

NEWS AND UPDATES

- **THEMATIC WORK ON 'TRANSITION TO THE GREEN ECONOMY'**
- **IMPROVING LEADER/CLLD IMPLEMENTATION**
- **THE FUTURE OF CAP**

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

- **AN INTEGRATED RURAL POLICY**
- **SUPPORTING THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS**
- **GENERATIONAL RENEWAL**

FOCUS ON...

SOCIAL INCLUSION

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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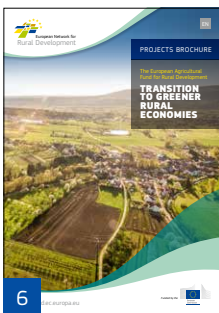
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EDITORIAL



As we progress through 2017, many of us are already thinking about the future programming period. Many ENRD stakeholders will have taken the opportunity in early 2017 to respond to the Commission's public consultation on modernising and simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy. It is nevertheless crucial to continue working hard to make best use of the opportunities available from current rural development policy to deliver tangible results and benefits in our farms, rural communities and society at large.

In this edition of Rural Connections, we present an overview of the work of the ENRD in continuing to strive for improved implementation of the Rural Development Programmes across Europe in the period 2014-2020. The **'News and updates'** (pp. 4-13) include details of ENRD work on 'revitalising rural areas through **business innovation**', improving **'farm resilience'** and **'generational renewal'**, supporting the **'transition to the green economy'** and 'improving **LEADER/CLLD implementation**'.

You can also read about the latest news and updates from the European institutions, various European projects, the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, and the EIP-AGRI Service Point.

As always, we include a range of stakeholder voices in our section of **'Rural Issues, Rural Perspectives'** (pp. 14-28) to capture some of the topics that are receiving people's attention in the field of rural development at the moment. In this edition, we hear about the role of the **farm advisor**, the key place of **forestry** in rural development, hopes for **generational renewal** in agriculture, issues affecting **women in rural areas**, hopes for an **integrated rural policy**, the potential of the new **European Solidarity Corps** in rural areas, **achieving results the CLLD way**, a **new rural policy for Sweden** and **updates from the National Rural Networks** in Slovenia and Slovakia.

Finally, we return to ENRD work supported by the Contact Point in the magazine's thematic section having **'A focus on... Social Inclusion'** (pp. 29-38). This builds on the ENRD social inclusion workshop held in February 2017 and presents an **overview** of social inclusion challenges in rural Europe, interviews on the inclusion of **youth** and of **migrants and refugees**, a consideration of **what LEADER/CLLD can do** to foster social inclusion and an interview on **social innovation**.

At the ENRD Contact Point we will continue to support rural development stakeholders to engage in networking and exchange both on making the most of the current programmes and inputting their voice effectively into discussions around the future. As always, there is a lot to discuss and a lot for us to learn from one another. We are here to help.

Ed Thorpe

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NEWS & UPDATES

ENRD NEWS

7th NRNs' Meeting: links with advisory services

The 7th meeting of the National Rural Networks (NRNs) in the 2014–2020 period took place 15–17 March 2017 in the Azores, Portugal. The overarching theme was improving links between rural

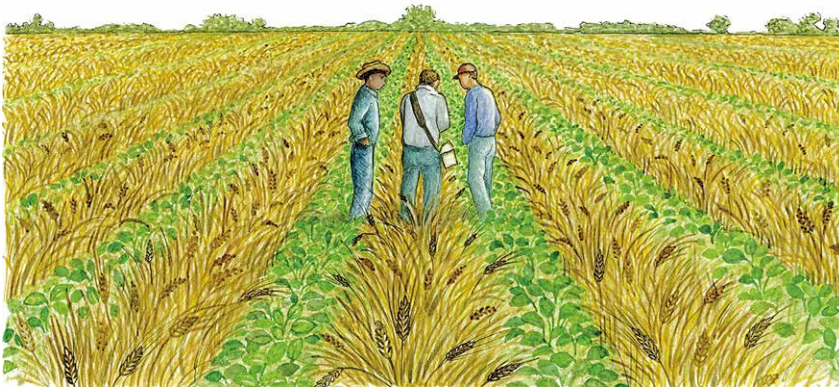
networks and advisors to better support farmers and project beneficiaries.

Specifically, the event brought agricultural advisory service representatives together with Network

Support Units (NSUs) and Managing Authorities to exchange on the differing systems and delivery models across EU countries and regions.

Additionally, participants discussed rural networks' various thematic work outputs, how these reflect realities on the ground and how they can be used to improve cooperation, as well as project design and implementation.

A final session reflected on ways in which NSUs can best support the implementation of the Cork 2.0 Declaration and, specifically, how their planned and ongoing activities contribute to the 'Cork 2.0 Action Plan' (see p.10).



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Social inclusion
in rural areas

The ENRD Contact Point thematic work on the topic of social inclusion and demographic change in rural areas (see also pages 29–38) has included the production of factsheets and a recent event on 'Social Hubs in Rural Europe' (9 February 2017 – Brussels, Belgium).

The event was structured around existing 'hubs of activity' amongst network members on the themes of: women; migrants and refugees; youth; Roma; and the role of arts and culture in promoting social inclusion.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the social inclusion page under the 'ENRD Thematic Work' section of the website.

Generational renewal

A recent ENRD workshop 'Generational renewal through rural development' discussed challenges faced by young farmers and new entrants, such as access to land, finance, training and knowledge. The event (25 January 2017 – Brussels, Belgium) was jointly organised by the ENRD Contact Point (CP) and the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA).

The workshop explored how the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) could support generational renewal and identified a set of good practice examples.

Ongoing CP work on this topic includes:

- identifying how various RDP Measures could be effectively implemented to facilitate access to land, finance, training and knowledge;
- facilitating cooperation and information exchange between NRN representatives and young farmers and new entrants into farming.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the generational renewal page under the 'ENRD Thematic Work' section of the website.

EIP-Agri Focus Group on 'New entrants into farming': <http://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/content/new-entrants-farming-lessons-foster-innovation-and-entrepreneurship>

NEWS & UPDATES

Revitalising rural areas through business innovation

An ENRD European Seminar (30 March 2017 – Brussels, Belgium) explored how both farm and non-farm businesses can innovate in ways that “create the conditions for future prosperity and vitality” in rural areas, as articulated in the Cork 2.0 Declaration.

The event brought together over 150 rural development stakeholders to exchange on:

- how EU policies and tools – such as digitisation, smart specialisation, social innovation and social enterprise – can help to create enabling conditions for rural business support and innovation;
- inspiring examples of rural business innovation and how these can be scaled-up through the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs).

The Seminar is part of the broader ENRD thematic work on ‘Smart and

Competitive Rural Businesses’, which has so far included several meetings of a stakeholder-driven Thematic Group and will produce in the coming months dedicated editions of both the EAFRD Projects Brochure and EU Rural Review.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the Rural Businesses page under the ‘ENRD Thematic Work’ section of the website.



© Cywain Agriculture

How to boost farm resilience

An ENRD workshop (29 March 2017 – Brussels, Belgium) explored how the RDPs can empower farmers to risk-proof their businesses through the use and strategic combination of a range of Measures, in particular risk management, advisory services, knowledge transfer, investments, innovation and diversification.

It concluded that RDP support can help farmers to cope with market crises and environmental and climate challenges through a wide range of tools, but that it is essential to coordinate implementation with other relevant policies at EU, national and regional levels. Managing Authorities and stakeholder groups need to work together to design strategies that work in a preventive way before a crisis hits and support farmers to prepare themselves for the medium and long terms.

3rd Rural Networks’ Assembly

The 3rd meeting of the European Rural Networks’ Assembly took place on 1 December 2016 in Brussels. Delegates mapped out how rural network members are responding to the Cork 2.0 Declaration and discussed how to better support ‘digitisation’ in rural areas.

The Assembly, one of the main governance bodies of the ENRD and EIP-AGRI networks, set out the priority directions for future work, including follow-up actions to Cork 2.0 and what rural stakeholder groups can do at their respective levels to facilitate the uptake of digital transformation in rural areas.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Find out more about Rural Networks’ Governance under the ‘About the ENRD’ section of the website.

NEWS & UPDATES

Thematic work on 'Transition to the Green Economy'

The ENRD thematic work on 'Transition to the Green Economy' has delivered a set of useful outputs exploring how Rural Development policy can support improved environmental performance in ways that are economically and socially viable.

Work on this theme has included the following main elements: meetings of a Thematic Group (TG) comprising various stakeholder representatives; one edition of each the EAFRD Projects Brochure and the EU Rural Review; and a European Seminar.

EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURE



An EAFRD Projects Brochure on 'Transition to Greener Rural Economies' explores how people in rural areas have used Rural Development Programme (RDP) funding – co-financed by the EAFRD – to take advantage of economic opportunities that are environmentally and socially sustainable.

The examples reflect some of the breadth of relevant approaches that can be supported under the RDPs, including:

- Making a living from biodiversity;
- Doing more with less;
- Promoting green tourism;
- Generating renewable energy from rural production;
- Installing renewable energy infrastructure in rural areas;
- Cooperating for a greener economy.

EU RURAL REVIEW 23 'GREEN ECONOMY – OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL EUROPE'



EU Rural Review 23 explores some of the ways in which social and environmental sustainability can contribute to economic growth in Europe's rural areas.

It highlights some of the particular opportunities for rural areas from the transition to the green economy, including through the move to the

low-carbon economy and more sustainable farming and forestry. It also looks at practical aspects of green economy projects and how cooperation can help deliver improved outcomes.

Throughout, it considers how the RDPs can best support efforts in these areas.

OTHER THEMATIC OUTPUTS

An ENRD Seminar on 'Promoting the Transition to the Green Economy' brought together over 70 stakeholders in Brussels on 1 July 2016.

The event aimed at generating and exchanging concrete proposals for ensuring that the RDPs support rural stakeholders to benefit fully from all the opportunities that a 'Green Economy' can bring.

Additional thematic outputs produced by or for the work of the Thematic Group include: a background paper and final report; factsheet; and five rural development programming case studies from Finland, Ireland, Wales (UK), Emilia Romagna (Italy), and Lower Saxony and Bremen (Germany).



THE CURRENT 'GREEN' FOCUS ON RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Current ENRD thematic work (2016-2017) is focusing on how the RDPs can best support 'Resource Efficiency' objectives. Related activities have included several meetings of a Thematic Group and a European Seminar under the title '**Opportunities and future perspectives for Resource Efficiency in Rural Areas**' (13 June 2017).

Upcoming outputs on this topic will include dedicated editions of both the EAFRD Projects Brochure and the EU Rural Review.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the 'ENRD Thematic Work' pages on the ENRD website.

NEWS & UPDATES

Improving LEADER/CLLD implementation

The ENRD Contact Point is continuously working to enable exchange among LEADER/CLLD stakeholders in support of more effective implementation. The CP has organised various capacity-building and networking events and supported expert-level exchanges on Transnational Cooperation (TNC) and LEADER innovation through Practitioner-led Working Groups (PWGs).

LEADER/CLLD EVENTS

A Seminar '**Achieving Results the CLLD Way**' (December, 2016 –Båstad, Sweden) explored how to make the best possible use of the CLLD method supported under European Rural Development (EAFRD), Fisheries (EMFF), Regional Development (ERDF) and Social (ESF) Funds (see also pp. 18-19).

The event resulted in an '**Agenda for Improvement**' comprising key ideas in the areas of 'Local partnerships and governance', 'Financing, delivering and reporting', 'Working with local assets'.

A workshop on '**Extending LEADER Innovation**' (February, 2017 – Brussels, Belgium) discussed the different ways in which Local Action Groups (LAGs) and other actors can strengthen LEADER's contribution to rural innovation.

The event resulted in a set of practical actions and recommendations through which LEADER innovation activities can be improved to better address local needs, including through stronger links with EIP-AGRI Operational Groups and Regional Research and Innovation Strategies.

The fourth meeting of the **LEADER Sub-group** (February, 2017 – Brussels, Belgium) stressed the importance of exchange and networking for a more effective and innovative implementation, building on the messages from events such as Cork 2.0, ELARD's LEADER/CLLD 2020+, and 'Achieving Results the CLLD Way'.

PRACTITIONER-LED WORK

The cooperation-focused Practitioner-led Working Group supported by the ENRD Contact Point has come up with good practice and concrete proposals for effective TNC. The group's work will feed into the upcoming update of the DG AGRI Guidance on LEADER cooperation activities.

A second PWG was recently launched in the context of the 'Extending LEADER Innovation' event (see above). It will work to investigate, exchange and produce recommendations for strengthening the LEADER innovation model and tools, and ensure these fit with beneficiaries' needs.

LAG Database				Country
Search in the LAG Database <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Search"/>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Austria 77 ▶ Belgium 25 ▶ Bulgaria 40 ▶ Croatia 54 ▶ Estonia 26 ▶ Germany 321 ▶ Latvia 35 ▶ Lithuania 49 ▶ Luxembourg 5 ▶ Poland 322 ▶ Romania 238 ▶ Slovenia 37 ▶ Spain 78 ▶ Sweden 48 ▶ The Netherlands 20
Total results: 1376				
Country	LAG name	Main ESI Fund	ESIF Programme	
Austria	Nordburgenland Plus	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	Rural Development Programme - National	
Austria	Mittelburgenland Plus	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	Rural Development Programme - National	
Austria	Südburgenland Plus	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	Rural Development Programme - National	

UPDATED LAG DATABASE

The LAG database on the ENRD website currently contains **over 1 400 LAGs** funded under the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) from **16 EU countries**.

