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Year

-Year ▼

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BUILDING THE EVALUATION CULTURE IN TUSCANY - LOCAL LEVEL LEADER EVALUATION SUPPORT FOR LAGs

STRENGTHENING LOCAL LEVEL EVALUATIONS

LAGs in the past were only the subject of evaluations at the RDP level, but in the programming period 2014-2020, Local Action Groups (LAGs) are asked to go one step further. According to article 143 (3) of the Common Provisions Regulation (EUFOR), each LAG shall carry out specific monitoring and evaluation activities related to their GLD strategy. In practice, this may include a self-assessment or optionally even an independent external evaluation of their GLD strategy. To organize this process has been particularly challenging for LAGs, but also for the Managing Authorities and other actors (PMTs) aiming to guide and support LAGs in these activities.

The factbook focuses on Tuscany's efforts to strengthen evaluation knowledge and culture among the LAGs and other evaluation stakeholders.

BUILDING EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE THROUGH A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

While evaluation activities can be very helpful and provide deeper insights at the local level, it has become clear that to achieve this it requires a specific skill set that is not always available within the staff of LAGs. Nevertheless, Tuscany believed that this could serve as an opportunity:

- to engage LAGs with new and profitable skills that could be used beyond the fulfilment of any obligation;
- to illustrate the role of evaluation both at the local and governance level and the benefits it can bring about to improve performance.

Therefore, the objective of this evaluation support activity was to coordinate, guide and support all seven LAGs in Tuscany with their first attempt at local level LAG-level evaluation activities. The support process was based on a participative and inclusive approach. The support period started in October 2019 and concluded in February 2020 with the objective to create a methodology suited to each LAG's needs and capabilities. The building blocks and the methodological framework were the same for each LAG and included the standard evaluation questions, judgement criteria, indicators, metrics, but the contents were different for each LAG according to their needs and specific situations. By doing so, this activity provided each LAG with the essential knowledge and capacity to either organize their own self-assessment or know what to look for when contracting an external evaluator for an evaluation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Furthermore, this support activity looked to stimulate LAGs to go beyond simply fulfilling the requirement and looked to help them to truly understand the meaning of evaluation, which can also be used as a tool to improve their performance and better implement their strategies for the future. It is important to highlight the importance of this activity for the evaluation of LAGs at the RDP level as it gives more capacity to LAGs and can therefore assist in the collection of more relevant data making it more useful and its dissemination.

The main action that was involved were the Region and the MA facilitating evaluation LAGs, local authorities and other stakeholders/beneficiaries. The evaluator for this process served as an evaluation expert that facilitated the LAG-level self-assessment activities.

This process was divided into two main stages:

- The facilitating evaluator backed by the Region and the MA carried out various participatory activities involving LAGs, other evaluation stakeholders and local authorities (e.g. experts and government local authorities) accordingly at all the main topics of evaluation could be used to develop a systematic methodology that would allow LAGs to answer the evaluation questions identified.

New Factsheet! - Building the Evaluation Culture in Tuscany

[1]

This factsheet focuses on Tuscany's efforts to strengthen evaluation knowledge and culture among the LAGs and other evaluation stakeholders.

[Download the factsheet now!](#) [2]

Source:

- Evaluation Helpdesk

Publication date:

06/10/2021



20 news schemes supporting the Birds@Farmland initiative

[3]

The Birds@Farmland initiative of the European Commission aims at supporting EU Member States in conserving wild birds living in agricultural landscapes. The initiative will develop twenty farmland bird conservation schemes in ten Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, and Portugal) based on sound scientific knowledge and agricultural and land management practices proven to work.

The initiative aims at involving agricultural and environmental authorities, farm advisory services, farmers' organisations, NGOs, land users, and experts in the process. Through workshops and stakeholder meetings at national and EU levels, Member States are invited to consider these conservation schemes that will be developed in the course of 2021 in their CAP Strategic Plans as well as other relevant policy tools. All EU Member States are invited to participate in the initiative to share their experience and to reinforce their measures for farmland birds.

More information can be found on the "Birds@Farmland Wiki-page" available here (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/birds_farmland_en.htm [4]). To request Wiki-access, please email t.metodiev@pensoft.net [5] or follow the instructions available on the website.

Source:

- EU institutions

Publication date:

30/09/2021



[EAFRD Projects Brochure "RIA2020" available in 6 languages](#)

[6]

This [EAFRD Projects Brochure](#) [7] presents the 15 finalists of the Rural Inspiration Awards (RIA) 2020, ENRD's EU-wide rural development good practice competition. This edition focused on EAFRD-funded initiatives that are promoting rural climate action and the bioeconomy.

The publication is available in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Polish.

Source:

- ENRD Contact Point

Publication date:

30/09/2021



[Rural Connections 2-2021 available in 6 languages](#) [8]

[Rural Connections 2-2021](#) [9] is now available in 6 languages!

