



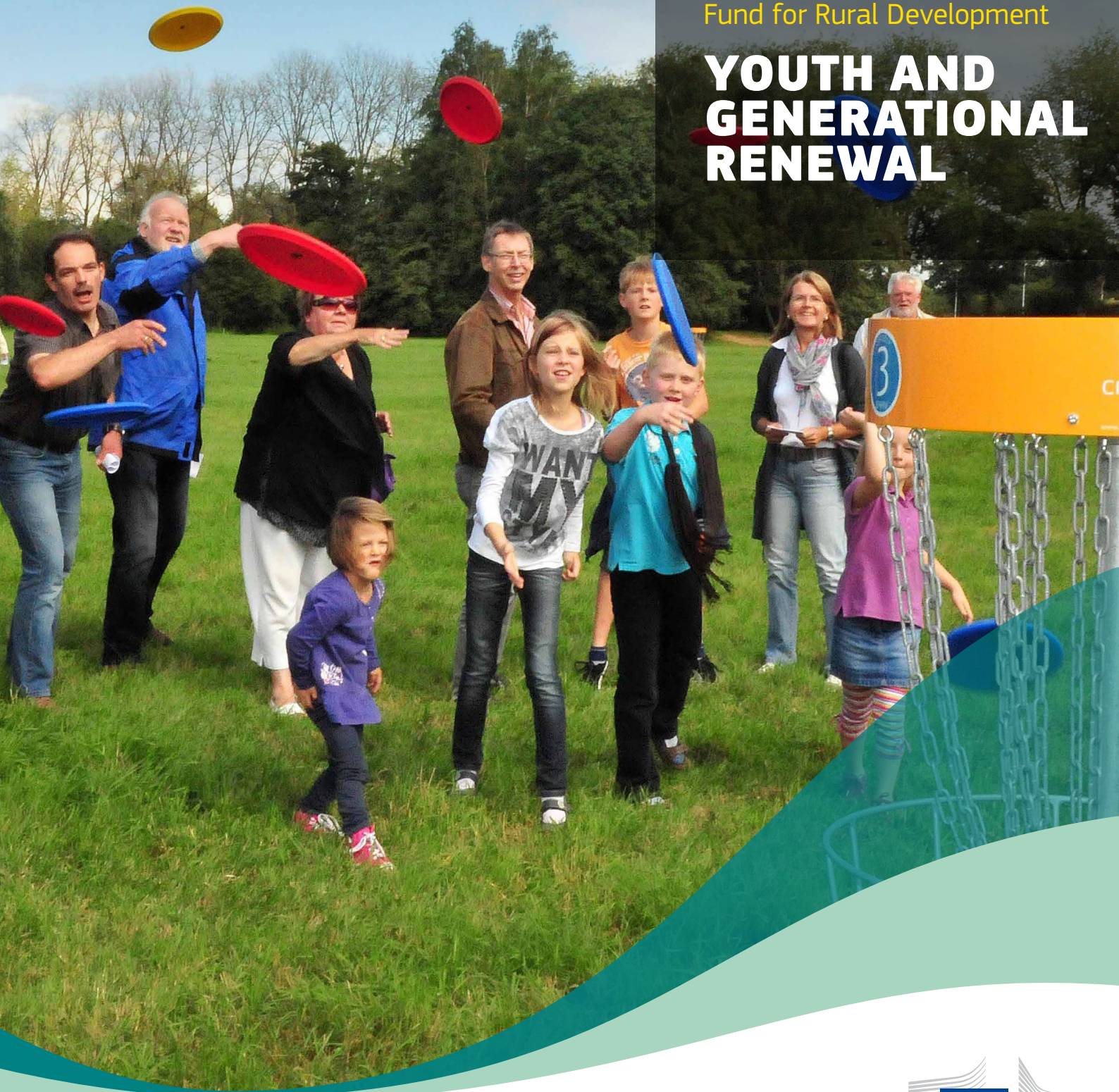
European Network for
Rural Development

EN

PROJECTS BROCHURE

The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development

YOUTH AND GENERATIONAL RENEWAL



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European Network for
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European Network for Rural Development

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union (EU). The ENRD contributes to the effective implementation of Member States' Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe.

Each Member State has established a National Rural Network (NRN) that brings together the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. At EU level, the ENRD supports the networking of these NRNs, national administrations and European organisations.

Find out more on the *ENRD website* (<https://enrd.ec.europa.eu>)

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

The EAFRD Project Examples brochure forms part of a series of ENRD publications that help encourage information exchange. Each edition of the brochure features different types of projects that have received RDP co-finance from the EAFRD.

Past editions of the EAFRD Projects Brochure can be downloaded from the publications section of the ENRD website.⁽¹⁾ The ENRD collection of good projects and practices⁽²⁾ contains many additional examples of EAFRD assistance to rural development initiatives.

(1) <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search>

(2) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice_en

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Introduction

Youth in rural areas, and young farmers in particular, enhance rural vitality and pave the way for stronger value chains and rural prosperity. Generational renewal is one of the preconditions for improved competitiveness of the agricultural sector over the longer term and for sustainable food production in Europe.

Rural Development policy not only facilitates the set-up of young farmers and new entrants to farming, it actively supports young entrepreneurs across many sectors of the economy. The policy's wider objective of strengthening the socio-economic fabric is also helping to make rural areas more attractive places to live and work, especially for young people.

In the current programming period, 2014-2020, both pillars of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) support the next generation of farmers. Young farmer payments under Pillar 1 and various forms of support for young farmers under Pillar 2 (in particular Measure 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers) are designed to bring new blood into the agricultural sector. The importance of attracting young farmers and facilitating business development in rural areas is confirmed and reinforced by their inclusion as one of the nine specific objectives in the legislative proposal for the CAP post 2020.

Young farmers – and new entrants to farming – are needed to take over and modernise rural activities and businesses. The CAP, and Rural Development policy in particular, can create an enabling environment for the current and the next generations of farmers. It provides the key that can help unlock the access to finance, land and knowledge that the new generation requires when setting up their businesses.

The importance of young farmers is clear. Their farms are on average in better economic condition than those operated by older farmers.⁽¹⁾ In addition, they are more likely to imagine different ways of creating value from their farms, besides generating produce from the land. They are more likely to see the farm not only as a place to generate produce from the land, but as somewhere where value can be generated in a variety of ways, from a variety of sources. In the words of EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan, young farmers can, “bring radical and creative ideas to the table, as a generation of disruptive innovators.”

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) also helps stem depopulation in rural areas. EAFRD-funded initiatives are encouraging young people to remain in, or move (back) to, rural areas. The Rural Development Programmes (RDPS) thus help to boost new skills and resources, often acquired in cities by young people, which can stimulate economic activities in a range of sectors, whether in farming or

(1) L. Zagata, J. Hrabák, M. Lošťák, M. Bavorová, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague; T. Ratering, Technology Centre of the Czech Academy of Science; L.-A. Sutherland, A.McKee, The James Hutton Institute, S 2017, Research for AGRI Committee – Young farmers – policy implementation after the 2013 CAP reform, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602006/IPOL_STU\(2017\)602006_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602006/IPOL_STU(2017)602006_EN.pdf)



beyond agriculture. Improving the attractiveness of rural areas for young people, both for their professional and daily lives, is a goal of Rural Development policy.

The examples of EAFRD-funded projects from the 2014-2020 programming period presented in this EAFRD Projects Brochure show how the needs of younger generations can be met. The RDPs can be tailored to encourage the business projects of young farmers and other young entrepreneurs in rural areas and to empower rural youth to play an active role in their respective communities.

This edition of the EAFRD Projects Brochure comprises three sections which highlight different aspects of the policy challenge posed by generational renewal in rural areas. It profiles some of the approaches being used to support young farmers and young entrepreneurs in the current programming period.

The EAFRD is helping promote generational renewal in farming and the creation of viable and sustainable agricultural businesses. This is the focus of **Section 1** of this publication, which concentrates on how various RDP Measures – including Measure 6.1 – are supporting the set-up of young farmers, as well as the transfer of knowledge between generations, to enhance the professional development of young farmers.

Economic opportunities are crucial in making rural areas more attractive to young people. **Section 2** highlights how EAFRD funding can facilitate the creation and development of new businesses in rural

areas, diversifying the sources of income for farms and creating new job opportunities – beyond agriculture. Through EAFRD funding, young people with an entrepreneurial attitude are launching new activities and creating new sources of income.

The attractiveness of rural areas is about the quality of life they offer, including their economic environment and infrastructure but also the access to social services and a sense of belonging. **Section 3** highlights EAFRD-funded projects that are enhancing the conditions for local business development and providing social services that encourage young people – including young parents – to stay in rural areas. It also presents initiatives that foster a sense of community and make young people feel that their voice is heard and that they can actively shape the future of the places they live in.

