



Experience of the Evaluation and Self-Assessment of National Rural Networks (NRNs)



European Commission
Agriculture and
Rural Development



European Network for
Rural Development

EN RD | **CONNECTING RURAL EUROPE**

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

Mark Redman
ENRD Contact Point
2 June, 2011





COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1698/2005

Article 68:

Each Member State shall establish a national rural network, which groups the organisations and administrations involved in rural development.



31 National Rural Networks





There are different types of cobwebs



Some are beautiful, structured
and highly functional.....

...others are not so beautiful, not
so well structured and not so
highly functional





What do we know about the functionality and effectiveness of the National Rural Networks?





Growing body of
knowledge, but
this is **not**
currently
collected and
shared

A faint, light blue map of Europe serves as the background for the slide. It shows the outlines of the continents and major countries.

4 Programme NRNs

Germany, Italy, Portugal & Spain

27 ‘Technical Assistance’ NRNs

21 national RDPs

6 regional RDPs in UK/BE

**Some Formal Obligations for
Monitoring and Evaluation of NRNs**

NRN “Self-Assessment”



Formal Obligations for Monitoring and Evaluation of National Rural Networks (NRNs)





4 Programme NRNs

Germany, Italy, Portugal & Spain

a) Subject to the obligations of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF)

-> **BUT no specific guidance** is provided





b) Methodological support from the *European Evaluation Network for Rural Development*



<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation>





c) Comprehensive Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) reports published in 2010





d) Specialist knowledge is developing amongst a small group of independent evaluators

An incubator of good practice – how to access it for the benefit of other NRNs?



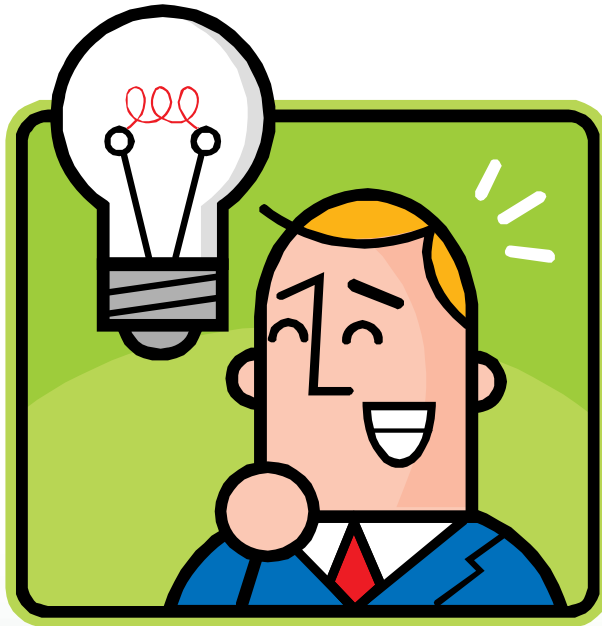


27 'Technical Assistance' NRNs
21 national RDPs
6 regional RDPs in UK/BE



i) Networks **may be** evaluated as part of the package of Technical Assistance measures





ii) **Significant consideration of networking in the MTE reports of *some* RDPs**



Scottish National Rural Network

1. Summary

1.1 Aims, Objectives

The EU Rural Development Regulation¹ (RDR) requires that each Member State set up a national rural network grouping the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. This reflects the perceived success of pan-European networking activity under the 2000 – 2006 LEADER+ Programme. The UK has 4 different rural development programmes reflecting each country's specificities each with its own rural network; these are linked together at the UK level.

The overall aim of such networking is that through an enhanced understanding of national and regional rural development issues, rural development stakeholders will be better placed to learn from one another and to take advantage of development opportunities.

The vision of the Scottish National Rural Network (SNRN) is therefore to contribute to enabling rural development; the principal aim is that this be achieved through establishing connections between rural stakeholders and by providing a means of communicating. This is summed up in the strap line from the Scottish National Rural Network website which is 'connecting rural Scotland, promoting rural growth'.

1.2 Relevant Measures and Activities

National Rural Networks are supported under the Technical Assistance provisions, Measure 511. The SNRN has pursued two main types of activity directly in line with those provided for and specified under the RDR; these are

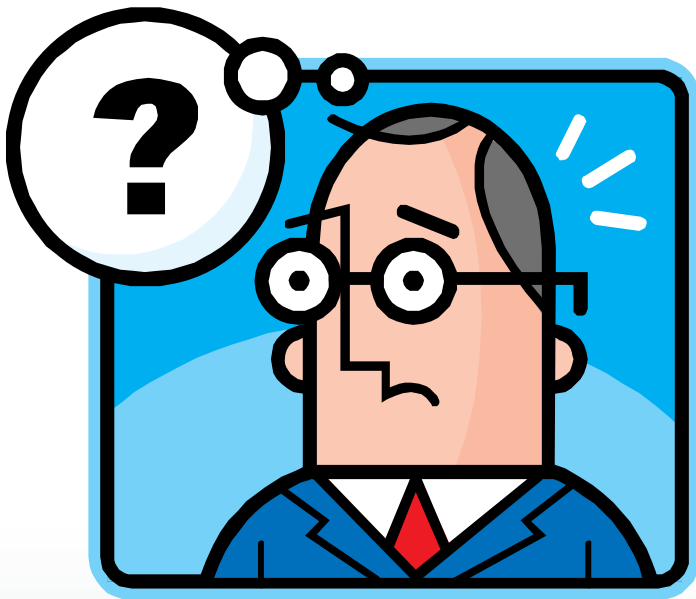
1. Establishing the structures needed to run the network; and
2. Delivering an action plan containing at least:
 - the identification and analysis of good transferable practices and the provision of information about them;
 - network management;
 - the organisation of exchanges of experience and know-how;
 - the preparation of training programmes for local action groups in the process of formation; and
 - technical assistance for inter-territorial and transnational cooperation.

