



European Commission



NEWSLETTER FOR THE ENRD July 2009



<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu> goes live

One key mission of the Contact Point has been to develop the EN RD website, which was launched in May 2009. Providing access to other relevant websites at EU, national and local levels, users can now access essential information such as contact details about the EN RD actors and stakeholders. The EN RD calendar contains a directory of events and meetings which users will soon be able to search for events by date. Together with all the back issues of Rur@l News and a glossary, it also incorporates a variety of features and rural development information like links to the national Rural Development Programmes.

In the near future, it will contain a wealth of information and interactive features for users. These features will include a 'Who's who' containing organisations' contact details, documents from Managing Authorities, all the print and electronic publications from the Contact Point, a resource centre and library, and information on the NRNs. In addition, a section on the [Evaluation Expert Network](#) is included, which is part of the ENRD but works independently in its daily tasks. This section contains the most important information about the network and its Helpdesk as well as its newsletters, analysis papers and guidance documents on topics like the application of the High Nature Value impact indicator.

One important goal of the ENRD – and indeed EU policies – is therefore to bring the EU and its citizens closer together. With these aims in mind, this website will include an array of interactive features. In particular, members of the restricted 'My ENRD' sub-site shall, for example, exchange

ideas, knowledge and documents through the 'Exchange' platforms and the thematic e-network, post rural development project ideas for which they are searching for partners and edit information on LAGs. [Find out more](#)

Coordination Committee focus on information and communication

How to meet common concerns and the priorities for year 2 of the EN RD were top of the agenda for the second [Coordination Committee](#) meeting, which took place on 19 May in Brussels (Belgium). The focus for the first round-table discussion was looking at what are the common concerns and needs of stakeholders in the current implementation period and what networks could do in the future. DG Agriculture and Rural Development gave an overview of major 'thematic concerns' to be considered in the current rural development programming period – e.g. territorial cohesion, competitiveness, innovation, environment issues, etc. In this context, DG AGRI further presented the objectives and scope of the three EN RD Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) launched in March and April 2009.

Simplification represents a key common concern at all levels (EU, Member State, regional and local levels) and for the whole range of rural development stakeholders. Simplification is recognised by all parties as a real need in order to increase flexibility, accessibility and efficiency of rural development measures. However, it does not constitute an aim in itself – it must demonstrate value and be balanced with maintaining accountability and being able to properly monitor and evaluate programmes. The ability to introduce timely

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policy responses in a changing environment is also important and not always compatible with simplifying implementation.

During the second round-table debate, information and communication were two priorities discussed. In particular, there is a need for comprehensive and accurate information provided in a timely manner. As such, web-based tools could be set up and regularly updated (e.g. a database of experts or a list of the people responsible for the day-to-day activities of the EN RD). Communication should also be enhanced not only between National Rural Networks (NRNs) and the EN RD but also with other stakeholders. More meetings between (NRNs) could help in finding common ways to tackle common problems. In addition, a clear and flexible working method should be established between the NRNs and the EN RD, to ensure that information is communicated effectively and Member States are adequately involved. [Find out more](#)

Leader Subcommittee meets for the second time

28 April 2009 saw the second meeting of the [Leader Subcommittee](#) in Brussels (Belgium). First on the agenda was a presentation by the [European LEADER Association for Rural Development](#) (ELARD) of the strategy for Leader for 2007–13. In particular, the national rural networks' activities planned for improving its implementation were outlined, such as supporting Local Action Groups (LAGs) and cooperation with Managing Authorities (MAs) and Paying Agencies (PAs) to better understand the main requirements for successfully implementing Leader.

Following presentations on Leader-related activities in Italy and Denmark, the focus moved to the potential, expectations and contributions of the EN RD. The visibility of Leader, administrative procedures, the evaluation system and participation in co-funding were among the topics discussed. In particular, the need for improving the visibility of cooperation projects was highlighted, such as tools to encourage contacts between beneficiaries and to facilitate partner-searching activities. The organisation of workshops, involving MAs, NRNs, LAGs, PAs and the Commission, was suggested to explore possible ways to simplify the administrative framework and payments.

