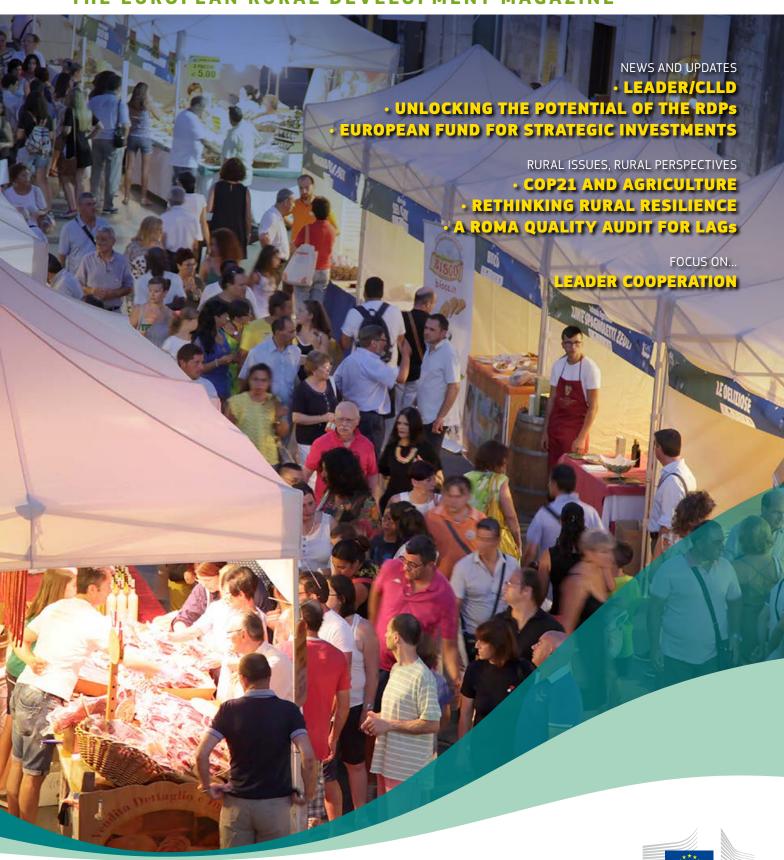


# RURAL CONNECTIONS



THE EUROPEAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE





#### 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 co-operation 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)

# Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.

# Freephone number (\*): 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(\*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

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#### **EDITORIAL**



t is spring 2016 and, although some Member States are at a more advanced stage than others, we are now seeing the **first fruits of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)**. New projects, new calls for projects and new Local Action Groups have been seen all across the EU, starting implementation of the policies and priorities defined in the RDPs.

Amongst the **'EU news and updates'** (p.4-11), read about ongoing ENRD efforts to enable rural development stakeholders to make the most of the opportunities provided by the RDPs. These include National Rural Networks (NRNs) discussing opportunities to work in **smaller groups on specific RDP topics** (p.4), an ENRD Conference on **'Unlocking the potential of the RDPs'** and the latest EU Rural Review No.21 on **'Rural Responses to Challenges in Europe'**.

We also take the opportunity to present a set of **infographics on the 2014-2020 RDPs** (p12-13) presenting the total public budget, as well as **aggregated EU targets** that expect to be achieved.

We hear another range of rural development voices in this edition's 'Rural Issues, Rural Perspectives' section (pp. 14-25). You can read about the recent global agreement on climate change 'COP21', hopes for multi-funded CLLD, rethinking rural resilience, the recent European Rural Parliament, a rural entrepreneurship competition, work of the Wallonian Network Support Unit, a Roma quality audit, and further ideas on creative rural regeneration.

This edition of Rural Connections includes 'A focus on... LEADER Cooperation' (p. 26-38). This section presents examples of inter-regional cooperation in Greece, third country cooperation between Latvia and Moldova, and LAG-FLAG cooperation in Italy. Two interviews also discuss methods that Managing Authorities can use to facilitate LEADER cooperation projects across more than one RDP.

As a reader of this magazine, you are part of the ENRD network whether you represent a specific sector of interest or just yourself. In that context, I look forward to hearing your own ideas on what needs to happen most urgently to support the achievement of rural development outcomes in Europe.

**Ed Thorpe** 

Eulhorpe

Communications Manager, ENRD CP editor@enrd.eu

#### **NEWS & UPDATES**

#### **ENRD NEWS**

### National Rural Networks plan 'communities of practice'

European and National Rural Networks' (NRNs) representatives came together for an NRNs' meeting held in Bled, Slovenia, 29 February-1 March 2016.

Discussions focused on the opportunities to launch joint work in smaller groups - or 'communities of practice' - to address specific priorities for improving implementation of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs).

Networks met bilaterally in a 'speed-dating' session and in 'open-space' discussion groups to identify potential partners for joint work. They also met in three larger workshops around themes pre-identified in a survey of the networks as of high current interest: Measure 16 Cooperation; Smart Supply Chains; and Young Farmers.

In addition, participants examined the value of independent network evaluation and specific processes for network self-assessment.

Many participants also joined a field visit in the Bohinj Valley of three local LEADERsupported initiatives. Thanks to the Slovenian NSU for their hard work and organisation in making the event a success!

#### **(i)** FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For event background material, presentations and final report, please visit: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/ en/en-rd-events-and-meetings/4th-NRNs-Meeting-20160229



ENRD CP, 2016

### ENRD CP team changes





The Contact Point has welcomed Roxana Vilcu (left) and Gaya Ducceschi (right) to the Brussels team. Roxana joins the Communications Team and will support

ongoing improvements to the ENRD website. Gaya rejoins the networking team.

We bid a fond farewell to Inés Jordana after more than three years in the CP. On behalf of the many network members who worked closely with Inés, we thank her for her work and wish her well on her return to her native Spain.



## Rural networking explained



A new ENRD presentation booklet explains the work and context of the ENRD and helps readers answer the question: 'What is rural networking?'.

The booklet provides an overview of EU Rural Development policy and explores how networking activities through the ENRD can enable the best possible outcomes.

The booklet will be made available in all official EU languages. Please think about sharing it in your own networks and distributing it at your events.

#### for further information

The ENRD presentation booklet is available for online download, as well as in digital and offset printing formats in the publications section of the ENRD website: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/ en/publications-and-media/ promotional-material

## Unlocking the potential of the RDPs

With all 118 national and regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) approved by the European Commission since December 2015, the challenge is now implementation.

Opportunities for the RDPs to address local needs and contribute to EU priorities as best as possible were explored at a dedicated ENRD conference in February 2016.

Ensuring viable rural areas, effective cooperation, and robust primary and food sectors are among the policy areas identified as offering the greatest potential to achieve positive impact on the ground. Specific actions to unlock the potential of the RDPs were identified, including simplification of

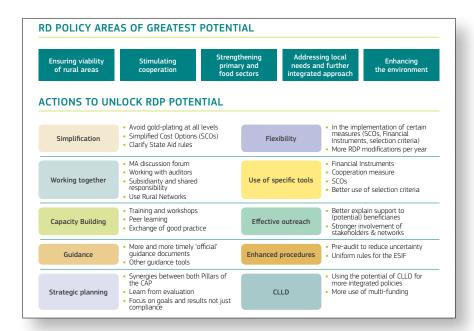
procedures, capacity building, collaboration and exchange of good practices (see figure).

The European and National Rural Networks are well placed to support Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and other relevant stakeholders in that effort. The ENRD CP will continue to support networking in this direction, including through dedicated events on topics identified as priorities by the conference, such as 'Selection Criteria' and 'LEADER/CLLD Cooperation'.



For background material, presentations and the main outputs of the conference – including a full report and shorter 'Conference highlights' document, please visit the event page on the ENRD website:

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/en-rd-events-and-meetings/RDP-Conference-20160201



#### Summaries of all RDPs online

The ENRD Contact Point has now published summaries of all the national and regional Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) for the 2014-2020 period.

Stakeholders can use the summaries to quickly overview the RDP for their territory and compare it with others across Europe.

See all the summaries at: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-in-figures/rdp-summaries-2014-2020

### EU Rural Review No 21



Issue 21 of the EU Rural Review addresses 'Rural Responses to Challenges in Europe'. It focuses on the contribution that Rural Development policy can and does make to some of the most pressing challenges facing Europe today.

Specifically, the publication focuses on rural responses to the challenges of

- Providing rural broadband internet access;
- Global climate change; and
- The current refugee crisis.

It goes on to explore the specific opportunities provided by new and evolving EU policy tools:

- Multi-funded CLLD;
- The European Fund for Strategic Investments; and
- The RDP Cooperation Measure (M16).

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/ publications-and-media/eu-ruralreview

#### **NEWS & UPDATES**

#### Multi-funded CLLD

As part of ongoing work to support improved LEADER/CLLD implementation, capacity building and cooperation, the ENRD Contact Point has produced two outputs overviewing multifunded CLLD in the 2014-2020 period.

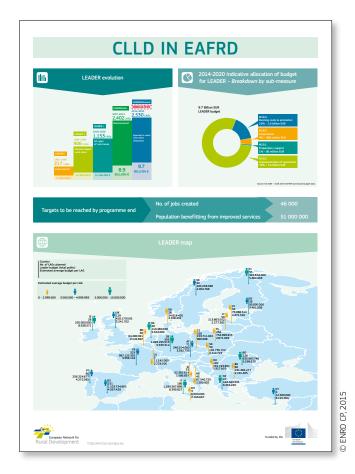
- A dedicated article in EU Rural Review No 21 analyses the state of play of multi-funded CLLD and some of the strategies being developed to make it work in practice in rural areas.
- An infographic on 'CLLD in EAFRD' (see figure) overviews the evolution of LEADER, as well as the indicative number and budget allocations for Local Action Groups (LAGs) across Europe.

This infographic forms part of a set of visual outputs on multifunded CLLD, which also cover 'CLLD in Europe' and CLLD in each of the Fisheries (EMFF), Regional Development (ERDF) and Social (ESF) Funds.

#### (i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

See the set of infographics on CLLD in Europe, including the above graphic 'CLLD in EAFRD' here: <a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/implementing-clld-across-esi-funds-edinburgh-uk-8-10-december-2015">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/implementing-clld-across-esi-funds-edinburgh-uk-8-10-december-2015</a>

Read EU Rural Review No 21, article 4 on Multi-funded CLLD at: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/publi-enrd-rr-21-2016-en.pdf



### LEADER/CLLD events

A series of ENRD events have been organised to enable exchange of practical experiences and build capacities of authorities in charge of LEADER delivery.

- The third meeting of the LEADER/CLLD Sub-group of 16 February discussed approaches to simplifying delivery, evaluation and innovation.
- A workshop on 'Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) in LEADER/ CLLD' explored approaches to designing and implementing SCOs with a special focus on 'preparatory support' and 'running costs and animation'.
- A workshop on 'Umbrella Projects under LEADER/CLLD' saw an exchange of practical experiences on the challenges and opportunities in setting up and implementing umbrella projects.

 A workshop dedicated to social inclusion explored LEADER/ CLLD and networking approaches, tools and practices for integrating marginalised groups in rural areas.