The ENRD Contact Point contributes to the generational renewal objective and to making rural areas more attractive for young people via workshops, the identification and sharing of good practices and the facilitation of exchange of knowledge and experiences across Europe. For more information about our work, see: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/generational-renewal_en

The ENRD Contact Point Team

1. Supporting generational renewal in agriculture

EAFRD funding supports generational renewal in farming and the creation of viable and sustainable agricultural businesses by providing a range of tools, in particular business start-up aid for young farmers through Measure 6.1. It also supports knowledge transfer between generations of farmers to aid the professional development of young farmers while allowing for an enriching intergenerational dialogue.

Average values in the EU show that most farmers (56%) are over 55 years of age, some 30% are over retirement age, while less than 6% are under 35 years of age. Although the exact figures vary across EU Member States (MS), it remains urgent to find ways to make farming an attractive and viable career choice for younger people.

Discussion about young farmers should not be limited to questions of age, however, it must be broadened to the structure of the sector and to questions of family farm succession, the role of new entrants in agriculture and the potential of policy tools to influence generational renewal. New entrants to agriculture are often innovators and are more likely to engage in diversification, offering new products and services.

Europe's young farmers and new entrants to agriculture face three significant hurdles to realising their ambitions: access to land; access to finance; and access to training and knowledge. Alongside the Common Agricultural Policy, EU MS also have a key role to play in tackling these challenges, for example by intervening on land regulations, taxation, inheritance laws or territorial planning. Consistency between MS and European actions will ensure the best outcomes.

In the 2014-2020 programming there are six EU Rural Development priorities and generational renewal is included within them. They provide the basis for rolling out support from the EAFRD to rural areas. The second EU priority seeks to promote farm competitiveness, restructuring and modernisation and to facilitate the entry of adequately skilled farmers and generational renewal in the sector.

EAFRD support for young farmers and new entrants is provided under various Measures and comes in various forms, from business planning advice to funding for implementing a farmer's plan, and from tailored advice and training to building cooperation. Nurturing

new entrants in this way allows innovation and entrepreneurship to flourish.

The example on page 5 shows how a young Spanish woman used EAFRD funding to set up a small horticultural enterprise and create new job opportunities.

Rural Development Programme Measure 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers consists of financial support of up to €70 000 per beneficiary to implement a business plan. It is expected to support over 181 300 beneficiaries over the whole 2014-2020 programming period, with a total public expenditure of €5.4 billion.

A practical example from Romania is presented on pages 6-7.

Besides access to land, other challenges for new entrants include access to labour, capital, housing, information, and markets.

In Portugal, pages 8-9, EAFRD support allowed the set-up of a new agricultural business which quickly achieved success on the local and European markets.

Besides Measure 6.1, a number of Rural Development Measures, not specifically targeting young farmers and new entrants, can contribute to delivering the policy objectives related to generational renewal. These include M4.1: Investments in agricultural holdings and M02: Advisory services, as well as networking actions.

On pages 10-11, you can read how the Czech National Rural Network is supporting the transfer of knowledge across generations.

Setting up horticultural seedling production in Spain

A young woman applied for European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development support to set up her own small agricultural enterprise. Investment in new technologies has improved the environmental performance of the farm she took over and the enterprise has created new jobs.

In Murcia, a region in the south-east of Spain, 57% of the territory is farmland. Challenges for the agricultural sector include a high share of older farmers and the need for efficient resource management. The area features limited water availability and high levels of soil erosion.

Patricia Álvarez, a 38 year-old woman living in Águilas, a rural area in the region of Murcia, decided to set up her own agricultural activity, specialising in horticultural seed provision and creating long-term job possibilities for her and her family. Patricia had lost her job in the elderly care sector, but her husband already had experience in agriculture. "Our son is a teenager now. We also wanted to create an opportunity for him to stay and for our rural community to have a future," explains Patricia.

Patricia designed a project that would fit with Murcia's Rural Development Programme (RDP), a regional RDP that aims to improve the competitiveness and environmental performance of the agricultural sector, supporting farm restructuring and modernisation and the set-up of young farmers. She applied for funding under two EAFRD Measures: Measure 4.1: Support for investments in agricultural holdings and Measure 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers.

As part of Measure 6.1, in 2016 Patricia developed and implemented a business plan with support from specialised consultants and received 120 hours of training on administration and farming. At the same time, she applied under Measure 4.1 with a two-phase project for investments aiming to improve the farm she rented for her activity and to develop a sound marketing plan.

The funding was used to build a cold storage room and to buy new machinery, including a mechanical planter and a peat spreader. The water system was replaced with a new irrigation system, recovering rainwater and water from evapotranspiration inside the building. This reduced the amount of water needed for irrigation by 5-10%.

The production activity started in 2017 and has already delivered results. It has created five new permanent jobs and some temporary jobs for the summer period. The activity contributes to the local economy by adding a new business to the chain of suppliers/buyers.

"This younger generation shows a greater interest in adapting to climate change threats and contributing to meeting environmental challenges; they want to undertake projects that are profitable from every perspective."

Pilar Gómez,
Managing Authority of Murcia's RDP



© Pilar Gómez Ros

Patricia Álvarez decided to set up her own agricultural activity, creating long-term job possibilities for her and her family.

Project Name	Setting up horticultural seedling production by a young farmer
Type of beneficiary	Farmer - Patricia Sanz Alvarez
Period	2016-2017
Funding	Total budget: € 106 292 EAFRD contribution: € 45 848 National/regional contribution: € 26 927 Private funds: € 33 517
RDP Measure	M 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers M 4.1: Support for investments in agricultural holdings
Contact	semilleroslazar@gmail.com

Modernising an agricultural holding in Romania

A young farmer used European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding to start his own business by modernising an agricultural holding and purchasing new machinery.

© Nancy Samarghiu



Alin Cojocaru designed and submitted his project under the Romanian RDP in July 2015, when he was 19 years old.

Alin Nicusor Cojocaru studied agronomy at the Lower Danube Engineering Faculty of Brăila, in the eastern part of Romania. While still studying, discussions with fellow students who had already received funding under Measure 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers, convinced him to start his own business in the agricultural field.

Alin designed and submitted his project under the Romanian RDP in July 2015 when he was 19 years old. At that time, he owned about 3 ha of land inherited from his grandparents and leased some 53 ha. The agricultural holding thus includes 56 ha of arable land where Alin grows grains (32 ha), pea (5 ha), sunflower (15 ha), melons (2 ha) and alfalfa (2 ha).

Alin utilised the knowledge gained through his university studies, information gathered from specialised websites and guidance from his family and fellow students. He also received expert advice on the project submission procedure from specialised territorial structures of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Paying Agency in Braila county.

Thanks to EAFRD funding, Alin was able to purchase the equipment needed to start the farming activity, including a Pottinger plough with four swaths. He uses this, and a tractor he bought with his own funds, to cultivate the farm and to maintain the crops to achieve the best possible production with the lowest costs. Alin also increased the holding by leasing and purchasing more land.

In addition, a permanent worker was hired to work part-time, and in peak periods, certain works

are contracted to individuals and/or specialised local businesses.

The project implementation was smooth. "I am most proud of having submitted the project and the fact it got selected and financed. The implementation has gone smoothly, without many difficulties," says Alin. The project started to deliver immediately: crops developed and his income increased. Alin even managed to maintain good production during periods of unusual or bad weather.

The farm respects the European Code of Good Agricultural Practices to better protect soil and soil water, reduce pesticide use and manage plant waste by incorporating it into the soil.

In 2016, in the early phases of the project, Alin joined the 'Unirea Sutești - Brăila' agricultural cooperative. The cooperative was set up in 2011 by ten founding members and currently counts 17 members. Cooperative members enjoy some advantages when negotiating input purchase, including discounts of up to 40-50% off the list price (for seeds, fertilisers and herbicides). They can also sell their produce at better prices.



© Alin Cojocaru

Thanks to EAFRD funding, Alin was able to purchase the equipment needed to start the farming activity.

Besides some economic advantages, being a member of the cooperative has allowed Alin to share his experience with other young farmers and friends living in the area. He has encouraged them to submit projects under Measure 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers, following his example. “My advice is that when drafting the business plan, they should first of all think how to integrate the project within their daily farm activities. Having an overall view of how the project will affect and change their daily work can be of help.”

“Young farmers should see this type of project as a help to develop their plans and put in practice the studies they have acquired. Young people from rural areas should be able to see agriculture as providing a job, generating long-term benefits both for the one implementing the project, as well as for the community they are part of.”

Alin Nicusor Cojocaru,
Young farmer

Alin is planning to submit another project in order to develop further his business, after completing the process of setting up as young farmer. Future plans include harvesting and irrigation equipment: “Based on the experience of this project, in the near future I want to expand the size of my holding by buying or renting agricultural land and at the same time to buy a seed drill and a combination of irrigation facilities. I aim to reduce costs by giving up out-sourcing to third parties and carrying out the agricultural works with my own machinery.”

