



Joint meeting of the Thematic Working Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4

Minutes of the 2nd meeting

07.06.2010, Brussels



Connecting Rural Europe

Agenda Item	Outcomes of TWG 1: Targeting territorial specificities and needs in rural development programmes
	<u>Presentations delivered</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>TWG1 "Targeting territorial specificities and needs in rural development programmes"</i> by Michael Dower (presenter) and Tomas Rateringer, EN RD Contact Point.
Discussion points	<p><u>Integration – Complementarity</u>: is relevant at national level and should also be reflected at regional and local levels. In Ireland, there is a broader pattern of local integration through the LAGs, many of which are well-established as local development companies. LAGs are permitted to extend some of their activities beyond the generally defined rural areas. LAGs are no longer simply partnerships set up to deliver EAFRD measures (axis 3), as local development companies they deliver both EAFRD measures and elements of other national and EU-funded programmes encompassing social inclusion, and rural-urban partnerships.</p> <p>Case study analysis in Denmark reveals another good example of a flexible and integrated approach concerning complementarities between different EU funds in general. Denmark also provides a specific example of how two funds, in this case EAFRD and EFF, can be closely integrated at local level. Where an area dependent on fisheries coincides with a Leader territory, a single common LAG may be set up. It is the LAG's responsibility to ensure that projects financed under the EFF programme and the EARDF are kept separate. However, projects which include activities aimed at achieving the same overall objectives, but where the individual activities are eligible for support under both funds, may be supported from both funds. The measures under the EFF programme and the RDP are managed by the same units in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries.</p> <p>Another relevant example is the 'Pays' in the region of Languedoc-Roussillon with an established local partnership and a local strategy focused on environmental protection and related developmental activities. Many of the French 'Pays' also serve as LAGs under Axis 4 of the EAFRD. Some of the larger 'Pays' include some territory defined as urban.</p> <p>These 3 examples of flexibility and integration at the local delivery level may provide useful input for the work of TWG 4.</p> <p><u>Data availability</u>: Lack of disaggregated data at smaller / sub-regional levels has been a recurring issue for both TWG1 and 2. From work carried out so by DG AGRI and DG REGIO, the most suitable data disaggregation level appears to be at NUTS 3, since there is a lack of data at a lower level, and at a higher level, the distinction between urban and rural loses its value.</p>
Agenda Item	Outcomes of TWG 2: Links between agriculture and the wider rural economy
	<i>TWG2: "Agriculture and the wider rural economy: TWG2 Status Report"</i> by Adrian Neal, EN RD Contact Point.
Discussion Points	<u>Focus of the TWGs activities</u> : one of the original goals of the group was, if possible, to identify a typology of rural areas related, at least in part, to

economic drivers and the nature of the links between agriculture and the rest of the rural economy. 18 NUTS 3 regions were selected and investigated, but the first quantitative and qualitative analysis results made clear that, not only was it difficult to define such a typology, but that (given the resources available to the TWG) it would be impossible to generalise the results in a meaningful fashion for all European regions. For this reason the focus of the group was slightly modified and the investigation of the linkages has become the main vehicle to detect useful elements in the rural areas examined, in order to identify policy related findings of use to improve implementation in the RDPs in this programming period and to provide useful insights for the future programming period. It was pointed out that the initial focus of the group was the investigation of the linkages *per se*, and not how agriculture can stimulate the creation of the linkages. The purpose of the in-depth examination of the RDPs in six regions included to understand how coordination and integration of the measures has stimulated, improved or supported linkages.

Coordination between different funding instruments, at European, national and regional level, is considered a crucial element to enhance the effectiveness of public support in developing and improving the economic situation of the rural areas and the linkages that exist between agriculture and the other sectors. Among the many factors and drivers influencing the linkage between agriculture and the wider rural economies, the concept of peripherality and the influence of urban areas are considered important to identify and understand what developmental approaches and support for rural areas can be the most useful.

In the discussion of the factors important in analysing linkages, the level of education in rural areas; the presence of innovative actions and the role of agriculture in the service sector, specifically in peri-urban areas; were mentioned. A specific analysis of the impact that large retailers operating in rural areas can have on the creation and development of the linkages as well as of the possible resources conflicts existing in rural areas was suggested. Clarification was requested concerning the geographical distribution in the selection of the regions.

It was pointed out that some European "macro regions", such as the Baltic region, are not very well represented in the TWG2 analysis. It was recalled that the findings of the group could not be treated as applicable to all European regions, even though they are important and constitute essential results that can be very useful in the development of advice and also suggestions for the future programming period.

Agenda Item

Outcomes of TWG 3: Public goods and public interventions

TWG3: "Public goods and public intervention: state of play" by David Baldock, EN RD contact Point.

Discussion points

Scope of TWG3 activities: The starting point of the work of the TWG3 was clarifying the concept of a PG itself, which can be approximated as "the

outcome of a deliberate action which has value but that is not delivered through the market system". The conceptual framework provided highlights well the reasons why and how rural development policy addresses the satisfaction of public needs. In this context, the work undertaken within the group has resulted in the majority of examples being concerned with environmental public goods, nevertheless, social public goods (in particular rural vitality) have also been addressed. The role of forestry in the provision of PGs has been recognized by the group but has not been integrated into its work.

