



Report on the Contribution of the European Network for Rural Development to the Public debate on the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013

(13/07/2010)

Introduction and background

DG Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission held a public debate on the Common Agricultural Policy post-2013 from 12 April to early June 2010. The intention was to give as many EU citizens and stakeholders as possible the opportunity to have their say at an early stage in the reflection process about the future CAP. A formal consultation procedure will be launched once the Commission issues a Communication on the subject later in the year.

The Commission positioned the debate around four key questions, and invited participants to respond to each:

- Why do we need a European common agricultural policy?
- What do citizens expect from agriculture?
- Why reform the CAP?
- What tools do we need for the CAP of tomorrow?

EU citizens and stakeholders were also addressed through the European Network for Rural Development (EN RD). The members of the Coordination committee were invited to launch discussions in their own country/organisation on a series of joint issues and questions specifically focused on the future rural development policy. On 14 April 2010 an extraordinary meeting of the Coordination committee was convened in order to launch this process. To guide the contributions, three additional specific rural development questions, formulated in the context of the general CAP questions were prepared:

The rural development questions

A. What should be the objectives of the future rural development policy?

- In the light of the future challenges for agriculture and rural areas, what should be the objectives of the rural development policy after 2013?
- What place should rural development occupy, within the future CAP and alongside the other EU policies, to make a meaningful contribution to the future EU priorities?

B. How can the policy instruments be made more effective?

- How can support be better targeted to bring about the most efficient allocation of resources, and thus to maximize the added value of the policy in pursuit of the future EU priorities?
- In the light of experience to date, is the existing toolkit of measures adequate for meeting the policy objectives? What role should be played by Leader in the future?
- How can we develop and improve evaluation methods and the underlying common indicators to best assess policy impact and render results visible without putting too much burden on Member States and beneficiaries?

C. How can the management of the policy be improved?

- How can the policy be better managed, including better coordination with other policies for the purpose of ensuring a coherent approach in rural areas?
- In what ways can both content and delivery be simplified, so as to facilitate implementation and empower local actors, without compromising the objectives of the policy and sound financial management?

There was a strong response to the invitation for contributions: contributions from 24 national rural networks (NRNs) and from 12 EU organisations participating in the EN RD were received by the European Commission by end of June 2010. The national rural networks summarised the discussions with their network participants. A webpage was created on the EN RD website where individual written contributions can be consulted (http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/cap-consultation-process_home_en/en/cap-consultation-process_home_en.cfm). An Annex presents more details on the consultation process.

The present report, prepared by the EN RD Contact Point in collaboration with DG AGRI, is a synthesis of the EN RD contributions.

1. WHAT SHOULD BE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FUTURE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY?

1.1. In the light of the future challenges for agriculture and rural areas, what should be the objectives of the rural development policy after 2013?

1.1.1. Challenges for agriculture and rural areas

Several of the challenges identified (food security, territorial, social and environmental challenges) are common to almost all National Networks and European organisations contributions.

(a) Environmental challenges

There is a clear view among the EN RD stakeholders on the importance of environmental challenges (soil degradation, shortage of water and water quality, loss of biodiversity) and the need to improve the sustainable management of natural resources.

Many ecosystems and landscapes are threatened by collapse of traditional farming and forestry practices.

The scale of public goods services and required policy response is considered to be underestimated.

(b) Territorial challenges

As far as territorial challenges are concerned, rural-urban differences should be addressed and the economic sustainability and quality of life in rural areas ensured.

In many rural areas social structures are not resilient and it is important to sustain communities and local economies. This is a particular challenge for remote areas and those suffering from a lack of human capital.

The provision of public goods in disadvantaged areas is a serious issue.

It is important that the potentialities of rural areas should be recognised as well as their disadvantages.

(c) Challenges for the farming communities

Important challenges for farming communities to address are:

- the maintenance of levels of farmers' and rural income ensuring fair living standards;
- to reinforce the economic position of farmers within the food chain;
- vitality and productivity in the farm and other sectors, in the context of an aging rural and farm population.

(d) Climate and energy challenges

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution and exploit local and decentralised energy sources in rural areas. The future of rural energy has to be sustainable – not only environmentally friendly, but also secure and affordable.

