

CONNECTIONS

THE EUROPEAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

NEWS AND UPDATES

- **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE CAP PLANS**
- **STATE OF PLAY OF THE CAP REFORM NEGOTIATIONS**
- **RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY**

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

- **THE FUTURE OF RURAL NETWORKING IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE**
- **FROM GREECE TO THE WORLD THANKS TO LEADER**
- **RISING TO THE RURAL CONNECTIVITY CHALLENGE**

FOCUS ON...

- **CAPITALISING ON EAFRD-FUNDED PROJECTS**

EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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

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

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RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES



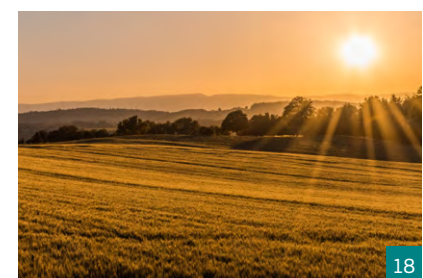
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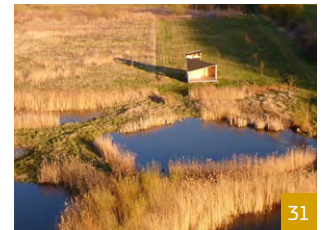
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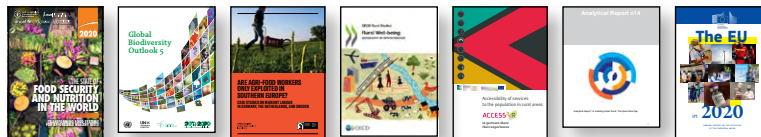
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EDITORIAL



Spring is the season that brings us from the darkness of winter to the summer light. As the days get longer, our hope gets stronger and we instinctively plan for the future. This spring edition of Rural Connections was prepared in this mood.

The ENRD Contact Point is supporting Member State authorities, NRNs, LEADER Local Action Groups and a wide range of stakeholders in the transition to the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In the [News](#) section (page 4) you can read about this and the latest EU policy developments. You can also find information about our recent landmark event, the Rural Vision Week (22-26 March 2021), a milestone in the development of a collective long-term vision for Europe's rural areas. This event will be the focus of the next edition of Rural Connections, so stay tuned!

A colourful range of [Rural issues, rural perspectives](#) (page 14) illustrates the diversity of topics related to rural development. The articles, mostly written by stakeholders and practitioners, range from social farming to LEADER enhancing a Greek island's intangible cultural heritage, to the state of the digital transition in rural areas. We also look at how National Rural Networks have adapted to the digital shift imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, learning important lessons for the future of rural networking.

To look at the future with hope, it is important to learn from the past. Thus, on page 26 we **Focus on** the lessons learnt from the past editions of the ENRD's Rural Inspiration Awards for 2019 and 2020, including the essentials for successful communication and the competition's impact on the participating projects.

We hope this new publication provides you with inspiration and connections to start 'building back better' from the pandemic in your communities, across rural Europe.

Enjoy the spring!

Elena Di Federico

Publications Manager, ENRD Contact Point

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NEWS & UPDATES

ENRD NEWS



Capacity building for the CAP Plans

An important part of the ENRD Contact Point (CP) activities involves supporting more effective and simpler implementation of the current Rural Development Programmes and preparations for the new CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs). This involves helping Member States' Managing Authorities, paying agencies and other stakeholders to gain new insights through exchanging experiences with their peers and discussing technical topics with European Commission experts.

In this framework, the ENRD CP has over recent months organised a series of workshops on different aspects of preparing the CSPs and the transitional period, all of them offering opportunities for exchanges between Member States' representatives and with European Commission officials.

The webinar 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: Designing the Intervention Strategy' (2 October 2020) discussed the design of intervention strategies for the future CSPs contributing particularly to the CAP Specific Objectives 1 – 'Fair farm income', 4 – 'Climate change action', and 8 – 'Vibrant rural areas'.

The webinar 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: designing interventions' (25 November 2020) discussed approaches to designing interventions under the future CSPs contributing to the CAP specific objectives, from the point of view of the legal proposal as well as from the perspective of the Member States.

The webinar 'The Transition Regulation, EURI and the extension of RDPs' (1 February 2021) presented the recently adopted

transitional provisions extending the legal framework of the current CAP to the years 2021 and 2022 as well as information on the integration of the European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI) funds in the RDPs.

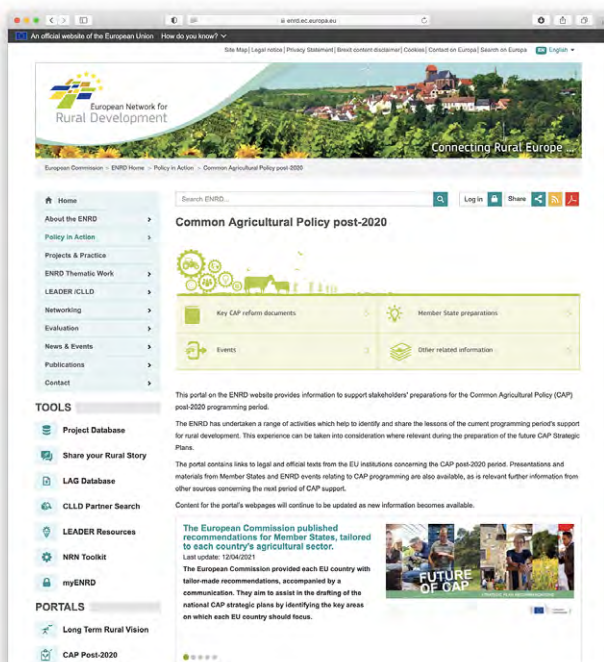
The webinar 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: programming regional-level interventions' (9 February 2021) aimed to encourage exchanges on the practical aspects of addressing regional and/or territorial specificities through the CSPs including by the design of regional level interventions, with a particular focus on identifying key obstacles, possible solutions and needs for additional support.

