



Summary of the outcomes of the 16th NRN Meeting

18 – 19th October, 2012

Nicosia, Cyprus

Compiled by the ENRD Contact Point

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Agenda Item **Opening of the Meeting**

Discussion Points The meeting opened by a welcome speech from Mrs Androula Georgiou, Director of the Department of Agriculture of The Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, Cyprus.

Rob Peters (DG AGRI) opened the session by welcoming participants to the 16th NRN and explaining the programme.

Presentations [Welcome speech](#) from Mrs Androula Georgiou, Director of the Department of Agriculture of The Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, Cyprus.

Agenda Item **Programming, monitoring and evaluation of the future National rural networks**

Discussion Points To frame the work of the morning, Michael Gregory from the ENRD CP made a presentation explaining that the whole exercise was about how to demonstrate in which ways and by which means networks and networking can contribute to successful policy delivery.

More specifically it was explained that NRNs should think about how to develop an intervention logic around the four main objectives linked to the networking function of the RD policy and the importance of linking these to a set of operational objectives, as stated in the draft legislative proposal for the next programming period. Output indicators should also be elaborated and clearly defined and eventually, it was reminded that no plan can be delivered without adequate resources.

Angelos Sanopoulos and Jela Tvrdonva from the Evaluation helpdesk addressed aspects linked to the evaluation of NRNs in the framework of the intervention logic proposed. It was explained that until now, there was an assessment of outputs (how much was achieved) by the program networks and in some of the other NRNs but few information about results and impacts (what change was induced by the network activities). Basic needs for a proper evaluation framework of NRNs and networking in the context of an intervention logic were explained.

Michael Gregory explained to participants that the rest of the morning would be dedicated to deeply discuss and exchange points of view about the programming aspects, monitoring and evaluating networks and the minimum set of tasks for NRNs in the framework of three working groups. Results would then be shared and discussed back in a plenary session.

Presentations Key elements of National rural networks and networking as regards:

- [Intervention logic and Monitoring](#) by Michael Gregory (ENRD CP)
- [Evaluation of NRNs](#) by Angelos Sanopoulos (EENRD)

Outcomes of the working groups

[Working Group A](#) on the Network Intervention Logic
[Working Group B](#) on Monitoring and Evaluation of Networks
[Working Group C](#) on Establishing a Core Set of Activities for Networking

Reporting back to the plenary, the hosts of the three working groups summarized the discussion of their respective groups.

It was mentioned that in general there was a common understanding and agreement that an intervention logic was a very important tool that should be adopted. However, it was necessary to make the necessary provisions in the ex-ante framework so that MAs and Evaluators do look at the NRN function within a holistic view of the contribution to the wider RDP objectives.

Regarding the communication functions of NRNs, group C discussed this point in depth, as NRNs should not be mixed up with a publicity service for the Managing Authority. But the two way communication as well as the information role of NRN was broadly recognized.

Action points

The importance of having a minimum set of tasks defined in the regulation was also generally recognised.

Altogether these workshops helped develop a shared understanding of the role and function that the NRN should take in the future programming period, at a time of ongoing negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament on the draft legislative proposal for Rural Development Policy.

Agenda Item

The importance of Communication as a tool for effective networking

Discussion Points

The ENRD Communicating Rural Development Gateway (CRD)

Amalia Ripea from the ENRD CP presented the CRD Gateway to the audience. She explained that the aim of the CRD Gateway is to promote and share communication materials produced across all EU Member States (using the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development).

NRNs will play a crucial role in the success of the communication gateway as they are able to identify, select and send to the ENRD contact point communication material to achieve the following objectives:

- Learning lessons for what works well and less well
- Inspire and guide new ideas and alternative messages
- Increasing the visibility of EAFRD initiatives at the European level

- Preventing duplications /enhancing efficiency of communications actions

The audience was invited to visit the [CRD Gateway](#) on the ENRD website.

A point on the quality and consistency of the products sent to be uploaded was made. Regarding the language of the communication products to upload, they don't have to be solely in English but the short description of each product should be in English. Quality criteria for selecting and promoting the relevant examples were listed be it in terms of content, design or dissemination.

Adrian Neal from the ENRD Contact Point explained that the objective was to establish the CRD Gateway as the definitive source of RD communication products to inspire and guide the current and future generation of RDP communication campaigns.

This specific RD gateway can be used as well to support the communication on the CAP as a whole (for example, it could help gathering examples of communication actions for the 50th anniversary of the CAP, for the CAP communication Award ceremony organized by DG AGRI on 10 December 2012).

