

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

- The Latvian Rural Network maintains an annual Work Programme which was approved in January 2012.
- The main priorities of the current AWP include:
 - Promotion of the competitiveness in agricultural and forestry sector;
 - Improving of the environmental and rural landscape;
 - Improving the quality of rural life and diversification of rural economic;
 - Promotion of active public participation in the socio-economic issues and employment.
- The Latvian Rural Network Tasks are divided into four main groups which include:
 - Providing the circulation of information;
 - Popularization of good experience and good practices;
 - Training program development and implementation;
 - Providing of international participation and cooperation process.
- One can access the Latvian Annual Work Programme 2012 on: http://laukutikls.lv/latvijas_lauku_tikls/par_valsts_lauku_tiklu/ricibas_plans/2795-valsts_lauku_tikla_ricibas_programmas_20092013_gadam_ricibas_plana_2012_gadam_finansetie_pasakumi



2. Thematic Initiatives launched by the Network

- **New thematic issues that the network is planning to address:**

- Support for dairy cooperatives;
- Support for non-agricultural entrepreneurship;
- Support for cooperatives;
- Support for home producing;
- Developing of short food supply chains;
- Involving youth in rural development;
- Support for producing innovative product from oats.

- **Continued thematic initiatives:**

- Support for small and medium-sized farms;
- Farmer education in breeding beef and sheep;
- Involving rural youth in promoting of rural development;
- Rural development through LEADER activities;
- Diversification and marketing of bee breeding production;
- Diversification and marketing of sheep breeding production;
- Support for food craft producers;
- Support for organic farming;

- **Issues addressed by the events:**

- Promoting of economic activity in rural areas;
- Support for rural youth in developing entrepreneurship;
- Baltic women's investment in the rural economy;
- Development of home producing;
- Support for industrial hemp cultivation;
- Support for poultry farming;

- Support for breeding goats;
 - Support for beekeepers;
 - Support for potato, onion and garlic cultivation;
 - Berry bushes and orchard integrated farming;
 - Support for bread and pastry producing in small amounts;
- **Issues addressed by working groups:**
- Development of rural areas in collaboration with local municipalities and local action groups (LAGs);
 - Promoting cooperation among small farms;
- At the end of each seminar or conference the audience is surveyed about the quality of the organized event, a lecturer's (s') work, as well as topics they are interested in.
- **Information about thematic initiatives is available on:**
- http://laukutikls.lv/vietejas_iniciativas/zinas.

1.2 LEADER-related activities

- The LEADER approach is used to ensure rural development by promoting the operation of local activity groups, securing better investment of rural development funding to address the needs of the rural population, by mobilizing and involving the existing rural development potential.
- Local activity groups prepare local development strategies of their territories and implement the most appropriate measures of Axis 3 planned in the Rural Development Programme of Latvia 2007–2013 based on the critical areas specified in the strategies.
- Within the framework of the LEADER approach, local initiative will facilitate the development of the rural area of Latvia.
- NSU supports LAGs and organizes trainings, discussions, workshops for LAGs.
- Information about events can be found on webpages:
 - <http://www.laukutikls.lv/leader/zinas>;
 - http://www.laukutikls.lv/biblioteka/cat_view/138-leader/225-pasakumi_vietejam_ricibas_grupam_2012_gada.
- NSU also provides LAGs and potential project writers with guidelines. Guidelines named "Preparing of documents for LEADER projects" are available on the webpage: http://www.laukutikls.lv/leader/leader_rokasgramata.
- Another form of support to LEADER implementation is informing people about LEADER, good practice etc.
- NSU also supports transnational cooperation.
- Inter-territorial and trans-national cooperation includes:
 - Promotion of cooperation both between the local activity groups in Latvia and on a wider scale will facilitate quality transfer and obtaining of experience across local activity groups, solving of topical problems as well as introduction of new and innovative cooperation ideas;
 - Ensuring the operation of local activity groups, acquiring of skills, animation of territory and update of Local Development Strategies;
 - Activities to build the capacity of local leaders and representatives of local activity groups;
 - Quality survey of the respective territory, used as a basis to identify the local rural development priorities, and public awareness measures.
- NSU also plans LAGs visits abroad. Information about these visits can be found in LAGs' reports.
- NSU provides partner search facilities, NSU had been translated European Network's for Rural Development guide "LEADER transnational cooperation guide".
- Information about transnational cooperation guide is available on the webpage: http://www.laukutikls.lv/biblioteka/cat_view/138-leader/229-starptautiska_sadarbiba.

3. Relevant Experiences/Good Practices

- The development of rural entrepreneurship and social development, as well as the development of rural areas, are promoted by implementing projects funding by Latvian government, EU and other funding sources.
- Lack of innovative ideas and initiative in rural areas makes it necessary to organize exchange of experience in order to get inspiration from others, as well as establish mutual cooperation.
- Activities organized in this case are:
 - Inter-territorial and trans-national experience exchange visits;
 - Exhibitions;
 - Implementing of innovative and entrepreneurship developing measures in rural areas;
 - Farming demonstrations and thematic initiatives;
 - Creation of data base for good practices, structured by sectors.
- Relevant experiences/good practices are available on: http://laukutikls.lv/vietejas_iniciativas/laba_prakse.

4. Monitoring and evaluation of networking

- Latvian Rural Network Support Unit provides quarterly reports to Ministry of Agriculture on implemented measures and their impact on objectives of Rural Development Programme.
- NSU also provides annual report on the implementation of the Work Programme.
- Performance indicators of each activity are used to evaluate National Rural Network activities.
- On request of Ministry of Agriculture or EU Commission NSU provides any other report and activity evaluation.

5. Communication

- The main objective of circulation of information is to develop coordinated sharing of information in rural areas. This is reached by compiling and disseminating information, organizing informative events, implementing researches and developing policy recommendations with particular attention to the implementation of RDP 2007-2013.
- Main activities:
 - Preparing and dissemination of informative materials;
 - Organizing of informative events;
 - Development of political recommendations, research activities and knowledge transfer;
 - Maintenance and updating of the website: <http://laukutikls.lv/>;
 - Analyzing of up to date sectorial information, preparation and submission to the members of Latvian Rural Network;
 - Creating database of the members of Latvian Rural Network.
- The RDP Communication plan is available on the website: http://www.zm.gov.lv/doc_upl/Komunikaciju_strategija_LAP_final_.pdf.
- The most frequently used communication tools are: press releases, press conferences, interviews with experts, publications, information leaflets, seminars and conferences and information days.

6. Cooperation interests of the Rural Network

- It is necessary for organizations and institutions involved in rural development to actively participate and inform organizations, institutions of EU member states and candidates about experiences, activities, national and international workshops, conferences and exhibitions.
- For a good dissemination of practices and knowledge from the organizations and institutions of EU member states, it is necessary

to provide representatives of Latvian Rural Network with opportunity to attend national and trans-national seminars, conferences and exhibitions.

- It is necessary to provide technical support for international cooperation projects.
- Activities organized in this case are:
 - Participation in workshops, conferences and exhibitions in EU member states promoting the implementation of RDP 2007-2013;
 - Technical support for the international cooperation projects – coordination, seeking for the partners;
 - Participating in activities launched by ENRD;
 - Participation in meetings and cooperation launched by Baltic and Nordic Rural Networks.

7. Documents

- The latest version of the NSP is available here: http://www.zm.gov.lv/doc_upl/Strategic_Plan_EN.pdf.
- The latest version of RDP is available here: http://www.zm.gov.lv/doc_upl/RDP_final%282%29.pdf.