

Name of Rural Network

Netzwerk Land



Contact Details

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Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives of the Rural Network

The Austrian National Rural Network (NRN) started its activities in December 2008. The main objective of the - "Netzwerk Land" is:

- To facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge between the different actors involved in rural development;
- To coordinate and collect information at local, national and European level.

To avoid any unnecessary duplication of work, the network will build on previously established organisations and networks, which specialise in the different 'axes'.

The operational tasks of the network include:

- To develop transferable innovative and instructive practices in rural development;
- To organise the exchange of experience and knowledge;
- To produce training programmes for Local Action Groups (LAGs);
- To provide technical assistance for interregional and transnational cooperation.

Participants in the Rural Network

The network comprises all organisations and administrations, active in the development of rural areas in Austria. As the network tries to include as many stakeholders and contributors as possible, it does not keep a list of designated members. However, the network has set up thematic support groups ('Begleitgruppen'; TSG) for those areas seen as a priority for the programme. The members of these TSGs meet regularly. It is intended that more people will be involved in network activities, either as users of the planned website/magazine, or as participants in seminars etc.

Network Structure

After an EU-wide tender procedure, the Managing Authority (MA – i.e. Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water) selected a consortium of three partner organisations to run the NRN. The network structure comprises:

- A Coordination Committee, in which local key actors and national authorities work together to represent the network unit in the Steering Committee (consisting of representatives from public administration and social partners as well as environmental and

ecological organisations, ecological and mountain farmers, national parks and LAGs);

- Thematic Support Groups (TSGs);
- A secretariat in charge of administrative and organisational activities;
- An operational group ran mainly by the partners of the consortium.

The network concept as well as its work programme, were officially approved by the Commission on the 18th December, 2008. The network itself was set up by a consortium of three partner organisations:

- Agrar Projekt Verein - covers agriculture and forestry (axis 1), coordinates all activities, as well as hosting the secretariat;
- Umweltdachverband (UWD) - focuses on environmental issues (axis 2);
- ÖAR Regionalberatung GmbH - deals with the themes of 'quality of life' and 'diversification of the rural economy' as well as 'Leader' (axes 3 and 4).

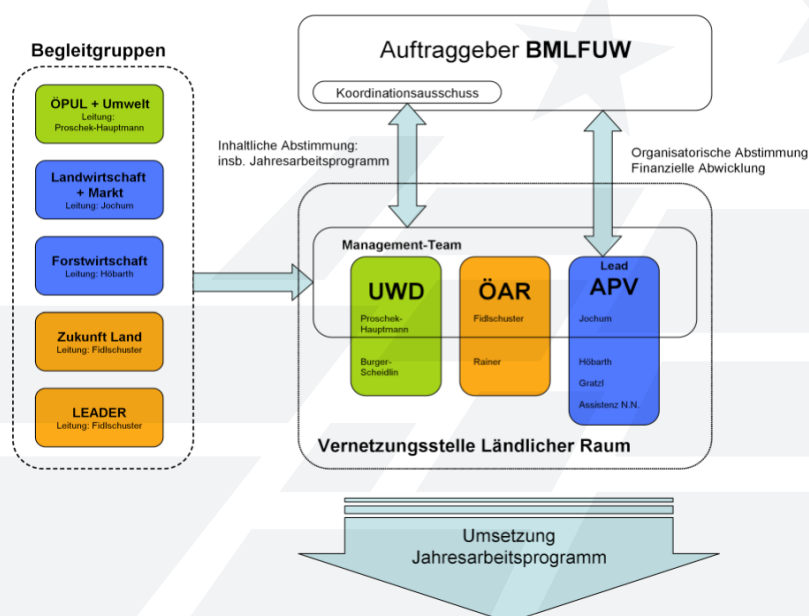
The contact persons for the different axes are:

- Axis 1 and overall coordination of the network - Christian Jochum, Agrar.Projekt.Verein, <http://www.agrarprojektverein.at>
- Axis 2 - Michael Proschek-Hauptmann, Umweltdachverband, <http://www.umweltdachverband.at>
- Axis 3 and 4 - Luis Fidschuster, ÖAR, <http://www.oeaar.at>

Network Management

Five Thematic Support Groups (TSGs = 'Begleitgruppen') will provide substantial inputs relating to agriculture, forestry, environment, rural development and Leader. The members of the groups themselves link key actors, feeding relevant information to and from the organisations to which they belong. As required temporary task forces will be established for contributing to specific topics.

The network will organize annual conferences focusing on specific themes in the different axes. In 2012, the focus will be on wider rural development and the 2012 NRN conference theme is 'Equal opportunities in rural development' (Annual NRN conference in



combination with project award). The conference will be held together with the annual Leader conference in November 2012. Moreover, the network will arrange workshops, seminars and excursions. As well as the working groups related to program priorities, the network will also set up temporary task forces to elaborate on specific topics.

The main communication tools are the website and 'ausblicke', the NRN's magazine which publish two issues per year).

Its website serves to facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge. The website is linked to the European Network for Rural Development (EN RD) and thereby promotes the exchange of information with the NRNs of other Member States. The first edition of the magazine 'ausblicke' was published in autumn 2009. It shows different topics in its various i.e. biological, social and economical aspects. In the meantime six issues have been published. The topics are: 'Diversity', 'Alteration', 'Multi functionality', 'Forest', 'Success' and 'Learning'. The magazine can be downloaded at: <http://www.netzwerk-land.at/netzwerk/magazin-ausblicke-1> (in German language only).

Network Budget for the period 2007–13

The network strives to represent the Austrian rural context in Europe, as well as ensuring that European-wide experiences are available to Austrian rural development actors. The network will support LAGs from Austria and other Member States to find cooperation partners. Cooperation with other networks is envisaged, in order to facilitate the exchange of ideas across borders.

The network has developed a tool for facilitating start-up workshops for transnational projects and is looking forward to a European guide for transnational cooperation to encourage and enable the project promoters. It would also appreciate the support of the European Network for Rural Development (EN RD) Contact Point in relation to pilot projects for transnational cooperation so that the importance of territorial cooperation can be widely demonstrated.

Network budget		€	Budget breakdown		€
Total network funds (Public Cost)		3.500.000	Total Network funds (Public Costs)		3.500.000
National co-finance		1.766.000	Work plan resources		2.800.000
EAFRD		1.734.000	Network running costs		700.000
EAFR Co-financing %		49.5 %	Others (if appropriate)		/