1.1.2. Objectives of the Rural Development Policy

(a) Production related objectives

A significant number of EN RD stakeholders take the view that sustainable food production should be maintained in Europe based on:

- the improvement of the position of farmers within the food chain;
- the development of certified production systems;
- restriction of GMOs;
- food security and quality at affordable prices;
- a better connection at local and regional level between producers and consumers (support to local food systems);
- the preservation of the diversity of farm production systems and farm structures including the smaller and disadvantaged farms;
- provision of equal opportunities for EU farmers including fair competition (e.g. support for the setting up of young farmers being available in all Member States);

- increased support to organic production;
- the need to attract new people and rejuvenate the farming and whole rural economy, bearing in mind the European demographic challenge to ensure viability for future generations.

Sustainability of the rural economy, in the broad sense, should be based on:

- competitiveness (through business development, modernisation, innovation and new technologies, transition from an industry-based economy to a knowledge-based economy);
- green growth (development of green technologies including more focus on the utilization of waste in agricultural and food production).

(b) Non-economic objectives

A generally held view among stakeholders is that European agriculture's contribution to public goods should be recognized and in particular rewarded for:

- preserving natural resources (including combating soil erosion, protection of humus, protection against natural hazards, sustainable irrigation systems) and protecting biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems;
- climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- maintaining rural vitality in areas highly dependent on agriculture;
- preserving cultural landscape and rural heritage rich in aesthetic, cultural diversity or historical value;
- diversifying energy production and producing renewable energy such as wood, other biomass, biogas, sun, wind and water.

The forestry sector is also recognised as contributing to these public goods.

Beyond the above mentioned objectives, the most frequent social objectives proposed for the rural development policy include:

- social cohesion (social inclusion, the fight against poverty, ensuring fair living standards for rural population including farmers, reducing imbalance of incomes and living standards among farmers in new and old Member States, reducing rural unemployment);
- developing social capital and addressing educational needs in rural areas;
- a better balanced age structure of the rural population.

(c) Territorial objectives

According to many EN RD stakeholders, the strengths and weaknesses of rural areas should be recognized, in particular to:

- prevent decline and abandonment of rural areas and the need to slow the rural exodus occurring in many Member States;
- fight against the loss of agricultural land for other purposes (e.g. urban sprawl);
- recognize the dependence on neighbouring urban areas to achieve local development and the resulting need to reinforce urban-rural linkages and dialogue;
- ensure access to basic services for all of the rural population .

1.2. What place should rural development occupy, within the future CAP and alongside the other EU policies, to make a meaningful contribution to the future EU priorities?

- The consensus among EN RD contributions is that a strong rural development component in the CAP is needed to address the challenges facing both agriculture and rural areas. The general view is to maintain a two pillars CAP with a reinforcement of rural development and more resources allocated to it. Rural development policy objectives should be in synergy with those of the 1st pillar.
- There is a general wish for a better fine-tuning of rural development policy with other EU policies such as cohesion policy, employment policy and environmental protection.

- The rural development policy should achieve a more balanced socio-economic development between different regions; rural development should be closer to general regional development (the more common view, in contrast, a clear separation between rural and regional development is also proposed).
- There is general support for more direct recognition of the Lisbon, Göteborg and EU 2020 strategies.
- A cross-sectoral legal framework in the EU between agriculture, energy and environment is requested.
- Rural development policy should better support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and NATURA 2000.

2. HOW CAN THE POLICY INSTRUMENTS BE MADE MORE EFFECTIVE?

Overall, including architecture of the policy

The majority EN RD view is that the 2nd – rural development - pillar of the CAP should be maintained and/or enhanced and that an integrated (and therefore flexible) approach to rural development should be applied. A minority of contributions question the efficacy of the current ‘axis’ based architecture, and its attendant financial allocation rules.

It has also been proposed that the architecture of the CAP should include a new axis to meet the CAP’s ‘new challenges’; that cross compliance/conditionality should be a prerequisite for access to any rural development funding and that; the programming process should directly link to strategic documents (the 5 CAP objectives under the Lisbon Treaty, EU 2020 Strategy, EU climate change adaptation strategy, basic principles of the EU Treaty, national strategic plans).