The LAG database will continue to be expanded to include the contact information of more local groups, including those operating under the Fisheries (EMFF), Regional Development (ERDF) and Social (ESF) Funds.

Additional database developments will include more detailed LAG information and an interactive **Cooperation Partner Search** to enable and facilitate interregional and transnational cooperation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- See the 'LEADER Cooperation' page and the past events section on the ENRD website.
- See the cooperation PWG proposals at: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/leader_pwg_cooperation_proposals.pdf
- See also ELARD's Tartu declaration 'Renewing LEADER/CLLD for 2020+': <http://www.elard.eu/uploads/tartu-declaration-leader-clld2020.pdf>

NEWS & UPDATES

UPDATE FROM THE EVALUATION HELPDESK

EUROPEAN
EVALUATION
HELPDESK
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Preparing the Evaluation of Innovation in RDPs 2014-2020

In the current programming period, increased emphasis has been placed on innovation to achieve both RDP and EU level objectives in a sustainable way. The policy framework for rural development takes a broad approach on innovation, considering the specificities of different situations in the Member States.

To reply to innovation-related questions in RDPs, there should be an understanding of how RDP interventions are contributing to rural innovation and, more specifically, how they are contributing to RDP objectives through fostering technological, institutional or social innovation.

EVALUATING INNOVATION TO ENSURE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EU OBJECTIVES

Three principal justifications underpin the need for the evaluation of interventions attempting to cultivate innovation:

1. accountability and transparency;
2. targeting support effectively; and
3. to provide for common learning.

Accountability of rural development interventions requires presentation of the progress and achievements made towards attaining policy objectives. Accountability

is achieved by evaluating if resources expended are used in the most effective and efficient manner.

The evaluation of innovation can help RDP stakeholders to target support more effectively and efficiently towards reaching the policy objectives of the programme. The findings generated from evaluation activities serve to facilitate identifying the most relevant programme beneficiaries, territories, activities, costs and budgets.

Evaluation can cultivate a common learning process between stakeholders to achieve innovation. Evaluating the success or failure of an intervention attempting to provide the impetus for innovation serves as a vital 'common learning process' to benefit all stakeholders in the knowledge exchange process.

REPORTING ON INNOVATION

To measure the achievement of these EU objectives Member States should answer related evaluation questions concerning interventions related to innovation.

The main times for the reporting on evaluation findings on innovation are in the enhanced Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) submitted in 2017, 2019

and the ex post evaluation report. These evaluations beginning with the enhanced AIR submitted in 2017 build upon each other and become increasingly more comprehensive in terms of scope over time (see graphic).

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP FOR THE EVALUATION OF INNOVATION LAUNCHED!

To achieve a shared understanding of what is required for the evaluation of innovation and to guide stakeholders in the development of essential information to answer CEQs, the European Evaluation Helpdesk has launched a Thematic Working Group (TWG) 'Evaluation of Innovation in RDPs 2014-2020'. The principal outcome of this TWG will be a non-binding, user friendly guidance document, developed in collaboration with evaluation experts.

The guidelines will be published in the second half of 2017 and reflect the EU's common legal framework, as well as the diverse needs of stakeholders in Member States in preparing, conducting and reporting on the evaluation of innovation.

2017 AIR

Quantification of programme achievements in relation to innovation, in particular, through answering CEQ 1, CEQ 2, and CEQ 21 and their respective indicators.



2019 AIR

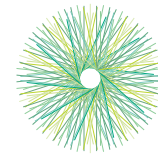
Progress towards innovation as a cross-cutting objective of the programme and its contributions to achieving the EU headline target on innovation and to smart growth through inter alia assessment of the programme's net contributions to fostering innovation through answering CEQ 23 and CEQ 30.



EX POST 2024

Results of the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency, impact and achievements of the RDP in relation to the EU 2020 target on innovation and RD cross-cutting objective of innovation. Answers to CEQ1, CEQ2, CEQ21, CEQ23, CEQ30 and programme-specific EQs, conclusions, recommendations in relation to innovation.

UPDATE FROM EIP-AGRI



eip-agri
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

EIP-AGRI Focus Groups: a recipe for innovation

SERVES: EVERYONE INVOLVED IN INNOVATING THE AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY SECTORS

Ingredients:

- 1 Specific question relating to an issue facing agricultural practitioners
- 20 experts in the field, selected from applications submitted through www.eip-agri.eu

For best results, ensure your experts are from a wide range of countries, with a wide range of backgrounds. Diversity of experience will make your Focus Group even better.

METHOD

Place experts in a room together. Allow them to discuss the problem, drawing on their own personal experience and expertise.

Once you have done this twice over the period of one year, your Focus Group will produce a Final Report.

Serving suggestion:

- Ideas for Operational Groups
- Research Needs from Practice
- Practical solutions to a specific problem

These results can be related to production, processing, consumption, transport or many other issues.

DIFFERENT FLAVOURS AVAILABLE

Five new EIP-AGRI Focus Groups have started in 2016 on the following topics:

- Agronomic use of recycled nutrients
- Sustainable mobilisation of forest biomass
- Robust and resilient dairy production systems
- Agroforestry: integrating woody vegetation with specialised crop and livestock systems
- Diseases and pests in viticulture

February 2017 saw the launch of 2 new Focus Groups on:

- New forest practices and tools for adaptation and mitigation of climate change
- Grazing for Carbon



You are the key ingredient

Focus Groups rely on your expertise. You can volunteer to join a Focus Group, by answering the call for experts which is announced on www.eip-agri.eu and through the monthly newsletter.

Focus Group results are published in many different formats – from the Final Report, to Brochures, to Single-page factsheets, all of these documents are available to you to use for free. If you would like to translate any of our documents, please contact us at servicepoint@eip-agri.eu.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

You can read more about how Focus Groups work and their expected results in the EIP-AGRI Focus Group charter and the Focus Group brochure.

All Focus Groups have their own page on the EIP-AGRI website. Find all results on: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/content/focus-groups>.

NEWS & UPDATES

EU NEWS

The future of CAP

A series of initiatives and actions focused on enhancing the current performance of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and outlining future priority areas for improvement were kicked off at the beginning of 2017.

- A **public consultation on the future of the CAP** ran between February and May 2017. It saw a high stakeholder participation with over 320 000 responses from across Europe. Input from the consultation will feed into a Commission Communication due for publication by the end of 2017 that will address the current performance of the CAP and potential policy options for the future.
- A document setting out '**EU action for Smart Villages**' was launched by the European Commission in April 2017. It sets out a range of relevant initiatives from European rural development, regional development, research, transport, energy, and digital policy areas. Specific actions highlighted include exchange platforms, funding opportunities,



capacity-building activities, events, thematic work, and research projects.

- A '**Cork 2.0 Action Plan**' maps out planned and completed activities across the EU to implement each of the ten policy orientations of the Cork 2.0 Declaration. Published in March 2017 by DG AGRI, it is intended as a living document compiling relevant initiatives. DG AGRI is inviting organisations to share their relevant events and initiatives at conference@ec.europa.eu.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Cork 2.0 Action Plan: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/events/2016/rural-development/cork-action-plan_en.pdf

EU action for Smart Villages:

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/looking-ahead/rur-dev-small-villages_en.pdf

CAP consultation: https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/high-participation-public-consultation-future-common-agricultural-policy_en

EU research targeting food and farming

A number of European research and innovation projects funded under the EU's Horizon 2020 or FP7 programmes have been producing several useful resources to support smart farming and improve CAP performance.

- **Smart technologies:** the **Internet of Food and Farm 2020** project is working to accelerate the adoption of the 'Internet of Things' in European farming and food chains; **smart AKIS** maintains a free online platform facilitating the use of smart farming technologies.
- **Smart services:** the **RECAP** project is developing a digital platform for the delivery of public services and monitoring of CAP obligations; **PRO-AKIS** has produced materials on information systems for farmer support and advisory services; and **AgriSpin** has collected best practice examples of innovation and support systems in European agriculture.

- **Smart bioeconomy:** a set of projects (**EuroPruning**, **ITAKA**, **GrassMargins**, **OPTIMISC**, **LogistEC**, **MultiBioPro**, **OPTIMA**) have worked to develop novel biomass solutions to support the wider European bioeconomy.



NEWS & UPDATES

New European funding targeting broadband and the environment

Two new EU funding initiatives intended to support broadband infrastructure and nature and climate adaptation projects have recently been announced by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The **Connecting Europe Broadband Fund** will lead to an investment platform combining private and public resources to finance smaller-scale, higher-risk broadband projects across under-served areas of Europe – many of which are likely to be in rural areas. The new Fund will

aim to invest in 7-12 projects between its operational launch in mid-2017 and 2021.

The **'Bank on Nature'** is expected to provide tailored loans and investments to over 30 nature-focused businesses across Europe in sectors such as forestry, water management, sustainable fisheries and tourism. This is the first loan agreement backed by the Natural Capital Financing Facility which aims to boost investment in biodiversity and nature-based adaptation to climate change.



Promoting EU agri-food products

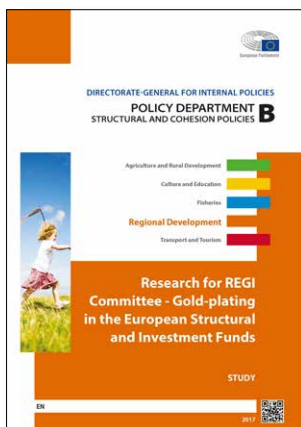
A free online tool aims to facilitate European agri-food producers and SMEs in accessing new markets outside the EU. It intends to serve as a one-stop shop for information on entering new export markets and EU funding opportunities for promotion programmes, as well as for project partner search. Find out more at <http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/agri/>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Connecting Europe Broadband Fund: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4351_en.htm

Natural Capital Financing Facility: <http://www.eib.europa.eu/products/blending/ncff/index.htm>

EU guides and publications



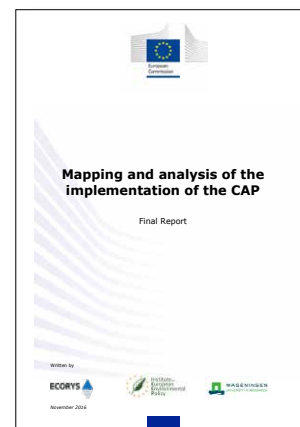
ISBN 978-92-846-0244-5

The study discusses the presence, reasons and effects of 'gold-plating' across ESI Funds and proposes solutions and recommendations to reduce it in both the 2014-2020 and post-2020 programming periods.



ISBN 978-92-79-60979-4

This handbook overviews: processes of stakeholder involvement; good governance principles; project selection; Transnational Cooperation; and monitoring within EU regions' Smart Specialisation Strategies.



ISBN 978-92-79-54679-2

The study examines countries' implementation decisions in relation to direct payments to farmers and Rural Development Measures. It further makes recommendations for the future of the CAP.

NEWS & UPDATES

Infographics – Planned public expenditure per RDP Priority

EU Member States and regions design their Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) to address their specific needs. The extent to which individual RDP Measures are supported under each EU Rural Development policy Priority provides a good illustration of the strategic approaches being used to achieve the policy targets (see also Rural Connections spring 2016 p.13). All graphics are based on the funds programmed by Managing Authorities in their RDPs (planned public expenditure) as of March 2016.