Alin’s initiative was one of the projects identified and proposed by the regional Paying Agency and the National Rural Network (NRN) to be presented at the regional conferences organised by the Romanian NRN. Representatives of the two bodies agreed: “We are happy to meet such determined young people who understand the opportunities created by EU funds – the EAFRD in particular – and do not give up on their dreams. They plan to change things for the best and ensure a good living in rural areas, both for themselves and the community they belong to.”

Project Name	Modernising an agricultural holding
Type of beneficiary	Farmer - Alin Nicusor Cojocaru
Period	2015-2017
Funding	Total budget: € 74 800 EAFRD contribution: € 42 500 National contribution: € 7 500 Private funds: € 24 800
RDP Measure	M 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers
Further info	www.hartaromanieionline.ro/judetul-Braila/firme-Sutesti/firma-Unirea-Sutesti-Cooperativa-Agricola/
Contact	nickualyn11@yahoo.com



© Alin Cojocaru

Young people from rural areas should be able to see agriculture as providing a job, generating long-term benefits for them and for the community they are part of.

Innovative asparagus production in Portugal

A new agricultural company used European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding to strengthen the production of green asparagus, a traditional wild crop of the Ribatejo region in Portugal. The successful production now serves both the national and European markets.

The green asparagus is a high-value product, much in demand in European markets. Thanks to specific soil and climate conditions, Portuguese growers can place the product on the market earlier than other countries, thus enjoying a competitive advantage. Wild asparagus is a traditional crop of the Ribatejo region.

In 2015, Sara Gomes (aged 20) and her uncle Rui Sousa (aged 48) decided to set up an agricultural company using land belonging to their family in Ribatejo. Although neither of them had previous experience in agriculture, they decided to set up the Villabosque agricultural company, specialising in the production of high-quality green asparagus in Portugal.

Sara applied for EAFRD support under Measure 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers (corresponding to the Portuguese RDP Measure 3.2.1) and Measure 4.1: Support for investments in agricultural holdings. The Villabosque company was able to start operating in early 2016.

The project, developed with the advice of one of the world's leading specialists in the production of green asparagus, uses the most modern and innovative techniques of integrated production, adopting a rational management of natural resources and favouring sustainable production.

The asparagus are planted in clayey lands with a high content of limestone, which gives them a unique flavour and makes for a high-quality product. The irrigation system guarantees water efficiency thanks to the use of soil moisture probes and rain gauge. By using water-storing reservoirs and night-time irrigation – which limits evaporation – the farm is saving around 25 % of water and 45 % of energy compared to typical production in the area using day-time irrigation and no water reservoirs.

The project also uses other innovative techniques: a hinged system of mini-plastic tunnels with flexible arches and a machine for collecting and spreading plastic covers. The calibrator and washing machine,



© Villabosque, Lda.

Asparagus plantation in Ribatejo. By using natural methods, the company is using 30% less chemicals compared to typical plantations using artificial fertilisers.



© Villabosque, Lda

EAFRD funding added value to the production of green asparagus in Ribatejo.

used to wash and cut the asparagus to the desired size, have an excellent performance, requiring only one employee to work and making the crop more profitable. The packaging of the final products is done semi-automatically.

The reduced water consumption, together with a semi-automatic harvest and the use of specific storage and cooling methods, guarantee the optimisation of resources, productivity and useful life of the plantation, resulting in higher profitability.

The funding beneficiaries received specific training on the production and marketing of green asparagus, which encouraged the increase of production and the expansion to new markets.

Three years and two harvests after it began, the company was ready to launch its own brand 'Villabosque - Espargos Verdes do Ribatejo' on the national market, both through small distributors and via a national chain of stores. A large part of the production is exported to the Spanish market, which recognises the quality and unique characteristics of the green asparagus from Ribatejo.

The product has obtained GLOBAL.G.A.P. certification (internationally recognised farm standards dedicated to good agricultural practices) and meets all environmental criteria regarding the use of phytopharmaceutical products, fertilisers, water resources and energy. The farm has also obtained GRASP certification (the GLOBAL.G.A.P. Risk Assessment

on Social Practice, a voluntary assessment of social practices on the farm, addressing specific aspects of workers' health, safety and welfare).

The farm has collaborated with plant-protection product companies in the development of products to combat diseases affecting asparagus plants and has participated in a project developed by CEBAL – Centre for Agricultural and Agri-Food Biotechnology of Alentejo – to help find ways to use the asparagus by-products.

Between the lines of asparagus plantation, the company planted fava beans and peas, which help fix the nitrogen in the soil and are later used as natural fertiliser, reducing the use of chemicals by 30% compared to typical plantations using artificial fertilisers. The asparagus exceeding the demand for fresh consumption is used to produce soups, and production waste is used for composting.

“The major challenges we face are common to almost all farmers: the question of the labour force, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and climate conditions, such as large variations in atmospheric conditions or pests, such as snails, that can destroy parts of the crop.”

Rui Sousa,
Manager of Villabosque

In the next phase of the project, the farm will install washing equipment and immersion tubs that will use innovative features to avoid waste.

The project is providing a solution to a complex production cycle while achieving success on the market. The Villabosque company is proud to grow a quality product of regional origin, which has become a reference on the national market. Other farms are now following their example and exports of Portuguese asparagus are increasing.

Project Name	Production of green asparagus
Type of beneficiary	Private company – Villabosque – Produtos Agrícolas, Lda
Period	2015-2021
Funding	Total budget: €517 402 EAFRD contribution: €233 272 National contribution: €39 327 Private funds: €244 803
RDP Measure	M 4.1: Support for investments in agricultural holdings M 6.1: Business start-up aid for young farmers
Further info	www.facebook.com/villabosque.pt
Contact	www.villabosque.pt

Networking for generational renewal in the Czech Republic

The Czech National Rural Network (NRN) organised seminars and site visits on farms and in high schools for agriculture to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences between older and younger farmers.

More than half of the farms in Czech Republic are managed by farmers aged over 55. To foster generational renewal, it is important to provide young farmers and new entrants with training and skills development opportunities. The sharing of practical knowledge and business development experiences across generations is an important part of this process.

To address these needs, the Czech NRN developed a knowledge-sharing platform where young farmers and new entrants to agriculture can learn from the experience of older farmers running well-established agricultural businesses and benefiting from support under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Through seminars and site visits to successful farms and agricultural businesses in different Czech regions, the initiative aimed to increase the prestige of farming in the eyes of the younger generation and to promote family farming among high school students in agriculture.

The project organised four interactive one-day seminars between February and October 2018. The seminars took place in four different Czech regions. Each seminar hosted different stakeholders (farmers,

researchers, representatives of administrative bodies) who tailored their presentations to young farmers and new entrants to agriculture. Attendance was free, but the number of participants was limited to 20 individuals per seminar.

The first seminar (23 February 2018) took place in the Vysočina region. Four family farm managers presented their experience with using Common Agricultural Policy support – both direct payments and EAFRD Measures – and the role such support had played in developing their farm businesses. The seminar included a visit of a specially selected farm located nearby.

The second seminar (20 March 2018) was organised in the region of Hradec Králové, where two farmers shared their experience and explained how the Rural Development Programme Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (Measure 10) is supporting their work. Participants also visited two nearby farms.

The third seminar (28 March 2018) took place in a farm in the Plzeň region. The programme included presentations of the host farm which is developing its activities in the agri-tourism sector thanks to EAFRD funding, and of two other farms benefitting from EAFRD support for farm modernisation.



Experienced farmers running well-established family farms can inspire young generations.

© Warren Wong, Unsplash



The sharing of practical knowledge and business development experiences across generations is key to generational renewal in agriculture.

The fourth seminar (25 October 2018) was held in the Olomouc region. Participants heard from a farmer who implemented two RDP projects focused on farm modernisation in the areas of food processing and direct sale. The seminar included a visit to a highly diversified farm nearby, with livestock and plant production.

The seminars were advertised in advance through official communication channels, such as the websites of the Ministry of Agriculture, the young farmers' association and the NRN website. The choice of venue for the seminars was given careful attention: two seminars took place in agricultural high schools, while two were organised on farms, thus allowing the presentations to be combined with site visits in order to enhance the students' interest in working in agriculture.

The seminars involved 12 speakers in total, mostly experienced farmers who shared first-hand experience, including with the implementation of RDP projects on their farms. The participants (about 60 in total) visited different farms and had a chance to see many of the project results on the spot and to ask questions related to practical as well as administrative aspects.

Most of the presentations detailed on farm modernisation since the competitiveness and profitability of family farms is a key concern for young farmers. The information presented at the seminars provided the young participants with valuable insight in how to prepare, submit and implement projects under the Czech RDP. The added value of the initiative, beside the advice provided by more experienced farmers, consisted in the possibility to visit the farms and to have an open discussion with farmers.