The ENRD CP will continue to enable exchange and collect good practices to support a simpler and more effective rolling out of CLLD. The next capacity-building workshop will be dedicated to LEADER/CLLD Cooperation and will take place on 14 June 2016.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

See events materials and outputs in the 'Events' section of the ENRD website:

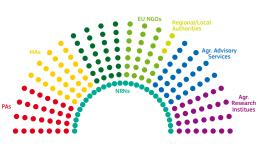
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/news-events/events/

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Rural Networks' Assembly

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Rural Networks' Assembly took place on 26 November 2015 in Brussels. Delegates discussed the future direction and priorities of the ENRD and EIP-AGRI networks, with a focus on contributing to smart and competitive rural areas and advancing the green economy.

The Assembly, as the strategic governance body of the Rural Networks, has a great potential to provide solutions to the main bottlenecks that stakeholders experience in the implementation of Rural Development policy.

The Assembly highlighted that active involvement in European networking can make a vital contribution to achieving effective implementation of the newly adopted RDPs and, ultimately, achieving the best possible results for rural areas.



#### (i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Detailed information on each Assembly meeting can be found in the 'Past Events' section of the ENRD website: <a href="http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/news-events/events/past">http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/news-events/events/past</a>

## 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Rural Networks' Steering Groups

Two meetings of the Rural Networks' Steering Group (SG) in October 2015 and March 2016 ensured follow-up and oversight of the activities of the ENRD and EIP-AGRI networks and Assembly Sub-groups.

There has been a specific recent focus on how to ensure effective interaction between the two European Networks and effective stakeholder engagement in, take-up and use of their outputs.

SG members concluded that effective communication was key. They highlighted

the need for greater clarity on the distinct objectives and target groups of specific meetings and working groups of the two Euroepan Networks. More communicable outputs, including shorter reports and videos were encouraged. The national networks have an important role to play as a link with rural stakeholders on the ground.



#### (i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Detailed information on each Steering Group meeting, including presentations, inputs and reports can be found in the 'Past Events' section of the ENRD website: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/news-events/events/past



#### **NEWS & UPDATES**

# UPDATE FROM THE EVALUATION HELPDESK



## Evaluation of National Rural Networks (NRNs): Creative Approaches from the Member States

National Rural Networks (NRNs) serve as an important channel for bringing together administrations and organisations active in rural development at the Member State

The evaluation of NRNs serves to examine the outcomes of interventions in Member States and their contributions to EU policy objectives. Evaluations provide recommendations for making operations more effective and efficient, ensuring that monies are well spent, thus providing transparency and accountability to stakeholders and taxpayers.

Experiences collected from Member States by the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development from the 2007-2013 programming period illustrate that while the evaluation of NRNs faces challenges, methodologies can still be made more robust and help to enhance the performance of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs).

#### ITALY: AN OPPORTUNITY TO REASSESS FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE

Italy has 21 RDPs, all involving different stakeholder needs and levels of implementation, providing a challenge for the National Rural Network Programme (NRNP) to effectively serve the needs of all. This complexity challenged both evaluator and Managing Authority (MA). Initial indicators defined during the NRNP design were unable to capture these intricacies.

A specific working group was assembled consisting of the evaluator, MA and stakeholders to properly account for details and more accurately gauge the

network dimension and the capacity of the programme. Through this successful collaboration, a new set of indicators for the NRNP was devised, facilitating a tangible link with the programme intervention logic through increased focus on output and result indicators.

Social network analysis played an integral part in streamlining monitoring systems, enabling increased stakeholder involvement, and ultimately bringing about a better design for performance in future programming periods by showing which products were most successful.

## FINLAND: HELPING NRNs REACH THEIR OBJECTIVES

Collecting data and information on the activities of NRNs is crucial for assessing performance. In Finland, self-assessment has been a pivotal part of the assessment process.

Participants in the Finnish NRN regularly gave feedback electronically on technical content and the extent to which their expectations were met. An interest group survey collecting feedback on NRN and NSU activities was also conducted every two years. The annual report compared NSU activities of the network with main objectives, giving due consideration to the perspectives of network participants.

Finland's self-assessment activities provide important supplementary information to fill data gaps for evaluators and help networks reach their objectives.

#### **FUTURE GUIDANCE FOR SUCCESS**

Evaluations provide an opportunity for identifying potential weaknesses and thus improve programme structure

and performance, as seen in Italy.
Supplementary information sources fill data gaps and can make evaluations more robust as practiced in Finland, allowing for enhanced recommendations to improve NRNs.

The Evaluation Helpdesk is preparing guidelines for the evaluation of NRNs targeted at evaluators, but also offering important information for managing evaluations and self-assessments.

Additionally, good practices and trainings offer Member States ways to achieve more robust results and demonstrate how evaluations provide an important governance tool for developing and implementing policy.

#### **(i)** FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Rural Evaluation NEWS article: "Building capacities for planning evaluation of Local Development Strategies":

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/ enrd/files/newsletter-en-0409web.pdf

Guidelines for NRN evaluation: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/ evaluation/european-evaluationhelpdesk-rural-development/ evaluation-helpdesks-publications

Evaluation good practices: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/ evaluation/european-evaluationhelpdesk-rural-development/ good-practice-workshops

Evaluation trainings: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/ evaluation/european-evaluationhelpdesk-rural-development/ capacity-building-activities

Rural Evaluation NEWS issue No 2: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/newsletter 2-en 2502 0.pdf

# elp-agri AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

#### **UPDATE FROM EIP-AGRI**

### How farmers and researchers learn from each other

"The future agriculture will be an agriculture of knowledge. Not only research, but also advisory services, demonstration farms, farmers' organisations and networks are at the heart of these changes. But we need to make sure we get it right," said European Commissioner Phil Hogan at the EIP-AGRI seminar on agricultural knowledge systems.

#### THINKING OUT OF THE BOX TO CO-CREATE AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Approaches to knowledge exchange, learning and innovation in agriculture are rapidly changing. Nowadays new and better ways to share knowledge and expertise are considered essential to keep agriculture and food production competitive and rural areas vibrant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Farmers, researchers, advisers, businesses should work together and share all useful information. Thinking out of the box is key.

New tools and approaches are already being used to enhance knowledge exchange, learning and innovation in the agricultural, forestry and rural development sectors. For instance, the UK 'Field Laboratories' where more than 750 farmers have tested and developed new tools and techniques in practical 'field labs', now extending into a wider network of farmer-led research called 'Innovative Farmers'. Or the Finnish agricultural press which has taken new directions, including the increasing use of the internet and social media.

Although many countries and their farmers are taking action, knowledge flows in European agriculture can be improved. The knowledge needs of farmers can be addressed better. Farmers stated this at the seminar with comments such as: "Researchers could learn more from farmers and provide practical solutions".

Interactive innovation, where farmers, advisers, researchers and others work together, is key to tackle this, combining various types of knowledge and developing new ideas. Funding is available to do so: EIP Operational Groups may be funded by Rural Development

Programmes, while the EU's research policy Horizon 2020 supports multi-actor projects and thematic networks.

The new solutions will not only be shared within the own community, but also through the EU-wide EIP-AGRI network. Making good use of scarce resources, it would be valuable if the answer to a question found by a Polish farmer and researcher can be shared with an Italian farmer with a similar problem.

As Commissioner Phil Hogan concluded: "Nowadays – to tackle the complex challenges we face – we need all the brains we can get: scientific, organisational and practical. For us, innovation is an idea, put into practice, with success."

#### (i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

EIP-AGRI Seminar 'Promoting creativity and learning through agricultural knowledge systems and interactive innovation': http://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/

http://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture node/1336



Innovative Farme

#### **NEWS & UPDATES**

#### **EU NEWS**

### The European Fund for Strategic Investments

The new European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), launched in 2015, can contribute to Rural Development objectives as part of the implementation of the European Commission's 'Investment Plan for Europe'. Strategic coordination between the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the EFSI is of particular relevance for ENRD stakeholders.

Recent EU and ENRD outputs have highlighted practical opportunities for combining the Funds to achieve better results on the ground. A new **EU brochure** explains how to combine the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) with the EFSI and Article 5 in **'EU Rural Review 21'** overviews the EFSI, its supporting tools, and how to combine it with the EAFRD.

The ENRD Contact Point organised two workshops on EFSI topics (23 February and 19 April) and will continue work on examining how the EFSI can benefit rural areas in practice.

#### **(i)** FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Brochure on 'European Structural and Investment Funds and European Fund for Strategic Investments complementarities': <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/sources/thefunds/fin\_inst/pdf/efsi\_esif\_compl\_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/sources/thefunds/fin\_inst/pdf/efsi\_esif\_compl\_en.pdf</a>

Factsheet on the state-of-play of EFSI support for the agricultural sector:

https://ec.europa.eu/priorities/sites/beta-political/files/sector-factsheet-agriculture\_en.pdf

ENRD workshops on EFSI topics:

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/news-events/events/past



### European Structural and Investment Funds

The European Commission has launched new online tools to improve access to, use and transparency of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds).

An online **data search tool** offers easy access to information on the financing and expected achievements under all the ESI Funds, allowing users to explore data by theme, Member State or Fund.

A **community platform** invites individuals involved in the Funds' management and beneficiaries to share their ideas on simplifying and reducing the administrative burden in the implementation of the ESI Funds.

Explore data by Fund		
European Regional Development Fund	European Social Fund	Cohesion Fund
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	European Maritime & Fisheries Fund	Youth Employment Initiative

#### (i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Search through the ESI Funds data tool at: <a href="https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/">https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/</a>
Share your views on the ESI Funds at: <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/simplify-esif">https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/simplify-esif</a>
See a guide on how to avoid the most common errors in projects supported under the ESI Funds: <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance\_public\_proc\_en.pdf">https://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance\_public\_proc\_en.pdf</a>

# EU Circular Economy action plan

The European Commission recently launched a new 'Circular Economy Package', including a broad set of measures to achieve a more resource-efficient economy in Europe. It consists of targeted funding and actions to boost competitiveness, create jobs and generate sustainable growth.

One of the main components of the package, especially relevant for rural areas, is the focus on waste reduction along the whole food supply chain. The aim is to support 'closing the loop' of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use, thus maintaining the value of products, materials and resources for as long as possible.



#### (i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

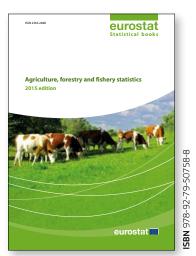
See 'Circular Economy Package' factsheets & Q&A: <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release</a> IP-15-6203 en.htm

Read the latest on the EU Circular Economy: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/towards-circular-economy">http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/towards-circular-economy</a> en EIP-AGRI publication "Opportunities for agriculture and forestry in the circular economy": <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/sites/agri-eip/files/eip-agri\_ws\_circular\_economy\_final\_report\_2015\_en.pdf">https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/sites/agri-eip/files/eip-agri\_ws\_circular\_economy\_final\_report\_2015\_en.pdf</a>

### EU guides and publications



This report presents an examination of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) in terms of: methodologies for establishing impacts; control and verification mechanisms; consistency between both CAP Pillars; and links between RDP Measures and Europe 2020 objectives.



