

# Thematic Group

## Smart & Competitive Rural Areas

3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting  
*Brussels, 27 April 2016*

REPORT

V3 – July 2016

## Contents

Introduction.....	3
Interactive Session 1: Presentations on Regional Approaches .....	5
Interactive Session 2: Food Policies and Initiatives.....	9
Final Discussion and Conclusions .....	10
Annex 1 – Updated Workflow .....	11

## Introduction

Presentation

### Introduction

by David Lamb  
(ENRD CP)

The opening presentation outlined the approach taken in the workshop, having discussed projects and specifically market opportunities in the previous workshop, that the focus for the day's discussions and presentations would be RDP programming at national and regional level.

#### *Key messages from the presentation:*

- There are a number of tools that can be used along the supply or value chain drawn from a number of RDP measures in combination, and a draft factsheet has been put together outlining these tools
- There is an opportunity to consider how these approaches can be put together in an integrated manner
- The focus continues to be on how to disseminate best practice and take forward the opportunities using both Contact Point and NRN resources – on projects and on programmes

*Further reference: [Draft factsheet](#) on Smart & Competitive Supply Chains*

Presentation

### Outline of regional and national RDPs

by Enrique Nieto  
(ENRD CP)

Enrique presented an overview of the RDP Focus Area 3A “Integrating primary producers into the Supply Chain”, including information on the expected achievements, budget allocation and programming choices done at the EU level and in some selected case study regions.

#### *Key messages from the presentation:*

- 11.1 Billion EUR are allocated to support the integration of 300 000 agricultural holdings.
- RDPs offer a set of tools that can be combined to address the specific needs of the territory. This results in a variety of strategies for the agri-food sector across RDPs, while they are characterised by providing support on hard investments combined with market access actions (e.g. quality schemes, animal welfare, organic farming, cooperation) and other soft measures such as knowledge and advice.

Presentation

**Regional  
Approaches**

David Lamb  
(ENRD CP)

The regional approach was looked at in the opening presentations, including examples of the development of food strategies and policies. Three examples were explored – Ireland, Scotland and Denmark. All three have evolved their food and drink strategies over time

*Key messages from the presentation:*

- The evolution of food strategies includes a change of focus to include markets such as tourism (Scotland)
- The Irish approach to integration has been the development of a single food and drink body – the latest process looks to incorporate RDP measures
- Despite a history of cooperation, the Danish Food Cluster approach is led by 75% of the food and drink industry in Denmark

## Interactive Session 1: Presentations on Regional Approaches

### Presentation

#### Case Study - Estonia

Jaanus Joasoo  
Ministry of Rural  
Affairs, Estonia

The session was opened with a presentation from Jaanus Joasoo from the Ministry of Rural Affairs in Estonia on 'Developing Competitive Supply Chains' which had built upon a food programme between 2006-2008 and was currently running from 2015 to 2020.

*Further reference:* <http://www.agri.ee/en/objectives-activities/agriculture-and-food-market>

#### *Key messages from the presentation:*

- A new working group to develop the plan consisted of 18 food sector organisations (representatives of farmers, food processing industry, chefs, schools and public sector organisations responsible for food)
- The strategy looks at domestic and export opportunities, and coordinates food sector activity
- It links with the RDP, including measures 1, 2, 3, 4.2, 9.3, 16.1 and 16.3, 16.2 and 16.4 and 19

### Presentation

#### Case Study – RIS3 in Catalonia

Eduard Barcons, LAG  
Manager, Catalunya

The second presentation looked at local level delivery, and the importance of ensuring strategy links with local needs and regional strategies.

#### *Key messages from the presentation:*

- The smart specialization model has been adopted in Catalonia, to foster innovation and regional competitiveness
- Food and energy are key target areas for development, and entrepreneurship is needed
- It is important to connect the RIS3 methodology with LEADER

**Group discussion**

*Where are the gaps and opportunities to provide support throughout the supply chain at a regional or national level?*

Two discussion tables were set up around the same question (see left column). Groups were then asked to share and comment on each other's findings. The following is a summary that takes into account recurring issues emerged during the group discussions.

The discussions focused on identifying **key gaps** and **opportunities** for developing support.

	Gaps	Opportunities
<b>Systemic approach</b>	<p>Lack of strategic focus as the Focus areas are new and so the strategic approach is quite weak.</p> <p>Lack of cooperation between regional &amp; local level. Clusters at regional level are much more effective</p> <p>Clusters of excellence that are not well linked with the national level.</p> <p>The regions sometimes limit the LAGs and do not allow them to work across all components of the food chain.</p> <p>Research evidence to develop strategies</p> <p>Involvement of the private sector in the development of the strategies. At the end, the strategies should count with the participation of the main stakeholders in its development.</p>	<p>Italy: The NRN is supporting a pilot project on circular economy. In this case a beer craft sector waste is used to be re-used. (Lazio)</p> <p>Tuscany will use M16 to support supply chains,</p> <p>Taste of areas in Estonia are supported at the food programme.</p> <p>Private-Public partnership for the development of the strategies (Scottish example)</p> <p>Consider the complementarities with other available funds (LEADER and RIS3) Example Catalonia</p> <p>LEADER used for piloting project while the RDP/other funds to support scaling up</p>
<b>Ideas, business plans / advice</b>	<p>Advisory service and LAGs are not connected.</p> <p>Education and training on entrepreneurship. In this respect also, consider long term supportive process (not only in the development of the project but in the implementation)</p>	<p>Advisory services should be supporting in cases where no LAG exists or there are no people to support the process.</p> <p>In Scotland &amp; Ireland some good examples exist</p>

