

1. Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2012: priorities supporting RDP implementation

- The objective of the activities outlined in the Network's Programme is to produce an added value for the Estonian Rural Development Program (RDP) implementation, including the involvement of beneficiaries and other parties interested in rural development.
- The main tasks of the Estonian NRN include the following:
 - Promoting the formation of new thematic groups and networks;
 - Providing Leader support activities for Local Action Groups (LAGs) and coordinating information exchange;
 - Collecting and disseminating project examples that have received support from RDP;
 - Promoting transnational cooperation, incl. exchanging information with European Network for Rural Development (ENRD).
- The NRN actions include the following:
 - Developing the website of NRN: collecting and disseminating the information about events; collecting and disseminating media publications according to target groups; establishing and updating different databases;
 - Publishing weekly e-newsletter "Võrgukiri"; compiling and publishing different publications and information materials;
 - Informing through virtual media - making and ordering video- and media-stories;
 - Organizing and co-organizing information days, seminars, thematic events and conferences;
 - Organizing international study trips; hosting international study trips; participating at events organized by ENRD and foreign NRNs;
 - Compiling, conducting and ordering questionnaires and researches.
- Quantitative targets are only set for larger network activities. An annual work plan is discussed each year with the Ministry of Agriculture and is set out in the European Rural Development Programme (ERDP) Technical Assistance plan. The work programme will be renewed as needed, with ideas coming from Chamber of Cooperation and Ministry of Agriculture, LAGs and other stakeholders.



1.2 Focus and annual priorities supporting the RDP implementation in 2012

- The annual work plan was approved on the 02.02.2012.
- The main annual priorities of the network are the following:
 - Contributing to the Leader measures implementation and preparations for the next period to inform LAGs and ministries about the multi-funding possibilities;
 - Collecting relevant RDP project examples and developing the NRN website database;
 - Improving rural entrepreneurship and associations by developing ENRD initiatives (cooperation, local food, social farming etc) in Estonia;
 - Collecting to NRN webpage news and events about Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2013.
- The main target groups are wider audience, agricultural producers, rural entrepreneurs and LAGs.

2. Thematic Initiatives launched by the Network

- Activities that started in 2010 and 2011 will continue in 2012:
 - Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas: Local food and social farming;
 - Youth in Rural Areas;
 - Cooperation in agriculture;
 - Debates and discussions on CAP post 2013;
 - EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region;
 - Forestry;
- No new thematic initiatives were not launched in 2012.

• **Thematic initiatives addressed through events in 2012**

- January: Participating in International Green Week in Grüne Woche in Berlin in EC stand with Estonian RDP project examples
- February: Thematic day for local food networks
- March: Thematic day on social farming
- April: Estonian Rural Fair 2012 – Big common stand for Ministry of Agricultural, Rural Economy Research Centre, Estonian Agricultural Registers and Information Board (ARIB) and Rural Development Association (co-organizer - Estonian NRN, 3 days);
- April: study tour for agricultural advisers and Paying Agency regional officers to Brussels on “How EU works?”
- April: study tour on social farming to Finland (4 days)
- May: Small study-tour on local food to South-France to participate I European Market of local products (NRN, Food and Veterinary Board and Managing Authority, small-scale food producers – all together 6 persons)
- September: International forestry conference “Wood for Energy” (co-organizer, 2 days)
- September: Study tour on community houses and village development to Latvia and Lithuania (4 days)
- November: small study-tour to Finland – rural gala, innovation seminar and Leader seminar for MA, PA, NRN and Leader people (8 persons)
- November: RDP project examples contest “Notice innovative agriculture” ceremony
- November: Thematic seminar for local food networks about EU quality schemes
- November: Thematic day and study tour in Estonia on social farming

2.1 LEADER-related activities

- One full time persons in the NSU and three full time epersons from the MA deal with LEADER issues.

• **NSU Members and LAG support**

- There are 26 LAGs in Estonia, covering 99.99% of the territory. All the LAGs have implementing their strategies. Estonian Paying Agency (PA) has accepted more than 5,616 project applications as of 31 October 2012, which is about 90% of the entire Leader budget. 50% of the entire Leader budget has been paid out.
- The NRN organises seminars for LAGs on different topics as well as providing telephone consultations. In addition a specific working group for future Leader 2014-2020 has been set up consisting of MA, PA and NRN representatives and social partners. It has met 4 times.
- The NSU/MA/other plan cooperation fairs, LAG visits abroad and other events. The NSU members participate to different EU NRNs events very actively, leading different working groups and doing presentations.

• **Training for LAGs**

- February-March: Leader training for local action groups’ evaluation committee members (2 days, in 2 different places) - <http://www.maainfo.ee/index.php?id=1688&page=3482&>
- March: Leader information day (2012/1) (2 days)
- May: Conference “European day with Leader” in Tallinn with Leader project examples fair - <http://www.maainfo.ee/index.php?id=1728&page=3482&>
- May: Leader information day (2012/2) (2 days)
- June: International conference LINC2012 in Estonia (co-organizer, 3 days) - <http://www.maainfo.ee/index.php?page=3589>
- August: Team training for LAGs on environmental issues (2 days)
- October: Leader information day (2012/3)
- November: Idea-trips “Learn more about Estonia” - Opportunities for Leader programme expansion to involve other ministries (5 trips)
- December: Leader information day (2012/4) (2 days)

- **Guidelines and support documents**

- The NSU and the MA provide guidelines and other supporting documents. All presentations and materials related to training activities and information days organised for LAGs, as well as several support databases, are available on the NRN website. In particular in the website it is possible to find:
 - The LAGs database of news;
 - The TNC partnership search database;
 - The list of open calls dates' and measures in different LAGs;
 - The LAGs and NRN database of study trips and international events;
 - A FAQ about the Leader measure (cooperation with MA and PA).