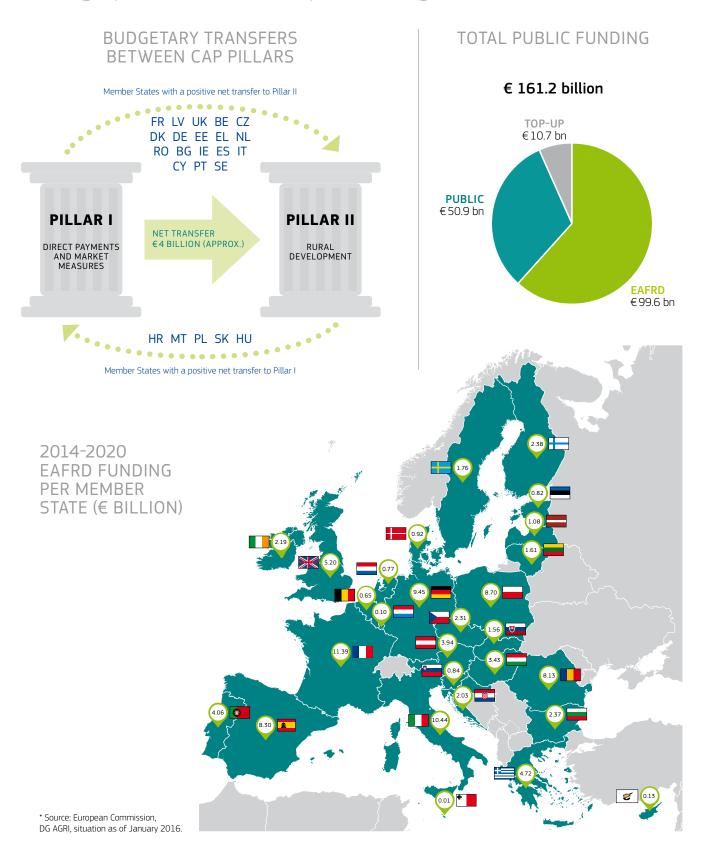
This publication by Eurostat, the EU's statistical office, overviews data on production, farm size and structure, and prices of agricultural products in the EU. It includes a specific chapter on the evolution of dairy statistics over the past 30 years.



This thematic report by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) presents the EU's scientific support to food security and assesses how best to achieve viable food production, sustainable management of natural resources and a balanced territorial development.

#### NEWS & UPDATES

# Infographics: Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020



#### AGGREGATED COMMON TARGETS PER EU PRIORITY\*

EAFRD Implementing Regulation defines a set of common target indicators for all RDPs. This enables aggregated targets to be defined. These targets do not include any additional specific targets that might be defined in each RDP.



- **15 000** Measure 16 'Cooperation' operations
- 3.9 million people trained under Measure 1 'Knowledge transfer and information actions'



#### **FARM VIABILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS**

- **335**000 agricultural holdings to receive support for investments to restructure or modernise
- **176 000** agriculture holdings receiving business development support for young farmers



#### **SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- **73** 000 jobs created in supported projects
- 22.6% of the rural population to benefit from improved services/ infrastructure
- 54% of the rural population covered by CLLD local development strategies
- 44 000 jobs created in CLLDsupported projects
- 18 million people benefiting from improved ICT services or infrastructure

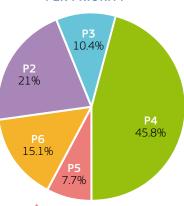


#### **PRIORITY 3**

#### **FOOD CHAIN ORGANISATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

- **296 800** agricultural holdings to receive support for participating in quality schemes, local markets and short supply circuits, and producer groups/organisations
- **644 500** agricultural holdings participating in risk management schemes

#### **FUNDING ALLOCATION** PER PRIORITY





### **RESTORING. PRESERVING AND**

#### **ENHANCING ECOSYSTEMS** 17.7% of agricultural land and 3.4% of

- forests/wooded areas under management contracts supporting biodiversity • 15% of agricultural land and 4.2% of
- forestry land under management contracts to improve water management
- 14.3% of agricultural land and 3.5% of forestry land under management contracts to improve soil management



#### **PRIORITY 5**

#### RESOURCE-EFFICIENT, CLIMATE-RESILIENT ECONOMY

- 15.3% of irrigated land switched to more efficient irrigation systems
- € 2.8 billion of investment for energy efficiency
- 7.7% of agricultural land under management contracts targeting reduction of GHGs and/or ammonia emissions
- **€ 2.7 billion** of investment in renewable energy production
- Investments concerning 921 million livestock units to reduce GHGs and ammonia emissions
- 1.8% of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation

<sup>\*</sup> Source: AGRI RDP March 2016. Target indicators expressed in % are representative of the RDPs having programmed the relevant Focus Areas.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Caculated excluding Technical Assistance.

#### RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# COP21 and agriculture

#### Ben Lilliston

The word 'agriculture' is conspicuously absent from the new global agreement on climate change signed in Paris in December 2015. A clear path forward on how to limit agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions internationally and support more climate-resilient agricultural systems is still too politically hot for governments to take on. This is an obstacle that will ultimately have to be overcome.



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\* This article is based on an original blog post which can be read in full here: www.iatp.org/blog/201512/plotting-the-course-cop21-and-agriculture

he importance of agriculture in the climate change debate is clear. The global agriculture research consortium CGIAR estimates that one-third of global emissions are associated with the global food system. (1) A recent report by Global Justice Now found that three major international agribusiness companies have a larger climate footprint than many countries. (2)

Despite its importance, the decision to sidestep agriculture, at least temporarily, within the COP21 climate agreement was not surprising. Finding common ground on agriculture and food security is notoriously difficult in international settings.

Much of the intransigence around agriculture lies in the enormous political and economic power held by small number of global agribusiness corporations with little interest in new rules that do not fit with their current business model. There is strong resistance to new regulations for agribusiness sectors that are high GHG emitters – particularly the big international fertiliser and meat companies).

**COP21** 

#### COP21 IMPLICATIONS FOR AGRICULTURE

The 2015 United Nations Climate Change

The Conference negotiated the Paris Agreement

– a global agreement on the reduction of climate

Conference (COP21) was held in Paris, 30 November-12 December 2015.

change reached by 195 governments.

Despite the lack of explicit references, many elements of the COP21 agreement do have important implications for agriculture:

- A stronger benchmark to reign in climate chaos:
  Countries agreed to not allow global temperatures
  to rise more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels –
  a stronger benchmark than the previously discussed
  2°C. For agriculture, which is already experiencing
  the effects of climate change, setting a stronger
  benchmark should benefit farmers trying to adapt to
  extreme weather events. This more ambitious goal
  will require greater reductions in agriculture-related
  emissions in the very near future.
- Ratcheting up non-binding national climate commitments: At the heart of the climate agreement are national-level commitments to reduce GHG emissions by 2025 or 2030, known as Intended Nationally Determined Commitments (INDCs). Some 80 % of the INDCs include agriculture or food, policies that cover both agriculture-related emissions, as well as climate change adaptation.<sup>(3)</sup>
- Poorly performing carbon markets still favoured: The agreement continues to support the creation and expansion of carbon markets as a means for countries to meet their GHG reduction pledges. However, these have largely failed so far to produce an adequate price on carbon to drive down GHG emissions. IATP has reported on five reasons why carbon markets will not work for agriculture

<sup>(1)</sup> www.nature.com/news/one-third-of-our-greenhouse-gasemissions-come-from-agriculture-1.11708

<sup>(2)</sup> www.globaljustice.org.uk/resources/silent-deadly-estimatingreal-climate-impact-agribusiness-corporations

<sup>(3)</sup> https://cgspace.cgiar.org/rest/bitstreams/63683/retrieve



A climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry is one of the priorities of EU Rural Development policy.

A climate-resilient

focus for agriculture

will ultimately have

to be integrated

within national

programmes.

and how such offset projects are not appropriate for small scale farmers and serve project developers more than participating farmers. (4)

• Voluntary soil initiative launched: Agriculture was included in several voluntary initiatives launched around the talks, known as the 'Lima-Paris Action Agenda'. One of these voluntary initiatives was a much publicised French '4 pour 1000' initiative<sup>(5)</sup> focused on sequestering carbon in the soil through agroecological and agroeforestry practices. A number of countries, research institutes and NGOs have

already signed up. But big questions remain about what the initiative will look like on-the-ground, the level of participation from farmer and civil society organisations and how it will be funded. (6)

#### Zero net emissions

The Paris agreement sets a long-term goal of reaching zero net emissions sometime in the second half of the century. Zero net emissions means that emissions can be offset by land-based efforts to sequester carbon, either through forestry or agriculture.

The net zero approach has been sharply criticised by some civil society groups as a way for polluting industries to avoid making real emission reductions, while relying on land-based offsets that are both unreliable and could result in a host of bad outcomes for farmers and communities tied to agriculture or forests – such as land displacement.

#### WHERE NEXT FOR AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE?

The global climate deal avoids the tough questions about how to reduce agriculture-related GHG emissions from industrial systems dependent on synthetic fertilizer use and large open pit manure lagoons linked to confined

animal production, while transitioning toward more climate-resilient systems, including identifying what agricultural systems are most climate-resilient.

As is the case with oil and coal companies in the energy sector, powerful agribusiness corporations will be at the table to protect their interests in future climate policy. At the same time, there is growing

international support for the more farmer-centred approach of agroecology – an approach IATP has strongly advocated for.  $^{(7)}$ 

The global climate deal in Paris has set the stage for an escalating debate about the way forward on agriculture in a climate chaotic world. We can expect this debate to happen at the national level as countries implement and strengthen their INDCs, and at the international level in discussions around climate finance and food security.

A climate-resilient focus for agriculture will ultimately have to be integrated within national farm programmes and regional and global trade rules, which often limit climate policy. To meet the challenge climate change poses for farmers and agriculture, governments will have to become a lot bolder than they were in Paris.



www.iatp.org

<sup>(4)</sup> www.iatp.org/documents/five-reasons-carbon-marketswon%E2%80%99t-work-for-agriculture

<sup>(5) &</sup>lt;a href="http://newsroom.unfccc.int/lpaa/agriculture/join-the-41000-initiative-soils-for-food-security-and-climate">http://newsroom.unfccc.int/lpaa/agriculture/join-the-41000-initiative-soils-for-food-security-and-climate</a>

<sup>(6)</sup> http://www.iatp.org/blog/201512/what-to-make-of-the-soilcarbon-initiative-launched-in-paris

<sup>(7) &</sup>lt;u>www.iatp.org/documents/contribution-to-africa-regional-meeting-on-agroecology</u>

#### RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# Hopes for multi-funded CLLD

#### Gerallt Llewelyn Jones

For me the best part of attending EU conferences on rural development and meeting other LEADER LAGs and FLAGs is that you realise you are not alone in the world. A recent FARNET conference showed what we can and need to do together for 'Implementing CLLD across the ESI Funds'.



Gerallt Llewelyn Jones is Director of Menter Môn, a third sector company whose primary aim is to facilitate rural economic regeneration on the island of Ynys Môn (Anglesey) in Wales (LIK)

www.mentermon.com

#### THE FARNET CONFERENCE

he conference on Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) – held by FARNET, 8-10 December 2015 in

■ Edinburgh (UK) – was a confluence of Member States, a gathering of bureaucrats. I did not expect to feel at home, but I did! It makes little sense that I feel professionally more at home in a European conference than I do actually working at home, but that is what is good about the EU.