After that, NRNs representatives were invited to post examples of existing communication products on four separate areas relating to publications, web-based tools, audiovisual products or communication campaigns.

For a more detailed overview of the NRNs responses, please link to [publications](#), [web-based tools](#), [audiovisual products](#) or [communication campaigns](#).

The ENRD Photo Exhibition

Back to the plenary, Sabria Regragui from the ENRD proposed to NRNs to host the ENRD photo competition and showed a little [video](#) about what it is about. She also explained that the ENRD contact point will offer NRNs the following tools:

- 2 sets of the 30 winning posters sent either to the NRNs or directly to the exhibition place
- Copies of the photo exhibition booklet (EN)
- A video of the photo exhibition (subtitles in EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, PL available soon)
- Promotional banners for online promotion and mailings + explanatory poster (EN)
- And access to InDesign files to produce other language versions

Presentations

[The setting-up of an NRNs communication group and the contribution of NRNs to the ENRD Communications gateway](#) by Adrian Neal and Amalia Ripea (ENRD)

Action points

CP)

[Proposal to NRNs for hosting the ENRD photo exhibition](#) by Sabria Regragui (ENRD CP)

To achieve the expected functionality and objectives of the CRD gateway, the following next steps were proposed:

1. Update (and/or identify) and engage key CRD Practitioners network members in all MSs by end 2012 (NRNs)
2. Promotion of the CRD Gateway through all relevant websites / links (ENRD/NRNs)
3. Utilization of the CRD network to expand the CRD Gateway examples to include more: Country /regional coverage and types of communication product (NRNs)
4. Agree on milestones whereby each MS commits to identify, prepare & upload:
 - At least 5 new, high quality, examples by end 2012
 - At least 5 additional (examples by end October 2013, linked to new programming period)

Target by end 2012: 250+ examples
Target by end 2013: 450+ examples
5. “oPENRD Forum” on CRD Gateway for feedback on tool launched by the end of October 2012 (ENRD)
6. ENRD CP Guidance document on CRD Gateway (November)
7. ENRD CP on-going editing and upload of examples
8. Hosting the next CRD Network Meeting: ‘Successful Communication Campaigns for the next generation of RDPs’ (NRNs)
9. ENRD Magazine partnership expansion:
 - Dissemination channels
 - Partners in identifying stories
 - Partners in translation
10. New RDP Projects Brochure:
 - Multi-thematic approach
 - Based on RDP projects database examples
 - In-depth stories

Agenda Item **NRN activities**

Discussion Points **NRN Needs Assessment**

Marina Brakalova from the ENRD CP presented a summary of the key elements identified in the process of the NRN training needs assessment that was launched amongst NSUs in September 2012.

The summary presented key areas that NSUs and MAs identified so far as requiring further mentoring to increase effectiveness of the networks and services of the NSUs and which in a nutshell comprise the following aspects :

- Planning, governance and management
- Structure and representation to allow for stakeholder involvement and shared governance
- Effective stakeholder involvement and participation
- Thematic analysis
- Facilitation
- Planning and delivering effective communication

Based on the initial feedback, participants were asked to reflect upon the needs and resources of their NSUs and provide feedback on three main questions:

- What does their team need to know, be capable of and be aware of to support their current and ongoing work?
- What expertise, knowledge, and tools they can offer to peer NSUs?
- What method for acquiring and accessing further information, knowledge and skills they propose and possibly support?

The input from participants will provide further input for the enhancement of the needs analysis and the elaboration of a proposed strategy for addressing those needs in the upcoming 6 months.

The issue of timing was however pointed out: such a strategy should take into account the fact that we are at the end of the programming period.

Input from participants organized in clusters of topics can be found in Annex 1.

Other Network Activities

- The Cypriot NRN, who hosted the [2nd Mediterranean Cluster Meeting](#), the day before, summarized the outcomes of that meeting.
- The French NRN informed that a survey on Short food supply chains was

Presentations

going to be sent to all NRNs.

- The Romanian NRN encourage other NRNs to share their views on the monitoring and evaluation approach adopted by the Romanian NRN on a dedicated “MyENRD” Forum
- The Belgian (Walloon) NRN informed that a publication has been issued about “Design, management and relevant practices of networking”.
- The 17th NRN meeting was introduced to participants. This will take place in Sweden and will be hosted by the Swedish NRN.