¹ 1698/2005 Article 68

E.g. Scottish NRN (14 pages):

- Strategic rationale
- Management and delivery
- Review of performance
- Summary of findings





iii) **No consideration of networking** in the MTE reports of *many* RDPs

-> delayed until *ex post* evaluation



SOME QUICK CONCLUSIONS:

1. There is **no consistent approach** to NRN monitoring and evaluation apparent in the 2010 Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) reports

-> but a 'learning process' is clearly started





2. There are some **indications of confusion** amongst RDP evaluators!

-> more guidance for evaluators is needed

-> and more guidance for NRNs.....?





3. There is some **(inevitable) critical comment** from evaluators....

“...slow start-up”

“...limited engagement with the wider rural community”

“...need for more relevant activities” etc.

-> but many very positive comments!





For example:

“....the [network] undoubtedly had a positive effect with its programme of events and through the website in enabling regional and national exchange and knowledge transfer...”





4. Most comments in the MTEs are focused upon the **outputs and results** of networking
- > evaluation of impact will be challenging!



NRN “Self-Assessment”





- 1 A **voluntary activity** for Managing Authorities and Network Support Units
- 2 **Flexible** and **adaptable** to the needs of individual NRNs
- 3 **Consistent** and **comparable** with formal monitoring and evaluation obligations



**"Self-assessment
for Self-
improvement"**

- 4** Focus on assessing the **progress** and **effectiveness** of the NRNs' own work for the purpose of improving it



Quick introduction to the content of the **NRN Self- Assessment Tool- Kit**.....



European Commission
European Network for Rural Development

European Commission > Agriculture and Rural Development > Rural Development > EN RD > NRN Self-Assessment Tool-kit



NRN Self-Assessment Tool-kit

HOME

- NOTE 8 ON NRN SELF-ASSESSMENT
- NRN SELF-ASSESSMENT PROFILE 8
- PRACTICAL TOOL 8 FOR NRN SELF-ASSESSMENT
- LOOKING BEYOND NRN SELF-ASSESSMENT




Welcome to the Homepage of the NRN Self-Assessment Tool-Kit

The aim of this on-line Tool-Kit is to allow users to present and exchange a range of different approaches, techniques and practical "tools" for monitoring the progress and assessing the performance of the networking activities typically undertaken by NRNs.

Self-assessment is not an obligation. It is a voluntary activity for those network managers and network members who want to understand if their network is working fully and effectively towards its objectives. The main focus of NRN self-assessment is upon measuring and assessing the outputs and results of networking – the evaluation of impact remains a job for the external evaluator at the level of programme evaluation.

You can begin exploring the Self-Assessment Tool-Kit by clicking on one of the buttons below.


QUICK VIEW



Notes on NRN Self-Assessment

Some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and a simple "step-by-step" approach to NRN self-assessment.


[More](#)



NRN Self-Assessment Profiles

Examples (with key supporting documents) of the approach that selected NRNs have taken to self-assessment.


[More](#)



Practical Tools for NRN Self-Assessment

Practical examples and advice about existing and potential tools for NRN self-assessment.

[More](#)



Looking Beyond NRN Self-Assessment

Potential inspiration for more advanced approaches to assessing the results (or even impact) of NRN activities.

[More](#)



Select Language



European Evaluation Network for Rural Development

EEN RD NEWS

18/02/2011 – EAAE seminar, February 2011, Ancona, Italy

26/11/2010 – 2010 SWOT analysis shows progress in EU rural development evaluation system

29/10/2010 – Rural Evaluation News – Issue n°5 – October 2010

07/10/2010 – Establishing a framework of reference to capture impacts of Leader and Quality of Life

07/10/2010 – Comparing approaches for the evaluation of National Rural Network Programmes

EEN RD Toolkit

- Get to know the Evaluation Helpdesk
- Learn about the Annual Work Programme 2010
- Read our latest newsletter
- Contact Us



Further Activities

- Launch NRN Self-Assessment Tool-Kit on ENRD website (June 2011)
- Support Finnish NRN with a joint network meeting on “Demonstrating the Value of Networking” (May/June 2012)
- Develop common working method for NRNs to contribute to “Demonstrating the Value of Networking”





Contact:

Mark Redman

ENRD Networking and Co-operation Support Team

mark.redman@enrd.eu

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

