



**Outcomes: 8<sup>th</sup> Coordination Committee meeting**

**Minutes**

8 December 2011



*Connecting Rural Europe*

## Coordination Committee Meeting, Brussels, 8 December 2011

### Context of the meeting

An overview of the Commission's legal proposals for the CAP after 2013 was made, including networking aspects.

The Coordination Committee was asked to help design the part of the activities of the ENRD which can help administrations and stakeholders prepare for the future programming period, while ensuring the best use of the remaining time for this current period.

In this context proposals for the launch of thematic focus groups and for a series of targeted workshops was examined (preparatory documents were circulated before the meeting).

All members of the Coordination Committee were also invited to participate in the seminar on "Improving delivery of rural development programmes", held on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December. In this seminar the conclusions of the TWG 4 on the "Delivery mechanisms of rural development policy" were presented and the proposals for the future policy looked at in more detail in the light of the group's findings.

### Agenda Item

**Welcome and short introduction**, By Rob Peters, Head of Unit for European network and monitoring of rural development policy, DG AGRI  
The participants were welcomed and it was confirmed that the meeting would have focus on: the new proposal for 2014-2020; ENRD preparatory activities for the next programming period; discussion about the proposed Focus Groups (FG) on environmental services and knowledge transfer and innovation; overview of the ENRD on-going activities.

### Agenda Item

#### **CAP proposals 2014-2020**

Presentation Link:

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_temp\\_lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367BE841-E471-C075-44CF-BE388DDD826F](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_temp_lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367BE841-E471-C075-44CF-BE388DDD826F)

**Overall architecture**, by Josefine Loriz-Hoffmann, Head of Unit for consistency of rural development, DG AGRI

Presentation link:

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_temp\\_lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367986C7-BC00-ADA0-506F-E8300DC64C15](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_temp_lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367986C7-BC00-ADA0-506F-E8300DC64C15)

**Role of networking**, by Rob Peters, Head of Unit for European network and monitoring of rural development policy, DG AGRI. The presentation gave an overview of which should be the role of ENRD and NRNs in the future programming period. L

Presentation link:

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_temp\\_lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367B2AC4-A3D9-EF24-758B-7E919841DAA7](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_temp_lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367B2AC4-A3D9-EF24-758B-7E919841DAA7)

**ENRD 2012: connecting the parts** by Adrian Neal, ENRD Contact Point

Discussion points

The main discussion points were:

- *Simplification*: The implementation of the RDPs tends to be a complex

task for several reasons, including the high diversity of rural areas across Europe, the presence of different programmes (from different EU funds) in the same area with different rules, the fact that programmes are composed of detailed measures, etc. For this reason simplification assumes a crucial role in implementation. In the new proposals there are several elements that, if properly used by the MS, can ensure a degree of simplification. In particular, drawing a Common Strategic Framework gives MS the possibility to define better the activities to be implemented under each fund and to enhance coordination between them; imputed (lump sum) expenditures will be acceptable for projects under 100.000€; simplified approaches for calculation have been proposed.

- *Implementation of Leader*: Concern was expressed by several members of the committee with regards to the implementation of Leader under the expected new rules. In particular, the inclusion of different funds in the implementation of the local development strategy is seen as a potential source of coordination difficulties. It was pointed out that Leader will continue working as in the present programming period, namely the LAGs will design and submit the strategy to the MA and that will implement the projects. LAGs' responsibilities are clearly described in the draft common regulation and MS are required to explicitly define what the actors involved will be doing (MA, PA, LAGs). However, guidelines will be provided to the MS and many details need still to be worked out.
- Starting from the importance that networking has in this programming period, additional effort will be made in discussing how to improve networking; how to set up the networks in the future using the present experience and how to reach even more stakeholders.
- The *Innovation partnership* will offer a platform to foster innovation, to support the implementation of innovation projects and to transfer effectively innovation to agricultural practice. Until now a serious gap between research activities/results and their use to support and improve agriculture has been observed. The Innovation partnership will help fill this gap, notably through the establishment of Operational Groups. Networking activities (seminar, conferences, workshops, training activities) will be organized to raise awareness of what can be done and what knowledge has been already generated.

Presentation link:

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=367C67DD-D27D-0657-0050-D189667F335F](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=367C67DD-D27D-0657-0050-D189667F335F)

### **ENRD preparatory activities for the next programming period**

***Presentation of Focus Groups and workshops***, by Rob Peters, Head of Unit for European network and monitoring of rural development policy, DG AGRI. The presentation introduced the work methodology of the proposed focus groups and workshops for 2012. Two focus groups are

envisaged. The first on 'environmental services' was launched during the meeting, and the second on 'Knowledge transfer and innovation' is expected to be launched in July 2012.

