



## **ENRD Thematic Working Group 1**

### Targeting territorial specificities and needs in rural Development Programmes



*Connecting Rural Europe*

# ENRD Thematic Working Group 1

## Targeting territorial specificities and needs in rural Development Programmes

### *Chairperson*

Rob Peters - Head of Unit G3, European Network and Monitoring of Rural Development Policy, DG AGRI, European Commission.

### *Members*

Download the list of the TWG1 Members: [PDF  ]

### *Mandate and specific objectives*

The meeting of the Coordination committee of 01/10/2008 agreed the general objective of the ENRD Thematic Working Group 1 to contribute, through relevant analysis and the diffusion of their results, to an efficient targeting of territorial specificities and needs in Rural Development programmes.

Following the meeting of 01/10/2008, the Chairman, with the support of the Contact Point, has refined the mandate which may be summarised as follows:

Within the overall scope of the topic, the group aims to identify the main factors contributing to the diversity of rural areas in Europe and describe their typical characteristics: experience, difficulties and comparability.

For European Rural Development programmes, the group will aim to examine:

- the strategies adopted in the programmes as regards the different types of territories;
- the different approaches used for targeting measures geographically, considering how National strategies and Rural Development Programmes have adopted and used the OECD definition
- the role that territorial targeting plays in demarcation;
- innovative approaches or initiatives to target the funds where they are most needed within a territory;
- lessons learned and possible recommendations at the level of programming.

To favour the development and exchange of broader expertise: the group may also collect and develop expertise under the following issues:

- taking into account the different forms of relationships between the agri-food sector and the wider rural economy to target the interventions territorially;
- tapping the potentials for synergies and complementarities between Community instruments at territorial level;
- governance and the territorial targeting in Rural Development programmes (consistent delivery mechanisms, mobilizing endogenous potential, mutual learning, etc.);
- examples of institutional efficiency.

### *Activities*

The Group's work programme was developed under the guidance of the Chairman with support by the Contact Point. It was discussed and agreed in principle with the groups' members designate in a preparatory meeting held in March 2009.

The working process was carried out in three steps:

- Step 1: Defining/targeting rural areas by the Member States and indicators applied for these purposes;
- Step 2: Using definitions of rural areas to territorially target rural development measures;
- Step 3: Feasibility of an EU-level typology of rural areas with a view to improve targeting;

**Step 1:** The analysis examined **how EU Member States have defined or targeted rural areas** in their RDPs for the 2007-2013 period, and what kind of indicators they have used. The results show that the OECD definition of rural areas offered by the European Commission for use by Member States was in fact used (in some cases with modifications) by only under half of the Member States examined. Other countries chose to use their own (national) definitions. The main finding is that the twin ideas (implicit in the OECD definition) of a standard population density threshold, and of a territorial basis (usually at NUTS 2 or NUTS 3 level), do not meet the needs of many countries in terms of distinguishing between urban and rural areas.

**Step 2:** The second step of the working process focused on **the analysis of demarcation and complementarity between the different EU and national funds**. The emphasis was upon the terms of meeting developmental needs of rural areas and targeting of specific territories for the application of measures and resources to meet the needs. Basing on this, six types of rural areas were identified: Less Favoured Mountain Areas, other Less Favoured Areas, Natura 2000 and environmentally-valuable farm land, specific development areas, rural areas eligible for Axis 3 measures, areas covered by Local Action Groups under Axis 4. Within each, case studies were selected to show the relationship between areas, needs and measures.

Approximately half of the definitions of the specific territories studied bear a clear relationship to the definitions of rural areas used by the Member States and regions for the general purpose of their RDPs. All of them have included the 'specific development areas' and the 'areas eligible for Axis 3 measures'. The 'Less Favoured Areas', and the 'Natura 2000 areas and environmentally-valuable farmland' also largely fall within the rural area, as generally defined. However, from the territorial perspective this tends to be governed more by specific provisions in the main EAFRD Regulation (for more information about EU legislation on rural development click [here](#)). Furthermore, a wide range of RDP measures is used to address the needs of specific territories, sometimes going beyond the scope of the measures normally associated with a particular type of territory.

**Step 3:** The final output of the process involved the elaboration **of an overall report bringing together the various issues** with respect to:

- national and regional approaches to the definition of rural areas;
- analysis of territorial specificities and needs;
- targeting of measures in relation to these specificities and needs; and
- strategies for demarcation and complementarity between RDPs and other Community and national instruments.

Informed by the above, the Final Report concludes by providing draft building blocks for a revised typology of rural areas, and a revised set of baseline indicators.

TWG1 activities timeline: [PDF  ]