2.1. How can support be better targeted to bring about the most efficient allocation of resources, and thus to maximize the added value of the policy in pursuit of the future EU priorities?

There is a general consensus that the CAP should be more targeted, taking account of regional diversity and also typical differences between ‘old’ and ‘new’ Member States. A significant number of both NRNs and rural development organisations call for targeting to facilitate, at least, more regional differentiation in interventions and for policies to be more area based (territorial targeting). Some rural development organisations advocate further territorial targeting by differentiating peri-urban areas and isolated rural areas.

The view is also expressed that there needs to be an improvement in the definition of target groups; specifically, more recognition of, and emphasis on, the role that actors other than farmers can play in rural development interventions. Consequently, access to funding should be less restrictive in term of categories of eligible beneficiaries.

A commonly expressed opinion is that there should be a targeted focus on environmental objectives in planning and a wider scope for the targeting of public goods (e.g. including rural vitality, landscape, cultural diversity and heritage). This could include criteria such as location, farming type/system, presence of particular environmental problems or potentialities.

Other proposals made include:

- identification of key target areas within each programme/axis able to meet both EU and Member State needs;
- targeting sparsely populated and vulnerable areas and the farmers in them;
- ensuring that each scheme/measure is specifically targeting the most relevant land and farmers.

A large number of contributions stress the requirement for better coordination between the EU funds applying to rural areas, and some particularly note the importance of creating linkages to provide for comprehensive integrated regional and local strategies.

Linked to targeting, a significant number of contributions make the case for increased flexibility, meaning less prescribed rules for defining eligible actions to allow more emphasis on linking support to policy outcomes and more room for innovative actions and instruments addressing newer policy areas, for example energy.

2.2. In the light of experience to date, is the existing toolkit of measures adequate for meeting policy objectives?

(a) Environmental protection and the ‘new challenges’

There is a fairly widely held view that the tools to maintain and enhance the environment should be more clearly results oriented. And also that forestry should be much more included in such measures.

Support measures should address the ‘new challenges’, protect the environment and biodiversity, specifically: agri-environmental measures; ecological agriculture; afforestation; development of forest infrastructure; biogas/biomass production; landscape/nature management and preservation; organic farming; sustainable use of forests, water and land; high-nature value of forestry.

Instruments should provide incentives for farmers to adapt to and mitigate climate change (i.e. reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing use of renewable energy - biomass, bio-waste).

Regarding agri-environmental payments, a large number of suggestions for improvements were made. These include:

- improving the agri-environmental measures with a gradual system of remuneration (for the public goods and services provided by them) and alternative agri-environmental measures for ecosystem services;
- promoting cooperation between farmers and/or other rural entrepreneurs;
- improve the attractiveness of agri-environmental measures through reinforced regionalisation, flexibility of contract conditions (including their duration) and re-introduction of an incentive component in the premia;
- agri-environmental measures to have a result oriented' design;
- farmers who receive agri-environmental payments to provide a minimum level of agricultural products for the market;
- clearer management measures targeting biodiversity and high nature value areas;
- special attention to be given to the maintenance of High nature value farming systems delivering high levels of public goods;
- agri-environmental schemes to be delivered through flexible multi-year contracts;
- clearer link between regional / local strategies and the projects under rural contracts;
- use of existing private sector certification schemes to minimise bureaucracy.

Other specific proposals have been made for: measures for the management of abandoned land; special support for areas with handicaps delivering public goods of high environmental value, grassland management, and territorial contracts signed with farmers to deliver multiple public goods.

(b) Less Favoured Areas

The majority of views expressed were in favour of maintaining the less favoured areas measures, but several proposed a rethink of these measures (e.g. compensation levels according to region, focus on support for extremely disadvantaged areas or replacing the compensation for natural handicap by a compensation for the delivery of public goods/specific 'results'. Support could be less focused on land areas but more on the content of the activities and investments and reward to farmers for the provision of public goods.

