1. Summary of work programme of the Bulgarian NRN

- The NSU operates under multi-annual work programme.
- The tasks of the NRN during the period 2012-2015 will include:
    - Dissemination of information amongst the members of the network on current topics related to the rural development policy;
    - Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices for rural development from Bulgaria and the other EU member states;
    - Providing a platform gathering the interests and capacity of the NRN members for discussion of effective and feasible solutions for rural development;
    - Providing feedback on current issues and possible solutions related to the implementation of the Rural Development Programme;
    - Cooperation for capacity building and strengthening of the Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the LEADER approach;
    - Encouragement of the cooperation between NRN members at regional, national and trans-national level;
    - Establishment and maintenance of a sustainable National Rural Network in Bulgaria.

- The AWP is available on: http://www.nsm.bg/sites/default/files/Action_plan_NRN%20_2009-2015_aktualiziran.pdf

2. Thematic Initiatives launched by the Network

- The thematic initiatives are defined after consultation with the NRN members, members of the NSU and regional coordinators. A short list of thematic initiatives is then proposed to MA and after consultation between the NSU and MA the thematic initiatives are selected. This process will be initiated again in January 2014 for the themes of 2014 as the NSU aim to be as relevant as possible to the needs of the NRN members.
- The continued thematic initiatives covered by the four thematic groups in 2013 are:
    - "Short Supply Chains in Bulgaria: Status and development Needs";
    - "Definition of permanent pastures and agricultural land of high nature value";
    - "Analysis and definition of small-scale infrastructure for the purpose of the rural development policy";
    - "LEADER approach: Lessons learnt from the present programming period and recommendations to the next one (2014-2020)" .

- Thematic issues addressed through events:
    - Definition for and understanding of the "Integrated projects" within the framework of the current (2007-2013) and future (2014-2020) RDP programming periods.
- Thematic issues addressed by working groups:
    - "Short Supply Chain" Analysis of the current status quo and definition of problems?;
    - "Definition of permanent pastures and agricultural land of high nature value" "Analysis and definition of small-scale infrastructure for the purpose of the rural development policy";
    - "Analysis and definition of small-scale infrastructure for the purpose of the rural development policy";
    - "LEADER approach: Lessons learnt from the present programming period and recommendations to the next one (2014-2020)".
- Thematic issues addressed in other ways:
    - Organization of thematic working meetings with the regional coordinators and NRN members for discussion of the activity, depending on the progress of the NRN's work.
- Information about thematic initiatives is available on: http://www.nsm.bg/tematichni-rabotni-grupi

3. LEADER related activities

- The Managing Authority has a permanent staff of 8 persons and other 8 persons are an additional staff with fix-term contracts. All of these persons are dedicated to LAGs support (for example they provide methodological help to the LAGs for the whole period of implementation of their Strategies). The NSU has also one key expert dedicated to LEADER related activities.
- The MA organizes permanent meetings for the LAGs with the whole LEADER unit.

- The capacity building for LAGs is one of the key activities for the NSU: in 2013 the NSU organized a training workshop for LAGs on Monitoring/EVALUATION of the Implementation of LDS and study trips to events in other MS.
- Information about these events is available on:
  - MA: http://prsr.government.bg/index.php/bg/sections/l2/25
  - NSU info on: http://www.nsm.bg/events; http://www.nsm.bg/tematichna-rabotna-grupa-4; http://www.nsm.bg/documents
- The MA provides guidelines and other supporting documents such as regulations documents, internal rules documents and guidelines. The NSU and MA are also translating guidelines and reports developed by ENRD and DG AGRI.
- Guidelines or other supporting documents are available on:
  - The website of the Ministry of agriculture and Food and also the website of the Programme for Rural development
  - NSU information is on: http://www.nsm.bg/tematichna-rabotna-grupa-4; http://www.nsm.bg/documents
- Other forms of support to LEADER implementation:
  - The presence of a LEADER Permanent Working Group, which is a part of the Monitoring Committee of the Rural development Programme;
  - Less formal contacts and communication between NSU experts and LAG managers.
- The NSU supports inter-regional and transnational cooperation. NSU carried out a survey on the process for preparation of the project proposals for TNC Measure 421 and it enables contacts between BG LAGs and other MS LAGs.
- NSU organized two experience exchange visits for BG LAGs in European LAGs/events in 2013. The work-plan states that four trips for LAGs from European countries should be organized in 2014 and 2015.
- All information about these events is uploaded in the relevant sections of the NRN website: http://www.nsm.bg/
- The NSU provides information and partner search facilities on the basis of the ENRD search tools and through email communication.

- **3.1. Relevant Experiences/Good Practices**
  - The methodology to identify EARDF-funded projects representing relevant experience has been elaborated by the NSU and approved by the MA. Regional coordinators are collecting good practices under the guidance of one key expert in the NSU.
  - The communication and dissemination of relevant experience is done through a constant maintenance, upgrade and update on the NRN's internet website (relevant experience are disseminated through website).
  - Relevant experiences/good practices are available on: http://www.nsm.bg/dobri-praktiki

4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Networking

- The NRN assesses the performance of each event organized by the NRN itself on the basis of a template.
- Performance assessments are reported to the MA in the quarterly reports.

5. Communication

- The communication activities of the NRN are a subset of the communication plan of the RDP and are thus managed by the MA.
- The RDP communication plan is available on: http://prsr.government.bg/index.php/bg/sections/l2/61
- The NSU uses the website as a main communication tool with the NRN members. Other communication tools used by the NSU are: a facebook page, email communication, publication of electronic bulletin and printed leaflet, meetings and other events.
- NRN's publications and documents are available on: http://www.nsm.bg/documents
- The latest version of the NSP and RDP are available on:
  - NSP: http://prsr.government.bg/Admin/upload/Media_file_1268272345.pdf
  - RDP: http://prsr.government.bg/index.php/bg/sections/l2/62

6. Cooperation interests of the Rural Network

- The NRN is seeking for cooperation on the following items:
  - Future programming period, CLLD and Youth Initiative, Short Supply Chains, Innovation and Operative Groups for the EIP
  - Cooperation with other rural networks on networking, planning, Monitoring and Evaluation