

Improving Implementation

Typologies and Targeting

Europe's rural areas are diverse in terms of many physical, socio-economic, environmental and institutional factors. This diversity is one of Europe's greatest resources but nevertheless it creates challenges for many Member States on how to accurately define rural areas. This definition is crucial for EU rural development policy design and ensuring its complementarity with other EU funds aimed at developing rural areas, especially those with distinct needs.

Thematic Working Group 1 was set up in 2009 to address these issues and specifically aimed to improve the efficiency of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) in the targeting of territorial specificities and needs of rural areas. Chaired by the Commission (Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development— DG AGRI) it carried out an in depth analysis of 23 national and 12 regional 2007-2013 RDPs.

The Group's work focused on how Member States and regions:

- defined or targeted rural areas for the 2007-2013 programming period in their RDPs;
- addressed the issue of demarcation and complementarity between the different EU or national funds;
- targeted territories of specific interest and assessed the relevant needs of these territories; as well as the application of measures and resources within and outside the RDPs to meet those needs.

Findings

The OECD definition of rural areas** , offered by the European Commission for use by Member States, was only taken up by a minority of national and regional RDPs and the findings of the working group suggest that it may not meet the needs of many Member States.

Rather, Member States or regions use a wide variety of territorial definitions to target their RDP measures.

Depending on their focus these definitions can be broadly clustered, either as sectorial (e.g. farming and forestry) or territorial (e.g. areas eligible for axis 3 measures). There is a strong awareness among the Member States of the need for clear demarcation between EU funds, and also of the potential for complementarity between the EAFRD and other funds, so as to ensure developmental needs of EU rural areas are met.

*(**) According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), predominately rural areas are defined as these areas in which more than*

50% of the population lives in rural communes. Rural communes are the communes with population density below 150 inhabitants / Km².

Building blocks for a revised typology of rural areas

Given the diversity of rural areas within the EU, it is important that each Member State and region applies not only an appropriate definition of rural areas, but also has the opportunity to apply a context relevant typology of rural areas.

In this context three “Building Blocks”, which can be used to define a typology of rural areas, were proposed:

- degree of physical handicap;
- environmental sensitivity, and
- socio-economic disadvantage.

The weight accorded to each building block can be used to create individual typologies that are appropriate given Member State or regional specificities.

Each building block is a composite of individual factors (see table), and each factor can be measured by a specific set of indicators.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A REVISED TYPOLOGY OF RURAL AREAS		
Building Blocks	Factors	
Rural Definition	1	Population Density
	2	Urban Areas
	3	Land Use
Block 1-Physical handicap	4	Physical Handicap
Block 2-Environmental Sensitivity	5	Environmental Sensitivity
Block 3-Socio-economic disadvantage	6	Demography
	7	Socio-economic problems
	8	Economic structure
	9	Access to urban services/economies

In this way, specific typologies relevant for rural development policy targeting purposes can be developed.

The potential to address the ‘new challenges’ of rural development policy is also an important aspect for consideration in a typology. However, the indicators relating to these issues do not lend themselves to being categorised in a common way.

Main reports

- TWG1 Step 1 Report [PDF [en](#)]
- TWG1 Step 2 Report [PDF [en](#)]
- TWG1 Final Report [PDF [en](#)], Annex 1 [PDF [en](#)], Annex 2 [PDF [en](#)], Annex 3 [PDF [en](#)], Annex 4 [PDF [en](#)]

Dissemination of results



- TWG1 leaflet [PDF [en](#) [de](#) [es](#) [fr](#) [it](#) [pl](#)]
- The summary final report is envisaged to make the main findings of the Final Report more accessible to the wider public. It includes sections on each of the main components of the TWG1 work (e.g. use of the OECD definition, complementarity and demarcation, possible building blocks for a future rural typology): [PDF [de](#) [en](#) [es](#) [fr](#) [it](#) [pl](#)]
- Power Point Presentation of TWG1 findings demonstrating the main concepts of the work: [PPT [de](#) [en](#) [es](#) [fr](#) [it](#) [pl](#)]*, [PDF [en](#)]

(*) Please note that the file is protected against further editing. To use it, just open it (double click) and click on the "Read only" button.

- Articles on specific themes or elements of TWG1's work were produced to highlight specific relevant issues:
 - Article on Rural Definitions [PDF [en](#)]
 - Article on Building Blocks [PDF [en](#)]
 - Article on Demarcation and Complementarity [PDF [en](#)]
- Case studies – 6 examples focusing on programming aspects in order to illustrate how the RDPs can be used more efficiently in the remaining part of the current programming period and also for future programming:
 - Case study on Natura 2000 and environmentally-valuable farmland [PDF [en](#)]
 - Case study on Specific Development Areas [PDF [en](#)]
 - Case study on Rural Areas Eligible for Axis 3 Measures [PDF [en](#)]
 - Case study on LAG (Leader) areas [PDF [en](#)]
 - Case study on Mountain Less Favoured Areas [PDF [en](#)]
 - Case study on non-mountain Less Favoured Areas [PDF [en](#)]
- Rural typologies examples: Three specific examples of Member States (Italy - Sardegna, Denmark, Finland) which have developed a de facto further rural typology.
 - Rural typologies example: Denmark [PDF [en](#)]
 - Rural typologies example: Finland [PDF [en](#)]
 - Rural typologies example: Sardinia [PDF [en](#)]

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Related Information

- [TWG2](#): Links between agriculture and the wider rural economy
- [TWG3](#): Public goods and public intervention
- [TWG4](#): Delivery mechanisms of EU Rural Development Policy