Views were also expressed that premia should be increased, in particular for farmers on marginal land and that less favoured areas payments should be extended to strengthen competitiveness (higher reimbursement rates, expanded areas and more crops eligible for compensation).

(c) Rural vitality

There was a broadly shared opinion of the desirability / necessity to enhance (or at least maintain) rural vitality, including through maintaining a sustainable population in rural areas and encouraging economic diversity. Many EN RD contributions flagged the need for a variety of tools designed to:

- improve quality and availability of basic services and infrastructure for rural economy and population (water management, energy production, rural living space, roads, telecommunications, ICT, schools, hospitals, police, social services); more financial resources should be allocated to infrastructure;
- support entrepreneurship, small-scale businesses (especially agrotourism), competitiveness, restructuring (alternative employment);
- counter the demographic challenges evident in many rural areas;
- support the provision of a range of public goods (e.g. payments for usage of heritage objects, farming in protected areas, landscape conservation);
- provide capital investment grants and other support for rural communities threatened by abandonment.

(d) Food production and local food systems

Many EN RD contributions propose the maintenance of current or the introduction of new or strengthened measures to support, mainly local, food systems and develop of direct producer-consumer links, particularly at regional and sub-regional level. Specific proposals include:

- an ‘organic premium’ for all measures;
- improvement in the food supply chain through measures supporting product differentiation, local production, producers groups, marketing, creation of agricultural logistic centres and cooperation along the value chain;
- improving production quality and processing through green technologies;
- farmers to be additionally rewarded to meet high hygiene standards, improved animal housing standards.

(e) Energy

Several contributions specifically highlighted the importance of energy with the following being proposed:

- support for the production of sustainable energy;
- energy audits for the agricultural sector;
- introduction of a new measure: farm scale renewable energy.

(f) Innovation

Some organisations and NRNs propose more support measures for innovation, particularly innovative projects and to encourage research and development. The implementation of the policy and its tools should be flexible enough to not obstruct innovative actions.

2.3. What role should be played by Leader in the Future?

A strong majority view is that Leader (and the Leader approach) is a vital element of the CAP. Some NRNs and rural development organisations call for its role to be enhanced; across economic sectors; for entrepreneurial and innovative actions; in the context of regional development and/or in specific connection with one or more of the CAP's ‘new challenges’.

The specific point is made that there should be a 'sound' budget for LAGs and capacity building in the form of training, which enables LAGs to discharge satisfactorily their *de facto* role in programme management and administration.

Several NRNs and rural development organisations advocate a strengthening of the approaches of participatory decision making and integrated area based strategies beyond Leader (for example strategies to develop local food systems).

Additional proposals are made broadly related to the Leader method; specifically the need to encourage leadership and setting up of partnerships, both related to including farmers themselves in initiatives.

2.4. How can we develop and improve evaluation methods and the underlying common indicators to best assess policy impact and render results visible without putting too much burden on Member States and beneficiaries?

A majority of the contributions specifically mentioned monitoring and evaluation. Common opinions voiced were that:

- monitoring and evaluation procedures should be simplified, with the existing tools and the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) indicators re-examined with a view to reducing the number of questions and indicators and improving measurability of indicators;
- there should be more focus on impacts (the efficiency and effectiveness of actions) than financial absorption;
- more exchanges between Member States would be beneficial;
- there should be more coordination with evaluation of other intervention mechanisms (i.e. structural funds).

Specific suggestions were received related to:

- the need for new indicators relating to nature conservation and biodiversity;
- the use of progress reports to assess performance against the objectives set in the rural development programmes and other policies;
- a more participatory approach (involving actors at different 'levels' in monitoring) and increased importance given to qualitative and process assessment;
- giving more freedom for Member States to set their own indicators.

3. HOW CAN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POLICY BE IMPROVED?

3.1. How can the policy be better managed, including better coordination with other policies for the purpose of ensuring a coherent approach in rural areas?

(a) Subsidiarity principle

There is a consensus on the need for an overarching EU framework for rural development with a set of common priorities, goals and objectives, supported by EU funds. Several contributions go further in stating explicitly that any nationalisation of the policy would be undesirable. Divergent views emerge, however, over the degree to which the subsidiarity principle should be applied.