	<p>Education should target as well consumers through promotional activities</p>	<p>In Italy some regions use animation activities through LAGs and this leads to innovative ideas.</p> <p>Skylark in the Netherlands - Example of ongoing training and advise</p> <p>Irish Advisory services – provide advice on entrepreneurship and ongoing support by including non-agricultural advisors in their system.</p> <p>Example of training and education in entrepreneurship (Agricultural schools training on Food start ups (NL).</p> <p>Training to farmers through their cooperatives (EE)</p> <p>Promotional activities to educate consumers (EE)</p>
<p><b>Skills acquisition</b></p>	<p>Investments might be supported without training or training supported for training without financing, so consideration should be given to potential linkages</p>	<p>Catalonia: They have their speed acceleration system for growth. LEADER beneficiaries get grants but also support to get training (knowledge transfer for to farmers).</p> <p>In Estonia, in order to get support beneficiaries are required to get a) Annual training and b) be part of animal welfare scheme.</p>
<p><b>Finance for investments</b></p>	<p>In ES LAGs are not allowed to finance agriculture but only local businesses.</p> <p>Applicants tend to be the same being the ones who can get guarantees from banks. These could do the project anyway, thus there is a deadweight problem.</p> <p>A problem is also the giving grants mentality.</p> <p>Linkage between investment measures and market access measures</p>	<p>In Andalucía: waste is to be used to produce energy for irrigation under measure 16.</p> <p>In Estonia FI and guarantees are supported.</p> <p>In Italy, LAGs in Lazio help business to access guarantees with the help from a local bank.</p> <p>Crowd funding is also used bringing together public and private funding. This is the case in Spain (Seville) where a Solar energy plant at local level was financed like this.</p>

		Beneficiaries who apply quality scheme get greater scores when applying for investment measures than those who are not part of any quality scheme.
<b>Cooperation organisation</b>	<p>Overall there is the problem of lack of cooperation</p> <p>In Seville cooperatives are not very well organised and they have problems in accessing the markets. In the past they were selling at low prices individually to big companies. In Italy they have the same problem.</p> <p>In Catalonia there are big clusters at regional level / Agri-food clusters. These do not exist at local level and this is a gap.</p> <p>There is a problem to connect the regional to local level.</p> <p>The use of ICT infrastructure in the supply chain and the lack of skills to manage it and use it. Common platform.</p> <p>Lack of horizontal and vertical cooperation in the supply chain</p>	<p>To address that they decided to start working with the Chamber of Commerce. The cooperatives set the price and the CoC does the negotiations and organises the sale transaction.</p> <p>Opportunity: Measure 16 could contribute in the future as it is not active yet in Spain.</p> <p>In 2007-2013 in Italy they supported integrated supply chain projects. These were instruments to ensure all actors are working together along the chain. This could be developed as a case study.</p> <p>Also in Italy clusters are local and this is where the RDPs are focused, meaning municipality level. In this case LAGs can promote the integrated supply chain.</p> <p>Open up advisory services to non agricultural advisors (IE example). As well the example in Sevilla with the collaboration between the Chamber of Commerce with the local player through LEADER.</p> <p>Cooperation between consumers groups and producers.</p>
<b>Market access</b>	<p>Market access is weak and there is a problem in identifying market opportunities.</p>	<p>'Open farms' is a good example to be followed.</p> <p>Cases from Scotland and Ireland can provide useful examples</p> <p>The role animal welfare plays in accessing markets (AT)</p>



## Interactive Session 2: Food Policies and Initiatives

### Presentation

#### **Developing a food Strategy**

David Lamb  
(ENRD CP)

The afternoon session was introduced through two presentations which addressed how food strategies are formulated

The first presentation was made by David Lamb, who outlined the steps towards the creation of a food strategy, building on the outline of strategies elsewhere in the morning, and presenting the case study from Scotland and the supply chain steps

#### *Key messages from the presentation:*

- The process should be strategic, but start and finish with market signals
- Consider how the range of measures can be combined and targeted

The follow-up presentation looked at the role of urban food policies, and the opportunities they provide for rural producers to access.

### Presentation

#### **Urban-rural links**

Jan-Willem van der Schans (University of Wageningen)

#### *Key messages from the presentation:*

- The relationship between cities and countryside should be symbiotic
- There are global examples of urban food policies which prioritise local production and sustainability
- The focus on consumption in urban food policy represents a large opportunity for linkages with regional policy and with the RDPs

### Group discussion

*What actions should we take to develop and improve RDP support?*

An open discussion took place around the actions that should be taken forward, and the key points were highlighted and have been incorporated into the updated factsheet.

*Further reference: [Draft factsheet](#) on Smart & Competitive Supply Chains*

## Final Discussion and Conclusions

### Conclusion & Next Steps

The final session was to consider what outcomes from the Thematic Group should be taken forward as concrete actions. The [factsheet](#) on Integrated Approaches was seen as a good output, and further development and analysis of the regional approaches was also welcomed, through case studies.

The content of the forthcoming Seminar on Smart & Competitive Supply Chains was presented and discussed, and a call for participation by members of the Thematic Group not only in attending the Seminar, but on making meaningful contributions to the workshops, including presentations at that point.

The other actions to take forward as discussed by the group were in materials for NRNs and the updating of the ENRD website with the final approved materials.

A Thematic area has been created and the finalised materials will be uploaded there. The key themes will also be addressed in Rural Review 22, and consideration of ongoing work carried forward in the Annual Work Plan of the Contact Point.

*Further reference:* <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/themes/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas>

## Annex 1 – Updated Workflow