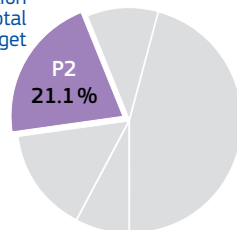
RDP Measures 2014-2020:

- M01: Knowledge transfer & information actions
- M02: Advisory services
- M03: Quality schemes
- M04: Investments in physical assets
- M05: Damage restoration & prevention actions
- M06: Farm & business development
- M07: Basic services & village renewal
- M08: Investments in forest areas
- M09: Producers groups & organisations
- M10: Agri-environment-climate
- M11: Organic farming
- M12: Natura 2000 & Water Framework Directive (WFD)
- M13: Areas with natural constraints
- M14: Animal welfare
- M15: Forest-environmental-climate
- M16: Cooperation
- M17: Risk management
- M18: Complementary payments to Croatia
- M19: LEADER/CLLD

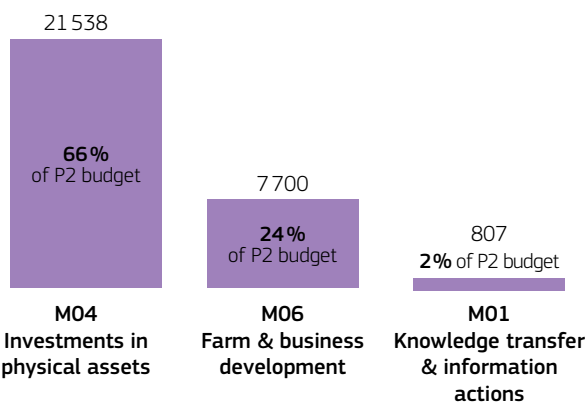


PRIORITY 2
FARM VIABILITY AND
COMPETITIVENESS
(€32.5 b)

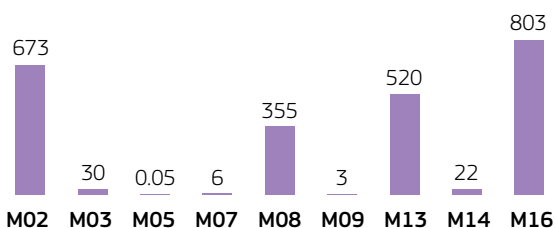
Proportion
of total
RDP budget



Top three contributing Measures (in €million)

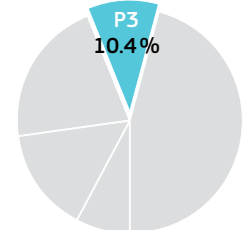


Other contributing Measures (in €million)

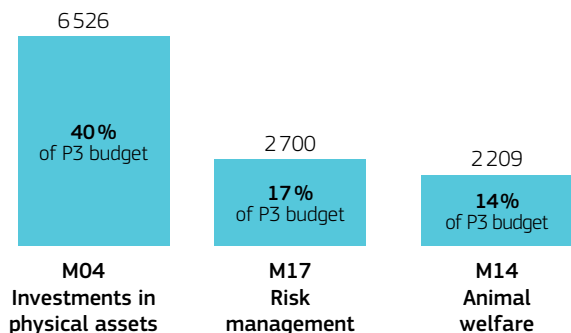


PRIORITY 3
FOOD CHAIN
ORGANISATION AND RISK
MANAGEMENT (€16.1 b)

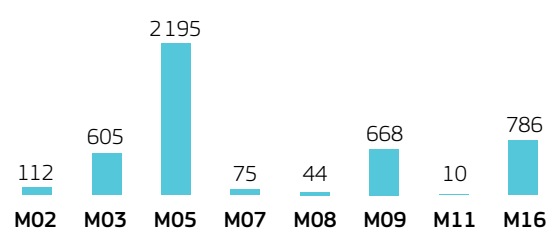
Proportion of
total RDP budget



Top three contributing Measures (in €million)



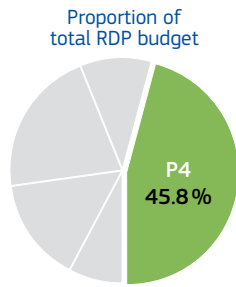
Other contributing Measures (in €million)



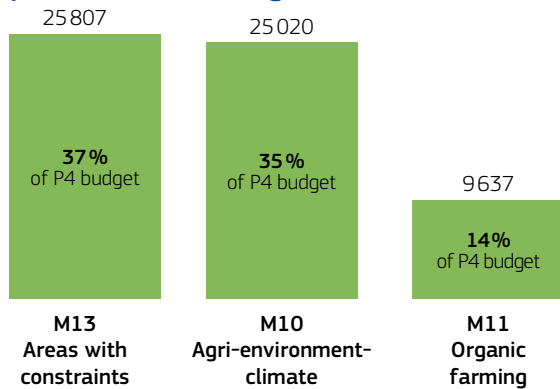
NEWS & UPDATES



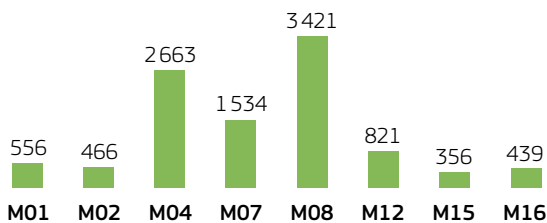
PRIORITY 4
RESTORING, PRESERVING
AND ENHANCING
ECOSYSTEMS (€70.7b)



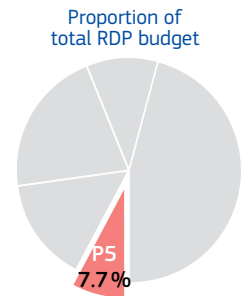
Top three contributing Measures (in €million)



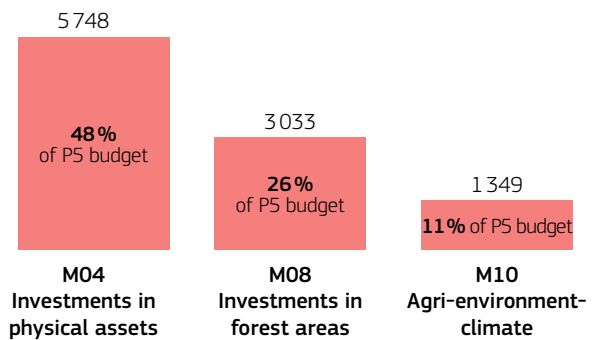
Other contributing Measures (in €million)



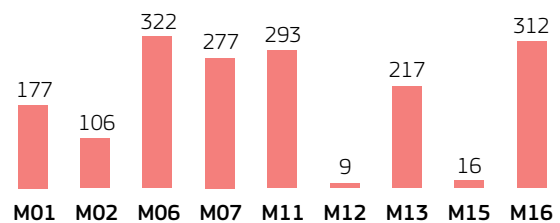
PRIORITY 5
RESOURCE-EFFICIENT,
CLIMATE-RESILIENT
ECONOMY (€11.9b)



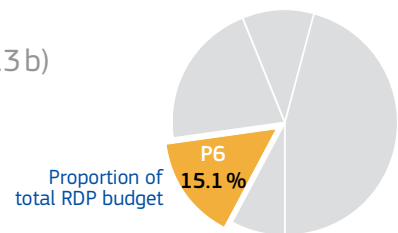
Top three contributing Measures (in €million)



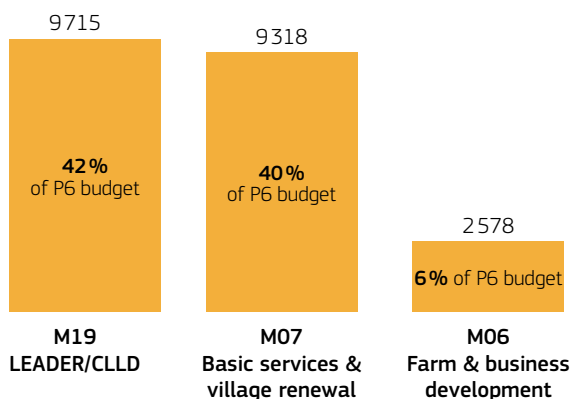
Other contributing Measures (in €million)



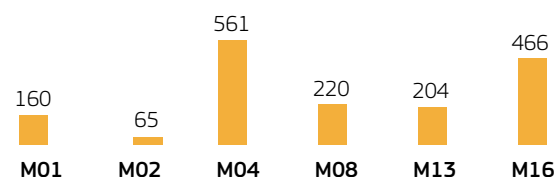
PRIORITY 6
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (€23.3b)



Top three contributing Measures (in €million)



Other contributing Measures (in €million)



RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

The Influential Farm Advisor

Dr Áine Macken-Walsh

In this article, I will present some insights from Teagasc's sociology research programme⁽¹⁾, which highlighted that the influential advisor not only has technical expertise, but also understands the farming culture, the individual mindsets of farmer clients and is sensitive to the diversity of mindsets in the farming community.



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MOTIVATORS: MONEY, PRIDE & RELATIONSHIPS

Sociology is the study of patterns of behaviour within society. Sociological research with farmers has highlighted that farmers are not only motivated by money. Other forms of 'capital' are also key motivators, including *cultural capital* (what farmers have pride in – e.g. farmland) and *social capital* (the value of relationships).

Awareness of these motivators helps advisors to have a more informed starting point in working with farmers, avoiding pitfalls such as assumptions that farmers are motivated only by money.

FARMERS' KNOWLEDGE: FACTS, LORE & HABITS

Frank Vanclay, Professor of Cultural Geography at the University of Groningen reminds us that "farmers have their own knowledge". In farmers' minds, "science and extension do not have automatic legitimacy and credibility".⁽²⁾ His research has proven to resonate with agricultural advisors involved in Teagasc action research.

Farmers' existing knowledge shapes how they interpret and engage with new knowledge. As such, influencing farmers not only can involve *developing new* knowledge, but often *changing existing* knowledge. For this, it is helpful to understand from the beginning what farmers know in

specific areas. Research by Teagasc⁽³⁾ has identified three broad categories of knowledge held by farmers.

1. Farmers make '*knowledge claims*', which may or may not correspond with scientific knowledge. Undertaking research to identify farmers' knowledge claims can allow the identification of differences and gaps, which in turn allows for the identification of targeted knowledge exchange opportunities.
2. '*Cultural scripts*' are traditions or stories that are shared and which can be powerfully influential on farmers. When advisors are interacting with and introducing new knowledge to farmers, it is helpful to be aware of existing cultural scripts or stories. Such stories may be identified by the advisor as topics for debate and may contain lessons that are supportive and informative to the work of the advisor.
3. Awareness of farmers' '*habits and routines*' is necessary for understanding how new knowledge fits in to existing practice. New, workable habits and routines can be co-created by farmers and advisors in true knowledge-exchange processes at farm level.

ACTORS: WHO ARE INFLUENTIAL AND WHY?

Our research at Teagasc⁽⁴⁾ found that the knowledge of peers was often perceived by other farmers as credible, useful, trustworthy – and therefore influential – because of its grounding in practical, real-life experience.

(1) Funded by Teagasc; Teagasc's Walsh Fellowship Scheme; and Ireland's Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine's Research Stimulus Fund.

(2) 'Social Principles for Agricultural Extension to Assist in the Promotion of Natural Resource Management', Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture, 2004, p.220.

(3) 'Using Sociology to Enhance Herd Health Interventions', Teagasc REDP WP Series, 2016.

(4) 'An Actor-Oriented Approach to Understanding Dairy Farming in a Liberalised Regime: a Case Study of Ireland's New Entrant Scheme Land Use Policy', Elsevier, 2016



© teagasc

The influential farm adviser understands and works in partnership with farmers.

Family members had a particularly strong influence on major strategic choices on the farm, such as decisions to make large financial investments. This often reflects the reliance of family farms on the commitment, labour and resources of wider family members.

Where 'expert' or 'professional' actors were concerned, we found that coercive behaviour was viewed unfavourably by farmers – particularly where actors were attempting to sell something to farmers and profit materially from farmers taking particular decisions. This was also true when advisors were perceived as pushing a particular agenda, even when informed by scientific 'best practice'.

On the other hand, where relationships between farmers and professionals were characterised by parity and customised advice, they could have very significant influence on farmers' decisions.

We found that if farmers were not confident that they had the necessary supports from advisors to embark on major development ventures on their farms, they were less likely to embark upon such ventures.⁽⁵⁾

THE ADVISOR AS FACILITATOR

Our research has focused on the role of the advisor as a facilitator. We examined the 'ingredients' for successful peer-to-peer discussion groups, from farmers' perspectives. The quality and relevance of information channelled to the group and how well the group meetings are facilitated and organised are key drivers of learning.⁽⁶⁾

Relational dynamics within the group were also identified as crucial. In order to discuss solutions, farmers had to feel sufficiently secure within the group to reveal the nature of problems they were experiencing. A sense of solidarity demonstrated by farmers' willingness to help each other at times of need was also important.

Fun and enjoyment with the group can reinforce positive social dynamics and members' sense of ease within the group. Qualities of collaboration, trust, parity and lack of fear were identified as necessary for open and equal debate.

CONCLUSION

Today's advisor relies less on traditional forms of influence such as 'informing' and is challenged with working in 'partnership' with farmers. It is crucial to recognise the value of diversity for innovation and the legitimacy of the perspectives and knowledge of a diverse range of stakeholders.

By 'letting go' of traditional attempts at exercising influence – such as coercion and instruction – more credible, effective and socially legitimate forms of influence may happen through parity, debate, deliberation and learning.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- www.teagasc.ie
- www.researchgate.net/profile/Aine_Macken-Walsh

(5) 'A Qualitative Study of Irish Beef Farmers' Production Decisions: Summary and Implications for Extension', Teagasc, 2012.

(6) 'Discussion Groups: Five Key Ingredients for Success', Irish Farmers Journal, 2016.

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Slovenian LAGs in action

Andreja Trček and Matej Štepec

Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) in Slovenia is supported by three Funds. By the end of October 2016, Ministries had issued decisions on the approval of all 37 Local Action Groups (LAGs) for the period 2014-2020, covering the entire territory of Slovenia.

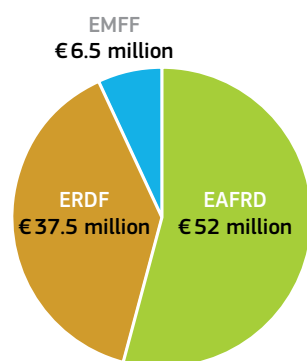


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works as a LEADER expert within the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food.
Andreja.Trcek@gov.si

The LEADER approach was established in Slovenia in the 2007-2013 programming period. Through 33 LAGs, more than 1400 LEADER projects were implemented across 95% of Slovenian territory, proving a successful tool for the realisation of local development objectives.

