



Outcomes: 9th Coordination Committee meeting

Minutes

14th June 2012



Connecting Rural Europe

List of abbreviations

AP&S: Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability

CAP: Common Agricultural Policy

CC: Coordination Committee

CLLD: Community-led local development

CP: Contact Point

EIP: European Innovation Partnership

ENRD: European Network for Rural Development

ES: Environmental Services

FG: Focus Group

KT&I: Knowledge Transfer & Innovation

LAG: Local Action Group

MA: Managing Authority

MS: Member State

NRN: National Rural Network

NSU: National Support Unit

OG: Operational Group

RDP: Rural Development Programme

9th Coordination Committee Meeting, Brussels, 14 June 2012
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Agenda Item	<p>Welcome and short introduction, Mr Plewa, Deputy Director General of DG AGRI for rural development.</p> <p>The participants were welcomed and it was explained that the meeting would address key issues for the RD policy through: the findings of the Focus Group on Environmental Services (ES); the new CC Focus Group on Knowledge Transfer & Innovation and the assessment of the value added of the networking. The importance of the support provided by the rural networks to rural development policy and particularly for the preparation of the next generation of rural development programmes was underlined.</p>
Agenda Item	<p>Environmental Services FG:</p> <p>Initial findings and next steps, <i>Fabio Cossu, ENRD CP</i></p> <p>This presentation highlighted the activities and main findings of the 1st phase of the Focus Group on the delivery of Environmental Services and the steps to be taken in the 2nd phase, which will focus on consolidating initial findings, exploring new areas and proposing recommendations on how ES can be improved in their delivery.</p>
Presentation Link: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=EF837ADE-CBA1-F480-DE2A-7111D68F8086	
Presentation link: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=EF837EE3-A3D2-E1D5-61CC-EE0B591B72A8	<p>Collective agri-environmental contracts: the Dutch experience, <i>Paul Terwan, NL MA</i></p> <p>The presentation described the successful case of collective approaches in Laag Holland (NL), that have enabled local level improvement of grassland bird management and increased the population of birds.</p>
Presentation link: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=EF83817F-A482-DD60-0C82-DD2D8DFB683E	<p>Integrated use of measures for delivering environmental services: an example from Italy, <i>Francesco Vanni, IT MA</i></p> <p>The presentation described an integrated approach to the implementation of measures in the Marche region (Valdaso) in Italy, protecting water and soil from chemical inputs.</p>
Discussion points	<p>The main points addressed during the discussion were that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The main role of the FG is not to give direct suggestions to the completion of the legal framework (which is being discussed by the European Parliament and the European Council), but to enhance the possibilities to share common knowledge on the implementation of environmental services and to make recommendations on how to improve their delivery. - Closer coordination between the FG on ES and the Advisory Group on Rural Development should be ensured, to make their activities more effective.
Action points (if any)	CC members were invited to send suggestions and comments regarding the

ES Progress report by the 26th of June. For this purpose, it was decided to open a My ENRD forum.

Agenda Item

Knowledge transfer and innovation FG

Presentation link:
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=EF8383C9-E966-6406-8681-C388EA3EF289

Presentation of the proposals as regards the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for agricultural productivity and sustainability,
Martin Scheele, DG AGRI

The presentation gave an overview of the policy framework, the role and way which the EIP for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (AP&S) will aim to stimulate innovation in this field. It will notably support, through a dedicated network, a practical exchange mechanism between the research community and farmers in order to address the increasingly significant challenges related to food, climate change, resource management and related issues.

Presentation link:
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=EF838703-D8E2-E5AF-9DA8-AC27A6B10E50

Introduction and launch of the CC focus group on Knowledge Transfer & Innovation (KT&I),
Michael Gregory, ENRD CP

The presentation gave an overview of the proposed scope of the FG. It also provided an indication of the milestones, the envisaged timeframe and immediate next steps of the FG. It was emphasized that the FG should deliver its initial results by December 2012.

