Future events– Kasia Panfil, ENRD CP and participating NRNs	15 (42%)	20 (55%)	1 (3%)			36

**3. What is your satisfaction with the following parts of the meeting? Field Visit:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Communication about the study visit was good	12 (48%)	13 (52%)				25
Organisation of the study visit was good	8 (36%)	14 (64%)				22
The place and activities offered were interesting and gave possibility to understand something about local development in Gdańsk	7 (33%)	14 (66%)	1 (1%)			21
Study visit should always be optional	10 (41%)	14 (58%)				24

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

- The location of this meeting was good because it was a nice rural site but close to the airport
- Try to stick to time-plan more strictly
- Everything was excellently organized
- As we do networking with EU peer countries it is very valuable to get to know the hosting context, in this case Polish culture, surroundings, and structure in rural development. I was especially satisfied with the effort of NRN Poland for hosting us, sharing information and arranging extra activities for us
- The flexible timing arrangement for the field visit was good
- The study visit was very good!
- The study visit was excellent.
- The three options according to arrival time for the study visit made things easier for participants.

**“Please indicate the key ideas that you are taking from these one and a half days”:**

- We are looking forward to the DG AGRI guidance
- Project for Youth from Latvia
- Really good organization and topics coverage
- Experience of colleagues through formal and informal activities
- Some ideas of enhancing the involvement of stakeholders from Italy
- Useful to share experiences and plans from other NRNs for the next programme; Good to work closely with CP and DG AGRI on development of Regulations, guidance, etc.
- Clarification of some tasks and objectives of the NRNS for the new programming period.  
Hoping to get more information on this during Friday and also in next meeting

## Annex II

### List of participants at the 19th NRN meeting

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