Experienced farmers running well-established family farms can inspire young generations and share valuable practical knowledge to facilitate young farmers' access to the profession. The initiative could easily be replicated in other countries, focusing on specific topics of interest for the participating young farmers.

Project Name	Activities of the Czech National Rural Network aimed at young generations
Type of beneficiary	Public – National Rural Network
Period	2018
Funding	Total budget: €9491 EAFRD contribution: €4698 National contribution: €4793
RDP Measure	M20.2: Technical Assistance: National Rural Network
Further info	www.cmszp.cz
Contact	menclova@cmszp.cz

2. Promoting entrepreneurship and technical innovation

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding facilitates farm diversification, the creation and development of new businesses and jobs in rural areas, beyond agriculture. Young people with an entrepreneurial attitude, both on-farm and off, are being given the opportunity to launch new activities, create new sources of income and build the rural economy.

Over recent years, farmers have increasingly been confronted with economic and environmental challenges. Key factors affecting the farming sector include a decreasing real income across the EU, a low-price environment, high farm income volatility, and increasing exposure to climate-related risks.⁽¹⁾ Many have reacted by re-imagining their farmstead to re-deploy their assets in order to diversify their activities. Meanwhile, new rural value chains, such as the circular bioeconomy and ecotourism, have emerged, offering new growth opportunities for farms and other rural businesses.

Several EAFRD Measures can support farm resilience and boost income in a variety of ways.

The project example from France on pages 13-14 illustrates how a young woman was able to use Measure 04: Investments in physical assets to set up a traditional bakery, thus starting a new business on her family's farm.

The 'multi-functionality' concept puts the farm at the centre of many different economic activities and is a provider of public goods such as landscape preservation. The farm is thus not only a place to produce food, but also a means to enhance the viability of the countryside as a place to live and work.

The project from Italy on pages 15-16 shows how a young farmer used EAFRD support to create tourist accommodation on her family's farm.

Rural entrepreneurs can use the EAFRD as a tool to set up new businesses that merge economic and cultural interests, sometimes boosting traditional activities through modern techniques.

The Latvian project on pages 17-18 is one such example. Here, EAFRD funding has empowered the local community through a woodcraft workshop that has provided much more than just new jobs.

Flexible business support is needed to sustain fledgling rural entrepreneurs through the business development and innovation process. EAFRD funding is strengthening the multi-faceted business 'support ecosystem' which practices such as peer learning, mentoring, training and advice to young rural entrepreneurs.

Find on page 19 a business incubator project in rural Slovakia that is helping small- and medium-size companies by providing a business site and support services.

For more ideas about how rural areas can be revitalised and which can also lead to new business opportunities, see the projects featured in the EAFRD Projects Brochure on 'Digital and social innovation in Rural Services.'

(1) See the report from the ENRD workshop on farm resilience, 29/03/2017: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-farm-resilience_en



Creation of a bakery on a French farm

A young woman used European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding to set up a traditional bakery in her family's farm, starting her own promising business and creating a new 'hub' for the community.

The Occitaine region, in south-west France, comprises the former regions of Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon. It hosts the Causses du Quercy regional nature park, a rural area including 102 municipalities and more than 30 000 inhabitants. The local agricultural sector features great diversity and high-quality production.

The Esparcetou farm is located in the Causses du Quercy park. It is a mixed crop and stock farming holding with 280 sheep and 257 ha of fields, moors and forest. The farm was growing wheat for its own consumption.

In 2013, the farmers' daughter, Justine Rossi, took a vocational training course to learn how to make organic bread. In 2014, she started producing bread, using a friend's bakehouse and selling directly around 70 kg of organic bread per week, forming her own network of clients. She started to develop her business idea further. To realise her dream, in 2016 (at the age of 34) she applied for EAFRD funding through the local collective farming grouping GAEC Esparcetou. It had originally been created by her father-in-law and Justine's husband had taken it over in 2013. The GAEC

members were already cultivating wheat and selling wood which Justine could use for her new activity.

The main short-term goal of her project was to set up a traditional bakery in the family farm, producing bread from organic wheat and selling it in the local area. Her long-term perspective for the project was to create the conditions for a smooth succession of the agricultural holding while creating added value at the farm level.

Justine built her bakehouse near her home, using ecological material (straw plastered with clay) and mostly self-constructed, apart from electricity and plumbing works that required professional certification. The bakehouse is a vast square room with all necessary baking equipment. The entrance allows for storage space and direct selling. The wood storage is at the back of the bakehouse, with direct access to the oven. In summer time, the terrace provides a comfortable space to host customers.

Apart from purchasing small equipment, such as storage shelves and food processing machinery, the EAFRD funding was used mainly to pay a specialised craftsman to build a traditional bread oven where



© Justine Rossi

Justine feels proud whenever she sees the bread come out of the oven.



© Justine Rossi

Justine's project contributes to the circular economy and has had positive impacts on the community.

the baking chamber has no masonry and only stands with terracotta and clay bricks. The work was quite challenging because of the oven's dimensions – a 5 m² baking surface, requiring 16 m³ of sand to mould the oven's shape.

The bakehouse was inaugurated in October 2017. Justine works 30 hours per week, with two baking sessions a week where she starts at 5 a.m.

She delivers the bread by car to the various selling points: a community café in Caniac, an employees' grouping in Labastide-Murat, a school kitchen in Figeac. She also directly serves some nearby farms (orders are taken in advance) and during summertime she has a stand at the local marketplace of Livernon. Every Friday, the bakehouse is opened to the public between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., hosting a weekly average of 30 customers.

Justine feels proud whenever she sees the bread come out of the oven. The project has allowed her to double production (from 70 kg to 140 kg) of bread baked each week, and has greatly improved Justine's working conditions: as the bakery is next door to the farm, she only has to walk a few steps early in the morning to go to work, instead of driving to a friend's bakehouse as she used to do.

In addition, the project has a positive environmental impact as the bakehouse building is made of ecological material and ensures low energy consumption rates. The bakehouse also contributes

to the circular economy as it makes use of wheat and timber produced on the farm.

The project has had other very important benefits for the community. The days when Justine cooks bread (Mondays and Fridays) create an opportunity for the local community to come together. In this isolated rural area, where houses are relatively far apart, people are eager to 'go to bread' (in French: '*aller au pain*'). The Monday bread delivery at the Caniac community café has become the occasion for regular meeting of around 30 people and the Friday direct sale at the bakehouse is a moment of solidarity and exchange, strengthening social bonds within the community.

The main challenge for Justine was to maintain sufficient cash flow while waiting for the grant which comes in the form of reimbursement of expenditure she had already made as the administrative procedures between the Managing Authority and the Paying Agency were particularly long at times.

Justine belongs to the local collective farming grouping, or GAEC (Groupement Agricole d'Exploitation en Commun) and now some of the wheat is also used for Justine's baking needs, and some of the timber logged and processed on the farm property serves to heat the oven. The EAFRD grant added value to the GAEC production and strengthened the local supply chain. On another hand, belonging to the GAEC has helped Justine ensure the mid-term financial sustainability of the bakery.

Developments planned in 2019 include the set-up of a traditional millstone to process the farm wheat directly into flour and the sale of local organic products (such as eggs, pasta, etc.) in the bakery.

Project Name	Setting up a traditional bakery in a farm
Type of beneficiary	Collective farming grouping (in French: <i>Groupement Agricole d'Exploitation en Commun – GAEC</i>) Esparcetou
Period	2016-2017
Funding	Total budget: € 54 318 EAFRD contribution: € 11 515 National/regional contribution: € 10 212 Private funds: € 32 591
RDP Measure	M 4.2.1: Investment aid for the processing and marketing of farm produce
Contact	justinerossi@souslesoleil.eu

Farm tourism as the best entry into the farm business in Italy

A young woman used European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding to restructure a family farm building in Italy and set up tourist accommodation.

Arcevia is a small municipality in the Ancona province, central Italy. The area features some interesting touristic attractions, such as nine castles and an archaeological museum preserving important parchments from the XIII and XIV centuries. This hilly area, not far from the seaside, is rich in small-size tourist accommodations, mainly agri-tourism sites and camping.

The Casagrande family farm (some 100 ha, of which 37 are owned by the family) has been cultivating fodder and seeds for almost 30 years and selling them to large animal feed producers. In 2016, the farm underwent a conversion to organic farming, which was completed in late 2018.

In 2016, the farmer's daughter, Sonia Casagrande (then aged 19) took over the family farm from her father with the aim of expanding the farming business by diversifying into tourism and so creating a business of her own for the future. While aware of the competition in the area, she decided to combine her passion for direct contact with people and farming activities.

"I like staying with people, listening to and chatting with them, I always liked it very much. Running an agri-tourism site allows me to meet people and this would not be possible if I limited my activity to farming."

