

News in Brief

First meeting of Evaluation Expert Committee

The first meeting of the **Expert Committee on Evaluation of Rural Development Programmes** (or the "Evaluation Expert Committee") was held at DG AGRI on 15 December 2008. Two representatives from the national competent authorities participate in Committee meetings, along with the Commission and the Helpdesk. The Committee will follow and provide advice on the work of the Evaluation Expert Network.

An early item on the agenda was a presentation by the Commission about the establishment of the **European Network for Rural Development (EN RD)** (read article page 15). Launched in Cyprus in October 2008, the EN RD is for networking of national networks, organisations and administrations active in the field of rural development in the framework of RD policy 2007-2013.

The Helpdesk of the Evaluation Expert Network prepared four presentations for the Committee. **Applying the CMEF High Nature Value (HNV) Impact Indicator** provided summary details about the revised guidance document for this important priority area for rural development which aims to preserve and develop HNV farming and forestry systems (read article page 1). Results of the **SWOT Analysis of the Evaluation System** and the associated **Needs Assessment in the**

Member States [read article page 6] were also presented plus outline details of the Evaluation Expert Network's **Work programme for 2009** (read article page 8).

One of the three concluding presentations was **Preliminary Findings of the Synthesis of the Ex-ante Evaluations of the Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013** (read article page 9). This study aimed to improve the monitoring and evaluation of rural development programmes, and assess the extent to which the needs of rural areas in the Member States are covered by RD measures.

The Commission provided **Conclusions concerning networking and governance from the Cyprus conference on Rural Development**. Finally, to exchange experiences and good evaluation practice, a Member State (Italy) reported on its **ongoing evaluation system and the national evaluation network** (read article page 11).

A number of questions were asked on the various topics, to which the Commission replied. The next meeting of the Evaluation Expert Committee will be on 23 June 2009.