Discussion points

Issues related to the operational groups of the EIP on AP&S

- *Format of the operational groups:* It was commented that the envisaged format of the operational groups to be established already exists and on a scale that indicates that this general approach is effective. Examples include: national and regional initiatives, joint group of farmers, agri-business initiatives which operate with minimal administration requirements.
- *Funding & allocation of tasks:* The EIP on AP&S does not have funding for the operational groups (OG). The OGs may be funded under the research and innovation framework. Support for the OGs will also be provided by the Managing Authorities of the RDPs through the Cooperation measure. Through the EIP network researchers & operational groups working on similar subjects will be brought together and exchange experiences.
- *Linking rural development, research and practice:* The links between rural development, research and practice is an issue which needs to be investigated and explored to maximize linkages and minimize waste of resources.
- *Definition of innovation:* It was explained that there should not be a definition of innovation in the sense of a legally established eligibility criterion for programming. MAs should use eligibility criteria and clear conditions provided under each relevant measure.

Possible issues for consideration on the scope of the Focus Group

- *Separating “Knowledge Transfer” and “Innovation”*: It was proposed to make a distinction between “Knowledge Transfer” and “Innovation”. “Knowledge Transfer” has been extensively examined while “Innovation” and the methods for boosting it are still less clear.
- *Sources of innovation*: Many innovations are generated at the farm level, not through formally recognized research. It was therefore proposed that the FG could examine the advisory services and how they could be organized to identify new ideas applied by farmers; then scientifically validate these innovative practices and disseminate them. The analysis of the use and results of actions taken under measure 124 was indicated as an important building block of the FG work.
- *Simplicity & flexibility of the EIP on AP&S*: It was suggested that the FG examples of innovation processes found in MS could inform the EIP with a view to ensuring its simplicity and effectiveness.
- *Guarantee funds to support innovation*: A significant problem is that banks are reluctant to fund farmers for innovative projects due to the risk involved. A guarantee fund could be a solution. The FG could examine how the possible use of such financial instruments to support innovation. Synergies should be created between the FG and other activities carried out by the ENRD, such as the workshop on financial engineering in October.
- *Innovation in forestry and rural areas*: It was proposed to examine innovation in forestry and in rural areas ‘beyond agriculture’ to include aspects such as the efficient use of resources. It was clarified that the intention is that the agri-food chain and the examination of links between RD and the EIP should be the initial scope of the work of the Focus Group. Notwithstanding this, if examples and/or case studies of other rural development related themes are identified they could also be taken into account.
- *Management of the operational groups*: It was proposed that the FG could provide guidance about the management of the operational groups. It was clarified that governance issues will be looked at in the future but the FG should focus as much as possible on the current experiences and from that point to look how to facilitate implementation of the next generation of RDPs.
- *Other possible issues for consideration*: It was suggested that the FG could consider investigating the cooperation between urban and rural areas, the supply of agricultural products, biomass, purification plants, logistics and marketing as well as how innovation can address societal needs. Also CLLD and the role of the LAGs in promoting innovation and in relation to the EIP on AP&S could be considered.