In the afternoon, a suggestion was made to set up specific discussion

groups ('focus groups') made up of Leader Subcommittee members in order to address specific topics of concern and suggest possible actions. The audience generally welcomed the suggestion. Proposals for 'focus groups' included transnational cooperation, mainstreaming the Leader axis and evaluation. The question of Leader's real 'impact' was raised. The participants were prompted to discuss the significance of the Leader approach and its application in the rural development programmes, in order to inform future EN RD and Contact Point activities. It was concluded that despite the complexity of measuring the impact of Leader and relatively small geographical scale of reference, the impact of the Leader approach to date is not questioned. The evaluation process should help to draw conclusions on the results of Leader at the end of the programming period in order to eventually modify the approach in future. [Find out more](#)

Find out more about the National Rural Networks

The first part of the compendium of National Rural Network summary information is now available. Each factsheet gives a broad overview of the network, including contact details and membership information. The summary of its work programme and content outlines the areas of proposed activity, key quantitative and qualitative targets and timetable, while another section describes how the network operates: who undertakes what work within the network? How is it staffed? Who chairs the network? The final two sections summarise the network's operating procedures and its cooperation interests such as technical or sectoral issues or methods that the network is interested in sharing their experience of and learning about from other rural networks. [Download the publication](#)



The International Forum on Cooperation in Rural Development

The Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Junta of Andalucía, along with the Spanish Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs organised the first [International Forum on Rural Development Cooperation](#) (FICODER) which took place in Seville on 7-9 June 2009. The main aim of FICODER was to provide a platform where Local Action Groups (LAGs) could come together and strengthen links in order to explore areas for potential cooperation. The event itself comprised of plenary sessions, workshops and an exhibition area where public organisations, national and regional rural networks, and LAGs could present results of their projects and exchange experiences about networking and cooperation. Four major themes: Rural Heritage; Rural Economy; Rural Population; and Equal Opportunities were addressed during thematic seminars while more general topics on rural development were presented during the plenary sessions. In one such session the European Commission made a presentation on 'Rural Development 2007-2013' outlining the services and activities of the European Network for Rural Development (EN RD) and were also represented during round table discussions regarding the 'challenges of cooperation in rural networking' and 'challenges of transnational cooperation in Europe'.

In the exhibition itself, which comprised of more than 130 stands, the EN RD was represented by the Contact Point and several of the National Rural Networks: Estonia; Italy; Finland and Sweden. This provided the visitors the chance to: learn about existing Transnational Cooperation opportunities (TNC) available in the different Member States, seek new projects and partners,



and also learn about the services and planned activities available from the EN RD.

FICODER also marked the occasion of the fifth meeting of the National Rural Networks and their National Support Units, and in keeping with theme, there was a presentation and discussion of the proposed European Guide on Transnational Cooperation. The guide which is currently being finalised is designed to help beneficiaries (LAGs) to develop and implement Transnational Cooperation projects financed

under the Leader axis. It will eventually become a web-based tool on the [EN RD website](#) and is designed to offer practical information on all aspects of Transnational Cooperation. As such it takes account not only of existing guides on cooperation from previous Leader initiatives, but also other structural programmes (such as Interreg and EQUAL), and not least the results of the recent needs survey's on TNC which have been carried out by the Contact Point, and which were presented at the Leader Sub-Committee of 28 April 2009. Following a

presentation on the proposed structure of the guide, the participants of the meeting were invited to take part in one of four workshops, each looking at a particular aspect of the guide. The results of these workshops will help to finalise different elements of the guide which will also be illustrated by various video-clips of interviews with various rural stake-holders. Some of these interviews were carried out during FICODER with various representatives of the NRNs and LAGs.



The new legislative framework for organic farming

The revision of the organic farming legislation was initiated by the European Action Plan for Organic Farming in 2004, with a view to develop and simplify the legal framework.

As from 1st January 2009, new Regulations have replaced the previous organic rules under Regulation 2092/91. They are made of a Council Regulation (834/2007) defining scope, objectives, principles and main rules and two Commission regulations one (889/2008) on detailed production rules for plants, livestock, processed products, labelling and control, and one specifically for import management (1235/2008).

The most immediate improvements are the clearer structure and the simpler wording of the legislation. Also the central element of consumer trust which is the control system is now explicitly placed under the roof of the Official Food and Feed Control (OFFC), while accreditation to either the international certification norms EN 45011 or ISO 65 is now obligatory for all control bodies in the EU. As from 1st July 2010, a new organic logo will be compulsory on all EU-produced organic products, together with control body code number and place of farming of ingredients.

However, only few adjustments in the implementing rules were made so far as the Commission committed itself to transposing the main part of the production rules from the old Regulation without substantial changes, which means that organic farmers do not have to change drastically their farming

methods. The new legislative framework allows for future extensions of the scope. New rules for organic aquaculture and organic wine are being elaborated and discussed with Member States and stakeholders. It is planned to bring these new rules as amending regulations to the Commission Regulation 889/2008 in 2009. More information can be found at: www.organic-farming.europa.eu

LIFE+ call for proposals

The third LIFE+ call for proposals has been published on 15 May 2009, with up to €250 million available for co-financing of projects under three headings: nature and biodiversity; environment policy and governance; and information and communication. Project proposals should be sent to the relevant national authority no later than 15 September 2009. [Find out more](#)

Rural Development Day at Agraria

[Agraria](#) is Romania's oldest and biggest international spring fair for agriculture and food processing, and this year the fair's rural development day was held on 8 May. On this occasion the European Commission had a stand from where the EN RD Contact Point and several rural actors from Romania presented themselves and their projects. This gave visitors an overview about happenings in the field of rural development and networking both in Europe



and in Romania.