Sonia Casagrande,
Young farmer

Sonia applied for support under the Marche region's Rural Development Programme (RDP), notably under Measure 6.4: Support for investments in creation and development of non-agricultural activities. The main objective of the project application was to re-convert one of the old farm buildings into tourist accommodation.

The two-year project started in January 2017 and focused on the partial reconstruction and renovation of an old farm building and its refurbishing. The old building was converted into four mini apartments and two rooms, which can host up to 20 people. The renovation activities were concluded in June 2018, respecting the time schedule envisaged in the project plan.

The renovation works faced a few unexpected issues which required some modifications of the project, but this did not compromise the final deadline. The new agri-tourism site was opened to the public on 8 July 2018.



© Sonia Casagrande

Sonia Casagrande's farm with tourist accommodation.

Between July and September 2018, the venue hosted some 120 tourists. Given the competition in the area, the results of this first season are positive and in line with Sonia's expectations. Tourism in the area is mainly concentrated in the summer, while tourists are rare in autumn and winter when the agri-tourism will mostly work during weekends.

The project is also setting up a 3 000m² cultivation of soft fruit, which might allow the future diversification of the farm's agricultural activities. The produce from the new fruit venture, however, could be sold at the farm, either directly or after being processed on the farm into jams and juices.

Beside the possibilities arising from fruit cultivation, Sonia is envisaging organising pedagogical activities for children from the local schools and possibly even hosting a 'green' childcare facility at the farm in the future. However, she is clear that she needs to proceed step-by-step.



© Sonia Casagrande

Sonia Casagrande took over the family farm at the age of 19, with the aim of diversifying the farming business into tourism and so creating a business of her own for the future.

“I am a young entrepreneur, but I am also studying for a degree in agricultural engineering. Organising teaching activities for children and direct sales at the farm takes time. For the time being, it is wiser not to bite off more than you can chew!”

Sonia Casagrande,
Young farmer

Sonia considers the project successful. The results envisaged in the initial plan were achieved, all activities were implemented on time. The tourist offering represents an important new dimension to her farming activities, not only financially but also in terms of personal and professional satisfaction.

Developing the project was not an easy task. When she applied for Rural Development Programme funding, Sonia, at 19 years old, was not aware of many bureaucratic details related to submitting the application and preparing such a project. However, she did not give up. She could count on the help and support of people she trusted and who had some experience with this kind of applications, including her father, some family friends and professional advisors. This allowed her to prepare a successful project proposal and implement it. Overall, this project shows how young people’s enthusiasm can serve as a catalyst for diversifying traditional farming practices.

Project Name	Farm tourism as the best entry into the farm business
Type of beneficiary	Farmer – Sonia Casagrande Conti
Period	2017-2018
Funding	Total budget: €543 057 EAFRD contribution: €80 737 Regional contribution: €106 500 Private: €355 820
RDP Measure	M 6.4: Support for investments in creation and development of non-agricultural activities
Further info	www.lacerquaagriturismo.com
Contact	sonia.casagrandeconti@gmail.com

The ‘Tree of Light’ workshop in Latvia

A cultural association in a small Latvian village used European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding under LEADER to set up a wood and glass processing workshop. This created new employment opportunities for young residents, strengthened their self-confidence and had positive impacts on the local economy.

The Latvian village of Kaldabruņa (Jēkabpils district, Rubene parish) has around 200 inhabitants. The main economic activity is agriculture, offering mainly low-qualified, seasonal and low-paid jobs. There are limited job opportunities with a the chance of professional stability or growth.

The local cultural association ‘Ūdenszīmes’ (‘Watermarks’) has been organising artistic workshops for over ten years, revealing the artistic talent of many people in the community. Looking to build on this local talent, the association decided to develop a social business activity in the village, one which would create jobs and growth opportunities.

The ‘Tree of Light’ workshop established a specialised glass and wood processing studio for the conception and manufacture of interior design items. The project included the development of a business plan. Through the project, the ‘Ūdenszīmes’ association wanted to develop a viable business model in order to ensure economic stability over the long term, allowing the

maintenance of the property they manage – the former school building (600 m²), a barn and 1.5 ha of land.

“We cannot rely solely on the funding of local governments, donors, or project funding to sustain our property. We need to increase the level of responsibility and participation of the members of the association as well.”

Ieva Jātniece,
‘Ūdenszīmes’ association

The project was submitted by the Association to the LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) ‘Selia’ under Measure 19.2: Support for implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy. It included the restoration of a workshop located in the former school and its transformation into a modern wood-and-glass processing workshop. The funding was used to install lighting, heating, ventilation and electric isolation systems, and to purchase and install modern working tools, including an expensive laser-engraving machine.



© Ūdenszīmes

The ‘Tree of Light’ workshop offers an attractive job with a unique possibility for work-life balance, which has allowed young people to stay in the area and start a family there.

The workshop, which started its activity in 2017, designs and produces accessories and artistic souvenirs using glass, wood and other local materials.

The core team of the workshop consists of nine Kaldabruņa residents, mostly young women (25-30 years old) with various degrees of artistic education and experience in design, interior design and wood handicraft. The workshop team has been involved in the project since the planning phase. They helped define and develop the technical specifications for the workshop. Thus, the ultimate beneficiaries were involved with full responsibility in the project development.

The workshop was expected to generate the equivalent of at least 30% of the initial investment by the third year of implementation. However, this result was already achieved in the first year of activity. The team currently consists of six local residents, two of which work full-time, and five volunteers whose expenses are reimbursed by the association.

The 'Tree of Light' workshop offers an attractive job with a unique possibility for work-life balance, which has allowed young people to stay in the area and start a family there. The initiative was particularly beneficial for some of the young people involved, who lacked higher education or had to face family resistance. The success of the workshop, according to Ieva, can make a person realise that, "she is not just a 'simple rural girl with a little child, without work and education', but a 'jewellery artist'" – which brings a new sense of identity.

The project also had a positive impact on the local 'Ūdenszīmes' association, which can use the new working tools to diversify its activities and organise new training opportunities. The income generated by the workshop contributes to support the association's core activities, including artistic workshops for local inhabitants, community meetings, a hay sculpture festival and other cultural activities. It also allows to organise group events and visits to other markets,

which provides new inspiration to the workshop team.

The activities of the 'Ūdenszīmes' association have dramatically increased the flow of people into Kaldabruņa: the workshop attracts tourists, clients, cultural activity participants, as well as those on study visits. In November 2018, for example, the association organised four seminars for school directors, the youth programme of the National Rural Network, NGOs from the Riga region and delegations from Lithuania, Georgia and Moldova. All were visiting Kaldabruņa to learn about the project's experience.

"This creates additional sales for local agricultural products, including forest products (such as berries and mushrooms), because we always inform local producers when we are hosting visitor groups. Guest house owners and local caterers also benefit from the increased number of visitors."

Ieva Jātniece,
'Ūdenszīmes' association

The project beneficiaries acknowledge the difficulties of working with young people who may benefit from the training provided and then leave because their own life plans take them away. However, when this occurs, the association takes care to maintain good relationships, which has led them to establish fruitful professional collaborations. People trained in the workshop have been able to set up their own activity but collaborate regularly with the 'Tree of Light' workshop and are creating new employment opportunities for young talent.

Project Name	The 'Tree of Light' workshop
Type of beneficiary	NGO – 'Ūdenszīmes' association
Period	2016-2017
Funding	Total budget: € 49 792 EAFRD contribution: € 23 701 National/Regional contribution: € 11 153 Private funds: € 7 438 Other (municipality): € 7 500
RDP Measure	Measure 19.2: Implementation of the CLLD strategy
Further info	www.facebook.com/Udenszimes/
Contact	ieva.jatniece@gmail.com

© Ūdenszīmes



The Tree of Light Workshop started its activity in 2017.

Setting up a business incubator in Slovakia

An agricultural company used support from the Rural Development Programme to diversify its activity and create a business incubator. This provides a venue for and support services to local businesses and is becoming a reference in the region, particularly for young entrepreneurs.

The Komarno district, in south-west Slovakia, had a long-standing shipbuilding tradition dating back to the end of the XIX century. Following the 2008 financial crisis, however, this started to decline, together with the agricultural production. These factors, combined with a weak infrastructure to promote industry growth, led to very high unemployment rates and a general lack of support for small businesses and young entrepreneurs.

Premier Travel Ltd., a company specialised in field crop cultivation, wanted to diversify its activities beyond the agricultural sector, while at the same time contribute to local economic development. They decided to set up a business incubator in Komarno, offering local entrepreneurs a suitable business premise to rent, together with business-support services.

Through rural development funding, the company built a modern two-floor structure in Komarno, which offers shared information technologies and infrastructures (e.g. a shared computer network) and includes rooms for training events and meetings. The companies renting a space in the building have access to a range of consulting services on business development and administration, and common financial and legal issues. The incubator has created a new job for an administrator who oversees all administrative tasks and supports the overall management of the incubator.