The webinar 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: designing eco-schemes' (25 February 2021) aimed at presenting and discussing approaches to designing Eco-Schemes, in order to address key environmental, climate and animal welfare challenges in synergies with EAFRD interventions.

All the information from this capacity building work is hosted on the ENRD website's CAP post-2020 portal, which includes presentations and reports from the webinars mentioned above and signposts to further resources.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- CAP post-2020 information portal: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/common-agricultural-policy-post-2020_en
- Workshop 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: designing the intervention strategy': https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-webinar-preparing-cap-strategic-plans-designing-intervention-strategy_en
- Workshop 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: designing interventions': https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/preparing-cap-strategic-plans-designing-interventions_en
- The Transition Regulation, EURI and the extension of RDPs workshop: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/transition-regulation-euri-and-extension-rdps_en
- Workshop 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: programming regional-level interventions': https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/preparing-cap-strategic-plans-programming-regional-level-interventions_en
- Workshop 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: designing Eco-Schemes': https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/preparing-cap-strategic-plans-designing-eco-schemes_en



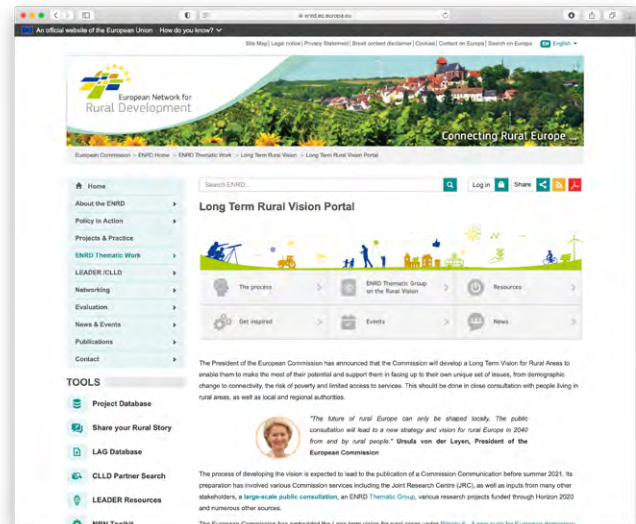
NEWS & UPDATES

Towards a Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas

The ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on the Long Term Rural Vision, #Rural2040, launched in September 2020, aims to contribute to and enrich the foresight exercise carried out for the European Commission's Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas, in cooperation with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The TG also acts as a platform or exchange hub sharing, discussing and communicating the results of different activities carried out by TG members and other key actors involved in contributing to the work on the Long-Term Vision.

Four TG meetings have taken place so far, on 22 September 2020, 2-3 December 2020, 27 January 2021 and 5 May 2021. The ENRD Contact Point also organised/contributed to two sessions on the Vision in the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities (13 October 2020) as well as an interim TG meeting (20 October 2020). The ENRD's Long Term Rural Vision Portal gathers event reports and other inspiring information on rural networks' activities and initiatives across Europe feeding into the preparation of the Long-Term Vision.

In addition, the ENRD, together with the European Commission, published the LTVRA Workshop Package 'Welcome to our rural!' for use by NRNs and other rural stakeholders. The package is available in most EU languages and provided opportunities for groups of rural citizens to explore their ideal vision for the future of their own rural area. More than 160 contributions were received from across the EU.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ENRD Thematic Group on the Long Term Rural Vision – #Rural2040: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision_en

ENRD's Long Term Rural Vision Portal: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision/long-term-rural-vision-portal_en

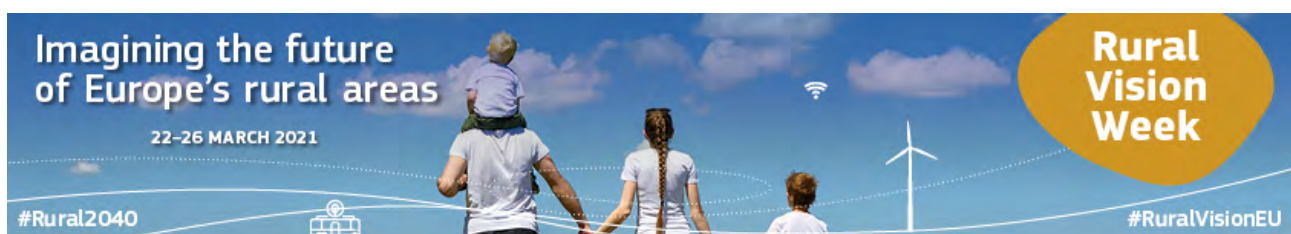
LTVRA Workshop Package for NRNs and other rural stakeholders: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/ltrva-workshop-package-nrns-and-other-rural-stakeholders_en

Rural Vision Week

The ENRD, in close cooperation with the European Commission, organised the virtual event 'Rural Vision Week: Imagining the future of Europe's rural areas' between 22 and 26 March 2021. This interactive event included high level presentations and discussions, workshops, a Marketplace and 'Fringe' activities. These involved European stakeholders in working together to contribute to the preparation of the Long-Term Vision for the future of EU rural areas (see above). The next edition of Rural Connections (summer 2021) will summarise the most inspiring outcomes and key messages – stay tuned!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Rural Vision Week: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week_en



NEWS & UPDATES

Rural Inspiration Awards 2021

The theme of the 2021 edition of the ENRD's Rural Inspiration Awards was 'Our Rural Future', in line with the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas being developed by the European Commission (see page 5). It recognised projects supported by EAFRD under the current RDPs which are already helping unlock rural potential or address some of the longer term challenges facing our rural areas. Project entries were identified and submitted by National Rural Networks, and we received 125 entries from 22 Member States.