Social public goods: The view was expressed that social public goods should be taken [more] into account by TWG3. In particular, the issue of "rural vitality", its definition in respect to the wider EU cohesion policy, the justification for its support at EU level and, eventually, the way in which it is delivered through Axis 3 measures of the RDPs. Some additional work on this has been already integrated in the latest report of TWG3 together with the work on spill-over effects of some environmental PGs and needs to be further discussed with members. The members of the TWGs and of the Coordination committee are invited to share any available background work and/or evidence related to this topic.

Suppliers of PGs: The importance of the provision of public goods through agriculture has been recognised, as well the need to support their delivery, even if there is still a need to better define what PGs are and where they are provided at Member State and the EU level. Farmers, together with other land managers, are recognised to be the main actors involved in the provision of PGs, but evidence and practical examples of this engagement have to be provided in order to underpin the need for related policies. On the other hand, the definition of an adequate level of public support is needed where continued agricultural land management is threatened by declining market prices and farm incomes, in view of ensuring the maintenance of an economically sustainable farming model.

Demand for PGs: It is necessary to identify the added value at EU level deriving from public support to the provision of PGs. The citizens paying for the provision of such PGs are the primary beneficiaries. The view was articulated that it should be made clear that the value of a PG resides in the potential public demand for that good.

Agenda Item

State of play of TWG4: delivery mechanisms of European rural development policy

- *"Thematic Work Group on Delivery mechanisms of EU rural development policy"*, Peter Wehrheim, Unit G1, Coherence of Rural Development, DG AGRI
- *"Potential links between: TWG4 Delivery mechanisms of EU rural development policy and other analytical work conducted by the EN RD"*, Michael Gregory, EN RD Contact Point.

Discussion points

Scope of analysis: The importance and complexity of the subject to be examined by TWG4 was recognised by members. Two issues raised were that the TWG4, by focusing on case studies, should examine possible problems of co-financing in rural areas and also complementarity between different funding sources. It was clarified that the case study based work will actively consider financing, complementarity (recognising the importance of cooperation between different funds and avoiding duplication) and identify difficulties that are experienced on the ground through gathering information regarding implementation in the MS.

It was suggested that emphasis should be given on the meaning of, and how to achieve, the 2020 Strategy goals and that TWG4 should explore this issue. It was clarified that the 2020 Strategy is not so directly relevant to the work that has to be done on delivery mechanisms and other measures/instruments are already in place which more directly serve the aims of the 2020 Strategy.

The 1st Pillar and its links with the 2nd Pillar: was brought up as an issue for consideration, including that more emphasis should be given to the 1st Pillar and its implementation mechanisms. It was suggested that there is a need to examine coordination with cross compliance, analyse Article 68 and the connections between the two Pillars, the management rules for different funds, and the implications for Axis 4 of the mainstreaming of Leader. It is recognised that the links between the two Pillars are very important and that there is a need to address this issue (including in relation to demarcation and synergies). Moreover, co-financing rates are of significant importance and will also be covered in the analysis.

Beneficiaries Perspective: It was proposed that TWG4 should examine the role of the beneficiaries and their involvement in the delivery mechanisms. It was suggested that attention should be given to the dialogue between the beneficiaries and the implementing authorities. The aim of TWG4 is to examine the delivery mechanisms both from the policy formulation level towards the final beneficiaries (top-down), and from the beneficiaries towards the policy designers (bottom-up). The beneficiaries' obligations for receiving support and participating in EARDF funded schemes will be examined, but a beneficiary survey is not foreseen.

Methodology and timing: On the methodology for the 6 case studies interviews, the criteria for selecting the stakeholders was debated. It was explained that a variety of stakeholders will be interviewed, but that it will be impossible to conduct a comprehensive and representative stakeholder survey. Accordingly, a semi-structured questionnaire is being applied, with a focus on members of a wide spectrum of organisations (ranging from NGOs to national implementing bodies). It was clarified that the method to be followed will not sum a number of personal opinions but is designed to identify specific issues – initially through discussion - and to be based on evidence. Since it will not be feasible to examine all RDPs, TWG4 will use a range of available sources of information, utilise contributions from experts and – possibly - also be informed by information provided by other related work conducted.

Decentralisation and centralisation of the Programmes as applied by various MSs was another issue raised. It was explained that case studies are selected from MS that apply both types of implementation model.

Agenda Item

Next steps for the TWGs: deliverables and dissemination

"Thematic Working Groups 1-3 framework for dissemination" by Rob Peters, Head Unit G3, DG AGRI.

Agenda Item

Closing remarks by the Chairman

There is a need to illuminate the workings of the current programming period and prepare for the next period. The EN RD's analytical and thematic work will be continuing and the expectation is that it will provide an opportunity for informed reflection on the future, including further thinking about the CAP post-2013.