Agenda Item	Improving effectiveness and efficiency of networking
<p>Presentations Link: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=EF838A04-9D0A-C835-3346-39A6690E58EB</p>	<p>Joint NRN action on “Demonstrating the added value of networking”: outcomes and observations, <i>Mark Redman, ENRD CP</i></p> <p>The presentation gave an overview of the results of the joint NRN action on “Demonstrating the added value of networking”, briefly describing also some examples of activities collected from the NRNs.</p>
<p>Presentations Link: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=EF838DD6-089A-E2BA-1F7C-1566BD27874E</p>	<p>Overview of what is working well and less well: the implications for the future, <i>Donald Aquilina/Adrian Neal, ENRD CP</i></p> <p>The presentation gave an overview of the discussion paper on networking, focusing on the results of the SWOT analysis and on the main suggestions formulated during the 15th NRN meeting in Finland, with the aim of improving the NRNs activities in the next programming period.</p>
<p>Discussion Points</p>	<p>During the discussion the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Different institutional models for the NSU:</i> There was some evidence coming from the joint action on “Demonstrating the added value of networking” that outsourcing can be advantageous, as when the NSU is within the MA it may be stripped of resources in times of austerity. However, it is not always the case that NSUs within MAs are constrained in their operations. Certain common problems associated with different models were identified but certainly the ‘correct’ or ‘best’ structure has not been found. - <i>Training and capacity building:</i> Regardless of the model adopted, training and capacity building are important factors to improve the performance of networks. - <i>European dimension of the NRN:</i> The importance for the NRNs of dedicating time and effort to undertake activities at European level was underlined. These activities give the networks the opportunity to build their capacities through the exchange of information and to have inspirations for new activities. - <i>Engaging networks’ members:</i> It is always important to engage network’s members but it does not always happen. Different governance models can assist on this. There is no evidence yet that specific models, such as those which foresee regional offices, can better support and stimulate participation and engagement. Some suggestions were made to support engagement, such as: i) rotating chairs in the steering committee of the network; ii) building the activities on an effective collaboration between networks and partners, driven by the achievement of objectives commonly agreed. - <i>Trust and flexibility:</i> Between the NSUs and the MAs it is vital and takes time, but once it is built then the NSU has more flexibility and ‘freedom’ in performing its tasks. - <i>Synchronization of RDP (MA) and NSU:</i> The NRNs can support and strengthen the implementation of the RDPs and this view should be

expressed strongly in the discussion paper on networking. It is important to ensure that when the implementation of the RDP starts the network has already reached a good level of organisation, so it can positively contribute to the implementation of the programme. The evident trust and partnership that now exists at European level between DG AGRI and the 'ENRD CP team', which has demonstrably improved the quality of the work, was taken as a good example of synchronization.

Action points (if any)

CC members were invited to send comments and suggestions regarding the Discussion paper on networking by the end of June.

Agenda Item

Proposals for 5th year: ENRD activity programme

Presentations Link:

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=EF83923B-9D09-975E-06FB-22565531E8D7

Overview of proposed Year 5 programme, *Adrian Neal, CP*

The presentation gave an overview of the proposals for the Y5 activities of the ENRD.

Discussion points

LEADER – in its broadest sense - will have an ex-ante strategy in the future programming period. This means that programming LEADER should happen immediately, i.e. the 'candidate' LAGs need to be prepared now and be supported in this. Given the resources available to the ENRD, there is unlikely to be any capacity to programme new (not yet foreseen) major events in 2012, but several smaller ones (e.g. workshops) are already planned and can assist this process.

Mobile internet and smart phones: This new technology, which is primarily software driven, will spread rapidly. It is something that the ENRD could examine, especially in the context of demography/young people in rural areas.

Green care: In rural areas is a small topic but becoming more important and is something that the ENRD could address.

European innovation prize: Several NRNs successfully organize 'Good practices' prizes, and the ENRD could consider an award for the best MS innovative project. MS have not been enthusiastic about such a prize suggested in the draft legislative proposal, therefore other simpler possibilities should be considered by the ENRD.

Upcoming events: CC members took the opportunity to inform the meeting about upcoming events, several of which have common themes to those being proposed as Year 5 ENRD activities.

- Euromontana will be hosting a seminar on Youth and mountain regions in early October 2012. This could form part of or be coordinated with the possible new ENRD thematic initiative on rural youth.
- The Dutch government is sponsoring NL young farmers in a debate related to 50 years of the CAP. All NRNs are invited to participate.
- All NRNs were invited to register for the Financial engineering event in

Latvia scheduled for June 28th 2012.

- Euromontana and the Italian NRN will be hosting an event on Mountain areas and RDPs.
- A joint event sponsored by AT, HU and SI on Food supply chains will be held on 8th-9th October. It will focus on practical experiences of short supply chains. The role of women will be highlighted, as approximately three of such local initiatives are driven by women.
- The organization 'Purple' is planning a seminar in Jan 2013 for Food as a link between urban and rural areas.