

Added Value of Networking

NRN self-evaluation activities:

NRN self-evaluation profile

Basic information	
NRN:	Lithuanian Rural Network
Coordinator:	Ms. Žaneta Jucaitytė, Ms. Kristina Butvilavičienė
Partners/evaluators (if used):	n.a.
Resources:	n.a.
Period:	n.a.

Background of the Network and the general approach taken to Network self-assessment and evaluation:

The Lithuanian Rural Network (LRN) was established in December 2008 and is a formal structure, uniting institutions and organisations participating in the Lithuanian RDP. Membership of the network is voluntary, open and formal. By October 2013 the LRN had brought together more than 900 institutions and organisations participating in rural development, agricultural and forestry. These include rural communities, LAGs, non-governmental organisations, science and research institutions, municipal and state institutions and agencies. Private legal bodies and individual people cannot become members. The organisational structure of the LRN consists of Network members, Network committees which group members according to the main rural development issues, Network council, Network working groups and the Network Support Unit. The NSU is based within the Ministry of Agriculture.

A presumption was made in the formation of the LRN model that a key stimulus for rural change is rural development stakeholders themselves, since no one better understands the problems and needs of the rural population. Therefore the coordination of LRN activities is guided by the 'bottom-up' approach.

Network members have the opportunity to receive LRN funds to implement their projects, like those for good practice exchange in agricultural and rural development, organising events, implementation of cooperation projects, collaboration in tackling other significant issues on the implementation of the RDP, forestry, food sector and rural development.

Assessment of NRN performance:

A research initiative entitled 'Challenges of National Rural Network activity in 2007-2013 and opportunities for its improvement after 2013' has been initiated by the NSU (at the time of writing public procurement procedures are still in process). The aim of this research is to evaluate the LRN activity during 2007-2013, to identify problems and to identify opportunities to improve its activity after 2013. The research will aim to include:

1. Legislative analysis to assess how the LRN legal regulations have influenced the organisational structure of LRN, its management and the quality of decision-making processes.
2. Intervention logic-based evaluation on the achievement of the Network Action Plan objectives and on the approaches that were used to achieve them.
3. Survey of Network members in order to identify if the management structure of the Network, networking tools and the measures used have ensured the implementation of LRN objectives.
4. Evaluation of the impact of the LRN in the implementation of the Lithuanian RDP 2007-2013.
5. SWOT analysis of the structure, budget, membership, activities, management, monitoring and evaluation of the LRN.
6. Analysis of the LRN member's cooperation initiatives such as level the cooperation took place, number of cooperation initiatives, types of activities implemented by cooperation initiatives.

Stakeholder surveys:

The research report 'Rural Development Stakeholders Expectations and Anticipated Activities After Joining the Lithuanian Rural Network' was published in 2011. A survey of the LRN members and other stakeholders was carried out as part of this research. According to the results of this survey, when joining the LRN most stakeholders expected to contribute to the improvement of living conditions in rural areas, to share their experience with other LRN members and to make new contacts. The majority of survey respondents indicated that joining the LRN had been simple and relevant. The work of NSU was assessed as good. Members were satisfied with the information they have received about the LRN and its activities. Though according to the survey less than half of LRN members indicated that they were actively involved in LRN activities. The survey also identified that members were expecting more effective activity, less bureaucracy, respect for members' needs and broader dissemination of information.

Almost half of respondents who were not members of the LRN had only partially heard about the Network. They had received most of information about the LRN from mass media, institutions and LAGs. Nearly half of respondents indicated that they were planning to join the Network.



*European Network for
Rural Development*

Network evaluation:

The research report 'Networking in the context of sustainable rural development: the case of Lithuanian Rural Network' was written by the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics in 2013. The aim of the study was to evaluate the application of networking for sustainable rural development in the case of the LRN. The main outcomes of the research state that the benefit of the Network is being demonstrated by the Network members' proven expectations, by their participation in implementation of their projects according to Network Action Plan, also by the intentions of new organisations to join the Network. The majority of LRN members evaluate the activity of the LRN as more successful. Though it was identified that Network members lack a sense of ownership (common mission and aims), self-motivation for becoming actively involved in information and good practice exchange, and also in the decision making process. Their experience networking and cooperating is considered less adequate because of their minimal experience in networking.

Additional information:

n.a.

Last Updated:

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