- Although supporting a common framework, the overwhelming majority of contributions call for a greater degree of subsidiarity in the setting of objectives compared to the present practice; for measures to be more aligned to regionally and locally specific needs; for Member States to have the flexibility to ignore EU priorities if they do not reflect local challenges and needs; and for a significant degree of flexibility to be afforded to Member States/regions in the allocation of funds between Axes and measures. Two contributions suggest that the development of more locally-sensitive rural development programmes could be achieved through greater involvement of local actors in the identification of priorities.
- Whilst the majority view is that a greater degree of subsidiarity would be desirable, three contributions call for the maintenance of the status quo, highlighting that a common policy framework is needed to address the range of rural development challenges faced across the EU.
- At the other end of the spectrum, and whilst recognising the need for a common rural development policy framework, one contribution calls for a reduction in its scope, stating that measures funded under the EAFRD should only support the delivery of public goods of international or European importance. The mechanism for supporting the delivery of more local public goods – by implication through national policies – is not addressed explicitly, nor is the challenge of distinguishing between global, European and local public goods, within a common set of rural development goals. In direct comparison, one European organisation contribution calls for measures funded under EAFRD to be targeted at a wider range of public goods than at present.

(b) Programming Process

Various elements of rural development programming are commented upon. Specifically:

- a majority of submissions to this sub-theme recognise the value of the programming approach: the obligation to agree on rural development priorities and objectives before decisions are taken about funding allocations, and for the budget to be allocated objectively in line with the agreed objectives;
- a small majority of the positions reflected by NRN submissions highlight a need - in the process of rural development programming - for greater account to be taken of the coherence with the objectives of Pillar 1 and other EU policies so that policy synergies may be achieved;
- in one response, there is a call for greater local participation in rural development programming, although another contribution stresses the importance of stream-lined decision-making to avoid decisions becoming politicised with the involvement of multiple stakeholders;
- there is a recognition in several contributions of the importance of monitoring and evaluation, with several calling for the Monitoring Committee to play a more active role in the programming process and in strategic discussions about future programmes;
- it is suggested that rural development programming could be improved by strengthening the institutional capital of public administrations, with more training provided to officials and advisers.

(c) Coordination and synergy with other funds

There is a consensus on the need for improved coordination between the EAFRD and other EU funding for rural areas, with some submissions calling for funding to be synchronised within a coherent and territorially-circumscribed framework. Specifically:

- all contributions identify the need for improved coordination between the EAFRD and Structural Funds to ensure coherence in objectives;
- three contributions mention the Leader approach directly – with one contribution suggesting that the Leader approach provides a common model that could be applied to projects funded through the Structural Funds.

- as well as improved coordination with other EU funding instruments, several responses identify the need for greater coordination between the EAFRD and national funding for rural areas.

Two NRN contributions and two European organisations make suggestions for the way in which improved coordination could be achieved:

- a national coordinating ‘task force’ or regional coordinating mechanisms;
- the development of regional development strategies that are territorially-focused and identify cross-sectoral rural development challenges, needs and priorities, and guide the use of funds from the EAFRD and the Structural Funds;
- European area-based development group as a local implementing body common to all EU funds.

3.2. In what ways can both content and delivery be simplified so as to facilitate implementation and empower local actors, without compromising the objectives of the policy and sound financial management?

(a) Simplification

In all contributions to this sub-theme, there is a unanimous call for greater simplification, with some contributions articulating that this would lead to a more effective and efficient rural development policy. Some contributions consider simplification within the context of the CAP more broadly with some responses calling for an equivalent Single Payment model to be applied in all Member States and a reduction in the number of cross compliance standards. The simplification of Rural Development policy, specifically, is discussed with respect to the following:

- reduction of bureaucratic procedures – achieved in part through a reduction in the number of payments, reducing payment delays and improving the speed of payment;
- administrative burden – reducing the burden on farmers and on the processing and food industries arising from documentation and reporting requirements;
- improvements to the application process, using digital technology for faster and more efficient processing of payment applications;
- simplified and harmonised control mechanisms;

- several contributions make the case for payments to be linked closely to the delivery of public goods or other desirable outcomes and administered through simple contracts;
- more flexible financial rules – to enable the delivery bodies and paying agencies greater scope to respond to changing circumstances.