The business incubator is particularly suitable for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), whether they are just starting off, diversifying their activities or looking for new headquarters.

"It is very important for us to offer our clients a quality of services comparable to what they would get if the incubator was in the capital city."

Business incubator manager

After a year of activity, the business incubator already hosts 16 small firms, amounting to around 75 % of its total capacity. The companies are active in areas such as IT services, accounting and auditing services, human resources, law and consulting. Most company owners are under 40 years old.

Although the approval and reimbursement periods were longer than those defined in the official guidelines and despite the high maintenance costs of the building, the project implementation went smoothly.



© Marek Janicek Photography

The business incubator in Komarno offers its clients a quality of services comparable to what they would get if the incubator was in the capital city.

Beside fostering networking among the companies using the facility, the incubator has become a meeting place for the region's entrepreneurs, as well as an occasional venue for side activities like photography exhibitions. Ongoing promotion of the space, for example through 'open door' days, helps deal with the natural turnover of clients.

Project Name	Business Incubator
Type of beneficiary	SME – Premier Travel Ltd.
Period	2016-2017
Funding	Total budget: € 1 905 980 EAFRD contribution: € 643 268 National/Regional contribution: € 214 423 Private funds: € 1 048 289
RDP Measure	M 6.4: Support for investments in creation and development of non-agricultural activities
Further info	www.startupkomarno.sk
Contact	miro@lopata.sk

3. Making rural areas attractive for young people

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development improves quality of life in rural areas. The projects it funds can boost local businesses, support cultural events and enhance provision of infrastructure and social services. Rural development projects are making rural life more attractive for young people in particular and helping them to take an active role in shaping their locality.

While Europe's rural areas can face a challenge to retain services, facilities and young people, they do offer unique potential in terms of quality of life. Rural areas that take steps to attract young educated professionals who have gained experience in cities, are benefiting from new skills and energy. New blood helps to realise rural potential and build vibrant and sustainable communities.

EAFRD funding offers several opportunities to make rural areas more attractive, starting with support for facilities that increase quality of life for local communities. Various EAFRD Measures actively contribute to making rural areas more attractive for young people, even when this population segment is not the specific target. A key Measure in this sense – which is particularly well-represented on the following pages – is Measure 19: LEADER. Local Action Groups (LAGs) often identify support to youth as a priority in their respective Local Development Strategies.

The Estonian project featured on page 21 shows how a new kindergarten greatly helped young families and boosted community engagement.

Social and recreational opportunities make an area more vibrant, particularly for young people. They can also help overcome tensions in diverse societies and enhance social cohesion, *as in the project example from Sweden on pages 22-23, where a local cultural association used EAFRD funding to organise a successful summer event in an area with scarce leisure activities.*

Local people and communities should be involved by policy-makers to identify their needs, to conceive strategies and to drive the development process. This builds trust in decision-making and nurtures community engagement and spirit. The ENRD workshop 'Making rural areas attractive for young people'⁽¹⁾ (3 May 2018) encouraged young representatives from various EU Member States to define crucial issues for rural youth.

On pages 24-25, you can learn about how a successful Finnish project gave a voice to a vulnerable group of young people who were at risk of social exclusion.

Employment and business opportunity remain fundamental to the perceived attractiveness of rural areas for young people. Enhancing broadband connectivity is an effective way to support the set-up of businesses in rural areas, helping to bridge the digital divide between rural and urban areas.

Find out on pages 26-27 how a small Danish island used EAFRD funding to improve broadband connectivity in order to attract more residents.

(1) https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-making-rural-areas-more-attractive-young-people_en



Childcare services for the Metsküla community in Estonia

When the local kindergarten closed, a cultural association in a little Estonian village used European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding to set up childcare services. Beside enhancing the quality of life of the local families with young children, the project has had a positive impact on the whole community.

© Aivi Lepp



This project shows how a local association can provide a much-needed public service by allowing people to work together in order to meet the needs of their community.

Metsküla is a small village in the northern part of the Saaremaa island in Estonia. In 2012, the only kindergarten in the village closed. This seriously complicated parents' schedules as the nearest kindergarten was located in a neighbouring village, at a 21 km drive from Metsküla. Some parents were even forced to stop working due to the lack of childcare facilities in the village.

Knowing that the kindergarten was about to close, Metsküla parents joined forces already in 2011 with the help of 'Metsküla Küla Selts' ('Metsküla Village Society'), a non-profit cultural association active since 2007. They applied for funding under the 2007-2013 Estonian RDP under both Measure 322: Village renewal and development and LEADER through the LAG Saarte Koostöökogu. The funding allowed to restore the attic of an abandoned manor house in the village, formerly a school, in order to set up a new childcare facility there. After intense renovation works, which included replacing doors, windows and stairs and renovating the building façade, the kindergarten opened its doors in February 2013, hosting 12 children.

The initiative was very successful and the demand for places in the kindergarten increased, so the 'Metsküla Village Society' applied again for funding under M19: LEADER of the 2014-2020 Estonian RDP in 2016. ⁽²⁾ This new project consisted in restoring another part of the attic to increase the capacity of the kindergarten, which can now host up to 20 children.

Demand for the childcare service has continuously increased, showing that the initiative was needed and that it is effective. This new facility has helped restore a better work-life balance for young parents by reducing the time needed to bring children to the kindergarten and allowing some parents to start working again.

In addition, already after the first round of renovation works to set up the kindergarten, the community came together to renovate the rest of the building. Thanks to additional funding from the municipality, private donations and other national funding programmes, the building now hosts the public library (previously located in other premises) and the social and cultural activities of the 'Metsküla Village Society'.

This project can serve as an inspiration for other rural areas. According to the project holders, another village already set up a local kindergarten, following the Metsküla example. The project implementation was smooth, although the project holders acknowledge that they had not foreseen the high amount of administrative procedures needed. This success story demonstrates how a local association can provide a much-needed public service by allowing people to work together to meet the needs of their community.

Project Name	Childcare services for Metsküla community
Type of beneficiary	NGO – 'Metsküla Küla Selts'
Period	2016-2017
Funding	Total budget: € 49 792 EAFRD contribution: € 23 701 National/Regional contribution: € 11 153 Private funds: € 7 438 Other (municipality): € 7 500
RDP Measure	Measure 19.2: Implementation of the CLLD strategy
Further info	www.facebook.com/Metsk%C3%BCla-K%C3%BCla-Selts-147399011965233/
Contact	arlitoompuu@gmail.com

(2) The figures in the table on the right only refer to the project funded under the 2014-2020 programming period.

‘Summer in the Valley’ festival in Sweden

NGOs used European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding to organise a summer festival in a rural area in Sweden, targeting in particular youth and young families. This leisure opportunity enhanced social cohesion within the community and was later transformed into a regular event by the municipality.

Gislaved is a small municipality in the Swedish countryside, counting almost 30 000 residents. The population is very diverse in terms of social, economic and cultural background. In the last few years, socio-economic disparities have caused some tensions and racist episodes against residents with a migrant background.

Differences within the population become particularly evident in summer when some families cannot afford to go on holiday or engage in leisure activities, while in this period Gislaved offers fewer free-time activities for children and young people than during the rest of the year.

In this context, local NGOs and the municipality saw the need to organise some events that could build a feeling of community. Inspired by summer festivals in nearby bigger towns, they adapted the concept to fit a smaller community such as Gislaved.

The purpose of the project was to create four summer events that would provide entertainment and a lively meeting place for the Gislaved community, including people from the surrounding countryside, and could be enjoyed by residents of any gender, age or ethnic background.

“We thought about the families that didn’t have the resources to travel for vacation when ‘everyone else’ did. We wanted to give them something meaningful to do and we wanted the community to be united.”

