

Workplan

ENRD Thematic Group on the Long Term Rural Vision #Rural2040

July 2020 – July 2021

November 2020

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1. Introduction

The President of the European Commission tasked the Commissioner for Agriculture with developing a “Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas” (LTVRA). This process is expected to lead to the publication of a Communication in summer 2021. It will involve various Commission services including the Joint Research Centre (JRC) as well as inputs from many other stakeholders, a large-scale public consultation and various research projects funded through Horizon 2020 and numerous other sources.

The CP proposal under the new Priority 4 for Smart, resilient and inclusive rural areas will bring together the previous thematic work activities on ‘smart and competitive rural areas’ with those on ‘inclusive and vibrant rural areas’. Priority 4 work will focus on contributing to the LTVRA through a CP supported Thematic Group (TG). The TG will be implemented as a way of facilitating significant multi-actor participation in contributing to the collaborative work leading to the Communication, notably as regards inputting to a specific foresight component to be organised jointly by the ENRD CP and JRC.

A key CP role will also be to facilitate, enable and orchestrate active and effective stakeholder participation to complement other activities contributing to develop the LTVRA Communication. The ENRD is also expected to deliver a major networking conference focusing on the LTVRA, planned/estimated to take place in the first quarter of 2021.

2. Objectives of the Thematic Group

The process leading to the Communication on the LTVRA will consist of a number of building blocks including: a foresight exercise led by the JRC, an on-line consultation, input from H2020 research projects and other sources and an on-line conference in the Spring of 2020. The ENRD TG on the Long Term Vision (#Rural2040) together with other ENRD activities related to NRNs and LEADER can add to and enrich these components by supporting the process of stakeholder dialogue, engagement and ownership leading to the Communication on the LTVRA in the summer of 2021. A centrepiece of the first phase of wider TG activities will be to support the foresight exercise.

The main objectives of the #Rural2040 TG are:

1. **To contribute to and enrich the formal foresight analysis carried out for the LTVRA in cooperation with the JRC.** This will take place as the centrepiece of the first two meetings of the TG in September and December 2020.
2. **To act as a platform or exchange hub** for facilitating the sharing, discussing and communicating of the results of different activities carried out by TG members and other key actors involved in contributing to LTVRA. TG meetings will be designed to contribute to and complement the different steps being taken by the various actors to arrive at the LTVRA. The TG can act as a forum for different contributors to connect, present and discuss their findings and develop their next steps.
3. **To contribute to a coherent and structured dialogue with rural stakeholders in different parts of Europe.** Through its extensive web of NRNs, LEADER groups and other stakeholders, the ENRD is ideally placed to engage rural communities and build ownership by helping ensure that their ideas, needs and aspirations are reflected in the LTVRA. An ENRD website portal can

act as a repository to harvest, assemble, curate and present relevant material derived from actions carried out under these TG objectives 1-3 and wider ENRD work. The use of other online tools and social media can complement the accessibility and dissemination of this resource. The exchanges with stakeholders in the Member States can also help to prepare their involvement in the LTVRA conference (see below).

4. **To communicate more widely with stakeholders and encourage sustained engagement.** A coordinated communications campaign for the TG will be implemented to include contributions on the LTVRA to an issue of the Rural Review, magazine articles, website news and newsletter items, promotion of the portal, a regular programme of social media posts, etc.
5. **To contribute to the conference.** All the activities above (TG, foresight and other stakeholder contributions) can provide material and help prepare stakeholders for the ENRD organised LTVRA conference planned for spring 2021. Other ENRD priority work strands will also contribute to the Conference.

3. Main TG activities, outputs and their feed in-out to other CP activities¹

3.1. Designing the Thematic Group

Forming and informing the Thematic Group

- While the foresight exercise will be the centerpiece of the TG during the first six months¹, the TG's remit and activities should be broader and coherent with its own overall purpose of contributing to the wider dialogue with stakeholders, inputting to the conference, and thereby feeding into the preparation of the Communication.
- Membership of the TG should provide support in the initial two meetings for the foresight component on an ongoing basis (involving around 50 participants), as well as a solid foundation for the ongoing work of the TG during the year. There may, however, be some variation and additional flexibility in the TG membership after the first two meetings focusing on the foresight exercise.
- TG members should both sign up for and commit to at least the first two meetings dealing with the foresight exercise.
- The membership will be selected on the basis of an open call. This will employ criteria agreed between DG AGRI and the ENRD Contact Point prior to consulting the JRC (taking particular account of experience and knowledge of rural challenges and opportunities, capacity and willingness to contribute to the LTVRA and including a balance of geography, sector, gender and age etc).

¹ This Work Plan for the Thematic Group and the proposed activities were designed when the Covid-19 situation was still evolving. Hence, activities could potentially be adapted to a virtual format where necessary.