(b) Empowerment of local actors

All contributions to this sub-theme are supportive of empowering local actors so they can play an enhanced role in shaping the development of rural areas. Local empowerment is seen to be achieved in three key ways through: the fostering of existing networks and building partnerships; a higher level of information provision to local actors; greater involvement of local actors in decision-making and in the development of national strategy plans and rural development programmes.

- In a third of NRN contributions, strong local networks and partnerships are seen as the basis for local empowerment and for helping to maintain social capital. These partnerships may involve a diverse range of actors in the public and private sectors, regional authorities, and stakeholders more broadly. In order to strengthen these networks, local partnership schemes need to be more reliable, effective and sustainable, with the Leader approach seen as important in achieving this.
- In a second third of NRN contributions, access to information is seen as an important requisite for empowering local actors, with a call for authorities to provide the beneficiaries of rural development payments with more information, in the form of comprehensive manuals.
- In the final third of NRN contributions, a greater degree of consultation with local actors and involvement in the decision-making process is seen as key in increasing the influence of local communities and actors.

(c) Sound financial management

A range of issues arise in contributions to this sub-theme:-

- In one contribution, a request is made for the EAFRD budgetary allocation to be more clearly defined to allow for proper planning and to ease financial management.
- One contribution calls for a set of common rules and requirements for EU funding for rural areas that apply in all Member States, including a clear articulation of the co-financing rules (as a divergence of rules applied creates a risk of legal misinterpretation).

- There is a call for greater flexibility with respect to the way in which financial resources are allocated and distributed in response to changing rural development needs, without undermining a commitment to sound financial management.
- Several responses identify a need for greater transparency in the relationship between the public payment and a scheme's outcomes, with payments administered through a contract and beneficiaries fully accountable for meeting its prescriptions.
- One contribution suggests that where payments support the delivery of public goods, the method by which payments are calculated should be revisited.
- The need for adequate administrative capacity to administer payments in a timely and regular fashion is identified in one contribution, with another calling for a flexible end of year accounting mechanism.
- In one response, it is stated that the paying agencies need to be fully accountable to ensure that public funds are not misused.
- Finally, there is a request for a reduction in the administrative costs in calls for tenders.

(d) Transparency

When this sub-theme is addressed, there is broad agreement that the management of the policy could be improved with greater access to, and flow of, information, although little is suggested regarding the exact nature of the information need. There are a number of proposals to enhance the exchange and communication of information:

- increased provision of advice to farmers with a greater role for the advisory services;
- improvements in the flow of information amongst the local farming community with farmers' organisations playing a key role;
- more training of farmers and beneficiaries of rural development funding at the local level.
- the central role played by the NRNs in promoting learning and information exchange is captured in a small minority of contributions, with one contribution emphasising that it is important that the NRNs remain independent.

Other Proposals and Comments

1. VISIBILITY OF THE EAFRD (COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY)

Among the contributions which address this sub-theme, there is unanimity in favour of increased levels of publicity and greater communication of the objectives and achievements of rural development policy, through information campaigns directed at rural actors or at the general public - as consumers and taxpayers. One contribution suggests that a communication campaign could highlight the role agriculture plays in maintaining an attractive countryside and in contributing to the sustainability of rural areas.

2. OVERALL FINANCING OF THE EAFRD

A small minority of contributions call for the maintenance of an ambitious CAP budget, with no reduction in the scale of expenditure, and within this group there is one direct request for an increase in the size of the EAFRD budget. In a second, the importance of an EU budget is identified in order to promote financial solidarity, and to share the burden of costs in meeting common rural development objectives.

In addition, there is an explicit request for rural development priorities and objectives to be agreed before decisions are taken about funding allocations, and for the budget to be allocated objectively in line with the agreed objectives.

3. ROLE OF NRNS

Some contributions proposed that NRNs should be broadened to include a wider cross-section of civil society and that they should provide more information on programme implementation and, most importantly, best practices.

