



NRN News

July-August 2011

1st Issue

1st Conference of National Rural Network

The 1st conference of NRN was opened by the Special Secretary of Hellenic Ministry for Rural Development and Food, Mr. Vangelis Divaris on Thursday, the 7th of July 2011 at the Ionic Center in Plaka.

The NRN Conference was successful thanks to the participation of about 120 delegates, representatives of members of the NRN and other stakeholders.

"Under the difficult conditions that our country experiences today, the Rural Development Programme is an important funding tool of balanced development planning to strengthen the competitiveness of agriculture, improve farm incomes, promote quality products, protect the environment, upgrade the infrastructure and the wider regeneration of the countryside. We aspire that the current Conference will become a permanent event which will be held at

a regular basis and will become a meeting point of all members". Vangelis Divaris - Special Secretary, Hellenic Ministry for Rural Development and Food

"The Common Agricultural Policy towards 2020 should ensure the survival of the rural population in rural areas, support the production of public goods by farmers, create conditions for development in the countryside, to tackle the growing price and markets volatility and address the impacts of climate change and environmental problems". Polyxeni Polyzou, Head of Managing Authority for the Rural Development Programme for Greece 2007-2013

We Start – We set up a Network – We Cooperate

That was the title of the event that the RDP Managing Authority used so as to show the intention to support the new institution of the Network for the benefit of its members.

"The Vision of the Network is born by its members".

During the Conference strong emphasis was given to the need for activation of members, since the successful operation of the network is directly dependent upon effective networking and cooperation between them.

"We discuss, we conclude and suggest".

The head of Unit E "National Rural Network" of Managing Authority for Rural Development Programme for Greece 2007-2013, Mr. Petros Mouchas began his speech with these words. Mr. Mouchas summarized the 7 axes of the Action Plan and the actions in progress.



Mr. Divaris and Mrs. Polyzou were the main coordinators of the Conference sessions, while the hall was filled with 113 representatives of NRN members and other agencies.



1st Conference of NRN
Thursday 7th of July 2011

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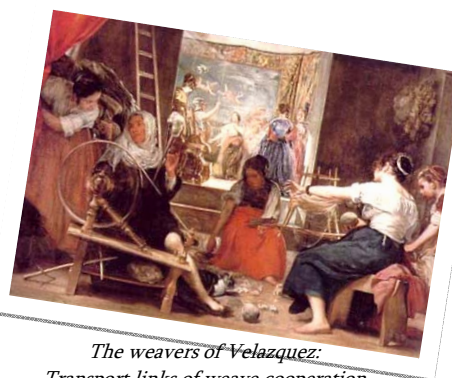
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Main points of the Conference

The Conference was structured into 3 main sections which have been successfully implemented in a climate of optimism and appetite for work. The representatives of NRN members were particularly interested in the thematic working groups, and participated in all the sections without failing to express their suggestions and comments on the operation of the Network. Participants of the Conference were informed about the startup of the Network, its progress and experiences from other similar networks. The main points are summarized as follows:

- ✓ Detailed presentation of NRN's Action, analysis, organizational structure, and operational framework with emphasis on preparations for its launch and future planning.

- ✓ Presentation of the European Rural Network.
- ✓ Presentation of the experience of both the Italian and Swedish NRN, and technology transfer in the process of enabling and displaying of relevant practice.
- ✓ Presentation of the basic points of the Commission's Announcement on the CAP after 2013.
- ✓ Successful implementation of thematic working groups, with rich conclusions for further discussion.



*The weavers of Velazquez:
Transport links of weave cooperation
via this networking*

Relevant practices from Italy & Sweden

The presentations of the two representatives of the Italian and Swedish network, Ms. Ascione and Mr. Laggeroth were very interesting and focused on methods of selection and award of good practices.

The Italian Network has organized a thematic working group on "Good Practices". A project should be characterized by 3 key elements so as to be chosen as a good practice: efficiency, sustainability and transferability of know-how. Good practices are collected through a database, and are rewarded with "Esempi" prizes, which are scholarships to attend training programs of the National Institute of Agricultural Economics, Italy (INEA).

In Sweden, the award of good practices is one of the most innovative actions of the Network. The awards ceremony takes place in **the main room of the City Hall in**

Stockholm where the Nobel Prizes are awarded. The prize for the winner is a statuette and a check of 1.000 €.