MULTI-FUNDED CLLD IN SLOVENIA

Slovenia is now delivering the application of the 'Community-Led Local Development' (CLLD) approach using three Funds: €52 million under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD); €6.5 million under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF); and €37.5 million under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).



Source: Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food



Matej Štepec
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By the end of October 2016, the Local Development Strategies (LDSs) of all 37 LAGs had been approved covering the whole of the Slovenian territory. Every LDS includes both the EAFRD and ERDF; four of these also include the EMFF.

The combination of different European Funds through CLLD enables local groups to implement comprehensive and more complex projects and is not strictly limited to rural areas.

2014-2020 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

When preparing their 2014-2020 LDSs, local partnerships had to observe the following key challenges:

1. job creation;
2. development of basic services;
3. environmental protection and nature preservation;
4. greater inclusion of the young, women and vulnerable groups (the unemployed, Roma, the elderly).

In practice, the objectives in the LDSs are mostly focused on increasing competitiveness, improving local self-sufficiency, promoting short supply chains, tackling high unemployment, addressing climate change, improving basic services (including local infrastructure), protecting the environment and natural resources, and promoting social inclusion.

Once their LDS is approved, LAGs are granted the right to draw funds from each relevant EU Fund. This is on the basis of set criteria, including the surface area covered by the LAG, the number of residents living in that territory and the level of development of the area.

LAGs select the operations to be financed – using the sub-Measure 'Support for the implementation of Local Development Strategy operations' – on the basis of the selection criteria they have defined in their LDS. The first operations have already been selected by LAGs and submitted to the Paying Agency for final approval.

At the end of December 2016, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food published the first call for cooperation projects which was open until 31 March 2017. The first decisions on approvals are expected within four months of the closing date.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

National Rural Network Slovenia: www.program-podezelja.si/en/national-rural-network

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Regional antennae in Slovakia

Michaela Töröková

The National Rural Network of Slovakia is divided into one central unit and eight regional branches called 'regional antennae'.



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The structure of each National Rural Network (NRN) varies from country to country across the European Union. We would like to present to you the functioning of the Slovakian National Rural Network.

THE SLOVAKIAN NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK

The hosting body of the Slovakian NRN for 2014-2020 is the Slovakian Agency for Rural Development (ARVI), under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development – as it was in the previous programming period.

ARVI has been operating for 20 years. Its main functions are currently to: collect, analyse and disseminate information related to the RDP; provide feedback to Managing Authorities about the RDP; support activities which will lead to sustainable, balanced socio-economic development of rural areas; and provide advisory activities for potential and existing RDP stakeholders.

THE RURAL NETWORK SUPPORT UNIT

Support and animation of the NRN is divided between a central unit and eight regional branches known as 'regional antennae'. Each antenna was selected and approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Slovakia.

The central unit is based in Nitra, nearly 100 km outside the capital city, Bratislava. The eight decentralised regional antennae are located in the regions of Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra, Trenčín, Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Prešov and Košice.

Members of the central support unit of the Slovakian NRN together with the members of the antennae form one team, which ensures cooperation based on regular communication, information sharing, and close collaboration on common, agreed activities.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE REGIONAL ANTENNAE

Activities of the regional antennae are very similar to the activities of the central unit. The most important objectives are: collection and dissemination of information; educational and information activities; national and international cooperation; and promotion of activities which are related to the RDP.

Regional antennae are very important in the implementation of our RDP because they are closer to beneficiaries than the central unit and are therefore able to better hear and understand their needs. The antennae can be considered crucial in the bottom-up approach in Slovakia.

The antennae serve to communicate messages, propose ideas and highlight specific needs to the central unit and Managing Authority. The role of the central unit is to use this information and help connect all the related parties and stakeholders as well as maintain national and international cooperation and collaboration.



Regional antennae can help communicate RDP possibilities to local stakeholders.

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 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.nsrv.sk

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Achieving results the CLLD way

Yves Champetier

I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to observe first-hand the evolution of LEADER over the past 25 years, and to have shared in the successes and the challenges of this great initiative. The distance travelled is impressive.



Yves Champetier (AEIDL) is an ENRD thematic expert, and former Director of the LEADER I Coordinating Unit and the LEADER II Observatory.
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UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

From an initial 'Community Initiative' – an experiment involving a relatively limited number of rural areas – the concept of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) has now extended the LEADER approach to cover virtually all EU rural areas, almost all coastal areas and a certain number of urban areas and districts.

Many thousands of local actors are thus engaged in the implementation of Local Development Strategies (LDS) that have been the subject of significant research and collective reflection. This unleashes enormous potential for dynamism for our territories and for Europe.

However, more needs to be done to enable LEADER/CLLD to unleash the creative potential of these local groups! There are significant challenges still to overcome.

A big recent problem was the delay in launching many of the 2014–2020 programmes. By early December 2016, only 1 800 of the estimated 3 000 local groups to receive support under CLLD from the European Structural and Investment Funds had been selected; fewer than 1 000 had begun project implementation.

Furthermore, breaks between the programming periods for some re-selected LAGs created a high turnover in their animation and management teams and a consequent loss of momentum.

Administrative burdens also remain challenging. Whilst there have been some simplification efforts at European level – including good work through the ENRD and the European Commission's new proposals for simplification – further progress is needed, including at national and regional levels.

Strengthened dialogue between LEADER groups and Managing Authorities can be key to help identify and mobilise the means to unlock the innovative potential of local groups.

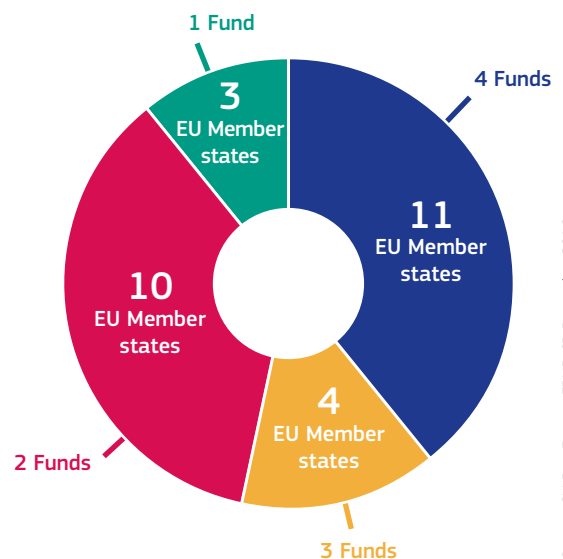
MAXIMISING CREATIVITY

LEADER is not a cash machine or additional layer of administration. Rather, LAGs should be seen as think tanks for the future of their territories and the challenges they face. We need to think about how we can communicate differently to involve the maximum number of local actors in the process, integrating new voices and perspectives and promoting creativity, cooperation and entrepreneurship.

Priority should be given to citizens' initiatives with a collective dimension that strengthen local connections and local innovators who can reinvent the territorial economy. Efforts should focus on exploring potential in new areas such as the collaborative, sharing, social, green or circular economies.

This is a big undertaking, but to me it is an essential one. In this way, CLLD can support both territorial transformation and the kinds of ecological, energy and social transitions that Europe so badly needs.

CLLD multifunding in the EU



Source: CLLD in Europe, ERND CP, December 2016



John Grieve
ENRD Contact Point

Over 130 representatives of National Rural Networks, Managing Authorities, Local Action Groups and Commission services from across the four ESI Funds came together, 7-8 December 2016, in Båstad in Sweden's Skane region to discuss how to deliver results by 'doing things the CLLD way'.

A key message was that LEADER started as a kind of revolution, but now it feels like it is being consumed by bureaucracy. People said: "We have to make sure the method delivers, but first we need to make sure the method happens".

Participants discussed an 'agenda for improvement' of the LEADER/CLLD method in three main areas:

1. **Local partnerships and governance** could be improved by stakeholders working together to move CLLD from a hierarchical approach towards greater cooperation. Developing and implementing a CLLD communication plan could strengthen understanding between levels, whilst regular independently chaired meetings between MAs and LAGs could help build trust.
2. **Financing, delivering and reporting** could be improved by creating one simple set of implementation rules at EU level and one implementing body for CLLD at Managing Authority level. In the short term, delivery systems could be improved through working group exchanges and work to harmonise systems and introduce flexibility.
3. **Working with local assets** means building trust and enabling real decision-making by local people in a spirit of co-responsibility. To support this, it is important to train local stakeholders along the delivery chain and communicate effectively. Local innovation is key, but to enable this, it is essential to also allow failure – so long as this is based on transparency, trust and learning.



Peter Rundkvist
Längs Göta Älv LAG, Sweden

I believe that CLLD multifunding needs to become better adopted and synchronised at the local level, something that the conference brought into focus in a very constructive and encouraging way. The direct exchange of perspectives and experiences between the Commission services and the LAG representatives was a great leap forwards!



Peter Cook
Opportunity North East, UK

CLLD can be agile and needs driven, but it needs to allow the taking of risks and learning from failures. The 'top' must give freedom to the 'bottom' and relax controls. To take more risks, we may have to find private sector money – for example through crowd-funding – to complement EU funding.



Gerallt Llewelyn Jones
Menter Mon LAG, Wales (UK)

CLLD has two meanings, local innovation (small things) and progressive development (big things).



Gabriel O'Connell
Monaghan LAG, Ireland

The importance of EU networking needs more prominence in CLLD, enabling the osmosis of ideas, concepts and ways of working.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

See the presentations, outcomes and factsheets of the ENRD Seminar 'Achieving Results the CLLD Way: Putting the Method to Work': http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/achieving-results-clld-way-putting-method-work_en
Including a four-page event summary: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/s3_clld-highlights.pdf

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

A new rural policy for Sweden

Maria Gustafsson

For the first time, in my experience of working with rural development during the past three decades, Sweden now has the chance to implement a coherent policy for rural development.



Maria Gustafsson is the Manager of the Swedish National Rural Network Support Unit and a former temporary member of the secretariat of the Swedish Parliamentary Committee on Rural Development.

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TOWARDS A COHESIVE RURAL POLICY

Big news from Sweden is that a unanimous parliamentary committee has submitted 75 proposals for a new national rural policy. These proposals lay the groundwork for a more cohesive Sweden in which everyone, wherever they live, is provided with what they essentially need to live their lives.

These new developments are crucial, because, until today, rural development has been relatively marginalised as a secondary dimension of regional or agricultural policies. The new proposals offer the chance to implement a truly coherent policy for rural development in Sweden.

In developing its proposals, the parliamentary committee mirrored some of the key messages of the Cork 2.0 Declaration. It recognised that rural areas offer many of the solutions to the challenges of the future – including environmental and economic – but this will only happen if it is possible to live and work there.

Addressing the increasing discrepancies in access to public services in different parts of the country can have far-reaching consequences for confidence in society and democracy, restoring the ‘social contract’ between citizens and the public sector.

THE NEW PROPOSALS

The 75 proposed measures complement each other. The majority aim to improve access to digital infrastructure, to knowledge or labour requirements, to integration in global production chains and to broader markets. They also aim to improve access to financial investment support, services, transport, etc.

Most of the proposed measures cover rural Sweden as a whole, but a few of them are limited to the most

remote and least populated areas with the greatest demographic, labour market and business challenges.

Crucially, the proposed measures have an inter-sectorial approach requiring more coordination between services and cooperation between actors from different sectors.

Four of the proposed measures aim to improve conditions for civil society to contribute to rural development. Others aim to increase knowledge about rural needs and to raise awareness of the consequences for rural areas from making and implementing diverse policies.

Before the Swedish Government submits a bill to Parliament, it has invited a large number of stakeholders to give their opinions about the proposed new policy. The National Rural Network (NRN) has contributed by facilitating arenas for dialogue.

As a former temporary member of the secretariat of the committee, I’m very happy to notice that there has been great interest among stakeholders to participate in the consultation and that many agree with a majority of the submitted proposals.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

http://www.sou.gov.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SOU-2017_1_tryck.pdf

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

The new European Solidarity Corps

Mario Milouchev

The European Solidarity Corps is a new European Union initiative that aims to create opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in solidarity projects – in their own country or abroad – that benefit communities and people around Europe.



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A NEW EU INITIATIVE

European Commission President Juncker announced the creation of a new European Solidarity Corps in September 2016: “Young people across the EU will be able to volunteer their help where it is needed most, to respond to crisis situations, like the refugee crisis or the recent earthquakes in Italy”.

The initiative aims to provide community benefits based on the understanding that solidarity is one of the core principles of the European Union. It will also provide multiple direct benefits to the many young people who will have the opportunity to make a difference, develop their skills and have an invaluable human experience.

The European Solidarity Corps aims to have engaged 100 000 young people aged between 18 and 30 in volunteering, a traineeship, apprenticeship or job across Europe by 2020. Solidarity projects can be for a period between 2 and 12 months.

THE POTENTIAL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Many potential areas of European Solidarity Corps activity are relevant for Europe’s rural development objectives. For example, volunteers may participate in environmental protection, the conservation of Natura 2000 sites, support and integration of migrants and refugees, prevention of natural disasters and assistance in the provision of food and non-food items.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) is amongst several EU Funds that will contribute to the implementation of the initiative.