#### Discussion points

During the discussion session the main issues to be potentially addressed by each focus group were discussed in small groups (4 to 5 people). Following this, representatives of each group were requested to comment on each of the proposed FGs. Annex 1 provides a summary of the outcomes of the group discussion and feedback

In the second part of the discussion session the following points were raised/explained:

- The operating procedures of the proposed CC FGs were explained by DG AGRI. In particular they are voluntary groups open to all CC members and others nominated by the CC members. Being voluntary, no reimbursement from the EC is possible for travel, subsistence or other expenses. The modus operandi of the FGs will be flexible and, where practicable, meetings will be attached to other ENRD events.
- The Co-chairs of the FGs will refine their scope and be responsible for reporting to the CC. The first meeting envisaged of the co-chairs of the Environmental services (ENV) FG is envisaged for mid-January 2012, which would be followed by a meeting with all participants in February. The first results should be made available to the CC meeting of June 2012.
- The following interest was expressed regarding co-chairing or participating in the FGs:
  - o **ENV FG.** Co-chairs: Austria, France and UK MAs, Birdlife, Copa-Cogeca. Participation: Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and Romania NRNs, Euromontana, Prepare and R.E.D..
  - o **KT&I FG.** Co-chairs: Italy MA, Latvia NRN, ELARD, RED. Broad interest from the floor was also expressed in participating in the KT&I FG. It was suggested that consideration be given to encouraging participation in the FG of one or more parties with experience in other EU funds. The following representatives expressed the interest to be co-chairs of the FG: DK, GR, MT, FI, FR, SE, Copa-Cogeca and Euromontana.
- Following the presentation of the possible thematic events for 2012, it was explained that the proposed workshops on 14th and 15th March 2012 will be open to all CC members or other nominated person(s). The workshop on Monitoring and evaluation would be a joint meeting with the European Evaluation Network for rural Development.
- DG AGRI explained that the EC is working to prepare for the forthcoming programming period on three levels: (i) related to the basic legal framework (now being submitted to the European Parliament and the Council); (ii) developing the EU implementing rules (implementing Acts and Delegated Acts) and; (iii) producing guidance

on different elements of the rural development policy where needed, on aspects not detailed in the legislation. The ENRD, on the basis of analyses made with stakeholders on the implementation of the current RDPs, is important in informing the second and third levels. The proposed thematic work for 2012 has been drawn-up with this in mind.

- Concern was expressed about how NRNs would be able to work after 2013 if any delays in finalizing the regulations. DG AGRI confirmed that lessons were being drawn from experience and that every effort would be made to ensure a smooth transition period, including not losing the knowledge embedded in the 'human capital'.
- Concern was also expressed about the level of stakeholder involvement that would be possible in the event of delays in the publication of the legal basic acts. It was concluded that the preparatory work must be progressed at all levels, even if there are obviously some uncertainties existing about the final content of the regulation(s) until their formal finalisation. Helping to manage this uncertainty will be something that the forthcoming FGs and workshops will need to address.
- It was proposed that the Workshops and/or other ENRD thematic work should address the proposed Leader start-up kit.

#### Action points

- CC members to confirm interest expressed / nominate members of the forthcoming CC focus group on Environmental services FG, by 15th Jan 2012.
- CC members to send any further comments regarding the scope of the proposed focus Groups to DG AGRI by 15th Jan 2012.

In both cases the DG AGRI Coordination committee email address should be used : agri-enrd-coordination-cttee@ec.europa.eu

#### Agenda Item

Presentations Link:

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_temp/lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367CBD47-AB72-B6DD-C717-3C06A33E9E6C](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_temp/lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367CBD47-AB72-B6DD-C717-3C06A33E9E6C)

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_temp/lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367D3E99-FC3F-8C55-87A5-AA58290FAB91](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_temp/lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367D3E99-FC3F-8C55-87A5-AA58290FAB91)

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_temp/lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367EB6A7-B842-3C74-0FF0-3AAE7331D3FF](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_temp/lates/filedownload.cfm?id=367EB6A7-B842-3C74-0FF0-3AAE7331D3FF)

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app\\_temp/lates/filedownload.cfm?id=36A0F107-BEED-E30C-9D6A-E9A0E8E41394](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_temp/lates/filedownload.cfm?id=36A0F107-BEED-E30C-9D6A-E9A0E8E41394)

#### ENRD current activities

- ***Feedback from Leader subcommittee***, by Stig Hansson, Leader subcommittee representative. The presentation gave an overview of the main outcome of the LsC. It also highlighted that the group discussions, organised during the meeting, on Better Local Development Strategies were very interesting and effective. The groups felt strongly that the bottom-up approach of Leader must be maintained. The group work method led to many interesting facts and examples being shared among participants.
- ***NRN Joint Action on "Demonstrating the Added Value of Networking"***, by Mark Redman, ENRD Contact Point.
- ***Rural entrepreneurship thematic initiatives***, by Donald Aquilina, ENRD Contact Point
- ***Development of communication tools***, by Angelo Strano, ENRD