8 categories were awarded last year including

- Project of the year
- Entrepreneur of the Year
- Innovation of the Year
- Leader project of the year
- Environmental innovation
- Youth
- Integration of new citizens
- Gender equality



*The two representatives of Italian
and Swedish Network*

The 2nd Axis of the NRN's Action Plan is dedicated to identifying, analyzing and disseminating information to local and national level relating to transferable relevant practices for rural development.

Thematic Working Groups

The third section of the Conference was dedicated to linking the members of the NRN through their participation in three parallel thematic working groups.

The subjects of the groups were chosen by the Network Unit and inspired both by the Commission's Announcement on the CAP after 2013, and the priorities of the EU Strategy for Europe for 2020.

According to the Head of Managing Authority for the Rural development Programme for Greece, Mrs. Polyzou speech during the morning session:

“European agriculture needs not only to be economically but also environmental competitive. The CAP objectives concern: sustainable production, sustainable management of natural resources and a balanced regional development. To achieve these objectives, CAP must be shared equitably on the first pillar and focus more on competitiveness, innovation, climate change and environment in the second pillar”.

The subjects of the working groups were as follows:

- 1st Group: **“Smart development (research – innovation)”**
- 2nd Group: **“Sustainable management of natural resources and public goods”**
- 3rd Group: **“The policy for rural development under the regional development”**

Working groups involved a total of 54 delegates, while the discussions were supported from four experts (key speakers):

- 1st Group: **Tsaftaris Athanasios** (Professor in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Director of the Institute of Agrobiotechnology, National Center for Research and Technological Development:
- 2nd Group: **Vlachos Georgios** (Laboratory of Agricultural Extension, Agricultural Systems and Rural Sociology, Agricultural University of Athens)
- 3rd Group: **Psaltopoulos Dimitris** (Associate Professor, Regional Economic and Integrated Development of Rural Space, University of

Patras) and

Firbas Ioannis (Head of Special Service in Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Development Programmes)

After the speeches, key speakers raised two main questions that the participants were asked.



The 1st Group was preferred by various rural institutions and ministry officials

1 «Smart development»

- How can coordinate the agencies involved in the production process to meet the agri-food sector to the needs of the population?
- How can clusters / groups of producers to contribute to the enhancement of research and innovation?



In the 2nd Group participated mainly representatives of NGOs, Ministry of Environment and LAGs

2 «Sustainable management of natural resources and public goods»

- How the relationship between agriculture and the production of public goods is documented?
- How can the integrated farming systems with high environmental value be a part of the discussions on the new agricultural policy?



The 3rd Group attracted most of the participants while the participation of LAG's representatives was very strong

3 «The policy for rural development under the regional development»

- How can we ensure that the policies of economic diversification and their actions are governed by synergy?
- Should the structural characteristics of economies set their sectoral orientation?

Network members can address to the Network Unit for any additional information about the thematic working groups.

Results of the TWGs

Before the end of the Conference, representatives of the working groups who had assumed the role of the rapporteur, presented the results obtained during the discussions. The results were referred to suggestions / concerns for next discussions.

1st Group «Smart development»

During the 1st Group, Mr. Tsafaris developed a model of know-how transfer from research institutions to consumers: the model referred to the creation of clusters. His presentation emphasized the need to create partnerships in the food sector.

Based on questions raised by the speaker, the group has submitted proposals for implementing measures necessary for promoting "smart growth".

The proposals put forward included:

1. Consolidation of research and research institutions results
2. Dissemination of good practices and research results
3. Encouragement of the use of research and innovation by groups of young farmers
4. Benefit from clusters and other forms of cooperation
5. Cooperation of research centers directly with producers

2nd Group «Sustainable management of natural resources and public goods»

Mr. Vlachos presentation in the second group was focused on the agricultural systems of high environmental value, and was also referred to the services provided by ecosystems, the functions of agroecosystems and the co-production. The interest of the team turned to agricultural policy issues and more specifically to the identification of public goods during the discussions on the formation of the new CAP.

The needs identified by the second group were divided into two main categories:

1. Thematic specialization, i.e. specialization in sectors as policy per public goods or group of public goods, focusing on water, soil, biodiversity, fire prevention and air quality.
2. Identification of the appropriate tools such as adjusting the legal framework, aid administration, quotas, targeted training / counseling.