Meeting counterparts such as those from Lesbos in Greece and the eastern EU states reminds me that it is not such a lonely job after all. When we scratch the surface, rural challenges in Wales are no

different to those in Slovenia, and it is crucial that we can compare notes and share experience.

It was a shock to me as a CLLD practitioner with 20 years of experience to find the multi-fund approach so embedded into the design of EU programmes among the Member States and the newer Member States in particular. I was impressed that most delegates were grappling with that misty zone where top-down and bottom-up development meet.

I was also grateful for the opportunity to share my own experience of getting local stakeholders and administrations to shake hands when they do meet,

rather than collide like vehicles and cause havoc.

To see national governments giving power to regional and local development was heartening at a time when I was expecting them to be reasserting their topdown credentials.

#### **LONG-TERM THINKING**

Nevertheless, I am still frustrated by the plethora of short-term evaluations. We need to look at 10- or 20-year evaluations to get a proper picture of the effect localled development can have and how LEADER can inform and complement Structural Funds.

Whilst preparing to address the conference two thoughts came to mind which I repeat here because I believe they are important:

- 1. CLLD must not be seen as some soft teddy bear, but as a prize fighter. If we are doing it, let's do it well, let's give it muscle in the long term for local economies to grow, rather than being dependent upon short-term national policies driven by urban prerogatives.
- 2. **CLLD makes the EU concept and vision relevant on the ground,** on the pavement, in the pub, in the locality. The EU needs this now more than ever.

It is essential to bring CLLD to the fore. We need to keep at it, because we are not there yet.



Member States are applying CLLD in different Structural Funds.

#### (i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

FARNET Edinburgh conference: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/ implementing-clld-across-esi-funds-edinburghuk-8-10-december-2015

# Rethinking rural resilience

#### Karlheinz Knickel

The 'RETHINK' project explored synergies between farm modernisation and sustainable rural development. Its key message is that the effectiveness of different scales, types and styles of farming for achieving societal goals must become a more important question.



Karlheinz Knickel is a research associate at ICAAM - University Évora, Portugal, and at Institute for Rural Development Research at Frankfurt University, Germany. He is Scientific Coordinator of the RETHINK project.

have long been interested in the balance between economic performance, environmental sustainability

Alternative

development

trajectories are

possible based on

local resources

collaboration.

and social progress. I have been particularly interested in what this means for the future development of (European) agriculture, food systems and rural areas.

#### THE RETHINK PROJECT

In that context, I was one of the partners and cross-sectoral who developed the transdisciplinary research project 'RETHINK', which received funding from national Ministries in 14 European countries under the EU's 'ERA-NET RURAGRI' programme.

The RETHINK project is about renewing our understanding of the relationships between farm modernisation and the resilience and prosperity of rural communities. It has sought to confront the complexity and variety of the challenges as experienced in different rural locations across Europe. Its empirical basis is a set of 14 in-depth case studies, one per participating country.

RETHINK lesson 1 - It is very difficult for farmers to rationalise and grow their farms fast enough to cope with the low producer prices in global markets. It is almost impossible to do this whilst applying more environmentally sustainable practices.

Furthermore, concentration of production in some regions or some farms is directly linked with the marginalisation of others.

RETHINK lesson 2 - Public funding needs to explicitly support resource-efficient, resilient, low-carbon **solutions** based on assessments of farm performance that extend beyond economic performance to include wider societal demands and the value of public goods.

This will help the very large number of small farms in Europe to modernise along trajectories that are more resilient, balanced, equitable and inclusive.

RETHINK lesson 3 - There is much to be learnt from local farmer-driven innovations. Farmers value location-specific experiential knowledge highly due to its relevance and efficient use of available resources.

This knowledge tends to be insufficiently recognised

by formal agricultural (knowledge) institutions. knowledge networks that facilitate more inclusive, flexible modes of knowledge generation. integration and sharing.

RETHINK lesson 4 - Informal networks can balance different interests and approaches as an essential ingredient in integrated rural development strategies and projects. This requires

capacity building among local government and stakeholders, moderation and facilitation.

The experiences gathered in grassroots initiatives and pilot programmes need to more systematically inform higher-level policy development.



Preparing the RETHINK case studies involved local field visits.

#### (i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit: www.rethink-net.eu for more information on the project, the 14 case studies and presentations from the RETHINK Final Conference, held on 2 December 2015 in Brussels.

© RETHINK project

#### RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# European Rural Parliament 2015

The European Rural Parliament (ERP) initiative used simultaneous national campaigns in 36 European countries to gather an 'upward cascade of ideas' from rural communities. The climax of the campaign was the second European Rural Parliament, held at Schärding in Upper Austria, 4-6 November 2015 and attended by over 240 people from 41 European countries.

#### A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

#### Vanessa Halhead

European Rural Community Alliance (ERCA) and ERP Joint Coordinator

For the ERP 2015 campaign, we enlisted the energies of national rural movements and LEADER networks in 36 countries, within and outside the European Union.

Only four of the EU Member States – Italy, Luxembourg, Malta and the Flanders region of Belgium – were not represented in the campaign. Outside the EU, active contributions came from the Western
Balkan countries, Iceland and Turkey. We drew on ideas from countries around the Black Sea.

When the ERP met, the gathering received a 100-page report, 'ALL Europe shall live', which synthesised the ideas from all the national campaigns.



#### **APPROVAL OF A EUROPEAN RURAL MANIFESTO**

#### Kirsten Birke Lund

European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD) and ERP Joint Coordinator



In workshops and plenary discussion, the participants debated line by line a draft European Rural Manifesto, which was adopted with acclamation as an expression of the aspirations of rural communities.

The Manifesto has been **translated into 27 languages**, which all appear on the

home page of the ERP website. It has been widely disseminated within the networks of the national partners, to national and regional governments, MPs, MEPs and elsewhere, and through European and national media.

Furthermore, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) covered the ERP campaign and Manifesto in its monthly newsletter, distributed to Agriculture Ministers and other institutions in 34 countries of Central and South America.

#### THE CONTINUING CAMPAIGN

#### Michael Dower

PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe and ERP Joint Coordinator



We are determined that the Manifesto will not sit on a shelf and gather dust, as happens to many conference declarations. It is deliberately full of active verbs, designed to encourage all relevant stakeholders – rural citizens, civil associations, entrepreneurs, local, regional and national authorities, the European institutions – to take action to

improve the lives of rural communities.

These active verbs form the starting points for elements in our 2016-2017 action programme, to be pursued by a partnership of the European networks and many national partners. We will welcome collaboration with like-minded organisations.

Our aim, in the continuing work, is to extend our network throughout the 47 member countries of the Council of Europe. Why this ambition? – because we know that strength lies in solidarity, and all can benefit from the wide exchange of ideas.

#### THE CONNECTING POWER OF THE ERP

#### Kristiina Tammets

President of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (FLARD)



I am delighted that ELARD is working closely with ERCA and PREPARE in organising the European Rural Parliament. This initiative is special because it brings forward the needs and interests of rural people across Europe in the common declaration, the European Rural Manifesto. That over 240 people from 41 nations could participate in shaping the Manifesto

is amazing and an expression of real democracy.

Many synergies emerged to contribute to the integrated and sustainable development of rural Europe. It is important to collect the knowledge and experience of diverse Europe. Each meeting of the European Rural Parliament will be held in a different country, giving opportunity to understand rural life in the area where the event is happening. From ELARD's side, I feel the connecting power of the European Rural Parliament for the village movements and for LEADER Local Action Groups.



#### THE INNOVATIVE NATURE OF THE ERP

Professor Mark Shucksmith Action for Communities in Rural England

The European Rural Parliament was very different to how we usually imagine a Parliament. At its heart was the voice of rural people, asserting the need for partnership between civil society and governments in addressing the big societal challenges. The process reflected the diversity of rural Europe but also asserted common values and a shared vision.

The generous spirit in which all these discussions and debates took place was impressive and inspiring, reflecting but also generating mutual respect, energy and enthusiasm. This innovative, and inspiring, process may be of interest for social movements and social renewal in many spheres – not just the rural.



#### TRANSATLANTIC LINKS

#### Juliette Majot

President of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), Minneapolis (USA)

Thank you, most sincerely, for the opportunity to participate in the European Rural Parliament. The darkness of recent events is made lighter by having experienced the great generosity and spirit of those

gathered to see a future for a changed and improved Europe.

The voices of rural people so strongly present in the report 'ALL Europe Shall Live', and the specific points articulated in the Manifesto, resonate deeply with us at IATP, and we think they will resonate with members of the National Rural Assembly here in the U.S.



(i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.europeanruralparliament.com



European and national partners meet to discuss the next phase of the European Rural Parliament campaign.

#### RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# A rural entrepreneurship competition in Latvia

#### Liene Radzina

The Latvian Rural Network counts rural entrepreneurship among its priority activities. In particular, an annual competition sees planning and financial support offered to new rural businesses run by the under-40s.



Liene Radzina is the coordinator of the Network Support Unit of the Latvian National Rural Network

he Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre runs both the Latvian Rural Network (LRN) and the Latvian Fisheries Network Unit. This enables us to implement an integrated approach to local economic development based on close and coordinated stakeholder cooperation.

#### PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Since our creation in 2008, one of our priorities has been on supporting entrepreneurs – and young entrepreneurs in particular. This is because the emigration of young people has a devastating effect on the development of rural areas in Latvia.

We run a 'Support for rural youth entrepreneurship' programme. But do not let its name deceive you – it is open to any 'young' entrepreneurs under 40! Every year more than 200 take part in a five-day training course on business basics, including market analyses, financial planning, marketing, accounting, presentation skills and business plans.

One of the main advantages of the programme is its accessibility across the whole country so that young people from even the most remote regions can take part. As well as expert consultation and mentoring support, another important benefit for participants is the peer learning and creation of new social networks.

Participants are supported to thoroughly assess and develop their business ideas. Then around 50 usually submit their idea to the annual 'Long live countryside!' competition which offers seed financing for the best business proposals.

Successful start-ups can also access complementary programmes. For example, through our "Programme for promotion of economic activity in rural areas", entrepreneurs can receive expert advice on their sector of activity to grow their business or improve its results.

We would be interested to hear from other colleagues and networks of similar or alternative approaches to promoting rural entrepreneurship across the EU.



nmerman Woor

#### A winning example

Arturs Immermanis won the 2015 'non-agricultural idea' category of the Latvian Rural Network's 'Long live countryside!' entrepreneurship competition. His idea was a wooden ski-bike, which is similar to a scooter but can be used with either wheels or skis.

Arturs used the support offered to develop and test the prototype and produce the first 10 ski-bikes, aimed at children from three up.

# LEADER training in Wallonia

#### Xavier Delmon

The Wallonian Rural Network has launched a new method for training LAG managers in its territory. The method used a participatory process to define the knowledge and skills required by LAG managers and provides them with a selfassessment tool to identify their training needs.



The network met with stakeholders to define the skills required



Xavier Delmon is the Network Coordinator of the Wallonian Rural Network (RwDR) in Belgium.

#### THE WALLONIAN NETWORK

relatively rare case in Europe, the Network Support Unit (NSU) of the Wallonian Rural Network (RwDR) in Belgium is an outsourced service. The network is supported and animated by the Tr@me Scrl. cooperative.