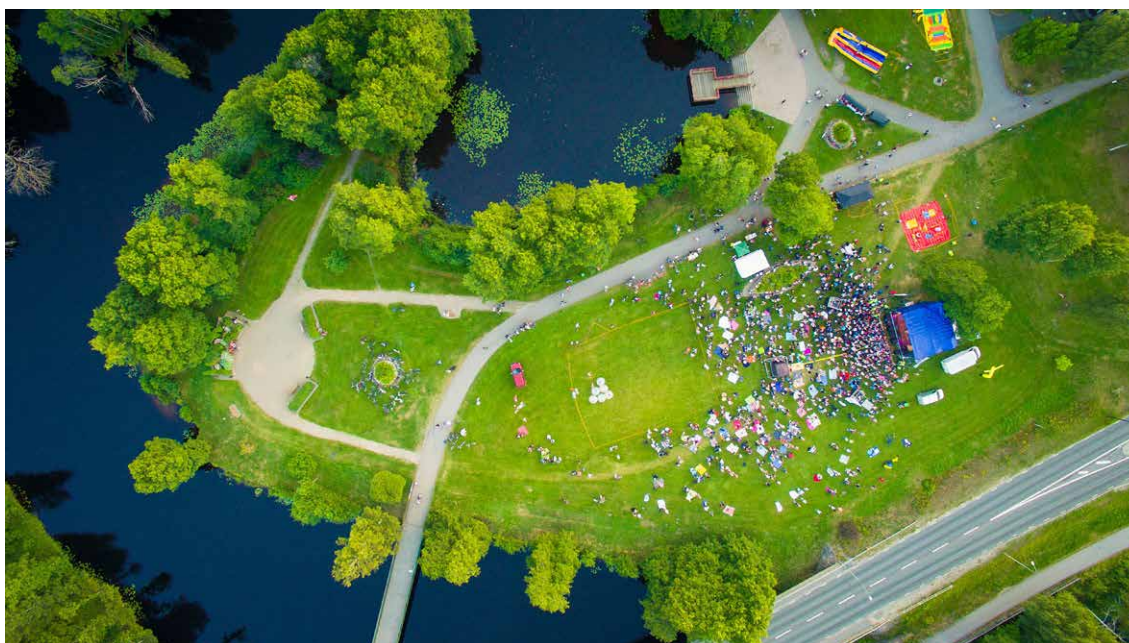
Eyran Meza Howes,
Event organiser, NGO ‘Film och Foto’

The ‘Film och Foto’ NGO and the national temperance movements’ educational association (NBV) applied for Rural Development funding. They collaborated with other NGOs to build an open-air stage in the People’s park in Gislaved. The site was given by the municipality and a special train service operated during the festival days.

The ‘Summer in the Valley’ festival took place once a week during the month of July 2016. Entrance to the festival and all activities were free of charge.

The festival offered a range of music styles. Each festival day featured some local bands and a headline performance by a well-known musician or band. To attract people with different backgrounds and to create a feeling of community, the festival offered a mixture of activities for youngsters, families with young children and older inhabitants. This included three bouncy castles and face painting workshops

© Film och Foto



The wide range of entertainment offered at the festival showed how cultural diversity makes a small community like Gislaved vibrant, attractive and innovative.

for children, and a bungy-jumping platform for the grown-ups.

Food was sold by a local social catering enterprise and in food trucks offering food specialties from other countries, for example Somalia and Palestine. The whole festival was alcohol- and drug-free: no alcohol was sold at the event and the security staff made sure that no drugs were used during the event.

The series of festivals were very successful, attracting up to 1 000 people in a single day. The initiative involved 30 volunteers every evening (coming from the local sports club), four local music bands, at least seven local businesses (including a social enterprise). The project saw the collaboration of at least five local NGOs and support from private sponsors, including 'Meza Verde Films and Expand' and 'Svenska Stadsnät'.

The diverse mix of entertainment offered at the festival showed that cultural diversity can make a small community like Gislaved vibrant, attractive and innovative.

Following the success of the first edition in 2016, the Gislaved municipality included the festival in its own programme of summer holiday activities for youth. Support comes from a national fund (MUCF). The 'Film och Foto' NGO is no longer the project owner, but it is involved together with several other local NGOs in organising different activities. The municipality appointed Annie Nilsson, a member of the 'Film och Foto' NGO since the onset of the festival, as a project coordinator.

The activities were organised in different areas of Gislaved, reaching a larger audience. In 2017, the festival offered concerts and other cultural activities in different areas of the city, and in 2018, the activities were organised also during other school holiday periods. The community appreciates the activities and the participation rates are high.

Annie Nilsson thinks that the summer activities organised since the original 2016 summer festival have served to reduce boundaries within the Gislaved community: "it has always been important for us to hold activities in neutral places, for example not in specific residencies, but rather between them. This has brought together people from different areas of the town and the municipality."

© 'Film och Foto'

The 'Summer in the Valley' festival was later transformed into a regular event by the local municipality.

"A lot of things can go wrong with this kind of activity, so always be ready for the worst. For example, during the last concert in 2016 it was extremely rainy and the roof of the stage was close to collapsing at one point, but thanks to the good collaboration of all of us the evening was eventually a success. So, keep a positive spirit!"

Eyran Meza Howes,
Event organiser, NGO 'Film och Foto'

Project Name	'Summer in the Valley' festival
Type of beneficiary	NGO – 'Film och Foto'
Period	2016
Funding	Total budget: € 62 193 EAFRD contribution: € 31 096 National/Regional contribution: € 28 710 Private funds: € 2 387
RDP Measure	M 19.2: Support for implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy
Further info	www.nbv.se/avdelningar/jonkopingslan/kalendarium/livemusik--sommarliv-i-dalen/
Contact	film_foto@outlook.com

Making Finnish rural youth visible

A project that gives a voice to Finnish rural youth at risk of social exclusion and is bringing their stories to the attention of local decision-makers.



© Vincent Guth, Unsplash

This project offered a response to challenges faced by youth in rural areas.

Following the economic downturn of 2008, northern Europe – like most of the continent – experienced a raise in unemployment rates, especially youth unemployment. Despite the more recent economic recovery, youth unemployment rates in Finland remain higher than the EU average (17.2% vs 14.9%) and considerably higher than the overall unemployment rate for the entire Finnish population (6.8%).

Unemployment has generated a variety of social problems like isolation, mental health issues and drug abuse. A recent national safety review revealed that social exclusion is the biggest threat for Finnish society and young people are particularly at risk, both in urban and rural environments. Rural areas, however, face specific challenges like long distances, sparse population, few youngsters and a lack of public venues where youth can gather.

Hämeenkyrö is a rural municipality of 10 600 inhabitants in the Tampere region, in southern Finland. It has particularly high unemployment rates. To tackle this and the related social problems, the municipality decided to invest in new forms of preventive youth work. In this framework, they applied for European Agricultural Fund

for Rural Development funding for a specific project called 'Making rural youth visible'.

The objective of the project was to produce a book collecting the testimonials of youngsters at risk of social exclusion aged between 17 and 28. Storytelling was used because it helps empower young people, but such a collection of real experiences can also raise awareness about new preventive forms of youth work. Thus, the project hoped to encourage more socially excluded youngsters to use the available youth services, and ultimately to improve the status of youth work in the municipal planning and budgeting.

The project staff interviewed 20 young people for the publication. The interviewees were selected through the municipality's youth work channels. The subjects were willing to share their stories anonymously. The group included people with a migrant background as well as persons who were born and raised in Hämeenkyrö, marginalised people like drug addicts, as well as ordinary youngsters who go to school or work. The interviewers and youngsters knew each other beforehand, so there was enough trust to discuss and share difficult experiences. The commitment of the municipality youth workers was crucial to the success of the project.

Besides sharing their stories, the youngsters had a say in the final layout of the publication. They wanted it to be appealing most of all to other young people who are struggling with their lives in Hämeenkyrö. The book was published in June 2018 and launched at a festive event, attended by both youngsters and local decision-makers.

The project publication, only available in Finnish, is called 'On the Open Sea' and is available both in printed and electronic form. The stories deal with various topics, including finding meaning in life, how to meet other people, school life, work life, finding a sense of place and belonging. It addresses difficult topics such as depression, social exclusion, bullying, drug abuse and debt problems.

"While others just agree to everything at school, I have taken up a more questioning role that some teachers experience as aggressive. I understand the teachers' reaction, but that behaviour is just part of who I am. The teachers' attitude made me wonder whether I can continue going to school."

Anonymous participant

The project has generated a discussion on whether youngsters are adequately heard and how their needs can be met by society, particularly in the digital era. All stories emphasise the importance of meaningful face-to-face meetings and peer-to-peer support that are provided by youth work services. The youngsters sharing their stories do not seem to place much importance on the fact of living in a small rural place or a big city. What really matters to them is having strong and safe social connections and finding their own path in life.

The stories include cases of socially excluded youngsters who live in state-run care homes. Some of the stories tell of how young people with severe depression who had lost their ability to take any initiative have started recovering and feeling better thanks to the support provided by the local youth work services.

“The biggest change that preventive youth work services have brought to me is that I am not so demanding and strict with myself anymore. The first two years of living on my own almost destroyed me, but now I see some future possibilities again. And I am not alone.”

Anonymous participant

The publication highlights the crucial role played by such services in Hämeenkyrö. The project has generated some ideas about possible new mobile youth services, for example furnished vans, that could reach the youngsters living in more remote areas. The project could be easily replicated in other rural municipalities in Finland and elsewhere.



© Hämeenkyrö municipality

Storytelling empowered young people and raised their awareness of preventive youth services offered by the municipality.