© European Solidarity Corps

There are many young, socially-minded people in Europe willing to make a meaningful contribution to society and help show solidarity.

Notably, it co-funds a specific call for young people on environmental volunteering – together with the EU’s LIFE Programme for the protection of the environment and climate action.

There is also potential for individual initiatives funded under the Rural Development Programmes (RDPS) to engage European Solidarity Corps participants – for example via the Measures for cooperation, basic services and village renewal and technical assistance.

A particularly interesting area of opportunity that will hopefully emerge in the coming months and years is the potential for LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) to engage young people in solidarity projects in their area.

LOOKING TO 2018+

The European Commission is exploring the ways to establish an appropriate system for programmes under shared management to benefit from the support of European Solidarity Corps’ participants from 2018. This is being informed partly by a targeted consultation that was open until April 2017.

Once the new 2018+ legal framework is established, we are going to prepare a guidance document on the potential use of the European Solidarity Corps in the frame of the Rural Development Programmes.

I am committed to make this initiative successful in Europe’s rural areas, but it can succeed only with Europe’s rural development stakeholders’ support!

Let’s make TOGETHER this initiative a success!

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

An integrated rural policy

Karl-Heinz Lambertz

For the Committee of the Regions, an integrated public policy approach is the only way to meet the economic, environmental and social challenges facing every territory of Europe, and in particular rural areas.



Karl-Heinz Lambertz is Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions.
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INCREASING EU FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN FAVOUR OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

A study ⁽¹⁾ by the Committee of the Regions on the European funding devoted to rural development shows it is largely insufficient in relation to the significance of rural areas in Europe. More worryingly, it shows that funding for rural areas fell from 17.1% of the European budget for the programming period 2007-2013 to only 12.2% in the current programming period 2014-2020.

We are calling for an increase in the EAFRD budget to offset the growing concentration of agricultural production that generates large regional disparities. This increase should be directed primarily towards the promotion of social inclusion, the reduction of poverty and economic development in rural areas, which currently receives only 15% of EAFRD funds.

In the framework of a competitive and multifunctional agricultural sector, there must be a focus on diversification. But it is not enough for agriculture to be multifunctional. In predominantly rural areas, 82% of employment and 95% of added value come from non-agricultural sectors. The remaining socio-professional sectors must be mobilised to achieve a sustainable, diversified and balanced development of rural society.

It is also essential to maximise the impact of local development projects. LEADER is practically the only instrument that supports employment and keeps the economic and social fabric alive in rural areas. However, only 7% of the EAFRD budget has been programmed for the LEADER approach, which is insufficient to propose a plan to boost investments in rural areas.

(1) <http://cor.europa.eu/en/documentation/studies/Documents/Evolution-Budget-Dedicated-Rural-Development-Policy.pdf>

INCLUDING THE RURAL SECTOR IN ALL EUROPEAN POLICIES

The needs of rural areas far outweigh what Rural Development policy alone can do. As stated in the Cork 2.0 Declaration last September, rural development policy must be taken into account in all European policies.

This is particularly the case for structural policies, which should make Rural Development their priority objective in line with the territorial cohesion objective enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.

There is an urgent need to redirect ERDF funds towards rural areas. Initial estimates show that only 11.6% of the ERDF budget is allocated to rural areas in the current programming period (compared with 25.8% in the previous period), whereas rural areas represent 52% of European territory.

One of the top priorities should be access to broadband telecommunications networks, which are a key factor for competitiveness and economic growth.

It is also urgent to improve the supply of vocational training in rural areas. Only 7% of the ESF is devoted to rural areas in the programming period 2014-2020 (compared with 9% in the previous period), manifestly insufficient to meet the needs of these areas and to combat rural depopulation and the ageing of the farming population.

These requests should be taken into account as far as possible within the framework of the mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework, and in their entirety in the post-2020 programming.

FOSTERING A TERRITORIALISED APPROACH

In addition to the available budgetary resources, it is essential to foster a territorialised approach within the framework of the Operational Programmes. This will enable a much more effective implementation of Cohesion policy and will better meet the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

'Rural proofing' all EU policies

The new Cork 2.0 Declaration contains a very important concrete proposal, which can have a significant impact on rural areas: 'rural proofing', which aims to "systematically review other macro and sectorial policies through a rural lens".

For the European Committee of the Regions, it is essential to provide rural proofing with an operational action plan, including concrete measures on how to implement it.

The Common Strategic Framework and the Partnership Agreements are two interesting innovations in the new EU policy framework. Nevertheless, the achievement of rural development objectives is severely hampered by a dominant sectoral approach.

For example, rural-urban interdependence is often acknowledged as a major factor to be taken into account, but it does not benefit from any EU policy.

Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) and Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) remain the only provisions of the Regulation that provide for real synergies for a joint application of structural funds. But the implementation of these principles remains a major challenge, particularly in certain strategic areas that traditionally take little account of territorial specificities.

In addition, the design and implementation of a genuine rural development strategy based on an integrated territorial approach also requires human resources, which the most disadvantaged areas may be lacking. Sufficient means should be provided to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders and enable them to develop and implement their local strategy.

CONCLUSIONS

Meeting the objectives of the 2020 Strategy while maintaining territorial cohesion in Europe cannot be achieved without involving all those areas with potential for growth, including rural areas.

I have noted with great satisfaction that the concerns and positions of civil society are in line with those of local and regional authorities, and largely also of the European Parliament. This confirms the urgent need for concrete commitments for the development of rural areas in Europe. That is why we support the request for a rural agenda issued by the Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas (RUMRA) Parliamentary Intergroup.

It is essential and urgent to diversify the entry points and to include rural areas in all European policies as is currently the case for cities.

This path will not be easy as it needs to overcome many obstacles linked to the size of rural projects and to prejudices, but it will ensure a better connection and integration of rural activities with other activities.

The added value and the potential for creativity and innovation in rural areas are considerable, but their contributions to growth are under-exploited.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/policies/agricultural-rural-development/Pages/agricultural-rural-development.aspx>

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Supporting the contribution of women in rural areas

Dr Maura Farrell and Marta Rosa

The work, innovations and entrepreneurial accomplishments of rural women are absolutely imperative to the future progress and viability of rural areas. Women engaged in rural communities or entrepreneurial activities need more than acknowledgment for their role, they require targeted support from the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs).



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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

Women have always played a key role in the development and sustainability of the agricultural sector and rural areas more generally. Yet their role and contribution – both on and off-farm – are still undervalued and understated.

Recent research has shown a significant increase in both the number of rural women employed and those acting as equal partners in production. Today, 30% of all farm managers in the EU are women and agriculture was the seventh largest employer of women in the EU 28 in 2014.

Women play a central role in the family farms that still dominate the European agricultural sector.⁽¹⁾ This role is often agricultural or in various on-farm business activities promoting farm diversification.

However, women's off-farm work is also of huge significance to the survival of family farms and contributes significantly to the financial security of farming families. Women are particularly skilled in the development of multi-functional projects, bringing the notion of an eco-social circular economy to life.

Women are having a stronger contribution to rural economies more generally, including as drivers of

innovation. More and more women are economically active in sectors such as the rural crafts industries, as well as diverse forms of volunteer work, social innovation and cultural engagement.

Underlying these trends is the increasing number of women that have higher educational qualifications. This furthermore opens up employment opportunities in leading positions.

BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES

Nevertheless, despite the positive developments, many women still face many challenges when attempting to access employment and/or develop rural businesses.

The rate of female labour-market participation still remains lower in rural than in urban areas. A major related issue is that many women are not officially 'employed' on their family farm and therefore do not acquire social protection entitlements despite their various forms of social and economic contribution.

Women farmers still tend to be employed in lower paid positions and less senior roles. Farms managed by women also tend to be smaller than those of their male counterparts.

Barriers to the employment of women beyond the family farm include: limited childcare, elderly care and health care facilities; inadequate public transport; lack of broadband internet access; and poor-quality vocational and skills training.

For many years, political efforts on gender equality in rural areas across the EU have seen some Member States make exceptional progress, whilst others still lag behind. Frequent barriers to entrepreneurship for women in rural areas are a lack of access to credit, participation in agricultural/rural decision-making processes, and availability of peer-support networks.

SUPPORTING RURAL WOMEN THROUGH THE RDPS

In order to make progress, women need to be encouraged and supported. It is particularly important to promote entrepreneurship. However, implementation of the Rural Development policies in the Member States or regions

(1) According to Eurostat figures, family members account for 41.7% of the total workforce on Europe's farms.

Innovation Award for Women Farmers 2016

The Women's Committee of Copa-Cogeca presented the fourth edition of its innovation awards for women farmers in October 2016 under the title: 'Women farmers as drivers of innovation and green growth in the European Union'.

Copa's top Innovation Award for Women Farmers was presented to Margaret Farrelly (photo) from the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) for her innovative free-range-hens business, which has grown from 150 hens in 1987 to 168 000 today with a business turnover of €6.2 million and employing 33 people. She has developed several product and marketing innovations, including investing in 'Mega' eggs that are naturally enriched with Omega 3, selenium and vitamin E via the hen's diet.

A Special Achievement Award was also presented to Italian farmer Lisa Paganelli for her innovative work using mycorrhiza for symbiotic agricultural production with nutritional and health advantages and developing the associated Bio Valbidente consortium.



© www.thinkbusiness.ie

does not yet take full advantage of all that rural women can offer for the sustainability and development of rural areas.

The RDPs have considerable potential to help entrepreneurial women in rural areas, particularly through **farm diversification** support, including for home-based – as well as other forms of – rural business.

Enhancing support – to both women and men – for entrepreneurship in areas such as rural tourism, locally made products and ecosystem services can be a key strategic element of promoting broader economic growth in Europe.

Through the RDPs, we can improve access to **start-up finance or grants** for women embarking on small to medium enterprises in rural areas and provide relevant **training courses** relating to business development, product identification, marketing, tourism, IT skills and the financial aspects of business.

Creating a supportive environment for female labour-market participation and entrepreneurship in rural areas also means improving the availability of quality **rural childcare** and other rural services including elderly care and healthcare services.

The **LEADER Measure** can be a particularly useful tool for actively engaging women in rural development, either at a community level or at a business innovation level. Ensuring gender equality on the boards of LEADER Local Action Groups could strengthen the role of rural women

in local planning and decision-making processes and also enhance opportunities for rural women.

INSPIRING RURAL WOMEN

Women from rural areas need to step out from the 'shadows' and help put a stop to rural decline. To encourage this, it is vital to showcase the positive economic and social role of women in farming and inspire more women to make the most of their economic potential.

The Copa Women's Committee plays a crucial role in emphasising the importance of women farmers and the challenges that they face.

Its most high-profile activity is its 'Innovation Awards for Women Farmers' (see above box). With this initiative, Copa wishes to improve the visibility of how women contribute to a more dynamic and innovative agricultural sector and stimulate adoption of further innovative, sustainable practices.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

'Gender in Agriculture and Rural Development', European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017: <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-agriculture-and-rural-development>

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Generational Renewal

Alan Jagoe

On 25 January 2017, CEJA and the ENRD Contact Point co-hosted an important workshop on 'Generational Renewal through Rural Development'. The event brought forward the pressing matter of sustaining farming throughout the generations.



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WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

European farmers have long been a necessary part of the growth and prosperity of the EU. All those farmers who have gone before us have served Europe in a way that needs to be acknowledged.

These are people who have worked long, they have worked hard, and they have made something important. But now, many are at a stage in their lives where they would like to take a step back. It's imperative that we develop a method for them to do so, and that's where generational renewal comes in.

To put it plainly, generational renewal in agriculture needs to be considered as a precondition for maintaining viable food production and improving the innovation, competitiveness and sustainability of the sector. We need new entrants to take over from retiring farmers, to invest and in some cases modernise their methods and output.

Although this was the first joint event between CEJA and the ENRD, it is not the first time we have co-ordinated on important issues of the day. This is the time to move our focus towards generational renewal in the context of a reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that aims to shake up how the sector is handled in Europe.

FACILITATING GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

We currently find ourselves in a situation where good agricultural land is scarce, where young farmers depend on the transfer of land from already existing farms. If their farms are to become more modern and competitive, they also need support for initial investments, access to loans, business advice and training.

Policy-makers are aware of the need for debate, but we can still do more. Facilitating generational renewal in the agricultural sector is a proposed focus area for Rural



Generational renewal in agriculture is a precondition for maintaining sustainable viable food production.

Development Programmes in the period 2014-2020, and that is the core to our work in CEJA at the moment.

We are in a landscape where the challenges and barriers facing young farmers can seem insurmountable without the proper support, but we want to see it provided.

While the situations currently facing us can seem daunting, I do have hope still. Considering the high level of interest from our stakeholders and the considerable number of young farmers who travelled from across Europe to engage with us, I think I can safely say that CEJA members and I look forward to playing our part in discussions on the future of Europe.

Juha Tenho

CEJA Vice-President, Finland



We must remember that no farms means no food. If we don't get a new generation of farmers, there won't be farms or food in the future. Young people need to be able to start their business when they are still young and full of energy and new ideas. If not, there are huge risks that they will choose a different career and won't come back later.