- A proportion of the initial TG membership should also be chosen for their capacity and willingness to contribute to the dialogue and exchanges around the LTVRA within the Member States, feeding information both in and out of the TG to wider rural stakeholders

Building engagement, dialogue and ownership of the LTVRA

Independently of the EU level activity on the LTVRA, there is likely to be a considerable amount of discussion and events in the Member States and among different stakeholders. Through its extensive network of stakeholders, and particularly, NRNs and LEADER groups, the ENRD can help to capture the richness of these discussions and activities and ensure that they build ownership and contribute effectively to the LTVRA. The results of these discussions can be captured and fed into the LTVRA in the following ways:

- On the #Rural2040 web portal;
- Support the EC in the development of the LTVRA Workshop Package for NRNs and other rural stakeholders;
- Through various online tools over the entire period;
- Through ENRD publications;
- By preparing presentations and sessions at the conference.

3.2. Thematic Group Meetings

The work of the TG will, among other activities, involve the JRC-led participatory foresight process supported by the ENRD Contact Point and associated activities within the TG meetings alongside other ENRD CP-led activities including specific ENRD workshops linked to the LTVRA.

The first two meetings of the TG in September and December will focus on the first three objectives described above with the foresight exercise as the centrepiece. Each of these two TG meetings is envisaged to be held over one and a half/two days incorporating both foresight elements and other complementary CP-led activities.

The same participants group, selected on the basis of a proposal from the ENRD in agreement with DG AGRI and the JRC, will take part in the foresight elements of the first two TG meetings. However, additional experts and stakeholders may be brought into the discussion to deliver presentations and contributions at certain points. As a preliminary proposal, TG meetings could cover the following topics:

- **1st TG Meeting – 22-23 September: 1.5 - 2 days².** The aim of this meeting is to work on the first phase of a Foresight exercise that will inform the EU Communication on a Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas (LTVRA). This will inform TG members about all the activities and steps that are planned for developing the Vision, share information on the state of knowledge on the future of rural areas and what has been learned so far and should be taken into account in

² Following the 1st TG meeting it was agreed to also hold an Interim TG meeting (as an Additional Task) on 20/10/2020 to allow further discussion on the foresight exercise.

the Vision. The TG will also discuss and consider how to support stakeholder engagement in the development of the Vision in different parts of Europe.

- **2nd TG Meeting – 2&3 December (tbc): 1.5 - 2 days.** The aim of this joint meeting with the JRC could be to continue and/or complete the foresight process at the level of the TG and discuss next steps with participants in their contributing to the LTVRA process in their own Member States and organisations.
- **3rd and 4th TG meetings - January & April.** These **two one day meetings** are still to be decided and could focus on:
 - Capturing and discussing the results of previous phases and preparing stakeholder input for contributing to the conference;
 - Sharing methods for communicating the results of the conference and the work so far;
 - Deepening the discussion on the enabling conditions and steps for implementing the future Vision and/or approaches in the LTVRA Communication.
- **Workshops - October 2020 & June 2021 (tbc):**
 - A first workshop is foreseen in October of 2020 with indicative topic of allowing the participants to deepen discussions on the drivers and scenarios emerging from the foresight exercise.³
 - A second workshop may be organised after the conference to further discuss communicating the LTVRA and the next steps for taking the LTVRA forward.

3.3. Link in-out to other CP activities

The TG will work in close coordination with the stakeholders involved in the CP's two capacity building strands (NRNs, and LEADER Local Action Groups) to help encourage discussions and support engagement in the MS so as to contribute effectively to the LTVRA.

NRNs will be essential partners in any of the meetings and will also play a central role in disseminating the information in their countries and informing the activities of the TG. This includes sharing the experiences of communities and stakeholders who engage in discussions to contribute to the LTVRA. In a dedicated questionnaire, NRNs expressed an average interest of NRN's stakeholders of 3.75 (out of 5) in getting involved in the LTVRA. Some NRNs reported that their MS have already implemented some visioning/foresight exercise in recent years (Wallonia: Rural territories in 2040 prospective exercise; [Finland: Rural 2030 process](#); etc)⁴.

NRNs could, therefore, play an important role in facilitating, collecting and synthesising stakeholder discussions and contributions to the LTVRA in their respective countries. The TG will discuss methods and tools for supporting NRNs to fulfil this role. These tools and methods will be presented at an NRN

³ As it emerged after the 1st TG meeting in September that there was a need for an additional Interim Meeting of the TG in October (20/10) this 1st Workshop will not take place in 2020.