[The assessment of NRN needs](#) by Marina Brakalova (ENRD CP)

[Invitation to attend the 17th NRN meeting](#), by the Swedish National Rural Network

Action points

NRN needs assessment

The following next steps were defined:

- Enhanced needs assessment report by Nov 12 (ENRD CP)
- Further consultation with the NSU teams on detailed needs, proposed approach and commitments for peer exchange learning (ENRD CP with NRN contributions)
- Developing a draft work plan for the period December, 2012 – July – 2013 (ENRD CP)

Annex I

Input from participants organized in clusters of topics for the needs assessment session:

Needs	Who	Input available	
General framework, awareness and guidance			
RD Program, , Guidance from the EU, Guidance for Multi-funding and support for preparing guidance on multi funding and networking for national level	Cyprus,		
MA/NRN Distinguished role, better understanding for MA-NSU roles, understanding for all stakeholders what and why is the NRN	Cyprus, Slovakia		
Multi-funding experience	Estonia		
NSU management and effective functioning			
Multi-funding system	Spain		
Getting a better cooperation with the MA	Sweden		
NSU internal coordination and management	Slovakia		
Monitoring and evaluation of the NRN work	Latvia		
How to organize effectively working meetings	France	Facilitation	ENRD CP
Communication			
Eco communication	Wallonia		
Planning and implementing of effective public campaigns and effective communication	Poland, Greece	Information dissemination on a grass root level	Latvia
Social media, audio visual, communication tools for effective reach out	Cyprus	How to set up a communication plan, how to create different kinds of communication tools Publications	Wallonia Romania
Stakeholder involvement and participation			
How to involve stakeholders	Poland	Methods to increase	Sweden

		cooperation among stakeholders	
Stakeholder mapping and needs analysis	Romania		
Communication with and among stakeholders, how to build links among them, effective communication among MA- LAGs, NRN	Spain, France, Cyprus, Estonia, Sweden	Organizing thematic consultation process	Cyprufros
Facilitation skills	Hungary, France, Sweden	Effective presentation and training Facilitation	ENRD CP
How to work with the media	Be, Poland, Sweden		
How to share photos within ENRD	Wallonia		
Others			
		Applied research	Greece
		Training program on youth entrepreneurship	Latvia
		LEADER experience: minimum rules, maximum trust	Estonia, Hungary
		TNC promotion and support, National and regional RN coordination	France

The proposed methods for providing and acquiring further competence building included:

- Practical training sessions
- Thematic visits/NRN from other MS
- Clusters to discuss the same topics
- Videos thematic
- Workshop
- Phone call based consultation sessions
- Peer exchange
- Social media
- Internal communication
- Study visits

- One to one exchange meetings
- Staff exchange – 1-2 weeks
- opENRD (NRN- NSU)
- Focus groups
- LEADER event
- Joint training ENRD – NRN
- Training
- Seminar
- ENRD Summer school

The Walloon, Hungarian and Finnish NSUs offered to contribute in hosting peer exchange visits or co-host workshops that will be oriented towards capacity building.

Annex 2

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	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Communication about the meeting was good	11	3				14
Organisation of the meeting whilst in Nicosia was good	12	2				14
The venue was appropriate for this kind of meeting	11	1	2			14
The interactive methods used for this meeting were very effective	5	8				13
There was enough time for questions and discussions	4	10				14
The meeting provided me with new and relevant information	5	9				14
I made new and useful contacts during the meeting	3	11				14
I was able to fully express my comments, questions and ideas	8	6				14

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
Presentation on the intervention logic and monitoring	4	9	1			14
Presentation on evaluation	3	10				13

	Excellent	Good	Neither	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Working Group A: Intervention logic and core set of activities for networking	1	5				6
Working Group B: Monitoring		4				4
Working Group C: Evaluation of networks and networking		7	1	1		9
Reporting on outcomes from the workshops	1	11	1			14
The setting-up of a NRNs communication group and the contribution of NRNs to the ENRD Communications gateway	6	7	1			14
Proposal to NRNs for hosting the ENRD photo exhibition	8	6				14
Presentation on the NRN needs assessment	4	9	1			14
Discussion on potential capacity building activities/initiatives	6	5	1			12

On the question “How can we better organize similar events in the future?”, the following answers were made:

- More time for discussion/workshops, extend length of the meeting (1,5 days)
- More short discussion in small groups related to presentations (2-3 min of reflection)
- It’s important to create a sense of security in a group to get a good discussion (group c)
- Better data-projector, more light in the room, better microphone
- Summer school of ENRD

On the question “What would you like to discuss during next NRN meeting?”, the following answers were made:

- Some initiative like entrepreneurship, SSC and forestry.
- Multi-funds sharing, network roles and experiences.
- Future work and organization of NRNs taking into account the new period and EIP and EENRD functions. How other MS are going to manage these tasks?