*Contact Point*

Discussion Points

The main discussion points were:

- That the mass media still mainly pick-up on Pillar 1 issues. There are many potential opportunities which the ENRD should make the most of to place rural development 'stories' – including their policy relevance – in the mass media. This is a much less costly method of communication than the development of, for example, written publications aimed at the wider public.
- Different NRNs have very different financial resources and this affects their ability to actively participate in thematic and other initiatives.
- The fact that rural areas are places of social and economic innovation should be highlighted. They can often be a part of the solution for 'big' issues such as employment and climate change and this should be communicated more. The ENRD needs to analyse further how it communicates with its primary stakeholders and the wider public and disseminate stories and examples within the context of the policy.
- Currently M&E of networking is far from perfect. In the future it will be more formalized in the context of networking and it is envisaged that the ENRD (as well as the EC) will play a role in strengthening it.
- In the future programming period innovation will be more important and more embedded in the policy. A cost effective way of communicating innovative ideas in action is through the organization of competitions which then attract media coverage.

## **ANNEX 1: Outcomes of group discussions**

### **Outcomes of group discussions on Focus Group on Environmental services**

In relation to the focus group on "**Environmental services**" (ENV) the following points were discussed:

- All the four initial issues are considered relevant for the work of the FGs.
- Pre-requisites for the work of the FG appear to be the following:
  - o to come to a clear and agreed definition of "Environmental services";
  - o to take into consideration the diversity of EU rural areas and the national conditions and needs (flexibility is needed in delivery).
  - o exchange good practices across MS. The point has been made in particular for collective approaches. In this regard, the focus of the work should be on identifying and assessing the benefits that collective actions/cooperation bring with them, and their added value.
- The FG should look at how to ensure better focus and concentration of environmental actions in order to get stronger results (results-oriented payments).
- Particular attention should be given to the new legislative framework with specific reference to monitoring and evaluation. There is a) need to establish a strong environmental baseline and put stress on ex-ante evaluation; b) need to think about more meaningful indicators which are relevant to the EU2020 targets and can be used across measures.
- Farmers and forest managers play a crucial role in delivery of Environmental Services but more awareness raising and training is needed for their delivery.
- The forestry sector should be considered along with agriculture in the analysis. However forestry and agro-forestry measures should be treated as separate items from agro-environment measures in general.
- The economic dimension of the delivery of environmental services has to be taken into account (i.e. creation of employment, jobs), with specific reference to areas which are subject to environmental restrictions.
- Importantly, the FG should also take into account the role that small and semi-subsistence farms play in the delivery of Environmental Services.
- The FG should look at the possible role that community groups and actions can play in respect to the delivery of environmental services: How to improve the involvement of community-led initiatives in Axis 2 (i.e. environmental) actions? *Success stories should be identified for inspiration (the cases of AT, SE were mentioned)*. Is there room for a "green" LEADER? How to better coordinate environmental actions with other structural funds which are relevant for rural areas?

- Another aspect of the analysis should concern the effects of the greening of Cap 1<sup>st</sup> Pillar with respect to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar agri-environment measures.
- Particular attention should also be paid to possible issues arising from the transition from the current programming period to the delivery of environmental services in post-2013.

A link with the FG on KT&I can be envisaged considering its potential scope for: a) orientating the research towards environmental practices to be applied in areas with environmental restrictions; b) building up environmental advisory systems.

### **Outcomes of group discussions on Focus Group on Knowledge transfer and innovation**

In relation to the focus group on "**Knowledge transfer and innovation**" (KT&I) the following points were discussed

- As starting point for the work of the FG, clear boundaries for what is meant by "innovation projects" would be needed (the risk being otherwise to not be able to target the interventions efficiently).
- The reference framework for the FG should embrace the wider rural economy and not just the agricultural sector.
- Facilitating the exchange of (existing) experiences and sharing practices was highlighted as a possible role of the FG. Also, it was suggested to explore what other policies (i.e. funds) are doing about KT&I.
- The FG should look at existing experiences with particular reference to the following:
  - o Setting-up farm advisory systems in the different MS. *One particular dimension to look at could be the way (if any) in which NRNs participate in the running of such services.*
  - o Existing successful experiences under Measure 124, in order to understand how to replicate the effects (*what kinds of selection criteria were used?*). An important topic to explore would be how to ensure that innovation projects/partnership has a real impact on agricultural holdings.
- The territorial dimension of cooperation has a particular relevance for innovation (within territories, between regions and cooperation actions between countries).
- Another point to be explored is how to ensure the transfer of successful experiences from one MS to another.

Finally, the FG should look at "farmer-driven innovation". *How to ensure that farmers can be better involved in deciding what innovations should be focused upon?*