The competition included four categories: Green Futures, Digital Futures, Resilient Futures and Socially Inclusive Futures. In addition to these, a Popular Vote Award was held and decided via an online voting system.

As you read these lines, the winners of the RIA2021 are celebrating following an exciting virtual ceremony held on 25 March 2021 in the framework of the



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Rural Vision Week (see page 5), where awards were presented by European Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski. We do not want to spoil the surprise: check the event page

on the ENRD website to discover the shortlisted projects and the winners and look forward to more details in the next edition of the Rural Connections magazine (summer 2021).

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Rural Inspiration Awards webpage https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural-inspiration-awards_en

The European Green Deal and rural areas

The ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on the European Green Deal (EGD) and rural areas, launched in autumn 2020, is collecting and sharing useful indications and ideas for the programming of green interventions under the future CAP Strategic Plans.

Three TG meetings were organised between September 2020 and February 2021, all in virtual format. The first webinar defined the specific topics

to be addressed by the TG until May 2021. The second and third meetings focused respectively on effective CAP approaches to support sustainable practices in agriculture and forestry (10 December 2020) and the transition to clean energy in rural areas, respectively (26 February 2021).

The TG has produced a scoping paper on the European Green Deal and rural

areas and a factsheet on 'Using the CAP to upscale sustainable agriculture and forestry management practices.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ENRD Thematic Group on the European Green Deal and rural areas: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/greening-rural-economy/european-green-deal-rural-areas_en



NEWS & UPDATES

LEADER activities

The 6th ENRD LEADER Thematic Lab (14 January 2021) focused on 'Designing LEADER for resilience and sustainability'. This online event explored various aspects of designing LEADER under the future CAP Strategic Plans for local community resilience and sustainability. Participants also discussed the potential role and contribution of LEADER and existing LAGs on these themes during the transition period to the new CAP.

A 7th ENRD LEADER Thematic Lab on 26 April 2021 looked at 'LEADER funding made simpler – using SCOs in the transition period and under the CAP Strategic Plans'.

The LEADER Resources section on the ENRD website, recently revamped, gathers information, news and updates about the ENRD Contact Point's work in support of LEADER. Frequent updates ensure that the material is always up-to-date and stakeholders' contributions are given a prominent place.

The ENRD's LAG database has been recently updated with data about 38 additional LAGs (37 LAGs from Lithuania and one LAG from Slovenia). This brings the total number of LAGs featured in the LAG database to 3136.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ENRD LEADER Thematic Lab 'Designing LEADER for resilience and sustainability': https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-leader-thematic-lab-designing-leader-resilience-and-sustainability_en

ENRD LEADER Thematic Lab 'LEADER funding made simpler – using SCOs in the transition period and under the CAP Strategic Plans': https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-leader-thematic-lab-leader-funding-made-simpler-using-scots-transition-period_en

LEADER Resources: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/leader-resources_en

LAG database: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/lag-database_en

Happy birthday LEADER!

Exactly 30 years ago, in 1991, the EU adopted a new approach for community-led rural development: the LEADER method, focused on the participation of the local population, innovation and public-private collaboration.

To mark the occasion, the European Commission has made available a banner which Managing Authorities, NRNS, LAGs and other stakeholders are invited to use on LEADER-related products during 2021. The banner can be downloaded from the LEADER Resources page on the ENRD website.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Download the LEADER banner: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/leader-resources_en

What does LEADER mean to you? What impact does it have on your rural area? Share your LEADER story! https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-sfr/add/enrd-ruralstory_en



NEWS & UPDATES

19th National Rural Networks meeting

The 19th NRN meeting took place virtually on 11 February 2021 and was co-hosted by the Luxembourg Rural Network. The meeting focussed on the role of NRNs in supporting and promoting transnational cooperation (TNC) activities of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and the cross-border cooperation of EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs) which is foreseen to be reinforced under

the new CAP legal framework. The event also provided the opportunity to exchange on forthcoming rural networking activities and on the ongoing development of national CAP networks.

Thanks to a pre-recorded virtual field visit, the 94 participants from 25 Member States got to know better the work that LEADER LAGs and the Luxembourg Rural Network are doing on transnational cooperation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

19th NRN meeting: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/19th-nrn-meeting_en
ENRD playlist 'Rural networking' on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLocST8_B8egbib_C7riKHcCCGt8WcFp_a

Common Network Statistics

The ENRD CP published the Summary Report of its Common Network Statistics (CNS), based on data from 2019. The document provides a good overview of National Support Unit (NSU) activities and thematic priorities, identifying trends and tracking progress in networking activities across the EU.

The latest summary report highlights, among others, a constant increase of NSU activities in general, except for training activities organised by NSUs for

stakeholders. This could be explained by the fact that more capacity building was needed at the beginning of the programming period. On the other hand, the tendency to focus thematic work primarily on Priority 6 – 'Social Inclusion and Economic Development' observed during the past years seems to have changed towards Priority 1 – 'Knowledge Transfer and Innovation'.

The report shows that there is more and more discussion about the future CAP

Networks, which will need to have a wider focus including different topics. The NSUs indicated that the shift from National Rural Networks towards CAP networks will be smoother if knowledge transfer and innovation related activities are already included.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CNS Y6 Summary Report: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/cns-y6-summary-report_en

Governance updates

The 9th meeting of the European Rural Networks' Assembly's permanent Sub-group on LEADER/CLLD took place online on 23 February 2021. Sub-group members received updates on the state of play of LEADER implementation and Commission initiatives relating to LEADER and on recent and planned ENRD Contact Point activities concerning LEADER. Participants were also able to share and discuss Member States' perspectives on how LEADER will be used during the transition period.