With regards its governance, the network is overseen by a **Standing Committee** composed of thirty members (professional organisations and public administrations) covering the range of rural development interests and sectors. Amongst its responsibilities, the committee defines the priority actions and launches thematic working groups.

To implement the network's Action Plan, the NSU works closely with a **pool of experts** and a **Scientific Council**. Both groups offer their expertise, provide strategic oversight and input into the reflections of the network's thematic working groups.

In its first year of activity 2014-2020, the Wallonian network has been working on the following themes: social farming and forestry; small rural health infrastructure; agricultural training; and biodiversity.

#### **FOCUS ON LEADER TRAINING**

Training of LEADER actors is a new role for the NSU in Wallonia. To carry out this task, we developed an original working method, which was prepared during the period 2007-2013.

Based on an assessment of the skills required by different categories of LEADER actors, the NSU used a participatory method to define a competency framework. This emphasises skills required in terms of: developing a vision of an inter-community project; creating and animating networks; negotiating with different stakeholder groups; energising a team of collaborators; and organising and managing projects.

In a second stage, a skills self-assessment tool was designed, as well as a training plan that can be adapted to the identified needs. On this basis, we developed, implemented and evaluated a 'pilot' training course for LAG managers.

This preparatory work allows us today - during the new 2014-2020 programming period – to implement a skills development plan for LAG staff focusing on three objectives:

- Provide training opportunities based on individual and group courses, which take account of the specific needs of the target audience;
- Establish an internal system of supply and demand management – a sort of a helpdesk service for the network of LAGs;
- · Create and animate a 'community of practice' that supports peer exchange to pool and give value to the knowledge and experience within the network of LAGs.



(i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.reseau-pwdr.be

#### RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# A Roma quality audit for LAGs

#### Daniel Grebeldinger and Ruus Dijksterhuis

Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) is a promising tool for investing in the inclusion of disadvantaged groups such as Roma. However, much more still needs to be done to turn this potential into reality. The ERGO network is developing a tool to monitor the performance of LAGs in investing and including Roma in their strategies.



**Daniel Grebeldinger**,
Nevo Parudimos
Association,
Romania



Ruus Dijksterhuis, European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO).

#### **ROMA IN RURAL ROMANIA**

omania has a larger Roma minority population compared to any European country. The Council of Europe estimates that approximately 1.85 million Roma live in Romania (8.32% of the population), of which more than 60% are living in rural areas.

Romanian society is generally characterised by relatively high levels of rural poverty – it is estimated that as many as 55% of the population living in rural areas are exposed to poverty and social exclusion. The situation of Roma populations in rural Romania is particularly precarious.

It is essential to invest strategically in the effective development, inclusion and participation of Roma populations at all levels of the social and economic life of the communities they are living in.

#### **INVESTING IN ROMA IS SMART ECONOMICS!**

While the population in the majority of EU countries is ageing and shrinking, the Roma population is young and growing. About 35% of the Roma population is under 15 years of age, compared to 15% of the European Union (EU) population overall.

At the same time, according to the FRA survey, 19% of non-Roma and 58% of Roma aged 16 to 24 are not in employment, education or training (NEET indicator). Investing in young Roma is the most effective way to break the cycle of poverty, discrimination and exclusion that this population group has historically experienced.

Investing in rights and equality of opportunities yields high returns and

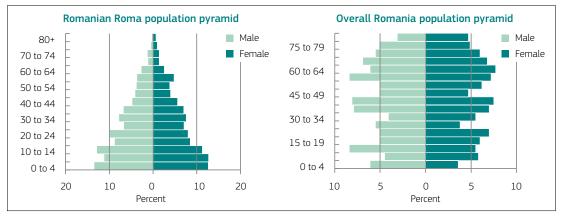
can deliver lasting

change.

Furthermore, investing now in young Roma is key for the future well-being of many territories. In Romania, 6-20% of new labour market entrants are Roma. Investing further in these groups offers a potentially effective way to ensure a skilled and healthy labour force to boost the economy at a time when shrinking

labour forces put economic growth at risk and contribute to fiscal pressures.

#### Contrasting population pyramids in Romania



Source: UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey (2011) and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013). World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, DVD Edition.



LAGs should assess

the potential of

Roma populations

in their territories

and translate that

into their Local

Development

Strategies.

Investing in young Roma is key for the future well-being of many rural territories.

#### **ROMA INVOLVEMENT IN LEADER 2007-2013**

Reaching out to vulnerable groups such as Roma and including them within the work of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) is essential. In this context, LEADER/CLLD is a particularly promising tool as it aims to give ownership of development strategies to all citizens concerned through capacity building, empowerment, transparency measures and shared governance.

Nevo Parudimos Association and the ERGO Network conducted research into Roma involvement in the 165 Romanian LAGs of the 2007-2013 period. We found that even with the LEADER approach, there are still particular challenges to addressing the inclusion and participation of Roma populations in rural areas. The RDPs have not yet sufficiently addressed Roma populations.

Even though 75% of the LAGs had Roma NGOs as founding members, Roma representation and participation in the LAGs was superficial, with low goals and extremely small results. Of the almost 8 000 projects approved by LAGs during the programming period, just 15 projects had Roma groups as beneficiaries.

#### THE POTENTIAL FOR CLLD 2014-2020

The 2014-2020 CLLD programme has a slight change of approach and a bigger potential for Roma communities in the territories. According to the National Federation of LAGs (FNGAL) there will be more LAGs, covering more of the LEADER-eligible territory in Romania, 2014-2020. It estimates there will be as many as 14000 projects approved and aims that hundreds of these projects will target Roma beneficiaries.

Since 2015, we cooperate with FNGAL to increase the participation of the Roma in CLLD in all stages, including planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. In the frame of this partnership, we organised one national and three regional meetings in Romania. These aimed to build the capacity of LAG teams to make Roma a priority in the new strategies.

However, more emphasis must also be put on the empowerment of the Roma communities themselves to

take part fully in all the CLLD processes. There are currently very few Roma NGOs in rural areas and most of them do not have the capacity to manage projects nor take part as 'Roma actors' in local structures.

Furthermore, the ERGO Network is developing a Quality Audit – a monitoring tool that measures the quality of a LAG's strategy and interventions, while empowering the Roma in the territory.

This Quality Audit will be implemented in the countries with a significant number of Roma, notably, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania.

Through such measures we hope to improve the performance of LAGs and increase the involvement of Roma actors in all stages of the CLLD process – a crucial factor in achieving Rural Development goals in many parts of Europe.

(i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.ergonetwork.org

O Luiza M

#### RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# Creative rural regeneration

#### Fernando Garcia Dory

The INLAND Europe network sees socially engaged art practice as a crucial component for community empowerment in rural development. It is based on the strong belief that creative investment can contribute to the revival of declining rural areas. The network calls for a European Working Group on rural arts and culture to promote the best approaches.



Fernando Garcia Dory\*, an artist and agroecologist, is initiator at INLAND Europe, which was a project and now a network of actors using arts and culture as a rural development tool.

\* With thanks to: Institute of Sociology and Peasant Studies, Cordoba University (ES); Department of Rural Sociology, University of Wageningen (NL); Department of Social, Economic and Geographical Sciences, James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen (UK). NLAND started in 2010 initially as a three-year project with support from the Spanish Rural Development Network. It developed art projects in 22 villages, driven by the manifesto of 'Art, agriculture and territory', and has since extended to other European countries, creating a transpational network.

We believe that artists can bring a crucial set of skills to unlock critical thinking and creativity, expand the vision of the community and communicate and share results.

We want to break the urban-centric, 'high art' approach and confront it with new territories and within social processes that can validate its pertinence and utility in the rural development context.

providing 'The production' a central production'

## ENGAGING ARTISTS WITH LOCAL QUESTIONS

INLAND project locations include a forested area in northern Finland, vineyards in southern Italy, an island of Denmark and high moorlands in Scotland. All of these are relatively remote rural places, with limited access to cultural production and distribution and often at high risk of progressive abandonment and decay.

We start to work by bringing artists together with rural communities and **building alliances** with established art institutions, farming organisations, rural associations, LAGs and all levels of government bodies in each country.

An important aspect of the approach is **to accompany the artist** so that they are effectively engaged with local questions. A good idea is to create a core group made up

of the artist and community leaders to ensure local buyin to the project from the beginning.

In this context it is essential to understand that the process is one of 'co-creation' between the artist and the community. The artist is the catalyst for the work in which the rural community plays a full part, not only providing 'material' for the artist's work.

The **productive sectors** of farming and forestry have a central place within the approach, since it is in the production of our food, the direct management of

> natural resources, agro-biodiversity and rural landscapes that the whole narrative of a new rural Europe has to be built.

> The methodology of insertion of the artist in the rural development processes goes through **three stages**: 1. analysis and mapping of the local situation and need; 2. training the participants and production

of a project; and 3. sharing and evaluation of the results and outcomes. Each stage is important for ensuring the initiatives have a tangible impact on the ground.

#### **DELIVERING IMPACT**

we make, but what

we make happen."

The basic premise of our intervention is that creative investment can develop rural cultural capital, promoting capacity building and community empowerment. Ultimately, we believe that this can contribute to **reviving even disadvantaged rural areas** and **broadening public debate** on rural issues and the future of rural areas.

The art works and projects need to be **meaningful and useful in the local context**. For example, by offering



© Fernando Garcia Dory



A two-year collaboration between the internationally renowned Turkish artist Can Altav and the rural community of Carricola (Valencia) co-designed new stalls that are used at the local farmers' market. The results were also presented and discussed at the prestigious ARCO Art Fair in Madrid.

opportunities to younger generations facing increasingly precarious and competitive forms of urban life or by exploring responses to rural challenges - such as the delivery of rural services or how inclusive communities are to newcomers regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual preference.

Another key lesson so far is that the artworks and projects have to contain a quality and relevance in contemporary art discourses, promoting forms of relational art emphasising process over object. We always aim to connect the interventions with the established art system. This is important for further outreach, tapping into the public debate, changing attitudes to rural areas and generating cultural currency.

One of the key challenges is to keep the diversity of languages and enriching procedures while making it accessible, pertinent, and sensitive to local conditions and demands. We are now working with Art Education Institutions to train artists to plan and conduct types of participatory action-research as they would master watercolour techniques.

#### A FINAL CALL

Bringing the arts into the rural context can deliver a 'return on investment' not only in the limited terms of the creative economy. It offers a series of benefits

- often intangible - in terms of community empowerment contribution to broader processes of rural regeneration and development.

We want to work and exchange with other groups and actors, including LAGs and rural networks, to develop work in this direction. In this context, we hope the 5th meeting of the National Rural Networks happening together with the Amsterdam Rural

"Sometimes an expensive bronze statue has no cultural currency, while a guided walk, or a banquet, when it is well-conceived and engaging, does."

Forum in May 2016 will help lead to a specific **European** Working Group that could help with the collection, dissemination and replication of successful arts and culture approaches.



(i) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

http://inland.org/

#### REPORT

# Inter-regional cooperation in Greece

'Finest Greek Tastes' is an ambitious LEADER cooperation project involving 21 Local Action Groups and more than 50 municipalities. They have worked together to help Greek farmers develop and market their produce based on their quality and local traditions. The project has worked to identify and develop the market for these products, both in Greece and internationally, for the benefit of the rural economy.



nest Greek Lastes

he 'Finest Greek Tastes' project sought to respond to some of the challenges faced by nearly 90% of farmers in Greece who have under 10 hectares of agricultural land. Many tend to rely on selling their produce by weight at local markets – often at relatively low prices – and are put off from adding value to their produce because of concerns about where they could sell it. More recently, these farmers had been profoundly impacted by the financial crisis.