In addition to the presentations given on the stand, there were other separate events organised by the European Commission and national bodies which looked at EU Rural Development Policy and aspects of rural development programme implementation.

EN RD attends last ever Royal Agricultural Show in England

England's Royal Agricultural Show has been recognised as one of the most important events in the UK's rural calendar for several centuries. Held annually in July, this year's 'Royal Show' attracted over 114 000 visitors to its wide ranging programme of activities, displays, lectures, and networking forums that cover a vast array of different countryside management and rural economy topics.

Show organisers, The Royal Agricultural Society of England, have been keen to use the event as a platform to encourage knowledge transfer and promote new innovations between UK and other stakeholders from the wider rural world. As such, a delegation from DG AGRI was on hand throughout the four day Royal Show to present a series of different information sessions and respond to queries from the public about Common Agricultural Policy issues.

DG AGRI's own programme of Royal Show events included a dedicated 'Rural Development Day', which was organised by the EN RD Contact Point with help from representatives in the UK rural networks. The aim of the Day was to showcase good practices in rural development projects and explain new features of rural development policy. Excellent examples of supply chain cooperation, quality product promotion and area branding initiatives were presented from different UK regions.

These included Wales, where the successful 'Made in Monmouthshire' label continues to support the local rural economy. Becky Hughes and Sandy Greenslade from the Welsh *Adventa* programme explained the benefits of their branding assistance for tourism, timber and food businesses in the Monmouthshire area. Important added value and environmental gains were noted by the success of this Leader funded 'buy-local' scheme, which attracted good interest from the Royal Show's visitors.

An equally popular project presentation, and accompanying tasty display, was provided by Northern Ireland's *Glen Tender*, an award winning beef brand. Andy Bryan, Harry McGaffin and Ivan McMullan, all farmers involved in the Glen Tender project, described how cooperation between fellow producers helped improve access to new markets through an innovative beef box delivery scheme. Samples of freshly cooked cuts from the County Down farms were offered for on-lookers, who were able to appreciate why leading regional restaurants include the delicious Northern-Irish bred beef on their menus.

Food lovers at the Royal Show were also told about another successful rural product project, this time involving handmade, luxury ice cream from the family-run *Bluebell Dairy*, located near Derby in the English midland region. The Brown family received EU rural development funding to help convert an old farm building into the new dairy, which opened its doors for business in December last year.

Some 12 different flavours of high quality ice cream products are produced on-site, which includes a farm shop, tea rooms and play area. Much pride was attributed to the fact that most of the fresh vegetables, meat, eggs, cheeses, milk, cream and bread used in the Brown's food products are sourced from within 30 miles of their farm gate.

In addition to these popular project showcases, the Royal Show's Rural Development Day also featured information about recent developments in rural policy. Dieter Wagner from the EN RD Contact Point highlighted new networking and communication tools that are being rolled out to Member States by the EN RD website. From the European Commission side Jean-Bernard Benhaïem and Frances White gave an interesting and detailed 'Tea Time' account of the current priorities and content regarding EU rural development policy. This was well received by the audience and stimulated a number of interesting debates.

Other topic areas covered by DG AGRI during their time at the Royal Show included a focus on recent events in organic product policy.



Interest in organic issues remains strong with visitors to the Royal Show and DG AGRI arranged a dedicated session to raise awareness about new developments in support of organic systems, such as breaking news about the 3400 entries that had been received for the EU organic logo competition.

This new innovation will complement other *recent organic policy developments*, featured above, and the EC delegation explained that the new logo will create a strong organic food identity across Europe for both farmers and producers, who were encouraged to take advantage of the logo in their own campaigns.

Participation in the Royal Show by EC delegates and the EN RD was welcomed and, despite this year being the last ever Royal Show, a new programme of events has been announced that will continue to provide opportunities for UK rural stakeholders to get together, exchange experiences, transfer knowledge and learn about new innovations. The EN RD fully supports such endeavours and looks forward to further collaboration on new rural networking events in the UK.

FIND OUT
MORE

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

EU Rural Development policy 2007-13:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index_en.htm

Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm

The European Evaluation Network:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/network/index_en.htm

RUR@L NEWS Contributions/Events

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