The event also provided an opportunity to present the results of the survey of Sub-group members and exchange views on the achievements and challenges of the Sub-group, in view of its current role and possible future governance needs. The survey received 37 responses from 23 EU Member States.

Overall, the Sub-group is seen to have fulfilled its mandate and members viewed their experiences of participating positively. The respondents valued in particular the possibility to exchange knowledge, experiences and good practices between different levels of stakeholder (local, national, EU) and across Member States. Overwhelmingly, respondents thought that a governance body dedicated to LEADER/CLLD should be retained in the future EU CAP Network.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

9th LEADER/CLLD Sub-group meeting: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/9th-leader-clld-sub-group-meeting_en

NEWS & UPDATES

UPDATE FROM THE EVALUATION HELPDISK

EUROPEAN
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FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The 15th Good Practice Workshop: 'Assessing the contribution of RDPs to a competitive and viable agricultural sector'



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The 15th Good Practice Workshop of the Evaluation Helpdesk on 'Assessing the contribution of RDPs to a competitive and viable agricultural sector', took place online on 9-10 December 2020. It brought together 80 participants from 25 Member States, including RDP Managing Authorities, evaluators, European Commission representatives, researchers, National Rural Networks, and other evaluation stakeholders. The overall objective of the workshop was to share and reflect on experiences in relation to assessing the contribution of RDPs to a competitive and viable agricultural sector within a properly functioning food supply chain and the EU's capacity for crisis management.

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Conclusions stemming from the experiences shared include the importance of having comparable control groups in order to assess the counterfactual. This will allow evaluators to determine the actual effects of the

RDP on supported beneficiaries. This is an important driver for future policy decisions, since it is essential that evaluators can determine whether the mix of interventions and their delivery models can improve competitiveness and to what extent along the food chain.

Triangulating the outcomes of such quantitative approaches with expert assessments, surveys and stakeholder inputs adds value by analysing causality and interpreting the quantitative findings. The workshop emphasised this as being particularly relevant for the assessment of competitiveness, which covers both the farming and non-farming sectors and is characterised by multiple internal and external linkages in a multi-step value chain. Participants agreed that broader or

holistic approaches that take into account the complexity of farming and non-farming systems are therefore relevant in order to provide context to the numbers calculated.

Participants indicated that there is no single-cover-all method that can be proposed since there are different delivery contexts, as well as, different availability of data, which will determine the appropriate mix of methodologies and focus. However, it was agreed that the evaluation should entail a certain degree of flexibility and openness in order to revise existing and/or develop additional judgment criteria and indicators to cover the limitations of the current evaluation questions, criteria or indicators, as well as, fill data gaps.

ADAPTING TO NEW REALITIES

Participants agreed that there is a need to potentially complement the existing evaluation elements with revised or additional elements due to the changing context. Economic, environmental or health related contextual changes (like the current COVID-19 crisis) will have implications on the intervention logic of programmes, including the mix and focus of measures and their delivery. Future evaluations of competitiveness cannot ignore the important effects on the food chain from external shocks like the current health crisis.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Explore the Presentations and Workshop Report:
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/good-practice-workshops/assessing-contribution-rdps-competitive-and-viable-agricultural_en

NEWS & UPDATES

UPDATE FROM EIP-AGRI



EIP-AGRI: 7 years of innovation in agriculture and forestry

The enthusiasm of the EIP-AGRI network members is essential to the success of the EIP-AGRI, and in ensuring that everyone can benefit. "Participating in the EIP-AGRI Focus Groups on Agroforestry and Renewable energy has been of significant help for my farm development" Mati Sepp (Estonia), farmer and Focus Group expert. Since its launch in 2013, the EIP-AGRI has been promoting interactive innovation to make EU agriculture and forestry more sustainable and productive. A report entitled 'EIP-AGRI: 7 years of innovation in agriculture and forestry' shows how the EIP-AGRI has grown into a thriving network. The report contains quotes from many EIP-AGRI stakeholders from different EU member states illustrating their participation and motivation since 2013. It also looks back over the past 7 years presenting the topics covered, number and profiles of people involved, types of activities and materials produced as well as many photos from the many EIP-AGRI events.

"This report shows that the effort of everyone involved has paid off [...]. If you are looking for inspiration, this is a great starting point"

*Janusz Wojciechowski,
EU Commissioner for agriculture and rural development.*

VIDEO: EIP-AGRI, MAKING EU FARMING AND FORESTRY FUTURE-PROOF SINCE 2013

Watch this new EIP-AGRI video to hear researchers, farmers, advisers, Managing Authorities and National Rural Networks about how the EIP-AGRI has helped them over the past 7 years: <https://youtu.be/lbZrhgEO7Zo>

IDEAS FOR OPERATIONAL GROUPS AND OTHER INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

The EIP-AGRI supports Operational Groups (OGs), multi-actor projects on a local scale to tackle the needs and opportunities of farming and forestry practice. The EIP-AGRI Service Point has also published a report aiming to inspire advisers, farmers and foresters, researchers who are considering starting an OG or another type of innovative project. The inspiration has been drawn from EIP-AGRI Focus Groups (FG) from the past 7 years which collect and summarise knowledge on good practices and challenges on a specific theme. Based on this, FGs highlight areas where OGs, or other similar projects, could make a difference. In this new report, search through the project ideas by Focus Group topic, agricultural sector or by theme such as resource management, food safety/product quality, animal

health and welfare, climate change or digitalisation. This report could also be of use for rural development programme Managing Authorities, and others who are preparing future calls for projects.