#### PROMOTING GREEK GASTRONOMY

It was clear that the challenges and thus the solutions could not be addressed at the level of individual farms. It was from this realisation that the idea for the 'Finest Greek Tastes' inter-regional cooperation project was born from a LEADER Local Action Group (Parnonas Development Agency SA) in Eastern Arcadia, southern Greece.

The inspiration was that Greek agricultural food products – based on the world-renowned Mediterranean cuisine (1) – have the potential to be a key tool for the survival and recovery of rural areas and even to stimulate significant development.

From its inception, this LEADER cooperation project had two overall aims. First was to encourage farmers to move away from mass-produced crops towards the high-value food products traditionally associated with Greece. Second was to market the concept of 'Finest Greek Tastes'

The Mediterranean diet was inscribed in 2013 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of UNESCO, after the initiative from four cities: Koroni, Greece; Chefchaouen, Morocco; Sorias, Spain; and Cilento, Italy.

on an international level in collaboration with the local tourism industry in Greece.

The project wanted to showcase not only Greek foods and gastronomy, but also modes of production and other aspects of Greek cuisine. It sought to exploit the full range of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols and traditions for farming and preparing, but also sharing and consuming food in Greece

What we wanted to reveal were not only products such as wines and olive oils, but what it means to enjoy these exquisite products; what is the authentic and proper Greek and Mediterranean way of eating, culinary pleasure and physical well-being.

Angela Manitara Spokesperson Parnonas Development Agency

### WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT GREEK FARMERS

Marinis Beretsos, the director of *Parnonas Agency*, first presented the idea of a coordinated response to promoting Greek produce at the conference of Koroni Messinia, the first 'capital of the Mediterranean diet'.

The conference urged the promotion of all the high-quality products of Greece and particularly those certified under the EU schemes for geographical indications and traditional specialities (see figure 1).

Parnonas started working on the creation of a partnership to develop the project in 2011 under the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme (Measure 421a 'Inter-territorial and Transnational Cooperation', under Axis 4).

With LEADER funding support, the partnership established the "Network of Municipalities Elect Greek Tastes" with partners from all corners of Greece. (2) Parnonas dedicated staff members to the partnership full-time. These staff members were able to support regular meetings, bringing the entire partnership together once or twice per year. Smaller regional and local meetings took place more frequently.

The 'Finest Greek Tastes' action plan was initially approved by the Ministry of Rural Development and Food. Later on it moved

under the auspices of the Central Union of Greek Municipalities (KEDE). This was felt to have made the implementation of the plan easier, facilitating the resolution of ad hoc problems or difficulties.

Together, the partners devised a network action plan and strategy. They evolved the idea for the project to include various dimensions of Greek gastronomic culture, including the individual products, recipes and cuisine, areas of production, and the ways of sharing, consuming and celebrating food.

Key activities of the project included:

- Assisting farmers with product development, including with packaging and marketing their products
  – urging farmers to add value to their products and, for example, to sell highvalue goods in delicatessens rather than selling primary produce in local markets;
- Publicising the quality of Greek agricultural produce and gastronomy through additional research and the scientific presentation of the nutritional value of Greek foods;
- Promotional events across the country, featuring the celebrated Greek chef Lefteris Lazarou to cook using products from the local areas involved;
- 4. Marketing the concept of 'Finest Greek Tastes' on an international level through the creation of audiovisual and digital content, presence at specialist trade fairs and exhibitions abroad;
- Collaborations with the tourism industry in Greece, including locallevel actions.

#### Figure 1: Geographical indications and traditional specialities

Three EU schemes encourage diverse agricultural production, protect product names from imitation and provide consumers with information on the specific character of the products:



Protected Designation of Origin – PDO: covers agricultural products and foodstuffs which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognised know-how.



Protected Geographical Indication – PGI: covers agricultural products and foodstuffs closely linked to the geographical area. At least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation takes place in the area.



Traditional Speciality Guaranteed – TSG: highlights traditional character, either in the composition or means of production.

<sup>(2) 21</sup> Local Action Groups and 55 municipalities, as well as three institutions: the Institute of Hellenic Food, Culture and Gastronomy-Nonprofit Company; the Technological Research Centre of W. Macedonia; and the Agricultural University of Athens.

The Network coordinated the dissemination and use by the project partners of the materials developed. One of the great challenges, but also successes of the project was to coordinate the actions and responses of around 80 partners and to smoothly implement local actions in all 21 regions concerned.

The ['Finest Greek Tastes'] action is especially important, as it contributes to the economy and reinforces the social fabric of Greek rural areas towards the 2014-2020 Rural Development programme.

Charalambos Kasimis Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food

#### **LOOKING AHEAD: 2014-2020**

In November 2015, the partnership held a two-day event in Brussels where they presented the preliminary results of their work. Patras Panagiotis, General Director of the Trikala Development Agency, highlights that they decided to host the meeting in Brussels for political, as well as practical reasons.

We organised the Network event in Brussels not only to show the EU institutions that Greece is able to make good use of European Funds in the midst of the economic turmoil, but also to inform wholesale agro-food traders that there is now a channel through which they can have access to some of the most extraordinary quality traditional Greek gastronomic products.

Patras Panagiotis General Director, Trikala Development Agency

project. The network also created a YouTube channel and Facebook page.

The Brussels event marked the end of the first phase of the 'Finest Greek Tastes' project, but not the end of the partnership. For the period 2014-2020, 'Finest Greek Tastes' will become a non-profit company, with an autonomous structure with its own employees, giving it a firmer basis to continue its work. Of the 320 municipalities nationally, 50 have already committed to join the non-profit company.

The company classification should assist in decision-making, hopes Patras Panagiotis. "Although networks are a very good idea in terms of people coming together and devising common strategies, we decided to make it a legal entity to support the undertaking of specific initiatives and funding applications."

One of the main planned activities for the future is to support Greek farmers in obtaining European certifications (3) for around 20 Greek products, thus adding to their value and making them more attractive within the European market. The support provided will help producers overcome the barriers presented by the fact that applications for these classifications can cost up to €40000 and involve compiling scientific evidence, conducting research and negotiating with authorities.

The partnership is considering advertising to the Greek brand more broadly, for example by placing advertisement in the entry-points to the country, at airports and ports. They also hope to have an impact on attracting more young people into farming through the use of innovative approaches.

The new programming period 2014-2020 includes the interterritorial cooperation project 'Fine Greek Cuisine II'. The follow-up will be dynamic... and extremely tasty.

Patras Panagiotis General Director, Trikala Development Agency

<sup>(3)</sup> See Figure 1.



⊙ FinestGreek

'Finest Greek Tastes' encourages farmers to focus on high-value foods traditionally associated with Greece.

#### **LESSONS LEARNED**

The process of establishing such an ambitious inter-regional partnership was not without its complications. The unusually large number of interested participants created a significant administrative hurdle for the project. Under Greek government regulations, funding support could only be shared between up to six partners. But the project had already attracted specific interest from 17 Local Action Groups in the first couple of months.

We went to the Ministry and explained it was impossible to know what to say to all these people who wanted to join the project. That we could not accept them 'because you put a number in the regulation that says six?' The Ministry was persuaded and signed an amendment.

Patras Panagiotis General Director, Trikala Development Agency A key success factor for the project was the productive negotiations with the Ministry for Rural Development and Food that designated the project as of national interest. This enabled such a large and ambitious inter-regional partnership to be eligible for support under the 2007-2013 RDP.

Angela Manitara of Parnonas highlights some of the key lessons for establishing a network of so many groups. "When groups work together, the potential benefits are great, but it is not always easy," she notes. Her advice for other partnerships is that it is important to take different organisations' working styles into account in order to carry out the complex and delicate exchanges that must take place to accomplish goals together.

The coordinator of the project has to act as the animating spirit, filling the partners with pride for their role, but must also have patience because not all partners can run at the same speed. Together, the organisations need to create a new working culture in which they become disciplined communicators.

Angela Manitara Spokesperson Parnonas Development Agency

#### **(i)** FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Finest Greek Tastes - www.finestgreektastes.com

Facebook page - <u>www.facebook.</u> <u>com/FinestGreekTastes</u>

Youtube channel -Finest Greek Tastes

Ministry of Rural Development & Food of Greece - www.minagric.gr

Mediterranean diet: www.mediterradiet.org

#### A FOCUS ON... LEADER COOPERATION

#### INTERVIEW

Third Country Cooperation – A network for regional development between Latvia and Moldova

Inga Krekele and
Sergiu Mihailov were both
actively engaged in an
exchange project between
'Pro Cooperare Regională'
in Moldova and the Latvian
Rural Forum (LRF) and its
member organisations.
Both organisations have
now signed a cooperation
agreement to continue
long-term cooperation.

# Inga Krekele

LAG manager, Latvia



# Sergiu Mihailov

Executive director – 'Pro Cooperare Regională' NGO, Moldova





Where did the idea of a cooperation project between Latvia and Moldova come from?

Sergiu Mihailov (SM): We can say that the two countries are not 'traditional' partners, but the idea appeared in the context of our recent common history. Both countries had a common social and economic development under the former Soviet Union. After that regime collapsed, Latvia enjoyed a rapid development and reforms were initiated towards EU accession. We in Moldova realised that there are many possibilities to learn from the Latvian experience in this regard and that everything is possible if we work hard.

**Inga Krekele (IK):** The idea of cooperation came from our common history and also from the possibility to experience rural development from the very beginning as it was in our country some years ago. The Latvian Rural Forum provided the opportunity

to attract financial sources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this purpose and we decided to share our experience... Not to make the same mistakes we did...



How did you find each other to start the cooperation activities?

**IK:** The initial interest and contacts for cooperation came from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia. They already had very good cooperation links with than Moldovan Ministry and the North Regional Development Agency, which had been built up some years ago. They wanted to develop cooperation not only at Ministry and regional levels, but also down to local-level organisations.

**SM:** We found our partners in Latvia through a local Moldovan institution involved in regional development: the North Regional Development Agency. It put us in

contact with the Latvian Rural Forum and facilitated the launch of our cooperation.



#### What were the biggest challenges you faced?

IK: There were very few challenges. Due to our common past experiences we found it relatively easy to communicate and understand one another. The personal contacts were good and it helped both in implementing project activities and reaching results.

The biggest challenge was the low human and financial capital of some local municipalities in Moldova. This made it difficult to address all the needs that we identified. Nevertheless, as people in rural Moldova are knowledgeable and engaged, it is just a matter of time to raise capacity and create possibilities to turn theory into a range of practical activities in the country.

Another very specific practical challenge was a change of government in Moldova, which meant that we had to renew the cooperation agreements.



#### What were the main activities you did together?

SM & IK: We organised a number of reciprocal study visits of different stakeholders between Latvia and Moldova. These often involved participation in conferences, workshops, field trips and practical traineeships.