So, we need to have instruments that help both young and older generations to get in and get out of the sector. If we want to help the EU farming sector to be more productive, we need the next generations to improve our style of farming and protect our living countryside and good animal welfare.



Jannes Maes

CEJA Vice-President, Belgium

In order to keep on providing the community with food and services linked to our European family farming model, we need a growth of young people entering the sector. This is of huge importance to the whole Union, not just to the young farmers. It is our task to provide the decision-makers with information on the problems we are facing to enter the sector and their possible solutions.



Radoslaw Nienartowicz

CEJA Vice-President, Poland

Generational renewal is something that needs to be held at the centre of everything we talk about in Europe at the moment. It's vital we see a strong, clear plan for allowing both younger and older generations to do what they have to do, ensuring a viable exit strategy for those who want to, and a way in for those who need it.



Alice Cerutti

CEJA Vice-President, Italy

Generational renewal is crucial for young farmers. It's the precondition that allows a future for Europe's farms and, in consequence, for the safe and viable food production needed for a growing population.

It's a fact that young farmers invest more on innovation, on technology, on quality productions and are more environmentally friendly. The competitiveness of our sector and of our products will only be saved by improving the conditions and measures that will allow generational renewal. This in turn will provide enormous benefit for Europe's population as a whole.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- www.ceja.eu
- http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/thematic-work/generational-renewal_en

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Forestry as a Swiss army knife

Emma Berglund

We need multifunctional forests, maybe now more than ever. To guarantee this, the millions of individuals and families responsible for managing Europe's forests need to be better recognised and promoted. Only with the engagement of forest owners on the ground can the multitude of benefits that the public needs be delivered.



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MULTIFUNCTIONAL FORESTS

Especially in rural areas, forests play a crucial and multifunctional role. In fact, a sustainably managed forest is as multifunctional as a Swiss army knife, delivering social, economic and environmental benefits and helping to ensure sustainable and viable rural areas.

Europe's forests provide around 3.5 million green jobs, sustainable timber and renewable energy, contributing to rural economic growth, all whilst delivering multiple ecosystem services, supporting biodiversity, cleaning and regulating water flows, and offering many possibilities for recreational activities.

CLIMATE-FIT FORESTS

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges faced by society in general and the forestry sector in particular. Whilst it puts our forests and thereby our forest owners under increased pressure, the good news is that forestry is also key for fighting climate change.

The management of vital, growing forests can ensure that forests make essential contributions in terms of sequestering carbon and delivering sustainable renewable energy and bio-materials. The focus has to be on supporting and delivering 'climate-fit forests'.

'Wald.Klima.Fit' – which benefitted from Austrian RDP support – provides a good example of how we can support foresters to make their forests climate-fit, providing advice on topics such as choice of tree species, forest tending measures, harvesting and natural regeneration.



European forests can be at the heart of the response to climate change.

© Wald.Klima.Fit

FORESTS IN THE FUTURE CAP

For forests to fulfil their multifunctional role, a competitive and economically viable forest sector is a must. This has to be recognised in the ongoing discussions on the future CAP and Rural Development policy of the EU, which should include the competitiveness of forestry in its objectives and priorities.

Forestry measures which promote active and sustainable forest management to adapt our forests to climate change are crucial. Climate change mitigation and adaptation go hand in hand and need to be at the top of the agenda.

A first step to create a better future in rural areas is to support forestry. And beyond that, Europe's forest owners can be part of the solution to many of the challenges in Europe today.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CEPF: www.cepf-eu.org

Wald.Klima.Fit: www.waldverband.at

A FOCUS ON... SOCIAL INCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

Social inclusion challenges in rural Europe

Priority Six of EU Rural Development policy is “promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas”.

Combating rural poverty is also a crucial element for achieving the European Union’s headline target of lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion from 2010 to 2020.

In this introductory article, we provide an overview of the social inclusion challenges in rural Europe. We present recent ‘at-risk-of-poverty’ rates⁽¹⁾ in Europe and explore key factors underlying social inclusion challenges in the rural context.

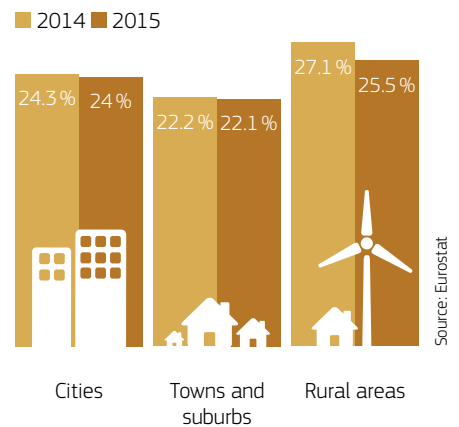
EU POVERTY RATES

More than one in four people living in Europe’s rural areas are considered at risk of poverty and social exclusion. As Figure 1 shows, the average at-risk-of-poverty rate is a little higher in Europe’s rural areas than in its cities, towns or suburbs.

However, disaggregated data for all 28 EU Member States provides an even more revealing picture of the risks of poverty experienced across Europe’s rural areas (see Figure 2).

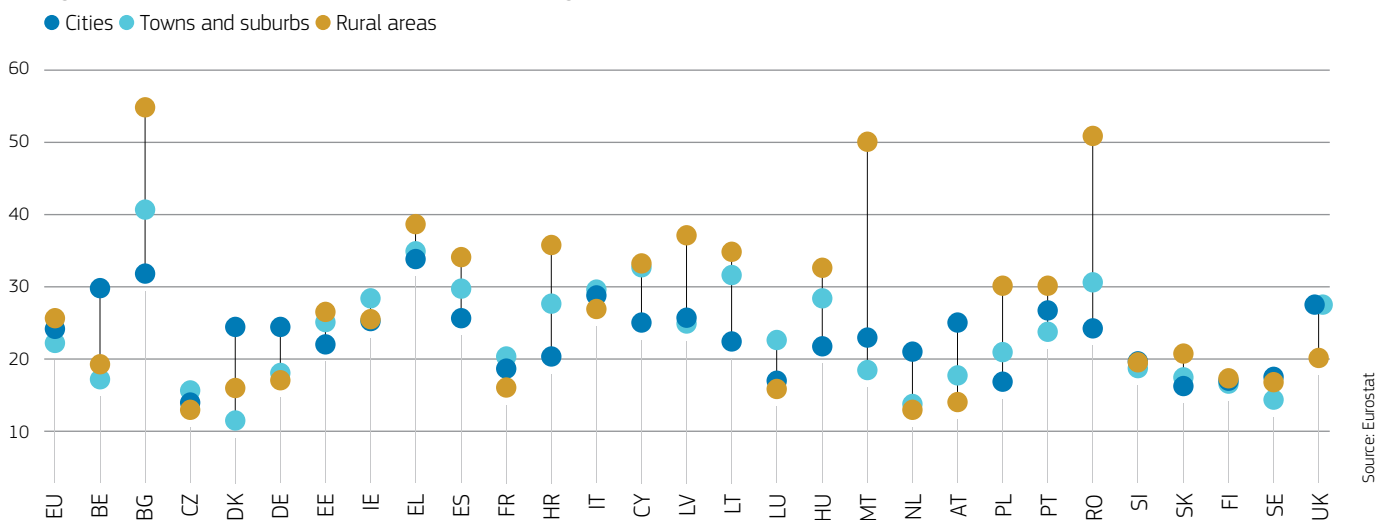
Many southern and eastern European countries face particular challenges with rural poverty – often linked to a high share of subsistence and semi-subsistence farming. This reveals itself not only in higher rural at-risk-of-poverty rates than in their central, northern and western European counterparts, but also in a serious urban-rural divide.

Figure 1. EU population at risk of poverty or social exclusion by degree of urbanisation



On the other hand, some of the EU-15 Member States – including Austria, the Netherlands and Germany – actually have lower levels of rural poverty than in urban areas, although these differences tend to be relatively small.

Figure 2. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by degree of urbanisation, by country, 2015



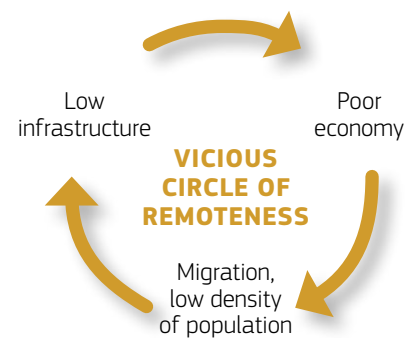
(1) The at-risk-of-poverty rate is not an absolute indicator of poverty or deprivation; rather, it measures low income in comparison to other residents in that country.

CAUSES OF RURAL EXCLUSION

Underlying the headline poverty figures, research has identified a series of inter-related factors causing particular risks of disadvantage and social exclusion in rural areas. This was summed up in a recent briefing by the European Parliament⁽¹⁾ as follows: "Rural poverty... is linked to the specific disadvantages of rural areas. These include an unfavourable demographic situation, a weaker labour market, limited access to education and also remoteness and rural isolation".

These same factors were identified by a European Commission report as the basis of four vicious circles of rural poverty⁽²⁾ (see example diagram).

Effectively tackling social exclusion in rural areas means breaking these vicious cycles of disadvantage. The good news is that approaches that are able to effectively invest in infrastructure or human capital (for example) can create virtuous cycles that have increasing benefits for the rural area.



ENRD SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKSHOP

ENRD Contact Point-facilitated work on social inclusion has recently (February 2017) included a workshop entitled 'Social Hubs in Rural Europe'.⁽³⁾

The workshop included 'hub' discussions on various aspects of social inclusion and demography, including on youth (see p.34); migrants and refugees (see p.36); and the role of women in rural areas (see p.24). It also included hubs on Roma in rural areas (see Rural Connections spring 2016) and the role of arts and culture (see Rural Connections autumn 2015, spring 2016 and autumn 2016).

Tom Jones
European Economic and Social Committee



Keynote speaker, ENRD Social inclusion workshop

"In rural areas, social exclusion is accentuated by its invisibility, the scarcity of support services and remoteness from concentrated specialist services.

Economic disadvantages can be exacerbated by an exodus of young people... loss of public and private support services... fractured communities and additional types of exclusion.

In many communities, there is an element of fatigue, of passive resignation. We need to identify the signs of withdrawal, listen and act on the 'sounds of silence'."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the social inclusion page under the 'ENRD Thematic Work' section of the website.

Amongst the most important conclusions from the ENRD social inclusion workshop were that:

- Social inclusion is a long-term process that often exceeds the timeframe of formal programmes;
- Approaches need to respond to diverse needs; but integration is ultimately about the whole community, not specific target groups;
- The partnership approach and ongoing communication and exchange amongst key stakeholders is essential.

(1) [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599333/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)599333_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599333/EPRS_BRI(2017)599333_EN.pdf)

(2) <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2087&langId=en>

(3) http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-social-inclusion_en

A FOCUS ON... SOCIAL INCLUSION

REPORT

What can LEADER/CLLD do?

Various RDP Measures can contribute to EU Rural Development policy objectives around social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas (P6). These include the Measures supporting physical investments, basic services and village renewal, and cooperation.

An ENRD workshop in March 2016⁽¹⁾ focused specifically on the role that bottom-up territorial approaches such as LEADER and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) can play in dealing with problems of poverty and social inclusion in rural areas. LEADER/CLLD was then present in all the 'social hubs' discussed at the 2017 workshop.

ENRD thematic work has highlighted that the LEADER/CLLD approach can help to identify specific problems at the local level, address these through tailor-made measures, and link together the various actors required to provide more effective solutions.



© Ralf Lienert, European Union, 2016

The focus of LEADER has always been territorial. This means that LEADER strategies have focused on the development of rural areas rather than the inclusion of disadvantaged people as such. Nevertheless, LEADER actions have often included strong social inclusion elements and achieved important social inclusion results.

Considerable knowledge and experience has been accumulated through LEADER activities on how best to respond to local social inclusion challenges, most notably in terms of increasing access to employment and supporting the provision of basic services in rural areas.

Furthermore, in the 2014-2020 policy framework, a new approach to local development has been introduced through CLLD, which opens up further direct opportunities to deal with social inclusion in a more integrated way, involving other European Structural and Investment Funds. Most notably, the European Social Fund will now be supporting CLLD in certain Member States.

MAKING THE MOST OF LEADER/CLLD

ENRD thematic recommendations on maximising the LEADER impact on social inclusion⁽²⁾:

- Excluded groups need to be represented in local groups and fully involved in developing the strategy.
- Project selection criteria and procedures need to be developed to ensure disadvantaged groups have fair access.
- There must be targeted investment in capacity building and animation.
- Local Action Groups (LAGs) should use their own activities to create linkages with other support agencies and help build integrated support itineraries.
- LAG goals and targets need to be set in a way that reflects the real needs and capacities of vulnerable groups.

(1) http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-leaderclld-and-networking-support-social-inclusion_en

(2) http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/w8_factsheet1_leader_clld.pdf

LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

There are many examples of LEADER projects achieving inclusion through initiatives which have generated employment opportunities and/or prepared the ground for future labour market inclusion, for example through the development of skills or analysis of labour market supply and demand.