9 KEY TOPICS IN FARMING AND FORESTRY

Agro-ecology, soil, climate change, digitalisation, plant health, circular bioeconomy, organic farming, animal welfare and forestry... since 2013, and thanks to the input of the whole network, these 9 key topics have been a focus for EIP-AGRI. These important themes have been brought to the spotlight and promoted through many different EIP-AGRI activities. A new page on the EIP-AGRI website lets you browse through a range of resources for each theme. These resources include dedicated social media campaigns and hashtags created by EIP-AGRI, thematic EIP-AGRI newsletters, related EIP-AGRI Focus Groups, events, publications and videos, many relevant inspirational ideas from the network across Europe, as well as interesting Horizon 2020 projects and more.

**i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

EIP-AGRI achievements report: 7 years of innovation in agriculture and forestry: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/publications/eip-agri-7-years-innovation-agriculture-and>

EIP-AGRI video: EIP-AGRI: making EU agriculture and forestry future-proof since 2013: <https://youtu.be/lbZrhgEO7Zo>

EIP-AGRI Report: Ideas for OGs and other innovative projects from Focus Group experts: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/publications/ideas-operational-groups-and-other-innovative>

Farming and forestry topics in the spotlight – links to thematic pages: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/spotlight>

EIP-AGRI Agrinnovation magazine issue 7 (2020): <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/publications/agrinnovation-magazine-issue-n%C2%B0-7-september-2020>

NEWS & UPDATES

EU NEWS

State of play of the CAP reform negotiations

The interinstitutional negotiations on the legal framework regulating the new CAP, between the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union – the so called trilogues – which began on 10 November 2020, are currently ongoing and are expected to end by June 2021.

In a 'Super Trilogue' held at the end of March 2021, the three institutions reached an agreement in principle regarding in particular the new CAP performance model, the support guidelines for direct payments, controls on conditionality and transparency in the application of funds.⁽¹⁾

While specific rules to verify direct payments and Eco-Schemes remain to be set, it has already been agreed that voluntary commitments in favour of greener agriculture will be supported with funds from both the first and second pillar of the CAP.

The CAP's green architecture has been one of the most debated issues of the proposed CAP Strategic Plans' regulation. Although steps have been made through the trilogues particularly regarding the enhanced conditionality, i.e. what farmers must do and comply with to receive direct aid, a final agreement has not been achieved yet. Discussions also continue on the details of Eco-Schemes (see details on page 12) and on ring-fencing part of the Direct Payments budget for them.

As for the performance check of the new delivery model of the CAP, progress has been made as regards the result indicators to be used for monitoring and performance review purposes. A deal was also found on the frequency of such a review and the deviation tolerance with respect to the pre-agreed milestones. The level of details regarding specific

regional elements in the design and implementation of the future CSP is also a key topic under discussion.

Portugal, which holds the Council Presidency until 30 June 2021, is organising technical discussions on the CAP reform between co-legislators at a very intense rhythm with the hope that the trilogue talks will reach a final political agreement under its Presidency. After any agreement is endorsed by the Parliament and Council, the Commission will draw up the necessary secondary legislation for implementation of the new CAP, with a view to Member States formally submitting their draft CAP Strategic Plans (CSP) to the Commission by end of 2021. The Commission will then examine and approve the new CSP, so they can start being implemented from 1 January 2023.

CAP transitional arrangements and EURI funds

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Transitional arrangements have entered into force for the CAP to cover the period 2021-2022. The CAP transitional regulation ensures continued support for agriculture, forestry and rural areas, filling the gap between the programming periods, until the planned entry into force of the new CAP and the national CAP Strategic Plans in 2023.

The transitional regulation will extend most of the CAP rules that were in place during the 2014-20 period, including extending the current Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) for an additional two years. New elements have been included to make a stronger contribution to the European Green Deal and to ensure a smooth transition to the future policy framework of the CAP Strategic Plans.

During the transition period 2021-2022, funding will be drawn from the CAP's budget allocation for 2021-27, bolstered by an additional €8 billion for rural development from the European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI) which will be implemented through the current RDPs.

The additional resources from the EURI for rural development will help fund a resilient, sustainable and digital economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which is in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal. At least 37% of the EURI resources should be devoted to measures that benefit the environment and climate, as well as to animal welfare and LEADER. At least 55% of the EURI resources should be devoted to measures that promote economic and social development in rural areas, namely to investments in physical assets, farm and business development, support for basic services and village renewal in rural areas and cooperation.⁽²⁾

(1) <https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/news/cap-reform/>

(2) https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/transitional-regulation_en

NEWS & UPDATES

CAP Reform: Eco-Schemes

Eco-Schemes are one of the biggest novelties introduced by the proposed CAP reform. They are a new instrument under direct payments support (Pillar I of the CAP), designed to reward farmers willing to do more in terms of climate action and the protection of the environment. The Eco-Schemes could provide a unique opportunity to engage a wider number of farmers and hectares (ha), in addition to and in synergy with the sustainable management commitments supported through rural development interventions (Pillar II).

The European Commission recently published a 'List of potential agricultural practices that Eco-Schemes could support in the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)'.⁽¹⁾ The publication describes how the Eco-Schemes will replace direct 'greening' payments to farmers and how these might look when the new CAP takes effect in 2023, as the direct 'greening' payments to farmers proved not to meet the expectations hoped for.