Representatives of Latvian NGOs, schools, LAGs and entrepreneurs took part in local events in Moldova including the 'Days of the Northern Region' and three one-day workshops in different municipalities in Moldova. Moldovan delegations participated in a national event and several study visits to rural communities around Latvia.

A representative of 'Pro Regional Cooperation' NGO participated in both the Latvian Rural Parliament (June 2015) and in the European Rural Parliament held in Scharding, Austria (November 2015).

The aim was to exchange experiences and to learn new practices. Particular themes addressed were: public-private partnerships; diversification of the rural economy and small-scale businesses in rural areas; and the development of rural schools as multifunctional local community centres.



#### What were the main benefits you experienced?

**SM:** We gained positive experiences in the field of rural development and found new ideas and good examples of how to contribute better to sustainable development of local communities. Additionally, we were able to establish collaboration with NGOs from other EU countries and our organisation became visible at the European level and involved in international cooperation.

IK: Our organisation has found new friends and good partners in Moldova. We shared our experiences and found a new motivation for working at local level in our country. Furthermore, the preparation process for sharing our 'know-how' made us think and see ourselves in a national and EU context.

Going outside our country and sharing our knowledge and experience also helped us to appreciate what we have done, to look back at the plans we had set and evaluate the results we have achieved.



**SM**: I would strongly recommend people and NGOs from non-EU countries to initiate cooperation projects with organisations from EU countries. It is a big opportunity to raise your (organisational) professionalism and to build up trust between countries.

We found that it was very motivating for the local people in Moldova to have international guests in their communities. They had a useful exchange of ideas and established the basis for future collaborations between them. It was a very fruitful and efficient collaboration for us due to the extensive experience of our Latvian partner.

Furthermore, our organisations learned more about the EU institutions, different funding opportunities at EU level and European networking related to agriculture and rural development. We learned a lot about the LEADER approach and Local Action Groups, which was new for us and something we want to promote in Moldova. We have already started taking some steps.

IK: We definitely gained as much energy and professional experience from working with a third country partner as from an EU partner, just in a different way. This will help us with our own work at home and is well worth the effort.

We warmly recommend third country cooperation to enrich the work of your organisation. The key is to find a good partner that you can trust and with similar aims to build a long-term cooperation also outside of specific project activities.



Exchange visits brought together local stakeholders from Latvia and Moldova.

#### REPORT

# LAG-FLAG cooperation in Apulia, Italy

In the coastal area of Apulia in southern Italy, a LAG and a FLAG started cooperating in 2014 on the value chain of farm and fishery products. Through joint stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising activities with harmonised funding programmes, they promoted direct selling of quality local products and increased the engagement of local producers in the strategic development of their region.



# THE PONTE LAMA LAG AND TERRE DI MARE FLAG

he Ponte Lama Local Action Group (LAG), based in Bisceglie (Bari) was established in October 2009 and became fully operative in December 2010. It encompasses the territory of two big municipalities bordering the sea in the Apulia region – a popular tourist destination in southern Italy.

The area is known for its long coastline, low population density and rich cultural heritage. Its agricultural sector has been characterised by small family farms, often focusing on certain well recognised local products – PDOs (Protected Designations of Origin) – such as 'Moscato di Trani' red

wine, and the 'Terra di Bari' extra-virgin olive oil.

When drafting its Local Development Strategy (LDS) for 2007-2013, the *Ponte Lama* LAG identified **improving the value chains** of local quality typical products as a key potential pivot for stronger economic development and for an enhanced local identity of the population. The creation of short supply chains and direct selling were seen as key aspects for promoting such products.

In the summer of 2011, the regional call for setting up fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) was launched. The fisheries sector is made up mostly of small entrepreneurs and the FLAG found

that fishermen were less accustomed to participatory approaches to local or sectoral development than their farmer colleagues. They worked with small groups of four-six people to encourage the fishermen to express themselves more openly.

This work to fully understand the problems and needs of fishermen highlighted that the practice of direct selling amongst fishermen was almost non-existent: most relied almost exclusively on traditional supply routes to retailers.

#### A NEW IDEA, A SHARED VISION

**Informal interactions** between the LAG and FLAG started soon after the creation of the FLAG, often at local events or common meetings. In the initial period of their cooperation, the FLAG relied on the positive image and experience of the LAG to attract its key stakeholders.

The staff of both started to appreciate that a strong synergy between the farming and fishery sectors could be exploited in the area. They became increasingly conscious that a sector approach was no longer sufficient to remove the limits for the

their they we both w

competitiveness of their territory where they were acting.

The fact that both we and FLAG Terre di Mare were at our first planning and capacitybuilding stage helped us to be

more open... Both being young helped us to work together to achieve a stronger critical mass able to create an impact on the territory.

Nadia Di Liddo Communication Officer, LAG Ponte Lama Given the challenges, the drafting of the Coastal Development Plan (CDP) of the FLAG took a relatively long time. During this period, contacts between the LAG and FLAG continued to intensify.

The two bodies **shared their development strategies** and started to see significant similarities in them. Notably, both strategies saw that the primary means for sustainable development of their sector was to build a strong social and economic identity centred on the top quality products of the area.

This led them to consider a **more structured cooperation** for increasing the value of local agro-food and fishery production chains, enabling producers to gain a stronger role. A particular aim was to explore joint and complementary approaches to supporting direct selling by local producers – whether from the farming or fisheries sector.

#### A COMMON APPROACH

The LAG *Ponte Lama* and FLAG *Terre di Mare* began to work together in the implementation of **joint meetings with local stakeholders** to better understand their needs and to plan the future 2014-2020 strategies. Understandably, during the first events, the LAG played the leading role, because it already had planned some events, while the FLAG had its strategy and programme approved later.

The two structures agreed to build a **common brand image** and operating format in order to improve their visibility and to involve social and economic actors in an easier way. They organised joint information and awareness-raising actions to promote local producers and the potential of local and regional markets.

More specifically, they agreed on a **common plan for funding** a wide set of initiatives and projects, in particular capacity building and cooperation activities, according to the potential and to the limits set by their

respective Structural Funds. The aim was to support a vision and provide the tools to ensure the critical mass for achieving their common goals.

territory.



Angelo Farinola Director, FLAG Terre di Mare

#### **DIRECT SELLING INITIATIVES**

The LAG-FLAG partnership launched a series of specific initiatives to promote direct selling by producers in order to achieve their joint strategic ambitions of promoting local economic development based on quality local products.

One initiative was support for a local enterprise network of primary producers (see 'VeDiPuglia' info box). Another was the launch of an open air market for local farm and fish products 'Dalla Terra al Mare' (from the land to the sea) in October 2014.

This market, initially organised in three towns, later established on a weekly basis in Bisceglie. The market has grown from around 15-20 producers in the early days – from both the farming and fisheries sectors – to around 30-40 producers. It is estimated that some 20 000 people visited the five editions of the market.



The market was so successful that its name was soon taken up as the brand identity of the wider area covered by the LAG and FLAG. The territory adopted it to better promote their overall tourist appeal.

Strategic cooperation between the LAG and the FLAG also led to the creation in spring 2015 of a 'helpdesk' at the LAG *Ponte Lama* premises and also accessible online. This aims to provide advice and guidance to address all the potential problems that farmers and fishermen may find while approaching direct sales and related issues.

#### **AWARENESS-RAISING INITIATIVES**

Further LAG-FLAG initiatives focused on joint awareness raising and outreach to businesses and consumers about the quality of local products. A specific initiative worked with **73 entrepreneurs** in the restaurant sector, encouraging them to buy from local producers involved in the 'VeDiPugli' project.

More culturally oriented initiatives included the **'Laboratori del Gusto'** — workshops about typical products where the public and students of the tourist institutes were involved in cooking traditional recipes based on local products.

Another initiative was the creation of the 'Percorsi Multi-Sensoriali' (Multi-sensorial Paths) – an exhibition on local food and craftsmanship issues placed inside the historical palace of Bisceglie. This initiative only started in February 2016, but already had more than 2000 visitors in the first two months.



LAG-FLAG cooperation launched an open air market for local producers.

#### 'VeDiPuglia' direct selling enterprise network

LAG-funding was used to develop a network of local primary producers from the agriculture and fisheries sector and the 'VeDiPuglia' web platform to support them in selling directly to consumers and businesses.

Giuseppe Povia is the owner of a 40-year-old pastry company called 'Le Deliziose', managed by him and his family. He is also President of the 'VeDiPuglia' enterprise network. His firm received a small grant from the LAG in the 2007-2013 programming period.

"We set up the 'VeDiPuglia' enterprise network in October 2015 and we now have 26 members from the agriculture and fisheries sectors. We are planning to open sales points in some big cities of Northern Italy, possibly under a common brand."

"We understood, when becoming members of the LAG, that this would be a long path towards an improvement of our conditions, involving different engagements and cooperation steps. The LAG and FLAG roles have been of the utmost importance for promoting our products in a more sound way to the local and regional public, and it has proven very effective in doing this."

"We have managed to face up to the recent socio-economic crisis, increasing our sales rates, because niche products of high quality tend to be more resilient compared to ordinary ones. Our firm has increased sales by 20-25% over the last eight years." LAG Ponte Lama

#### Awareness campaigns support direct selling

Mimmo Facchini is the owner of Facchini Pesca, a small fishery enterprise that promotes direct sale of its fish via an online website ('Fish all days') and a dedicated Facebook page.

In the last two years Mimmo's enterprise managed to get 30-35% of their fish sales via direct marketing, reaching consumers either individually or merged in small purchasing groups (usually merging people living in the same building).

"The key contribution of the FLAG and of the LAG has been the comprehensive and innovative information and awareness-raising campaign first organised for the fishermen in Apulia, involving consumers, the general public and decision-makers. It led to an increased visibility of our sector and of its potential for local and regional markets. Thanks to

this campaign, for the first time fishermen felt that their needs were taken in due consideration by decision-makers."

He received a prize from the European Fisheries Area Network (FARNET) as an example of 'European Best practice' in March 2015. Moreover, Mimmo's enterprise is the first and so far the only one in Italy recognised by the 'Friend of the Sea' international quality scheme. He carefully plans each move in his business operations after due assessment of all the issues at stake.

In the future. Mimmo plans to expand direct sale of fresh fish outside of the region: he has already started tests in cities like Milan, Rome and Asti. Another major improvement would be to establish a local fishermen group in order to set up a small cleaning plant able to prepare packaged ready-to-eat fish and to sell it at regional and inter-regional scales.

#### **KEY RESULTS AND LESSONS**

Synergies blossomed in a rather virtuous circle, anticipating an important feature of the new programming period: the complementary and combined use of two Structural Funds (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, EAFRD, and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, EMFF), within a multi-fund approach.

Thanks to the joint promotion of direct selling, many producers in both sectors now tend to sell their products more easily – one fishermen stated that he has completely abandoned sale of fish to the usual intermediaries.

Moreover, many producers have started to become more proactive in suggesting new ideas and initiatives in the context of the overall strategy for the region. Several farms and fisheries have even started to cooperate spontaneously by buying and selling products to each other.

The project partners identify the following issues as key lessons for others: share

strategies and goals as early and openly as possible, ensure an open and responsible dialogue with stakeholders and encourage stakeholders to realise that LAGs and FLAGs represent first and foremost the people of a territory.

There is only one regret: we could have started joining our forces at an earlier stage...

Angelo Farinola Director, FLAG Terre di Mare



Direct selling by producers offers enhanced sales and greater margins.

#### A FOCUS ON... LEADER COOPERATION

#### **INTERVIEWS**

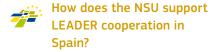
Harmonising LEADER cooperation across RDPs

# Lucía Martinez

### Spanish National Rural Network Support Unit

Lucía Martinez is part of the Spanish NSU team working to support the Spanish regions in developing exchange of information and harmonisation of processes to enable more cooperation projects across regional borders.

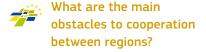




There is a natural willingness to develop LEADER cooperation between Spanish regions, particularly in areas facing similar challenges or opportunities. The challenge then is to connect those LAGs with the same thematic interests in order to facilitate the planning of potential cooperation projects.

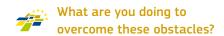
To support this, we have created an online partner search tool on the NRN website. We also organise group visits to LAG areas to exchange about experiences and projects on specific themes.

Additionally, every year we organise a national LEADER event. In 2015, this event focused on cooperation project proposals and we hope that many projects will come out of it.



The biggest challenge to inter-regional LEADER cooperation in Spain lies with the different rules, selection criteria, budgets, organisation of calls and division of responsibilities (between the Managing Authority and LAGs) established for management of LEADER cooperation sub-Measure (19.3) of the different Rural Development Programmes.

This challenge, even if solvable, can lead to obstacles such as different timings of calls for projects between regions, differences in budgets that prevent a fair distribution of costs/spending between partners and different selection criteria that can prevent a project from being approved in one of the planned territories.



The NRN launched a specific Working Group on LEADER cooperation with the aim of coordinating the Managing Authorities (MAs) from the different regions on sub-Measure 19.3 in order to harmonise rules and improve the possibilities for interregional cooperation projects.

We held the first meeting of the Working Group in November 2015 with the participation of 11 experts who manage LEADER cooperation of different RDPs, and representatives of two national LAG networks. This focused on confirming



There is significant appetite for LEADER cooperation between regions in Spain.

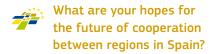
the main challenges and exploring possible solutions.

For example, the group proposed the creation of a harmonised and common application template. We also hope to develop draft guidelines on the

functioning of LEADER cooperation between regions in Spain.

The NRN has an important role to play. As a first step, we have proposed to increase and improve the sharing of information between regions on various aspects of

LEADER cooperation, such as the timings and deadlines of application windows in different regions, the different selection criteria used and lists of non-eligible costs.



We expect that a network of interactions will be created between LAGs, but also among experts of the different regional MAs during this period. This will help raise confidence in both the management and the results of LEADER cooperation amongst all stakeholders.

Ultimately, this should boost the development of inter-regional cooperation projects to the benefit of the rural population across Spain.

# Alistair Prior

### Scottish Rural Network Support Unit

Alistair Prior is the Head of the Network Support Unit and Rural Communities Team for the Scottish NRN. He has been actively involved in discussions with counterparts in England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Ireland to build relationships and develop harmonised processes to facilitate LEADER cooperation across the RDPs.



What are the main reasons for supporting transnational LEADER cooperation?

Good question! Recently, (12 March 2016) we held a cooperation pro-action

café as part of this year's national LEADER conference – with delegates exchanging numerous anecdotes about past cooperation experiences with partners from Sweden, Poland, Ireland and Slovenia.

People were clearly excited by the opportunities that LEADER cooperation offers for their LAG areas. Everyone I spoke to agreed that tapping into the diversity of rural Europe through cooperation was absolutely essential in helping Local Development Strategies realise their potential. People also reflected on ongoing networking beyond the lifetime of the LEADER-funded action.

My sense from the discussion is that there is a thirst for ideas to be transformed into transnational projects. Our role as the Network Support Unit is to help make this happen. Our mission is 'Connecting Rural Scotland', but this means we have a role to do even more than that.



# What can authorities do to make it easier for LAGs to cooperate across borders?

Scotland's experience from the 2007-2013 period suggested that LAGs were unwilling to promote or support cooperation on the grounds that the administrative burden was too high. It was simply too difficult, with little or no support.

The critical first step for us in the 2014-2020 programme was therefore to learn from these previous experiences. We wanted to develop systems and support to ensure that the experience LAGs have of cooperation is more positive.

We established a working group with LAGs to consider what was needed. The output from this group fed into the design of the new IT system for LEADER in Scotland, which included:

- A LEADER Cooperation Framework which sets out our (LAGs, NSU, MA) respective roles and responsibilities;
- A summary paper for LAGs setting out successful characteristics of cooperation;
- A Template Cooperation Agreement between LAGs in Scotland; and
- A Transnational & UK Cooperation Agreement Template.



#### Why did you start looking at harmonisation with the other RDPs in the UK and Ireland?

Harmonising our approaches was an obvious thing for us all – we share a common language and common boundaries; we also have close cultural, social and economic ties.

Importantly for LEADER, since 2011 we have invested a great deal of time as NSUs and MAs to build good working relationships, meaning that the willingness was already there when we began to look at the issue in earnest in 2015.



# What progress have you been able to make so far?

The NSUs and MAs from all four countries had a face-to-face meeting in Birmingham (England) in late 2015 to consider how best to support cooperation under LEADER. We understood the need to recognise the differences as well as the commonalities in our approaches. It was not about introducing a one-size-fits-all system. The watch word for us all was 'harmonisation'.

We also recognised the need to be proactive as far as ideas were concerned and ensure that we (NSUs, LAGs and MAs) were **discussing project ideas** prior to preparatory support being offered to LAGs in the different countries.

We agreed that preparatory support to develop the cooperation idea should be funded at 100% across all jurisdictions with a common 'Preparatory Support Application Form'.

We also agreed to continue **sharing information** after the preparatory support phase through an agreed common template which would allow us to compare and contrast elements of projects in each territory and find opportunities as far as possible to harmonise approaches across different jurisdictions.

Finally, we agreed that a **common** 'Transnational/Inter-territorial Project Agreement' template for UK & Ireland will be needed. We have since shared our documentation, and agreed that we would come back together soon — once all the NSUs are in place — to finalise our common approach.



# What are your future hopes and aspirations for harmonisation across RDPs?

I think there is a real desire for LEADER cooperation to work. We have been approached by other NSUs on our approach. At the same time, we are absolutely committed to learning from others about how to improve upon what we have done so far

But I also wonder at the untapped opportunities for cooperation in others parts of the RDPs. I have been working with MA colleagues on various aspects of Measure 16 and I find myself wondering how best we can apply the principles of LEADER cooperation to these actions. I think there is massive potential there...



Welsh NSU

The NSUs and MAs in the UK and Ireland have invested time in building good working relationships.

# Books & publications

#### CAP - What's cooking?

Recipes for Understanding the Common Agricultural Policy

#### Groupe de Bruges, SFYN, CEJA



The book overviews the main features of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), illustrating them through case studies from various EU Member States and presenting them in an easily 'digestible' form intended for a broader audience.

The publication provides an overview of the CAP in the 2014-2020 programming period and goes on to explain issues around: short supply chains; organic farming; greening; innovation; small farmers; biodiversity; knowledge transfer; and young farmers. Each of these aspects is brought to life through a good practice example from an EU Member State demonstrating ways of making agriculture both more sustainable and more competitive.

The book features the views of CAP experts and stakeholders on the new policy and its implementation.

# Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in the Bioeconomy: A Challenge for Europe

# Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR)

The publication explores the state of the bioeconomy and principles leading to a sustainable bioeconomy in Europe. Specifically, it examines what the bioeconomy means for



primary sectors and seeks to identify potential challenges for production, as well as implications for future policy agendas.

The current European policy framework for the bioeconomy covers several policy areas, including the Common Agricultural Policy, as well as a multitude of regulations and strategies on forestry, fisheries, renewable energy, climate and the

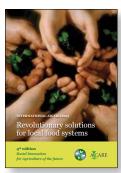
circular economy. Reflecting on all these areas, the publication makes recommendations for research to support the bioeconomy and achievement of its multiple goals of food security, environmental care, energy independence, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and employment creation.

# Revolutionary Solutions for Local Food Systems

#### **AiCARE**

The publication overviews practices from Europe and around the world aiming to reconnect agriculture and food chains with societal needs.

The initiatives, related to food production



and including both technical and community-based solutions in areas such as environment, knowledge and welfare needs, are deemed to bring about "real social innovation".

The publication

highlights the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders – from farmers to consumers – to develop food production solutions that are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

#### A Strategic Approach to EU Agricultural Research and Innovation

#### European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development



The publication identifies priority areas for EU agricultural research and innovation and maps out the main elements for its effective implementation. The strategy focuses on land-based primary production, centred around agriculture and forestry, and extends to food and non-food chains, and the rural economy.

The paper highlights sustainable primary production and enhancing rural innovation as the main strategic priorities for EU research.

It also maps out cross-cutting issues such as: use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); enabling sciences and infrastructures; and creating value from socioeconomic research. Finally, it identifies key factors to enable the research strategy to achieve its objectives.

#### Climate Action Now

Summary for Policymakers 2015

# United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The publication identifies good-practice policies, initiatives and actions that could be replicated on a global level to achieve significant climate change mitigation effects in the pre-2020 period.

It examines the potential in areas such as land use, renewable energy, energy efficiency and transport to



reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and the potential to scale up and tailor solutions based on countries' national circumstances. One chapter is dedicated to low-cost mitigation opportunities in agriculture, forestry and other land use, including good practice examples on both national and international levels.

The publication places great

emphasis on the potential of international cooperation initiatives to foster sustainable climate action.

ISBN 978-92-9219-163-4

#### Urban Agriculture Europe

#### JOVIS publishers

The book explores urban agricultural practices from across Europe contributing to sustainable and resilient urban development and the creation and maintenance of multifunctional urban landscapes.



Deemed "the first comprehensive, transdisciplinary publication about urban agriculture in Europe", it overviews both traditional and innovative forms of urban agriculture taking into account social, economic,

ecological and spatial-planning aspects.

The book includes an examination of the role of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the role and needs of citizens and relevant stakeholders in urban agriculture. It features statements from involved parties, as well as quidance for cities and regions.

ISBN 978-3-86859-371-6

#### **ENRD PUBLICATIONS**

Keep up to date with all the latest news, views and developments in European rural development by reading the various ENRD publications.

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#### **EU RURAL REVIEW**

The EU Rural Review is the ENRD's principal thematic publication. It presents the latest knowledge and understanding of a particular topic relevant to rural development in Europe. Themes range from rural entrepreneurship and food quality to climate change and social inclusion. It is published twice a year in six EU languages (EN; FR; DE; ES; IT; PL).

No.21 – Rural responses to challenges in Europe



No.20 – Getting Rural Development Programmes Going



No.19 – Improving stakeholder involvement



#### EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURE

The ENRD publishes brochures presenting good and interesting examples of EAFRD-funded projects. Each edition highlights successful project examples around a particular rural development theme. The brochures aim to showcase the achievements of the EAFRD and inspire further projects. They are published in six EU languages (EN; FR; DE; ES; IT; PL).

# Rural Development Priorities 2014-2020



EAFRD Project Examples 2007-2013



Social Inclusion



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