GROWBIZ (SCOTLAND, UK)

A business advice network used a LEADER project to develop a community-led method of supporting businesses in rural Perthshire, Scotland.



© European Union, Kelly McIntyre

Peer support and enhancing business confidence were central to the approach developed, replacing the need to travel to the nearest city for advice.

Support services included friendly informal sessions for local people to meet others who were setting up or running their own businesses or ventures. A network of volunteers willing to share their skills and help others achieve their goals was also set up.

The project established a volunteer board of up to ten people from the community and appointed a locally based Enterprise Coordinator. One-to-one support meetings were offered to identify what new entrepreneurs need to get started with their business.

Funding

- Total budget: €627 050
- EAFRD: €166 360
- National/regional: €268 735
- Private: €107 494
- Other: €84 459

Timeframe: 2009-2016

<http://growbiz.co.uk>

VILLAGE GOODIES (POCIŪNĖLIAI, LITHUANIA)

This Lithuanian LEADER project empowered a group of women in the small and disadvantaged village of Pociūnėliai to increase the income from their organic fruit and vegetables.

The project initiated the 'Village goodies' brand and created a packaging line, order cards, information leaflets and a website. Working quarters were renovated to meet hygiene requirements and important machinery was purchased, including drying equipment, which can extend the life of the produce. After some testing, the women extended their product range to include herbal tea, candy from carrots, beetroots and pumpkins.



© Pociūnėliai

The project built on the main activity of local women in a village with relatively few opportunities. Some women had already started to sell organic produce, but with limited access to markets. They applied for the LEADER funding to enable them to achieve more by working together.

Funding

- Total budget: €38 647
- EAFRD: €28 107
- National/regional: €7 027
- Private: €3 513

Timeframe: 2014-2015

www.pociuneliai.com

Benefits of LEADER for labour market integration

- Tailor-made, personalised approach to skills development;
- Advice on the financial possibilities for business creation;
- Support based on knowledge of local labour market challenges (e.g. unemployment, barriers to entry) and opportunities (e.g. demand);
- Targeting different groups according to their characteristics.

TERRE & COMUNI (FROSINONE, ITALY)

Support under the Rural Development and Social Funds was combined in a CLLD project for the integration of migrants through work training.

The project organised four training sessions involving a total of 46 young unemployed people (27 local and 19 migrants) living in the LAG area. The sessions were centred on key issues such as business start-up, social farming and European funding.

Ten of these participants were selected to spend 100 hours working either at the premises of the local botanical gardens or at the LAG offices, where they got involved in analytical and research work on the conditions and problems of migrants in the area.

The project was developed by a social enterprise to respond to both the challenges of two local asylum centres and the opportunity of integrating immigrants in a rural area that is rather disadvantaged and at risk of abandonment.



© European Union, Silvia Di Passio

Funding

- Total budget: €50 000
- RDP (including EAFRD co-finance): €6 000
- European Social Fund: €44 000

Timeframe: 2015

www.galverla.eu

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

LEADER has supported many initiatives that have facilitated access to basic goods and services for rural communities, including health services, educational opportunities and village shops.

These goods and services are often essential not only for vulnerable individuals, but also for maintaining community life and creating an environment in which businesses can prosper.

CAFÉ AND KITCHEN AT THE VILLAGE SHOP (DYRÖN, SWEDEN)

A very small island in Sweden used a LEADER project to broaden the range of services offered by a village shop.

EAFRD support via the LEADER Measure helped to cover the costs of fitting a kitchen into the existing shop and expanding the premises to provide space for a café. Beyond the money, the engagement and commitment of the islanders was key to the success, providing suggestions, ideas and many hours of voluntary work.

The shopkeeper was able to open the café, which serves the local population, comprising 250 all-year inhabitants, rising to nearly 1 000 in the summer, as well as visiting tourists. The project has helped overcome some of the problems associated with Dyrön's insularity and low level of economic activity.

Funding

- Total budget: €53 106
- EAFRD: €35 404
- National/regional: €17 702

Timeframe: 2016-2017

www.leadersodrabohuslan.se/godkant-projekt/cafe-och-kok-affaren-pa-dyron



© Leader South Bohuslän

Benefits of LEADER for the provision of rural services

- Offering services that the private market is unable or unwilling to provide due to remoteness, inaccessibility, or low population density – including targeted services for the most disadvantaged groups;
- Involvement of local organisations with a deep understanding of local people and local issues;
- Ability to test different approaches to come up with tailor-made responses;
- Ability to develop cooperation and networking between local authorities, social services, local companies and local communities.

HORSE-ASSISTED THERAPY CENTRE FOR CHILDREN (ST. MARTIN IM MÜHLKREIS, AUSTRIA)



© www.reittherapie-buhibl.at

The Austrian LEADER project 'Bühübl' converted a farm into a horse-assisted therapy centre for children and adults with special needs.

Andrea Enzenhofer, who studied horse-assisted therapy, used the funding to convert her conventional farm into a therapy centre offering hippotherapy, occupational therapy, curative education and equestrian vaulting as therapy. She created a barrier-free riding centre accessible to all, purchased therapy equipment and launched a webpage.

The project enables children with disabilities to be hoisted onto the horses using straps and also includes a multi-person elevator from the riding centre to the living area.

Funding

- Total budget €305 700
- RDP (including EAFRD co-finance): €88 500
- Private: €217 200

Timeframe: 2009-2013

www.xn--reittherapie-bhbl-g3bb.at

PROVIDING RURAL BROADBAND FOR AN ISOLATED RURAL COMMUNITY (IBIZA, SPAIN)

A LEADER project helped the Neighbourhood Association of Rafal Trobat to get broadband coverage for its area, which was previously lacking any access to internet or telephone connection.

The project installed two general antennas to bring broadband coverage into the Rafal Trobat area situated between mountains on the island of Ibiza. Smaller antennas were also installed to capture and spread the signal of the general antennas to all of the dispersed homes in the valley.

The project overcame the digital divide experienced by traditional and highly dispersed villages in the Rafal Trobat area. Doing so enabled access to new digital services and potential in the area.



© Leader Eivissa i Formentera

Funding

- Total budget: €30 087
- EAFRD: €11 782
- National/regional: €13 191
- Private: €5 115

Timeframe: 2012-2013

www.leadereivissaiformentera.com

A FOCUS ON... SOCIAL INCLUSION

INTERVIEW

Youth Initiatives of South & East Cork Area Development (SECAD), Ireland



Ryan Howard

Chief Executive Officer, SECAD



Nuala O'Connell

Development Officer, SECAD

**What does 'social inclusion' mean to you?**

Some people seem to think that if you live in a wealthy area you can't have a social inclusion problem. People even said to me in my area: 'we have a good road and a new railway station, what's our social inclusion issue?'

But no matter how your economy evolves, you're going to have social inclusion needs. The reality is that within any household you can have somebody who has got a challenge, whether they are wealthy or poor. And if I am poor and living next to a rich guy, it doesn't make me better off. Or if I'm poor and living next to a new train station, I may have better access to transport, but if I can't afford it or I'm not going anywhere, then it doesn't do anything for me.

Social inclusion to us is about the groups of people who are not getting access to

opportunities and support, who are not coming through the door, who would not be able to write a plan, who have serious issues in terms of numeracy and literacy. It's about people who may have serious issues in terms of motivation, who may even have problems getting up in the morning.

**What specific social inclusion challenges have you faced in South and East Cork?**

We faced a really dramatic challenge about 12 years ago. Our main market town, Middleton, the wealthiest town in our whole area, became the town with the highest rate of youth suicide in Europe.

What made the issue so challenging was that many people didn't even see this as a social inclusion issue. But the people working on the ground in the community

knew the reality. We knew that the systems weren't working and that we had to do something about it.

**What was your approach for addressing such a dramatic challenge?**

Our approach centred on building a relationship with young people where they felt they could trust us. It was about developing co-ownership of the process right from the beginning. We wanted to build a line of communication with young people and allow them to be creative. We went to the young people in our area and asked them 'how can you express yourselves?'

A crucial element of every individual activity was also to identify the right partners, including those who can offer funding and, separately, those that can help manage and deliver the project.

Crucially, the young people have to trust all the partners involved.

We also commissioned a study by the University of Cork which involved 900 young people and delivered a report called ‘Where do you go when you go out?’. It clearly indicated the steps we needed to take and highlighted the need of young people for a space of their own – not just to play games in, but to have serious discussions, to help each other and bring in support services.

Later on, we established a youth council in South and East Cork, providing a forum for young people to express their views on local issues.

What kinds of activities did you organise?

The ‘Cork Young Filmmakers Project’ has been particularly successful.

This was a direct partnership between SECAD and our local authority, Cork County Council Arts Office. We provided funding for technical training workshops for young people who were in contact with social services and others from the wider community.

During week-long workshops, young people developed the whole process of making a film, including writing scripts and various technical roles. What was so valuable was that while on the surface it was practical training, it also allowed the young people to express themselves. Furthermore, young people would participate summer after summer and you could see their confidence and skills develop.

So far there have been more than 1000 young people through the programme. Every year, there are two film festivals so all the young people watch each others’ films. Some chose very serious themes, like drug use in their community and mental health, whilst others were very light-hearted and funny. It’s a fantastic occasion.



© SECAD

The South and East Cork Area Development (SECAD) is a local development company that works in partnership with state agencies local authorities, the community sector and social partners to deliver various local development programme.

How have you used RDP support?

As a Local Action Group, SECAD has been able to allocate support to LEADER projects fitting with the agreed Local Development Strategy. As well as supporting the film-making project and the somewhat similar East Cork Music Project, focusing on music-making skills and music production, LEADER has been used to provide youth leadership training under the training measure.

Capital investment has also been an important use of funds under the LEADER approach, for example in developing a derelict fire station into the state-of-the-art youth and community centre ‘My-Place’, in Midleton. SECAD allocated €23000 to a voluntary ‘project committee’ to develop the designs for the centre and organise fundraising and other coordination activities. It then allocated a further €330000 capital funds towards the total €800000 renovation costs.

A key partner within the project committee was the local Youth Service under the direction of ‘Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services’ (CDYS), who now run an office in the new centre. The considerable cooperation of the town and county councils was also essential – not least for securing use of the premises.

Any final message or advice for others facing similar challenges?

We did not know it would take us 15 years to get where we are today, but we absolutely knew it was going to take longer than one project or the period of one LEADER programme.

A crucial message is that we need to have the possibility and the courage to design and implement Local Development Strategies that are ambitious enough to try to achieve things that can’t be achieved within one European programming cycle.

Also, it’s crucial that you don’t just rush out and spend money on buildings for kids. Even though you may need the infrastructure, you have to build a relationship, build responsibility, build capacity within the community involving people of all ages first. This can then make any subsequent infrastructure investment successful.

Also, the experience of those young people who have gone through the animation process and who are now using the LEADER-funded facilities is very valuable. Through peer support, these young people can be vital in mobilising and supporting other young people in the rural area.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.secad.ie

A FOCUS ON... SOCIAL INCLUSION

INTERVIEW

NRN cluster on migrants and refugees

The 'National Rural Network (NRN) cluster on the integration of migrants and refugees' was initiated at the 4th NRNs' meeting in Bled, Slovenia (March 2016). Initially, four Network Support Units (NSUs) – Austria, Finland, Greece and Sweden – started exchanging their experiences. Other members, such as the Greek and Italian NSUs and a representative of the European Rural Parliament, have since joined.

The NSUs have so far organised four phone-based exchanges to discuss the developing situation in their countries and the relevant activities of the NRNs.⁽¹⁾

They have agreed to find and share examples and successful approaches of how to support migrants and refugees in areas such as access to housing, entrepreneurship and training. They are interested in all examples, no matter how they are funded.

We asked four representatives from the 'NRN cluster on the integration of refugees and migrants' the same two questions to get a sense of the direction and focus of their work on this theme.



What is the current situation in your country?



What actions is your NRN planning or already doing?



Michael Fischer

Austrian NSU

Current situation in Austria

The number of refugees arriving into Austria has decreased significantly. The problems we faced with the massive influx of immigrants during 2015 and the beginning of 2016 have ceased.

The major issue is no longer the initial response and hosting. What we have to do now is to highlight the potentially positive longer-term impacts that migrants and refugees can have in depopulated rural areas.

To enable this, we realise that there is a need for cross-cultural support and to

help connect migrants with companies and possible workplaces. Two LEADER groups are actively working on this.

Planned/ongoing NRN actions

In the NSU, we are trying to support our LAGs with good examples, experiences from other countries etc.

We run a thematic working group where we are connecting the issue of migrants and refugees with rural areas. It brings together people from different fields related to immigration. Key topics we are addressing include education, language training and intercultural competences.

We have to recognise that it is often quite a difficult political issue for a local mayor to advocate receiving and integrating refugees. We are looking at how the local rural population can be prepared to better understand immigrants.

(1) The NRN cluster also contributed and hosted one of the social inclusion hubs during the ENRD event on 'Social Hubs in Rural Europe' (9 February 2017).



Juha-Matti Markkola

Finnish NSU

Current situation in Finland

The statistics show that we now have approximately one sixth (17%) of the number of asylum seekers arriving into Finland compared to 2015. Many asylum centres are closing down, mostly in rural areas, which sometimes is a pity since they have worked quite well.