⁴ https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/5_tg1_ltrv_ppt_nrn-survey_korcekova.pdf

Meeting to establish the extent to which different NRNs are willing and able to coordinate or facilitate stakeholder discussions and communicate their results to the CP. The CP can then synthesise the NRN contributions into a consolidated networking report in time to provide evidence for the Communication on the LTVRA.

LEADER **LAGs** are likely to be a key stakeholder group for engaging local actors in developing their contributions to the LTVRA process.

During Y7 the aim is to establish the links between this TG and the other ENRD TG on the EU Green Deal as some of the outcomes collected and developed under TG #Rural2040 could also be relevant for this strand of ENRD thematic work and vice versa.

The following charts present the core activities and outputs of the TG (Table 1) and the indicative work plan (Table 2).

Table 1: Main activities and outputs of the ENRD Thematic Group on the Long Term Rural Vision

| ACTIVITIES | |
|--|--|
| <p>Background research and scoping</p>  | <p>A scoping exercise of NRNs will be carried out by the CP to assess the level of interest of their stakeholders and the NSUs themselves in engaging in discussion on the LTVRA. Background research on the key drivers for rural areas will also be commissioned from external experts. This will feed into a Workshop Package produced by the European Commission to help stakeholders to engage in discussions on the LTVRA.</p> |
| <p>Four TG meetings</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st TG meeting (22&23 September 2020) • 2nd TG meeting (2&3 December 2020) • 3rd TG meeting (January 2020 - tbc) • 4th TG meeting (June 2020 - tbc) |
| <p>Up to two additional workshops</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 October 2020 (tbc) • June 2021 (tbc) |
| <p>Supporting NRN stakeholder engagement in the LTVRA</p>  | <p>Support for the NRNs through various meetings and channels to help them engage with their stakeholders and encourage discussions and contributions to the LTVRA. Those NRNs implementing action on this topic may provide the CP with consolidated reports of the stakeholder discussion in their country using an agreed template. The CP would analyse and bring together the available country reports produced by NRNs as one key component within an EU Networking report.</p> |
| <p>Communication and outreach activities</p>  | <p>The ENRD CP will contribute to relevant events on the LTVRA to promote the outcomes of the TG and the tools developed around this topic in also aiming to encourage stakeholders' groups to participate in and contribute to this process. For example, the CP team and TG members will be involved in two related workshops at the European Week of Regions and Cities (October 2020). In addition, communication activities will be implemented</p> |

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| | on an ongoing basis to disseminate the results of the work (e.g. TG pages and portal, social media campaigns, Newsletter items, etc). |
| Contribution to the Conference on the LTVRA  | The CP team and members of the TG will be heavily involved in providing ideas, content and support for the conference on the LTVRA planned for the end of March 2021. |
| Rural Review on the LTVRA (TBC)  | The CP team, members of the TG, speakers from the conference and other contributors can provide content and material for an edition of the Rural Review focusing on the LTVRA. Content and date of publication (TBC). |
| OUTPUTS | |
| Meeting highlights  | Highlights reports with the main outcomes from each of the TG meetings in a visual, reader-friendly format for broad dissemination. |
| TG section and LTRV web portal  | The TG section and LTRV Portal will contain relevant information for a wide audience interested in the LTVRA. The portal may include information about the LTVRA process, relevant resources, stakeholders' contributions as well as relevant news and events. |
| A Rural Review on the LTVRA  | The CP and certain members of the TG may contribute to an edition of the Rural Review focusing on the LTVRA. Content and date of publication TBC. |
| EU Networking Report on the LTVRA  | The CP can provide a synthesis of the results of stakeholder discussions coordinated by interested NRNs in their respective countries on the LTVRA, as one of the key components within an EU Networking report. Due to the evolving situation, the nature and exact contents are still to be defined. |
| TG summary report  | Synthesis of the key outcomes developed and activities of the TG throughout the year in a brief document. |

3.4. Indicative workplan

The following table illustrate the milestones and indicative time for the implementation of the key activities of the TG.

Table 2: Indicative workplan

| | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | |
|--|-----|------|-------------------|-----|----------------|-----|-------------|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|--|
| Background Research | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 st Meeting | ■ | | ★ (22&23 Sept 20) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 nd Meeting | | | ■ | | ★ (2&3 Dec 20) | | | | | | | | |
| 3 rd Meeting | | | | | ■ | | ★ Jan (tbc) | | | | | | |
| 4 th Meeting | | | | | | | | ■ | | | ★ Jun-tbc) | | |
| TG Outputs | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting highlights | | | ▲ | | ▲ | | ▲ | | | | | ▲ | |
| LTRV web portal: Ongoing development and update | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NRN contributions to the LTVRA Section in the EU networking report | | ■ | | | | | ▲ | | | | | | |
| Rural Review on the LTVRA | | | ■ | | | | | | | | ▲ | | |
| TG Summary report | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | |