

Promoting the Transition to a Green Economy

ENRD Thematic Group Report

Final Report

August 2016

Table of Contents

PROMOTING THE TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY – SUMMARY, OUTPUTS AND ACTIONS	1
SUMMARY OF THEMATIC GROUP ACTIVITY	1
FIRST WORKSHOP	1
WORKFLOW FOR THE THEMATIC GROUP	3
SECOND WORKSHOP	4
THIRD WORKSHOP	4
RURAL SEMINAR.....	6
OUTPUTS.....	8
FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS	9

Promoting the Transition to a Green Economy – Summary, Outputs and Actions

Summary of Thematic Group Activity

The thematic group on Promoting the Transition to a Green Economy covered three meetings and a final Seminar, starting in December 2015 and concluding in July 2016

The scope for the meetings and the key topics of interest were set by the first meeting and subsequent feedback from stakeholders including the European Commission, Rural Networks Assembly, Steering Group and NRN, NSU and MA feedback, plus input from other stakeholders both nationally and at European level

On this basis, three meetings were held:

- 1st Workshop: 16th December in Brussels
- 2nd Workshop: 6th – 7th April in Rotterdam
- 3rd Workshop: 17th May in Brussels

The meeting in Rotterdam also featured a field trip to a number of sites around the Rotterdam with a focus on Green Economy objectives.

First Workshop

The [first workshop](#) in Brussels on 16th December addressed a number of key objectives to be address in the work of the Thematic group. Presentations were made on the Green Economy and the way in which it links with other similar concepts such as the Circular Economy and the Bio-economy. The relevance of the Green Economy to other policies, and in particular EU policies was explored.

There was also a presentation on projects past and present, and the realistic opportunities for those involved in rural development to use RDP measures and interventions to make practical changes.

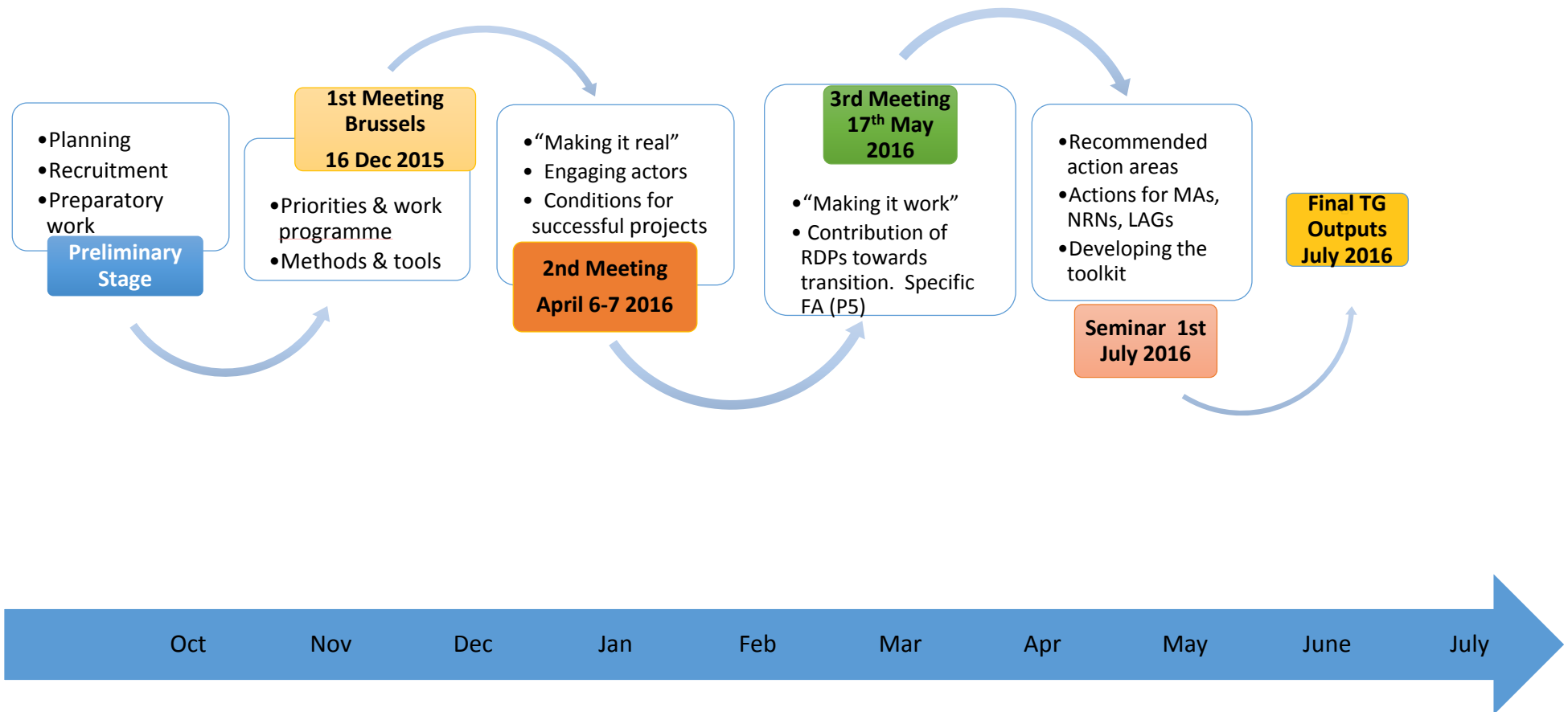
The scope and focus of the working group was discussed, and a number of key recommendations emerged. These included

- Applying a multi-actor approach in the development of the green strategy in order to overcome challenges and foster innovation

- Creating links with Leader Development Strategies, particularly linking with regional and national directives and policies
- Take into account the economics of the green economy but also the sustainability into the strategies – the three-pronged approach to sustainability of looking at economic, environmental and social sustainability
- Encourage and support collaboration between the different authorities involved in the delivery of the RDPs, in order to break down barriers. There should be greater encouragement of integrated strategic planning, and to look at integrated models of spatial planning (for example, Wales). There was a desire to integrate a range of planning strategies, for differing sectors, at national level where there are existing strategies (e.g. for the Bioeconomy). The strategic timescale is also important.
- The role of the RDPs in addressing Green Economy objectives should be through the priorities: (for example, P4 conservation, P5 efficiency). There should be consideration of how RDPs can contribute now and in the future, and how amendments might be made to the RDPs
- Consider complementarity: what is being delivered now, and who are the stakeholders working in this area, and therefore how do we involve them? This means the involvement of stakeholders in the working groups, but also mapping the environmental and economic stakeholders.

From the outcomes of the 1st meeting, the approach was modified for the follow-on meetings, looking at on creating a common approach to the development of Green Economy projects ('making it real') and to the development of actions in the Rural Development Programmes ('making it work').

Workflow for the Thematic Group



Second Workshop

The [second workshop](#) in April concentrated on some of the issues required to 'Make it Real':

- Discussing how to design and implement effective projects for the green economy
- Choosing the most useful networking tools to support and promote the work of the Thematic Group

The workshop followed on from a [field visit](#) to Rotterdam, where three visits highlighted approaches to precision farming and biodiversity, short food chains and use of food waste, and the circular economy, and how the farming sector in the Netherlands works together on environmental objectives, the visits included [Fenix Food Factory](#), a visit to [Klompe Farm](#) and the use of unwanted or less favoured foods over a meal prepared at a restaurant also promoting social inclusion, [Hotspot](#).

The outcomes from the workshop considered the process of designing the process for creating an effective Green Economy workshop, and a number of key stages were identified in the development of Green Economy projects which were used to create a draft [factsheet](#) for the development of new projects.

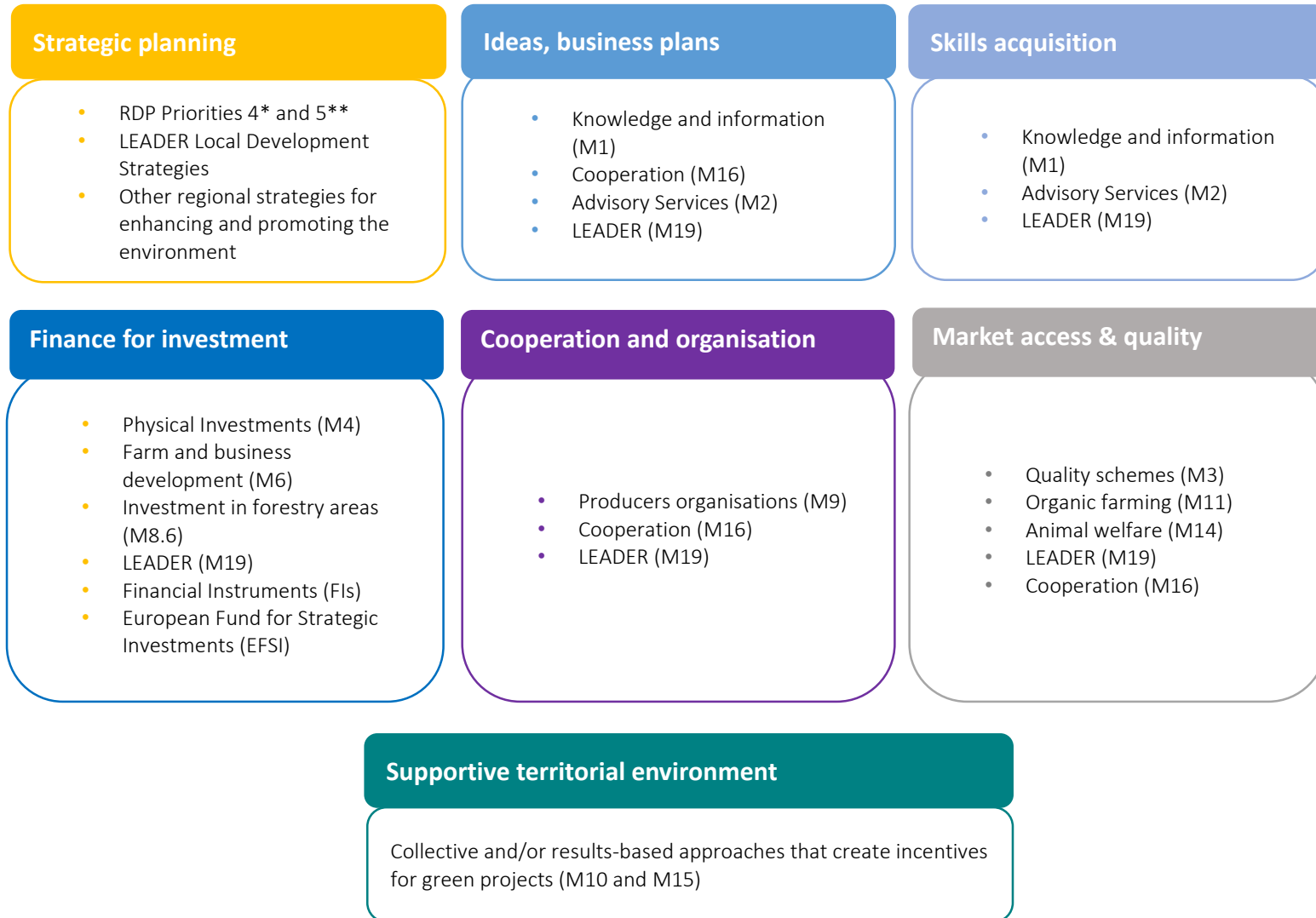
The key stages were outlined, refined and developed, with links to RDP Measures identified for presentation in the final workshop.

Third Workshop

The [third workshop](#) in May looked at the various packages of measures and programming approaches to the Green Economy, with presentations on the approach taken in Wales, Sweden and the Veneto region of Italy. The main issues addressed were:

- Discussing the existing support initiatives at regional and national level targeted at promoting the transition to a Green Economy
- Integrating RDP programmes to develop targeted support for the Green Economy.
- Developing programme activity to continue to improve opportunities.

The areas where measures can be integrated were presented as shown on the diagram as follows, integrated into the factsheet presented for discussion and approval by the working group members, as was the agenda and potential input into the Rural Seminar.



Rural Seminar

The [Rural Seminar](#), held at the Berlaymont Building in Brussels, on 1st July 2016 was entitled **Changing our Mindsets - Seizing opportunities in the Green Economy** and looked to

- showcase a selection of the projects and activities that are being carried out in different Member States and regions to promote the transition to a green economy in rural areas;
- share experiences and new ideas on how the 2014-20 Rural Development Programmes can support rural stakeholders to benefit fully from all the opportunities that a greener economy will bring; and to
- bring together national and regional MAs and other stakeholders concerned with the implementation of RDPs to prioritise actions which can enable rural areas to change their mindsets and seize opportunities in the Green Economy.

The focus was on delivering the scope for development of the Green Economy across the EU, with examples of best practice delivered through presentations made by invited stakeholders, and scene setting of the opportunities at a strategic level.

The afternoon parallel workshops delivered a series of recommendations for taking activity forward, building on the presentations, examples and the factsheet distributed, but considering programming objectives:

- An integrated approach to the bio-economy. This was seen to use a range of integrated measures such as investment, cooperation and LEADER, but also soft measures such as Knowledge Exchange, and had a particular focus on bioplastics and green chemicals.
- Awareness raising on climate change adaptation and mitigation. this was very much at farmer level, and considering how to use the range of investments to support ground level actions through the RDP and through financial instruments, EFSI and the EIB. Links with research were seen as important in establishing relevant targets.
- Specific approaches were seen as necessary on biodiversity, nutrient use efficiency and water use efficiency, and this included consideration of how farmers can make an economic return from nutrient and water efficiency, and in the development of a market for waste products, but also the consideration of consumer demand in economic terms.

- Following a strategic integrated regional/ local approach which will allow for coherence and continuity to consider packages of soft and hard measures within the RDP, and this includes support for animation activities. This can be combined with incentives through scoring and selection criteria.
- Raising the awareness of economic and environmental benefits and successes in practices, and this should be through communication to producers, consumers, potential beneficiaries through funding and demonstration of what can be funded.
- There is also a need to ensure continuity in the field of Climate change adaptation, which entails a longer term planning perspective. This might mean the continuation of measures between funding periods and using the full potential of flexibility of RDPs (such as pre-financing). Capacity building is also important, particularly among those involved in RDP programming.

Outputs

The outputs from the Seminar acted as a summary from the work of the Thematic group throughout the year, but also as a link to ongoing work on outputs which can be developed.

The presentation of projects by stakeholders in the working group will contribute to the development of a projects brochure on the Green Economy. This builds upon the range of Good Practices which were created.

Published examples of the Green Economy focused on two areas: project examples showing how RDP funding and support can be used to create examples worthy of sharing and using as the basis for similar initiatives in other regions, and cooperative schemes where methodology can be shared. A number of these are already published, such as:

- [A way of using shared machinery to manage upland grasslands in Romania](#)
- [Results-based agri-environment schemes in Germany](#)
- [Geothermal energy for the horticultural sector in the Netherlands](#)
- [Cooperative results-based schemes in the Netherlands](#)
- [Economically and environmentally sustainable pig farming in Malta](#)

A number of **Programming Case Studies** have been developed to highlight the varying approaches to the Green Economy across the EU Member States and regions, and these have been produced following input from the following regions and countries:

- Emilia-Romagna
- Sweden
- Wales
- Ireland
- Lower Saxony / Bremen

In total there were 40 projects submitted to the Contact Point , and these will be fully developed for the website using the information provided.

Once finalised these good practices can also be transferred into the EU Results webpage, which highlights Good Practices across the EU budgets, and this will include examples developed under funds other than EAFRD (including LIFE).

The **factsheet** on Green Economy projects was finalised for the Rural Seminar, and distributed to participants, and this will be disseminated at other events to share and foster good practice in the design and implementation of Green Economy projects.

It is anticipated that the range of topics covered by the Thematic Group on the Green Economy will be addressed by a future edition of the **Rural Review**, building on the identified areas presented through the project and programming examples.

Follow-Up Actions

There is further action required to develop delivery on this theme, informed by the recommendations from the Rural Seminar, and considering further activities

- The issue of the rural environment, water and climate, will be taken up in the high level conference in Cork on September 5th to 6th, which will also consider economically viable agriculture, the bioeconomy and the circular economy.
- The EIP-Agri Network continuing the ongoing Focus Groups on issues such as nutrient recycling and forest biomass, bringing together experts to focus on new initiatives. Previous work has identified opportunities to take forward, such as precision farming and nutrient recycling.
- The development of Green Economy initiatives will be adopted and developed by Operational Groups and LEADER partnerships, and there are already examples of this including smart farming initiatives
- Approximately 8 NRNs are working on various environmental themes (with others working on sustainability topics) and there will be ongoing opportunities for exploring the best ways of seizing all the opportunities offered by the RDPs
- The ENRD Contact Point activity on the Green Economy will continue, refined by the Cork 2.0 Conference, but looking to focus on creating **a resource-efficient rural economy** (water, soils, energy, P.5): which will consider how investment measures, land use management incentives, and soft measures are being used to promote resource efficiency (successful examples, barriers, solutions). This will explore how RDP support could be channelled to achieve resource efficiency goals.