To be supported by Eco-Schemes, agricultural practices have to meet the following conditions:

- cover activities related to the climate, environment, animal welfare and antimicrobial resistance;
- be in line with the needs and priorities identified at national/regional levels;
- go beyond the requirements and



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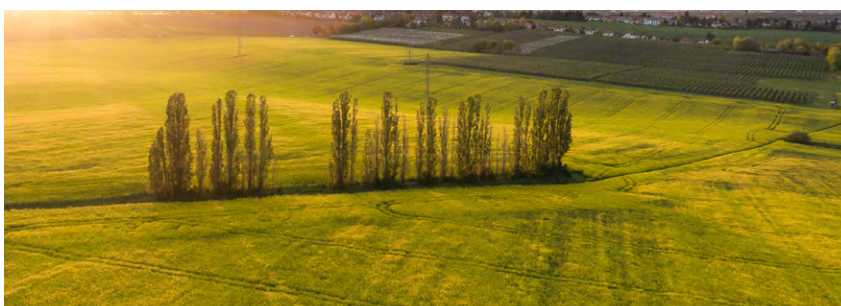
- obligations established under the baseline (including conditionality); and
- contribute to reaching the EU Green Deal targets, which include reducing pesticide and fertiliser use, turning agricultural land over to organic farming, halving nutrient loss and increasing the share of farmland consisting of 'high diversity landscape features'.

The examples of agricultural practices that could be supported by Eco-Schemes

identified by the Commission include: integrated pest management; agro-ecology and agro-forestry; husbandry and animal welfare plans; carbon and precision farming, nutrient management; protecting water resources and measures beneficial for the soil or for reducing GHG emissions.

Examples of 'carbon farming' include conservation agriculture – restoring the carbon content of soils through techniques such as using cover crops, restoring wetlands, burying agricultural residues and establishing or restoring extensively grazed permanent grassland.

The Eco-Schemes should be planned in consistency and complementarity with similar agri-environment-climate types of interventions programmed under Pillar II of the CAP, contributing together to the objectives of the Green Deal.



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(1) https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/factsheet-agri-practices-under-ecoscheme_en.pdf

NEWS & UPDATES

Recovery and Resilience Facility

The European Parliament and the Council have agreed on the EU's €672.5 billion recovery and resilience facility (RRF)⁽¹⁾ to help Europe 'build back better' following the COVID-19 crisis. The RRF, which entered into force on 19 February 2021, is made up of €312.5 billion in grants and €360 billion in loans available to support reforms and investments undertaken by Member States. The RRF is the key instrument of NextGenerationEU, the EU's €750 billion recovery package, the largest EU programme ever developed.

This unprecedented funding will help to make the EU's economies and societies more resilient and secure the green and digital transitions.

For the Commission to start borrowing under NextGenerationEU, thus making the instrument operational, the ratification of the new Own Resources Decision by all Member States in line with their constitutional requirements is still needed.




Member States were, as a general rule, due to submit their national recovery plans setting out the reforms and public investment projects that will be supported by the RRF to the European Commission for scrutiny, by end of April 2021. Once validated, countries will have until 2026 to implement the plans.

Member States are encouraged to focus on areas that deliver tangible benefits for citizens across the EU. All investments and reforms must respect the "do no significant harm" principle, ensuring that they do not significantly harm the environment.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE RECOVERY
AND RESILIENCE FACILITYWhat is the Recovery and
Resilience Facility?

€672.5 billion

The 6 pillars of the RRF

-  GREEN TRANSITION
-  DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
-  GROWTH, JOBS AND COHESION
-  SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION
-  HEALTH, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE
-  POLICIES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

What will it support?

A minimum of **37%** of expenditure for **climate** investments and reforms

A minimum of **20%** of expenditure to foster the **digital transition**

(1) https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

The future of rural networking is not what it used to be

Kasia Panfil

How have National Rural Networks (NRNs) and Network Support Units (NSUs) adapted their working methods following the COVID-19 pandemic? We collected suggestions and food for thought from representatives of 16 organisations.



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Since early 2020, the majority of NRNs and NSUs have had to adapt their ways of working to significantly new circumstances. Based on their experience, they are considering a hybrid approach to future networking activities, combining physical and virtual meetings.

In some respects, online activities (e.g. meetings, events) are faster and cheaper to organise than physical meetings. As participants are not required to travel, online meetings can be organised more frequently and have a reduced environmental impact. However, they require specific skills and equipment – and at least the same amount of preparatory work. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, NRNs had to demonstrate flexibility and the capacity to change plans quickly, to find new resources and to learn to manage teams remotely. Some organisations, including Managing Authorities, face limitations and restrictions on their use of online tools. Finally, there is a real risk of overload with too many webinars.

Face-to-face interactions are irreplaceable and no virtual tour is as rich as a real field visit, but ‘the new normal’ imposed by the pandemic and related travel and meeting restrictions is generating interesting ideas.

ADAPTING, MIXING AND EXPERIMENTING

Rethinking networking in a digital format means creating web-based platforms and fora to generate ideas and to facilitate knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning. Such platforms can also serve as an open space



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for sharing a wide range of information and proposals with NRN members, including on future activities.

As one example of new approaches, the Italian NRN organised a hackathon. In rural development networking terms, ‘hackathon’ means an online discussion allowing for an exchange of information on burning issues and a collective effort to find potential solutions. The Italian NRN’s ‘Rural4Hack’⁽¹⁾ involved agricultural entrepreneurs, students, communication experts, university professors and regional authorities. For three days (15-17 September 2020), the participants learned about useful tools to tackle the challenges faced by farmers and worked together on developing SWOT analyses, marketing and communication plans, and business ideas for case-study agricultural holdings. The initiative was a success and another edition was organised in March 2021.

Looking forward to future CAP governance, digital platforms can be a powerful tool to involve a wider range of stakeholders. Many current NRNs will transition to become National CAP networks, with an increased

(1) <https://www.reterurale.it/rural4learning>

scope of activities, and the two years transition period 2021–2022 can offer an opportunity for piloting new approaches to stakeholder involvement and for capacity building.

