

Added Value of Networking



Provision of networking activities for advisors & innovation support services:

RUR@L INOV

Basic information	
NRN:	Portugal
Keywords:	Innovation research
Coordinator:	University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD)
Partners:	University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD), Direção Geral de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural (DGADR)
Resources:	About 160 000 €
Period:	Dec 2011 – June 2013

Background to the networking/innovation support activities

Innovative projects and processes were successfully delivered in rural Portugal, resulting in improvements in development in the areas where this innovative activity was taking place. It was recognised however that there was little understanding of how and why innovation had occurred and whether there were any particular conditions which encouraged these innovative activities. The project was developed in order to better understand innovation in rural Portugal in the hopes that the findings would help the policies to be better tailored to support rural innovation.

Purpose and description of the networking/innovation support activities

The overall aim of the project RUR@L INOV - Innovation in Rural Areas was to learn about innovation and how innovation was developed and implemented by different types of organisations in Portuguese rural areas. The project aimed to identify and describe innovation processes, create a profile of the innovative organisations and other stakeholders, as well as the supporting environment.



Added Value of Networking



The specific goals of RUR@L INOV project were:

- To contribute to the development of a flexible analytical framework enabling the identification and measurement of broad scope, small-scale and non-technological innovation;
- To characterise innovation processes and the profile of innovators in rural Portugal;
- To identify the key variables which enhance and constrain innovation processes;
- To develop a system of indicators to assess innovation and its effects, both internal and external, on organisations.

The methodological approach used combined qualitative and quantitative techniques. It utilised focus groups, learning workshops, interviews by questionnaire and cases studies. The project captured an interdisciplinary approach and encompassed the participation of innovation stakeholders, thus representing their vision and expectations.

Who benefited from the activities and how

In the short term the organisations involved benefited from having an increased understanding of the development of innovation and the conditions required to enable it to thrive. In the longer term these organisations will be able to use their findings to develop policy encouraging an innovating environment, and benefiting the potential entrepreneurs and the rural areas in which they develop their activities.

Main results of the networking/innovation support activities & added value of the chosen delivery approach

The main results from the project were:

- Development of tools for the collection of data for an information system on innovation in rural areas;
- Identification and dissemination of Good Practice in innovation in rural areas;
- Evaluation of the impacts of innovation in rural areas.

A multi-disciplinary approach utilising both quantitative and qualitative research techniques helped the researchers to capture a highly complete picture of the innovation processes in rural Portugal. This enabled the team to explore the elements which support innovation from a range of different and complimentary sectors.

Added Value of Networking



Success factors

A strong partnership of academics, government officials and the networking expertise of the NRN enabled this project to be delivered effectively, exploring all elements of the rural context which can support innovation.

Description of NSU and other partners contribution

The Portuguese NRN Programme provided funding for the activity. The research team was drawn from one University and DGADR, supported by international experts from Ireland, Sweden, Portugal and Spain.

Additional information and useful resources

Webpage: <https://sites.google.com/site/inovaremmeiorural/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/RURAL-INOV-Inovar-em-Meio-Rural/427061480718246>

Last Update

November 2013



Funded by the

ENRD *Connecting Rural Europe*

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>