In this edition of the Rural Connections magazine, rural development stakeholders from across Europe look at the future of their territories and of rural Europe. They share their views on a range of topics, including the role of rural youth, the importance of broadband development and the use of LEADER to support cultural projects.

Source:

- ENRD Contact Point

Publication date:

21/09/2021



EU Rural Review 30 'Climate action in rural areas' now available in 6 languages ^[10]

The EU Rural Review 30 'Climate action in rural areas' ^[11] is now available in 6 languages!

This edition of the EU Rural Review looks at how rural areas are making significant contributions towards climate action, also thanks to EAFRD support. The publication is available for download in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Polish.

Source:

- ENRD Contact Point

Publication date:

21/09/2021



New Report! - A journey through evaluation plans: Learning from past experiences for the future CAP ^[12]

This report summarises the major outcomes of the Good Practice Workshop, 'A journey through evaluation plans: Learning from past experiences for the future CAP'.

Download the report [here](#) ^[13].

Source:

- Evaluation Helpdesk

Publication date:

31/08/2021



Partnership with French LAGs ^[14]

French LAGs (Local Action Groups) invite any European LAG interested in cooperating with them to get in touch to identify possible future partnerships.

Leader LAG integrates transnational and/or inter-territorial cooperation. During the current programming period, many difficulties have been encountered by LAGs in the implementation of their respective development strategies, and, consequently, in the emergence and implementation of Leader cooperation projects.

If you are a LAG interested in cooperating with any French LAG, please write to the following email address: and find out more information on the webpage of the [French Rural Network](#) ^[16].

Source:

- National stakeholders

Publication date:

14/07/2021



Promoting Romanian forests as cultural and natural assets

[17]

The Association for Environment and Development - [ADEMED](#) [18], Romania supports three villages in reviving traditional community celebrations in the forest.

The Administration of National Cultural Fund, Romania, supports a five-month project by ADEMED to promote folkloric theater in Bosorod, Pietriceaua and Pesac, three settlements in the Carpathian Mountains. Between June and July 2021, cartoonists, actors, teachers and residents team up to translate three local legends into comics and then perform them in the forest.

The villages seed to form a network promoting the forest's cultural role and raising awareness of their role as cultural and natural local assets, promoting their conservation.

Source:

- National stakeholders

Publication date:

14/07/2021



International Film Festival Agrofilm 2021: submit your film!

[19]

Agrofilm is a unique festival organized by a research institution in cooperation with film professionals. The presentation of the results of the EIP AGRI working groups is welcome and contributes to the dissemination and use of good solutions.

This festival welcomes films on agriculture and food, which present examples of good practice, cooperation between farmers and researchers and innovative solutions that are the basis for effective

implementation of the new policies such as Green Deal, Organic Action Plans, Farm to Fork Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy. Submit your film by 31 July 2021 using [this form](#) [20] to

Source:

- National stakeholders

Publication date:

14/07/2021



[Rural Coworking Guide by CoLabora](#) [22]

[CoLabora](#) [23], a European cooperation project promoting coworking in rural areas, has released the toolkit '**[Rural Coworking Guide](#)** [24] - Tips for the successful creation of a rural coworking space'. The toolkit is available for free download.

Coworking spaces can contribute to rural areas' development. This new model of places designed for professionals offers them an opportunity to efficiently work where they choose to live, without the need to move away from their rural environment.

CoLabora is a transnational LEADER cooperation project gathering seven LAGs from Spain, France, Germany, Latvia and Wales.

Source:

- European stakeholders

Publication date:

12/07/2021

Pages

1

[2](#) [25]

[3](#) [26]

[4](#) [27]

[5](#) [28]

...

[>](#) [25]

[>>](#) [29]

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Links

- [1] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/new-factsheet-building-evaluation-culture-tuscany_en
- [2] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/publications/building-evaluation-culture-tuscany-local-level-leader-evaluation-support_en
- [3] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/20-news-schemes-supporting-birdsfarmland-initiative_en
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- [6] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/20-news-schemes-supporting-birdsfarmland-initiative_en
- [7] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/20-news-schemes-supporting-birdsfarmland-initiative_en
- [8] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/20-news-schemes-supporting-birdsfarmland-initiative_en
- [9] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/20-news-schemes-supporting-birdsfarmland-initiative_en
- [10] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/20-news-schemes-supporting-birdsfarmland-initiative_en
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- [12] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/20-news-schemes-supporting-birdsfarmland-initiative_en
- [13] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/20-news-schemes-supporting-birdsfarmland-initiative_en
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- [17] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/promoting-romanian-forests-cultural-and-natural-assets_en
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- [22] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/rural-coworking-guide-colabora_en
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- [25] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/misc/collapse.js_en?page=1
- [26] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/misc/collapse.js_en?page=2

- [27] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/misc/collapse.js_en?page=3
- [28] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/misc/collapse.js_en?page=4
- [29] https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/misc/collapse.js_en?page=125