For the Irish NRN, the transitional period should be used to identify synergies with other policies and funding streams (e.g. Horizon Europe), build stakeholders' capacity (e.g. to transition from one funding stream to another or to engage in web-based networking) and facilitate knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning through (virtual) platforms and events. The transitional period will also be the time for the national network to identify tools to assist with networking across both CAP Pillars, participate in and contribute to the activities of the future European CAP network and disseminate information about the new CAP (e.g. Eco-Schemes, benefits of results-based payments) and the CAP Strategic Plans. They should also facilitate knowledge brokering and innovation at a local/regional level and engage with groupings of younger rural dwellers and young farmers to expand their knowledge about the CAP Plans.

During the spring 2020 COVID lockdown, the French NRN created digital 'assemblies of territories' in different regions to bridge rural and agricultural actors through regular online meetings. Their webinars tackled issues at the crossroads between rural development and more general societal themes and attracted participants beyond rural development stakeholders, such as universities and local authorities. The success of the initiative motivated the NRN to consider introducing regular webinars for future networking.⁽²⁾

CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR A DIGITAL WORLD

The COVID-19 pandemic forced rural networks – like many other organisations – to re-examine and adjust their traditional ways of working to adapt to new ways of living and working. A good digital infrastructure and up-to-date skills are essential ingredients of this.

Webinars are a good option for digital networking, but organising them – and keeping them participative – requires time, new skills for staff and careful preparation, including detailed scripts. For example, the team of the Walloon NRN (Belgium) received training in Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Metro Retro, Miro and Mural. The NRN is now preparing training modules for its LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) on themes such as organising and managing remote work (managing teams, projects and partners), adapting a territorial development project to the current circumstances and using collaborative online platforms or tools effectively.

Rural development in Wallonia (Belgium) goes virtual

Apart from NRNs, other rural development stakeholders have shown their capacity to adapt to the current circumstances – often using digital tools.

Some LEADER LAGs focused on enhancing the skills of local associations. In Wallonia, LAGs Jesuishesbignon and Culturalité, for example, organised training on online collaborative tools (including Google Docs, Zoom and Jitsi) for local associations in the framework of their LEADER cooperation project 'Smart Hesbaye'.

<https://jesuishesbignon.be/smart/>

Belgian farm Ferme Louvigny replaced its 'Fancy Ferme' educational activities for children with a regular Facebook activity, posting frequent videos and images from the daily life on this educational farm.

<https://www.facebook.com/fermelouvigny>

The Lithuanian NRN introduced new measures to improve the smooth implementation of its members' projects by increasing and harmonising the use of online tools, such as webinars, virtual tours and audio-visual materials (e.g. videos).

In Poland, a number of successful activities using digital tools resonated with rural stakeholders. The Podkarpackie Agricultural Advisory Centre, for example, launched an e-market⁽³⁾ connecting agricultural producers, rural business and consumers. This was co-financed by the technical assistance measure of the Polish RDP under the Agricultural Innovation Network. The Agricultural Advisory Service in the Brwinów – Kraków branch office launched a weekly newsletter disseminating practical information about the pandemic and how to mitigate its impact.⁽⁴⁾

When face-to-face events and meetings became no longer possible, the Irish NRN quickly established a more significant online presence through webinars. Since April, the NRN has been supporting weekly webinars in association with Teagasc ConnectED, Dairy Sustainability Ireland, and Food Drink Ireland Skillnet. The webinars aim to raise awareness of the environmental and sustainable challenges facing Irish agriculture, delivering a stepwise change in illustrating the potential of digital communication for making the farming sector's voice heard.

(2) <https://www.reseaurural.fr/le-reseau-rural-francais/les-webinaires/webinaire-territoires-ruraux-en-action-face-au-covid>

(3) <https://www.polskiebazarek.pl>

(4) www.poradnik-row.pl

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

From Greece to the world thanks to LEADER

Amalia Tavladoraki

The LEADER philosophy contributed actively to the inclusion of the area of Asterousia (Crete, Greece) in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.



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Asterousia is the southernmost mountain range in Greece. It is located in the south of the Prefecture of Heraklion, between the plain of Messara and the South Cretan Sea. The area stretches over 367 km² of palm forests, ridges, gorges and steep ravines, as well as magnificent beaches and a wide coastal and maritime zone.

The area includes three Natura 2000 sites, three wildlife refuges, seven archaeological sites and a large number of monuments, such as Minoan sanctuaries, monasteries and hermitages. The beautiful landscapes host rare native species of terrestrial and marine flora and fauna, including 192 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Local people have managed to live in harmony with nature for centuries. The result is a unique combination of natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage.⁽¹⁾

Since 2020, the area of Asterousia has been included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO's 'Man and the Biosphere' (MAB) Programme (see box page 17). This is the result of two years of intense work and collective efforts coordinated by the Local Action Group (LAG) Heraklion Development Agency, which implements LEADER in the Heraklion region.

With its inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the area of Asterousia aims to be a catalyst for sustainable development through the combination of its natural and cultural capital. This will be achieved through the rational management of natural resources, the development of eco-tourism

and socio-economic activities, including high quality agricultural and livestock products of protected origin and the promotion of cultural goods. The area will host animation and awareness raising activities such as summer schools, festivals and exhibitions. At the same time, the strong UNESCO brand will help local producers promote their products both in domestic and foreign markets.

The preparation for the inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves was centred around the LEADER philosophy – the belief that local communities, with their excellent knowledge of both the strengths and weaknesses of their area, are best placed to identify and address local challenges.



© LAG Heraklion Development Agency

(1) Intangible cultural heritage encompasses the knowledge and skills transmitted from one generation to the next such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and ways to produce traditional crafts.