Main findings

There was a relatively short time after the initial invitation for the members of the EN RD Coordination committee to organise a debate, collect contributions and send a synthesis to the European Commission. Nevertheless, the majority of NRNs were able to conduct a meaningful consultation process within their respective Member State.

Key findings, focusing on where there was a general consensus among the contributions received, are that:

- the 2nd pillar has proved valuable and should be maintained within the CAP;
- the preservation of the diversity of farm production systems is essential both for sustainable food production and the delivery of public goods;
- it is important to meet environmental objectives and support the vitality of rural areas, both in an integrated perspective;
- regional targeting should be more embedded in the policy;
- Leader and other local approaches should be maintained or reinforced;
- greater simplification is required for effective delivery;
- coordination with the other EU policies applied in rural areas should be strengthened;

In addition many specific suggestions were made regarding how to improve delivery through existing measures and tools and new measures.

Consultation process employed in the EN RD contributions to 'Future of the CAP post 2013' public debate

Contributions from 24 national rural networks and from 12 EU organisations participating in the EN RD were received by the European Commission by end of June 2010.

Almost all contributions were structured around the three Rural Development questions. A variety of tools were used involving different stakeholders as detailed in the table below. At least 15 NRNs organised a substantial consultation process by judging from the information received.

The range of tools used includes: web tools (e-mails, homepage, on line forums, debates, campaigns, questionnaires, video presentations on web), meetings, structured discussions, workshops, flyers, structured telephone survey, telephone workshops.

The different stakeholders involved were mainly representatives from public authorities at different level (national, regional, and local including municipalities), public sectoral institutions, agricultural organisations, environmental NGOs and representatives of rural civil society, LAGs, private sector representatives, research institutes, and individuals.

National Rural Networks	Tools used	Scale of consultation	Additional comments
Austria	Invitation to answer questions, post on NRN's homepage, discussions and debates within the Monitoring Committee	1400 stakeholders involved, 34 statements made in total (20 from agricultural sector, 5 each from environmental, regional management/Leader and 4 others)	
Belgium			
Flanders	Survey	Regional and local authorities; agricultural sector, social sector, environmental sector.	
Wallonia	No details	No details	
Bulgaria	Opinion of a single organisation	Submitted document considers only the statement of the Council of Bulgarian Agriculture Organisations	Not structured around the 3 RD Questions
Cyprus	E-mail submissions and one general meeting	4 agricultural organisations, 3 environmental NGO, 2 agricultural NGO, 2 LAGs, 1 Union sent their contributions and participated in the general meeting together with other 3 agricultural organisations, 1 association, 1 foundation, 1 LAG, 1 Community Council, the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism	
Czech Republic	No details	No details	
Denmark	Public debate online, e-mail submissions	4 out of 5 Danish regions replied through the Regional rural development network and the regional food network. 20 contributions from authorities, social and economic partners, LAGs, consulting firms and private citizens from different parts of the country. The Monitoring committee was also involved (30 members)	

Estonia	Discussions	Ministries, RDP Monitoring Committee, NRN, LAGs, NGOs and professional associations (rural network, farmers and food processing, forestry, rural women, rural tourism, rural youth), research, education, training and advisory institutions	Prepared jointly by MA and NRN
Finland	No details	Contributions from animal welfare associations, environmental association, Food Safety Authority, Women National Council, environmental NGO, 6 LAGs	
France	The synthesis of these contributions was discussed during the meeting of the permanent commission of the rural network (3 rd June)	Approximately 20 contributions mainly from regional authorities among which 3 regional networks and 2 consular institutions	
Germany	E-mail (26.4.2010), position papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - German-wide - All partners were consulted although some participated by other means (position papers sent directly or through Europe-wide NGOs) - Answer given by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute for Agro-ecology and Biodiversity (ifab, Mannheim) (1) • 2 Regional LEADER Groups, Thuringia, common contribution (2) • Federal Institute for research in construction, city and spatial planning (BBSR, Bonn) (3) • German association for landscape (DVL) (4) 	No synthesis has been however provided by the German network. In order to reflect the different priorities set by the 4 contributors, the respective numbers attributed to them above are indicated behind each position but this should not be seen as a prioritisation in the definition of the position of the partners participating in the German network