- **Transnational Cooperation (TNC) Activity**

- The NSU supports inter-regional and transnational cooperation by collecting TNC offers on its website and by assisting the stakeholders in their participation to thematic events and seminars in Europe.
- Short descriptions of the offers are translated into Estonian: more than 200 cooperation offers have been translated into Estonian (as of December 2012). The MA produced also a little booklet about transnational cooperation in Estonia in English, German and French.
- Estonian NRN, furthermore, disseminates Estonian TNC publications in English, German, French and Russian. The publications are compiled by the MA.
- Estonian LAGs have gained experience in 23 different TNCs and approximately 75% of LAGs have gained experiences in cooperation projects (as of December 2012).
- Information about TNC projects: www.agri.ee/leader/
- Cooperation offers are available on: www.maainfo.ee/index.php?page=3406

3. Relevant Experiences/Good Practices

- The Estonian NRN collects relevant project examples of RDP 2007-2013. Projects are uploaded into the RDP database. The database of RDP projects includes over 100 different project examples. The projects can be found by topic (agro-environment, agriculture, animals' welfare, bio-energy, cooperation, cultural heritage, diversifications, entrepreneurship, natural environment, small-scale processing, tourism, village development, youth), or by measures.

- Database in Estonian: www.maainfo.ee/index.php?page=3302
- Database in English: www.maainfo.ee/index.php?page=3451

- Relevant examples are selected for the database by following criteria:

- Nominees of competition "Notice Innovative Agriculture" in 2012;
- Projects that were selected, videotaped and published on air by Estonian Public Broadcasting in cooperation with NRN;
- Projects that were used for different events, publications and ENRD activities etc.

- **Competition "Notice Innovative Agriculture":**

- For the second time in Estonia, the Rural Economy Research Centre in cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of Agriculture and Estonian Agricultural Registers and Information Board (ARIB) organized RDP project examples competition. In 2011 it was called "Notice Leader". In 2012 the main target was to find projects from axis 1.
- The aim of the competition is to introduce and give recognition to the best projects that have received support from the Estonian RDP 2007-2013 and to the entrepreneurs, NGOs and local administrations that implemented these projects. The Projects were evaluated in three categories: the Best Agricultural Cooperation Project, the Best Agricultural Innovation Project, the Best Agricultural Knowledge Transfer Project. Anyone was allowed to nominate their projects. A total of 18 projects were nominated in the competition "Notice Innovative Agriculture".

4. Monitoring and evaluation of networking

- A rural network performance assessment was done during mid-term evaluation.
- The network doesn't implement self-assessment/evaluation activities nor implement quantitative or qualitative assessments.
- Estonian NRN compiles annual RDP monitoring report about specific indicators, including the number of website visitors, number of participants of events etc.
- Estonian NRN collects information from LAGs about the accepted project applications inside their LAG for annual RDP monitoring.
- The evaluation of NRN activity is a specific task of the MA.

5. Communication

• **Communication plan for the NRN:**

- The communication plan is part of the NRN annual plan. The Estonian NRN communication strategy includes the implementation of the following activities:
 - The publication of a weekly e-newsletter "Võrgukiri";
 - The updated calendar of rural events;
 - Daily updates on NRN and Leader news, incl. news from LAGs and RDP supported projects;
 - TV clips (a` 10 minutes) about RDP projects in cooperation with the Estonian Public Broadcasting. 30 TV clips will be produced in summer 2012 and they will be on-air every weekend from September to December 2012;
 - Videos will be available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/maainfo;
 - Videos are also available on NRN website: [http://www.maainfo.ee/index.php?article_id=2655&page=3265&action=article &](http://www.maainfo.ee/index.php?article_id=2655&page=3265&action=article&);
 - Photos about Rural- and Fisheries Network activities are available on NRN website: www.maainfo.ee/index.php?page=3538;
 - The exhibition on-wheels (15 banners) about RDP village renewal and development projects from all the 15 counties of Estonia. Exhibition was established in cooperation with Estonian Village Movement "Kodukant". The first stop was in the birthday conference of Kodukant in October. But the opening of the exhibition was in Estonian Parliament on 6th of November 2012;
 - The exhibition on-wheels (28 banners) about Estonian LAGs and their area is travelling since the second half of 2010. In 2011 it was more than 20 places all over Estonia, in 2012 more than 10 places.

• **Communication plan for the RDP**

- The working group on RDP communication has been set up in 2010 and in every year it look over and coordinates RDP communication activities of MA, PA and NSU.

6. NRN Knowledge Base

• **Publications:**

- Weekly e-newsletter "Võrgukiri": www.maainfo.ee/index.php?page=3284
- Publications "LEADER for local food development" in Estonian and in English and "Notice Innovative Agriculture – RDP agricultural project examples" in Estonian: www.maainfo.ee/index.php?page=3537
- Latest version of the RDP available on: www.agri.ee/rdp/

• **Links to MA/PA/NRN website:**

- MA – www.agri.ee
- PA – www.pria.ee
- NRN – www.maainfo.ee