There are, of course, some local people and groups that are negative to refugees, but others are not. The situation was more difficult when such large groups came in such a short time. But it is not a hot political issue now.

Many have seen the LAGs as a very natural actor to deal with integration. We have had about 10 LEADER projects targeting the immigrant issue. One of these was also a Transnational Cooperation project, which was presented at the ENRD social inclusion workshop in Brussels (see p.4).

Planned/ongoing NRN actions

The integration of immigrants is not a big topic for the NSU. Nevertheless, within our working group for entrepreneurship, we are dealing with questions like how immigrants can be potential rural entrepreneurs.

At the Finnish Rural Parliament this year, there will be a part of the international programme where immigration is one of the topics, in cooperation with the Swedish village movement 'All Sweden Shall Live'.



Maria Christina Makrandreou

Greek NSU

Current situation in Greece

The situation is much better than in the previous two years. It is currently estimated that there are 60 000 to 70 000 migrants and refugees in the country.

It is worth noting that there have been endless stories of humanity and solidarity. Local populations, especially those of the Northern Aegean islands, at the critical moment, supported refugees by any means possible.

As far as the integration issue is concerned, there is a lot to be discussed and done still. International and European NGOs, solidarity groups, volunteers and active citizens have all played an important role since the beginning of the refugee crisis.

Initiatives have been undertaken by the state, the regions and the municipalities concerned. Support has come from the EU (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, European Social Fund...), the UN and other structures that I may be unaware of.

Planned/ongoing NRN actions

Recently, we have joined the thematic cluster and we are thinking of proposing to the next NRN Coordination Committee a thematic group on how the RDP and LEADER/CLLD could contribute with specific activities.

We believe that a better knowledge and mapping of refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants in rural areas could give us ideas about the actions to be undertaken in synergy with the ESF.



Nils Lagerroth

Swedish NSU

Current situation in Sweden

We had 165 000 asylum seekers in 2015, but only 35 000 in 2016. Many asylum centres in rural areas and small communities are now closing.

A problem is that those who receive permission to stay often have to move to a new area. This can create frustrations and upset both refugees and locals where asylum seekers have become relatively well integrated in local life e.g. active in local NGOs, children attending local school.

To enable people to stay in the same area, there is a great need for housing, apprenticeship and jobs for migrants in the rural areas.

Planned/ongoing NRN actions

The NRN has had a thematic working group on social inclusion of refugees and migrants for almost 10 years. Three of the 15 representatives have a refugee background personally.

We have conducted an inventory of housing in rural areas and led a pilot project in five municipalities on how to find housing for migrants in rural areas. We also made a report and video about training courses for migrants in agricultural, forestry and horticultural schools.

The thematic group is also supporting LEADER groups to start integration projects and trying to inform decision-makers about the possibilities of refugee integration in rural areas.

A FOCUS ON... SOCIAL INCLUSION

INTERVIEW

Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas (SIMRA)



Thomas Streifeneder


Head of the Institute for Regional Development
at EURAC Research, Italy⁽¹⁾



What is the SIMRA project?

SIMRA (Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas) is a project funded under Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. It aims to fill significant gaps in knowledge and understanding of how to enhance social innovation in marginalised rural areas.

My institute is one of the partners of the project which will run between 2016 and 2020, and is coordinated by the James Hutton Institute in Scotland (UK).




What do you mean by 'social innovation'?

The SIMRA consortium defines social innovation as **"reconfiguring social practices in response to challenges associated with society, economy or environment which are based on novel ideas and values"**.

These new practices, which necessarily include the voluntary engagement of civil society actors, comprise the creation of new institutions, networks and governance arrangements, and seek to enhance societal outcomes, especially but not exclusively for disadvantaged groups.

There are other definitions of social innovation. For example, Dr Andrew Copus of the James Hutton Institute has

described it as "a new way of delivering a service which is not achieved primarily by a technological change, but by a new way of organising various actors (individuals or organisations) and the way in which they interact".



Can you give an example?

The social cooperative 'Learning-growing-living with women farmers' was founded in South Tyrol (Italy) in 2006 to provide social farming services to local families. It sought to deliver an innovative approach to social service provision while encouraging positive interactions with nature and farming.

Its first service was **on-farm childcare** for up to six children aged 0-4. The service provided by a team that now comprises 106 qualified carers in the cooperative includes individually adapted care and is highly responsive to demand, which is particularly important in peripheral areas.

As well as half-day farm activities for school children aged 6 and older, the cooperative now offers **elderly care** as a response to growing local need since 2014. At present, there are 32 women farmers offering the service on request, actively integrating the older people into farming life.

Social farming is a farm diversification strategy promoting modern, family-



© South Tyrolean peasant organisation

New forms of community organisation can deliver real change for local people.

orientated and innovative services for vulnerable people, empowering women farmers and providing an extra income in peripheral rural areas. Due to its success, the cooperative is planning expansion into new territories and additional activities for people with disabilities.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

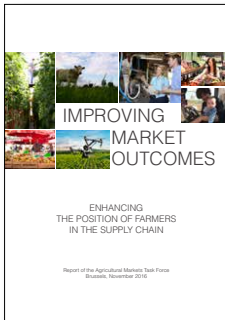
www.simra-h2020.eu

Social farming example:

www.baeuerinnen.it/soziale-landwirtschaft.html

(1) This interviewee would like to acknowledge the contributions of Clare Giuliani, Christian Hoffman and Elisa Ravazzoli, also researchers at EURAC Research.

Books & publications



Improving Market Outcomes

Enhancing the Position of Farmers in the Supply Chain

Agricultural Markets Task Force

The publication makes concrete policy and legislative recommendations for the European food supply chain and sets out considerations for a broader Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) framework post 2020.

The report examines the position of EU farmers in the supply chain and argues that they “are becoming the main shock absorber within the chain as regards market risks such as price volatility or prolonged periods of low prices”. In view of improving that position, the publication explores in detail aspects such as: market transparency; risk management; trading practices; use of contracts; competition law; and

access to finance. It identifies key issues and makes recommendations for improvement.

Finally, the report considers arguments in favour of a broader policy framework for the post-2020 period, under the heading ‘Common European Food and Agriculture Policy’.

OECD Regional Outlook 2016

Productive Regions for Inclusive Societies

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

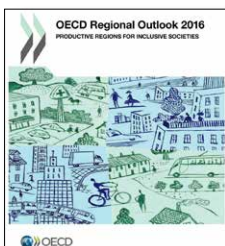
The publication examines the widening productivity gap across regions and its implications for the well-being of people living in different places. It discusses

how structural policies, public investment and multi-level governance reforms can help boost productivity and inclusion.

The Special Focus Part II on rural areas looks at different types of rural area and their productivity performance trends.

It supports a move towards the

OECD’s ‘**Rural Policy 3.0**’ which involves enhancing communities’ competitive advantages through integrated investments and appropriate local services, and encouraging local participation and bottom-up development. This policy paradigm emphasises rural development approaches that move beyond farm support to also recognise the diversity of rural regions and the importance of connectivity to dynamic areas.



Gender in Agriculture and Rural Development

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

The publication overviews the relevance of gender and issues of inequality in agriculture and rural development and makes the case for integrating the gender dimension into the policy cycle.

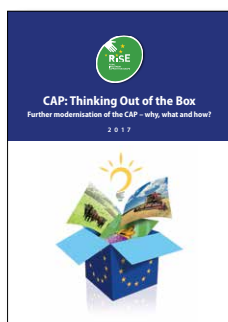
The publication highlights issues such as: unequal participation; ageing and masculinisation; invisibility of women’s role; and under-representation of women in farm ownership and

agricultural decision-making. It goes on to examine gender equality policy objectives and initiatives at the EU and international levels.

Finally, the publication provides a wide range of resources and practical examples of “mainstreaming gender into agricultural policy”, including under the 2014-2020 Common Agricultural Policy priorities.

ISBN 978-92-9493-584-7





CAP: Thinking Out of the Box

Further modernisation of the CAP – why, what and how?

RISE Foundation

The publication discusses modernisation of the Common

Agricultural Policy (CAP), proposing actions to streamline policy resources into better supporting land and risk management.

In particular, the report proposes a redesigned, more integrated tiered structure of land-management supports, with clearer targets on the environmental outcomes sought. Additionally, it outlines the full range of instruments that are most appropriate for managing risk at the farm level, market level, and nationally at times of catastrophic risk.

The report makes the case for an economically and environmentally sustainable farming sector while discussing why CAP reform is needed and what that reform could look like.

Towards better food policies

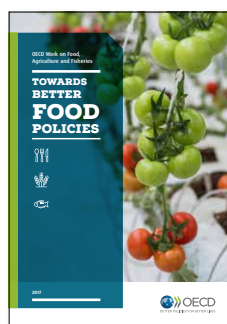
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The publication overviews OECD work on agriculture and fisheries and provides references to a wide range of research and analyses on

trade and agriculture policies, food security, innovation, environmental sustainability, and risk management.

This collection of evidence-based work intends to inform policy decisions that would support a shift away

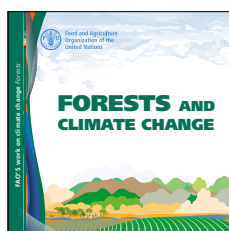
from production-linked and trade-distorting measures to strategic public investments in a productive, sustainable and resilient global food system.



FAO publications on Climate Change

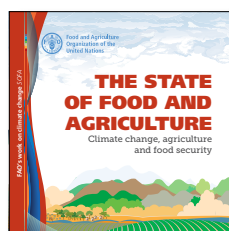
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

All three publications are in the form of infographics and are available in English and French.



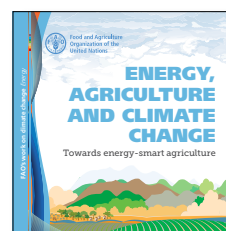
The publication provides data and statistics on forests, and the impact forests and forestry can have on mitigating the effects of climate change, as well as information on how they are affected by climate change.

REF I6374En/1/10.16



The publication overviews the negative effects of climate change on agricultural production and implications for food security. It is based on key findings in the FAO Report 'State of Food and Agriculture 2016'.

REF I6372En/1/10.16



The publication explores the various uses of energy in the food value chain, as well as ways of improving energy efficiency and increasing the use of renewable energy in agriculture to limit negative impact on climate.

REF I6382En/1/11.16

ENRD PUBLICATIONS

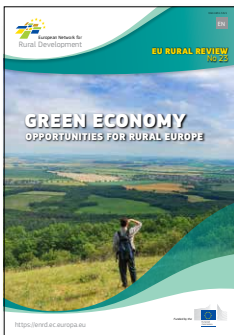
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EU RURAL REVIEW

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.23 – Green economy – Opportunities for rural europe



KF-AJ-16-023-EN-C

No.22 – Smart and competitive food and drink supply chains



KF-AJ-16-022-EN-C

No.21 – Rural responses to challenges in Europe

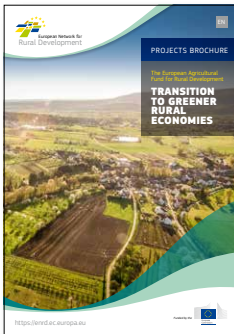


KF-AJ-15-021-EN-C

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).

Transition to Greener Rural Economies



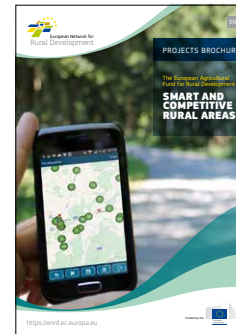
KF-04-17-108-EN-C

Migrant and refugee integration



KF-01-16-688-EN-C

Smart and competitive rural areas



KF-04-16-359-EN-C

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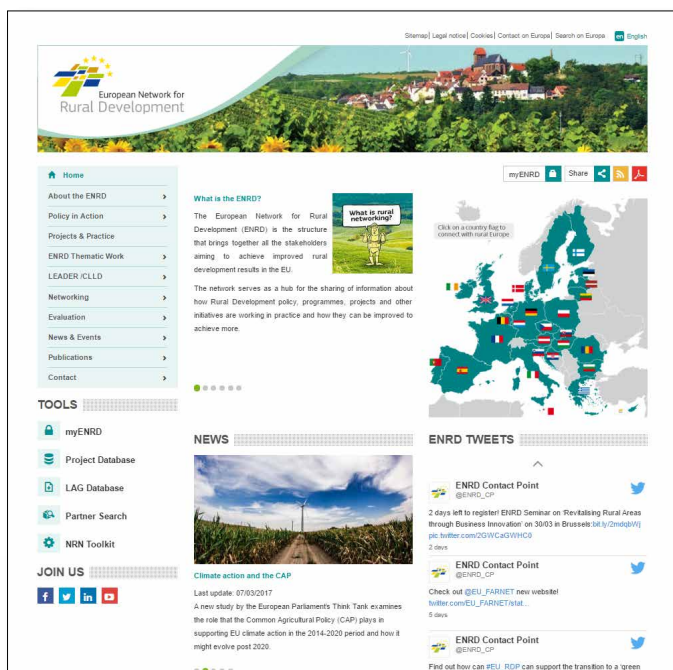
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