Project Name	Making rural youth visible
Type of beneficiary	Public
Period	2017-2018
Funding	Total budget: €7950 EAFRD contribution: €2961 National/Regional contribution: €4089 Private funds: €900
RDP Measure	M 7.4: Support for investments in the setting-up, improvement or expansion of local basic services for the rural population, including leisure and culture, and the related infrastructure
Further info	www.hameenkyro.fi/tietoa-hkyro/ajankohtaista/ulapalla-tarinoita-etsivan-nuorisotyon-nuorilta/ To download the publication: https://indd.adobe.com/view/d89f33da-1aee-434c-addf-8fd77d9ef360
Contact	hanna.rajakoski@hameenkyro.fi

Broadband expansion and upgrade on a Danish island

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding supported the extension and upgrade of a high-speed internet connection on the Danish island of Samsø. It has attracted new residents, tourists and businesses and ultimately helped stop depopulation.

Samsø is a small Danish island with approximately 3 700 permanent residents, about 29% of which under 40 years old. About half of the island's territory is agricultural land. The island was suffering from depopulation, with approximately 25 % of the houses being holiday homes, while another 25 % were uninhabited.

The Local Action Group (LAG) 'LLSÆ' made access to stable, high-speed wifi connection a priority in its Local Development Strategy. Samsø has had problems with internet coverage and low wifi speed since 2012 when the island's internet provider went bankrupt. A wide group of permanent residents, companies based in Samsø and so-called 'leisure-time residents' joined forces – and capital – to create the Samsø Broadband Association, which applied for EAFRD funding under M19: LEADER via the LAG 'LLSÆ'.

The project aimed to expand and upgrade the transmission network in order to secure a stable signal that can be received by several households and companies in Samsø, including areas of the island which had no or limited coverage. The project consisted of the set-up and establishment of a new transmission mast and equipment on the island (in Onsbjerg), and the upgrade of the network by replacing the existing transmitter and receiver equipment with new technology.

The project has provided most Samsø residents with a fast and stable broadband connection and an IT infrastructure that is competitive with that of the

mainland, benefitting an estimated 3 000 permanent residents. This is attracting new residents, tourists and businesses to the island and increasing the average number of days that leisure time residents spend in their holiday homes in Samsø, where they can now also work remotely. A stable internet connection also enhances the attractiveness of the island for current residents, including young people and young families, as well as for leisure-time residents who have their holiday homes in Samsø. Thus, the project helped to maintain jobs and create new ones, and contributed to the future development of the island, particularly combating depopulation.

Since the project began, new businesses have been established on the island and the unemployment rate is very low.

"Thanks to Samsø Broadband I am able to work as a virtual DJ. I need a fast internet connection to upload videos and sound in the best quality. In July 2017, I played for 7 000 people in Paderborn from my studio on the island via the fast internet connection from Samsø Broadband."

Frank Eusterholz,
a DJ based on Samsø

The workforce has increased due to new permanent residents, in particular thanks to workers from Eastern EU Member States who previously came only during the holiday season, but today have settled on the island with their families and young children. Depopulation has stopped since 2015 and the Samsø municipality expects the number of permanent residents to increase by around 2 % by 2030, reaching 3 800 people.

Beside permanent residents, tourists are increasing and so is the time they spend on the island. In 2015, the total number of guests visiting the island was 228 240, while in 2017 it was 272 596 – almost 20 % more. The trend continued in 2018, with an additional increase of around 5 %.

VisitSamsø, the Samsø Tourist Association, uses the availability of fast internet connections as an argument to promote tourism on the island, targeting both occasional visitors and tourists who work on the mainland but own a holiday home in Samsø, like lawyer Jesper Knudsen, who says: "The fast-speed



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In Samsø, fast, stable and reliable internet is today a crucial facility.



© Franck V., Unsplash

The project helped to maintain jobs and create new ones, and contributed to the future development of the island.

internet is decisive for me to be able to work in my holiday home. With the high-speed solution I can now stay 100 days a year on the island.”

The success of this EAFRD project has also paved the way for a commercial investment. Initially, Samsø residents and local businesses had raised the necessary capital to install the transmission masts for the broadband connection. They gathered in the Samsø Broadband Association. In 2018, a Danish supplier of fibre optic broadband solutions purchased the Association, which by that time counted 1 500 members. The new supplier is investing in a full coverage of fibre optic broadband on the island, which is expected to provide access to high-speed connection to all 3 700 households, holiday homes, farms, businesses and public institutions in Samsø.

While a direct connection between the availability of high-speed internet access and the growth in businesses and tourism is hard to prove (in Samsø and elsewhere), residents of the island generally agree that fast, stable and reliable internet is today a crucial facility, as important as electricity and tap water.

Project Name	Broadband expansion and upgrading
Type of beneficiary	Samsø Broadband Association
Period	2016-2017
Funding	Total budget: € 78 310 EAFRD contribution: € 25 423 National/Regional contribution: € 6 355 Private funds: € 46 532
RDP Measure	M 19.2: Support for implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy
Further info	http://net4samsø.dk
Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formand@net4samsø.dk • info@net4samsø.dk • hfm@lmo.dk

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Further inspiring examples of EAFRD-supported rural development projects can be found in previous editions of the EAFRD Projects Brochure. Each edition highlights successful project examples on a particular rural development theme.

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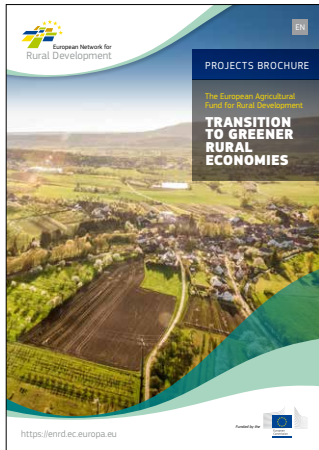
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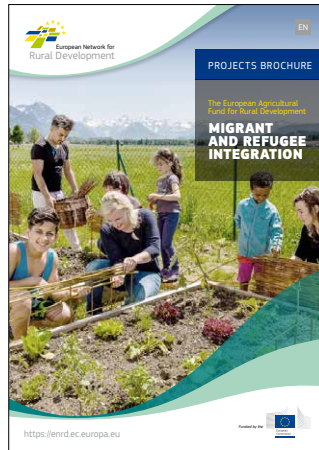
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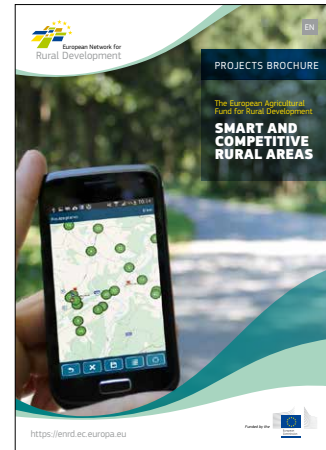
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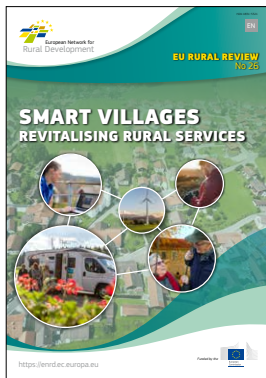
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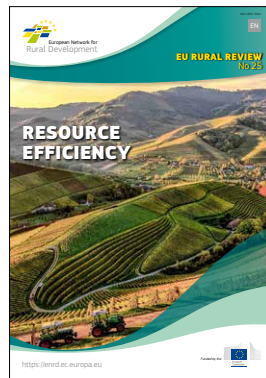
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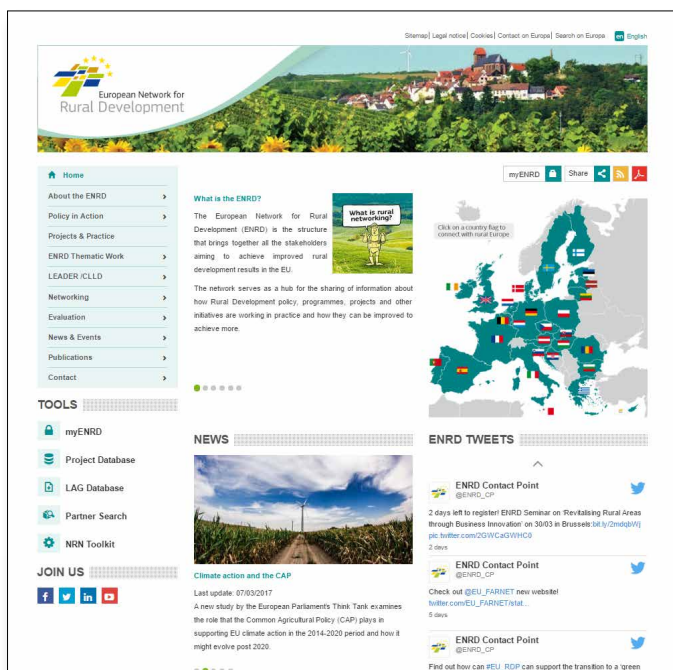
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