3rd «The policy for rural development under the regional development»

The 3rd group was focused on the speeches of the 2 speakers, who provoked the intense interest of the participants by reaching key strategic issues in planning development policies at both regional and local level. Mr. Firbas set the scene for the new multidisciplinary regional policy direction, while Mr. Psaltopoulos reported on economic diversification.

The main concerns expressed by the group are as follows:

1. Multidisciplinary and multi-fund growth strategy
2. Exploring the issue of economic diversification for both the rural population and the wider local economy
3. Planning and strategy based on local features
4. Local development strategies
5. Advices for rural population
6. Tools to achieve synergy

Networking within the RDP

"Networking takes place at two levels: European and National" Since 2008 the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) operates involving 31 networks in 27 EU Member States. In each NRN a set of organizations, agencies and services that represent categories of beneficiaries of the RDP is involved.

The Greek Network includes 20 agencies and organizations, 43 LAGs, Services involved in managing and implementing the Measures of the RDP, DG of Development and Protection of Forests and Natural Environment (Ministry of Environment) and MA of OP Fisheries.

"Our vision and hope for the NRN is to continue its operation after the programming period"

Petros Mouchas, Head of Unit E "National Rural Network"



Petros Mouchas, Head of Unit E

The Steering Committee

Under the structure of the NRN, the Coordinating Committee acts by supporting the Network Unit. The Committee has also a guiding and advisory role in designing and implementing the Action Plan and in preparing the annual work program of the NRN. The Steering Committee may also suggest topics for the Thematic Working Groups.

The composition of the Steering Committee was a decision of the Special Secretary on 10/05/2011. Committee members consist of four executives from the Ministry of Rural Development and Food and three representatives of Agencies-Members of the Network.

The selection of these representatives was illustrative of the priorities of each Axis of the RDP.

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The Network Unit

The Unit responsible for the operation of the network is Unit E: **"National Rural Network" of the RDP's Managing Authority**. The work of the Unit is seen as particularly important, since Unit E' is responsible for the preparation, specialization, updating and implementation of NRN's Action Plan (AP), while also for disseminating AP's results to its members.

The Unit was staffed in April 2011 with 4 people:

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Social networking

Latest News

Thematic Working Groups

The continuity of the Thematic Working Groups was announced by Mr. Divaris at the end of the Conference. The Network Unit has already draw the conclusions of the first meeting of the TWGs and will soon start the preparations for the next meetings, due to be held in autumn.

Submission of proposals

The Network Unit expects proposals from all members about the Action Plan, the organizational structure and the general operation of the network.

Proposals may be sent by e-mail in ead@mou.gr

Submission of relevant practices

The Network Unit has started the collection and recording of relevant practices and corresponded projects funded under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, aiming their promotion both at national and European level. For this purpose, any interested party may send a description of the project to assess and join the list of NRN relevant practices.

Network of the month!

The Greek Rural Network has been chosen by the European Network for Rural Development as the Network of the month and will soon be displayed on the website of the European Network:
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>

NRN Website

The website was created in May 2010 and is located at <http://www.ead.gr/>.

In the webpages there are several sections with information about the National Rural Network, the European Network for Rural Development, Leader and events related to the field of rural development. One of the immediate actions of the Network Unit is to enrich the web interface with tools for members, while the translation in English is being prepared.

Action Plan

The Network Unit has already produced the Action Plan, which includes actions to be undertaken until 2015. The Plan is divided into 7 priority axes in line with the objectives of the Network. These axes are further specified in operations activities and actions.

Mr. Mouchas outlined the Axes by highlighting the actions taken so far. The sever axes are the following:

- Priority Axis 1 "Interconnection of organizations / agencies and Administrative Services, involved in rural development".
- Priority Axis 2' Identification, analysis and information on local and national level with regard to transferable relevant practices for rural development".
- Priority Axis 3 "Dissemination of the results of the RDP at local, national and European level".
- Priority Axis 4 "Organization of exchanging experience and expertise in rural development".
- Priority Axis 5 "Technical assistance for inter-territorial and transnational cooperation under Axis 4 of the RDP".
- Priority Axis 6 "Cooperation and links with the European Network of Agricultural and other rural networks".
- Priority Axis 7 "Contribution to the ongoing evaluation of the RDP".



MINISTRY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD
ADMINISTRATIVE SECTOR FOR COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Managing Authority of the Rural Development Programme of Greece 2007-2013