Greece	Questionnaire	Questionnaire sent to 73 NRN members, but 9 contributions received (4 agricultural stakeholders, 2 RDP implementing authorities, RD dept. of the ministry, 2 LAGs)	
Hungary	National conference, meeting of Hungary NRN thematic field representatives, regional events, internet (online campaign, questionnaire, vote on CAP objectives, mailing to HRN members), IPSOS survey (CATI), informing rural stakeholders through 'e-Hungary' points	Over 500 participants in regional events; e-mail to over 7,300 NRN members, and members of NGOs (agricultural, local self-government, environment), local development offices, LAGs, researchers; survey with 6,400 respondents, 283 completed online questionnaires, 271 votes on CAP objectives, 17 feedback e-mails to NRN secretariat, statements from various stakeholders	
Ireland	The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in Ireland launched the public consultation process on the post 2013 CAP debate, by inviting submissions in late 2009 and in April 2010 with a particular focus on rural development, 60 submissions were received. The Irish National Rural Network has actively encouraged all stakeholders and interested parties to make submissions on this important debate. Invitations for submissions also through consultative committees and other RD communication events	6 farmer organisations, 1 rural NGO, 1 LAGs network, 1 LAG, 3 public authorities, 2 research institutions	Prepared by MA
Latvia	Questionnaire on the NRN the homepage (264 respondents) , 48 open discussions in different regions	Rural population (in total 954), represented sectors: agriculture (549), forestry (32), management of environment (25), non-agricultural entrepreneurship (59), municipalities (85), LAGs – LEADER implementers (38), rural inhabitants (165)	

Lithuania	Discussions among NRN members	5 Committees of the Lithuanian NRN, 100 participants from municipalities, public institutions, associations, science institutions and NGOs (rural communities, LAGs and their networks)	
Luxembourg	No details	No details	
Malta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - telephone surveys with the general population; - one to one semi-structured interviews with the key stakeholders in the sector; - Half-day workshop with the key stakeholders ; - Promotion of the Commission's website on the CAP post 2013 public debate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 504 interviews with Maltese private households; - interviews with 14 stakeholder organisations (agricultural organisations, cooperatives, business chamber, LAG, environmental NGO and government agencies...). 	Structured around the 4 general CAP questions. Full analysis provided by type of interviewee.
The Netherlands	Structured discussions in 2 days, internet forum	Representatives of government, agriculture, LAGs, nature conservation and environmental organizations, advisers, 1 municipality, 1 drinking water company and the research sector	Not structured around the 3 RD Questions
Poland	No details	No details	
Portugal	Debates, presentations, website information and presentation of submissions, e-mail to network members, video presentation on the website, meetings with various stakeholders, written contributions, final discussion for 250 participants	NRN members (194), Rural Regional Assemblies (91 members); "agriculture, NGOs, local development etc." (13), one individual contribution	
Romania	No details	2 farmer organisations, 2 environmental organisations, 1 network organisation, 1 private, one public institution (Ministry of Finance)	

Slovakia	No details	No details	Prepared jointly by MA and NRN
Slovenia	No details	Contributions provided by 44 individuals, representatives from public institutions, municipalities, economic sector, local action groups, interest groups, farmers.	
Sweden	Flyers with written suggestions and answers during a public debate, opinion statements, 10 telephone workshops	Circa 1100 participants within the Swedish Rural Parliament; more than 30 other contributors from the sectors: agriculture, rural NGOs, local self-government, government agencies; 56 participants in telephone workshops; different (personal and organisation) points of view have been reflected in the summary	

The following European organisations sent a written contribution:

- COPA - Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations
- COGECA - General Committee for Agricultural Cooperation in the European Union
- CEJA - European Council of Young Farmers
- EFFAT - European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism sectors
- BIRDLIFE International
- ELO - European Landowners organisation
- CEPF - Confederation of European Forest owners
- EUROMONTANA - European Association for Development of Mountain Territories
- AER - Assembly of European Regions
- CEMR - Council of European municipalities and regions
- RED - Rurality-Environment-Development International Association
- PREPARE Partnership