© LAG Heraklion Development Agency

Information events for the local community started in March 2018. Initially there was a great deal of resistance for fear of possible restrictions on activities in a protected area. However, through consultation activities in the municipalities concerned, contacts with the Environmental Education Centre operating in the area, as well as cultural associations, local chambers of commerce and business associations, the LAG Heraklion Development Agency was able to generate confidence among the local community and the stakeholders involved. The population eventually embraced the project and signed letters of support for the candidacy, which was submitted to the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) by the Region of Crete and the LAG.

The MAB strategy will be implemented by Asterousia's Local Management Committee, to be set up within the LAG's operating structure. This was seen favourably by the jury as it means that the Biosphere Reserve will be managed by an experienced development body that has been operating in the area for many years, cooperates with local agencies and is trusted by them.

Other elements in favour of the application were the LEADER/CLLD projects implemented in the area during the 2014–2020 programming period and the focus of the Local Development Strategy on rural and coastal development, social cohesion and the fight against unemployment.

The inclusion of Asterousia in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves raises awareness among local people of the value of their area which hosts a culture that has been preserved over the centuries.

This international recognition is expected to generate multiple benefits for the preservation and protection of the environment, as well as for the people and the economy of the area. By boosting the community's local pride and confidence, this international recognition will support their contribution to the sustainable development of the area and the identification of tailor-made solutions to daily problems.

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

is an intergovernmental programme that aims to establish a scientific basis to enhance the relationship between people and their environments. It combines the natural and social sciences with a view to improving human livelihoods and safeguarding natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts 701 sites in 124 countries all over the world.

For more information: <https://en.unesco.org/mab>

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Sustainability will be central to farming roles in 2040

Liz Newmark

Who will be farmers in the medium- and long-term to deal with challenges like climate change, decreased natural resources and increased digitalisation? The 'Farmers of the Future' foresight study conducted by the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), found that sustainability and resilience will be key to any future role.



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Achieving sustainability is increasingly important in all aspects of today's COVID-19-affected world – and farming is no exception. The 'Farmers of the Future' project, that aimed to identify possible future professional roles of farmers in 2040 and implications for EU policies, has concluded essentially that farming in 2040 must be more sustainable than today but also more resilient. But different farmers will pursue different approaches. This raises several questions, especially for policy coherence for moving in the same direction.

"For the study we developed 12 farmer profiles⁽¹⁾ based on the current diversity of farming in the European Union (EU) and already including some new, emerging profiles," DG AGRI adviser on foresight and impact assessment Florence Buchholzer and JRC policy analyst Anne-Katrin Bock told Rural Connections magazine. These profiles were explored with farmers and other stakeholders in several workshops.

"So we might see in 2040 a larger variety of farmer profiles, with the current emerging profiles developing into established ones," the experts said. All farmers must adapt to changing framework conditions, "not least to climate change and its impacts, in addition to food security."

"The 'people-centred' study shows that all farmer profiles in 2040 will need to adhere to sustainable farming," Buchholzer and Bock explained.

DIFFERENT PROFILES

Notably, for one key profile – the 'regenerative' farmer – 'the greener mainstream agriculture will imply change to the business model, the Commission experts said. In 2040, these farmers will move from being pioneers experimenting with new practices to become guardians of these practices, founding and helping communities and farmer associations which want to maintain more meaningful sustainability rules than the mainstream.

For corporate farmers, participants imagined that with the help of new technology and company support systems, farming would also attract people looking for careers in large companies, "rather a manager than a farmer for life". Farming here would be integrated into a food producing company as part of ensuring supply security.

Lifestyle farmers, a third important profile, are viewed as being part of a larger movement, motivated by a desire for 'self-fulfilment' and 'increasing mental horizons', Buchholzer and Bock said. They prefer life in rural areas to increasingly crowded, expensive urban centres. This group will look for a suitable farm, usually a cooperative, to pursue their chosen activity and get the necessary training. "They bring in potentially useful skills and expertise from other contexts and the link to urban communities and consumers."

(1) The 12 farmer profiles are divided into six 'established' profiles: adaptive – diversified, intensive – specialised, patrimonial-family, corporate, semi-subsistence, and recreational, non-profit; and, six 'emerging' ones: regenerative, indoor-controlled environment, urban micro-farming, biotech start-up, community – social farming, and lifestyle- neo-rural.



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CHOOSING FARMING

The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are making the choice to become a farmer more difficult. Three main obstacles to a career in farming are getting access to land, to finance and to knowledge or training.⁽²⁾

Meanwhile, young people choose to go into farming for reasons as diverse as the profiles themselves. For example, technological progress can reduce the drudgery of work, making farming more attractive. In particular, more women are likely to be farm holders. “All this will have an impact on how the profession is perceived by future young people.”

Profitability of farming and quality of life in rural areas where many of the future farmers will be active will of course play a role, the Commission experts continued. For most farmer profiles, a closer contact to consumers is expected. This is also linked to the increased demand for high quality food produced locally.

More positively, the project has showed young farmers are ready to adapt to future changes. These include dealing with ‘megatrends’ – developments already visible now and expected to have a significant impact in the next 10-20 years. With climate change and environmental deterioration prominent such examples, others are natural resource scarcity, accelerating technological change and the changing nature of work.

POLICY ISSUES

The project did not set out to find concrete recommendations for future EU agricultural policy, as Buchholzer and Bock made clear. But it has raised questions which would impact on new legislation. For example, the future diversity of farmers reflects the increasing range of food systems and approaches to tackle environmental sustainability and climate neutrality. “In the face of increasing risk and crisis situations – like climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, how do we build transformative

resilience so that farmers can further improve and adapt?” they ask.

Pekka Pesonen, Secretary-General of Copa-Cogeca, the organisation representing European farmers and their cooperatives in the EU, said agricultural legislation should always support farmers in guaranteeing food security and contributing to rural development. The new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) proposals should enable EU farmers “to move towards more sustainability (in social, economic and environmental aspects equally) and make the necessary investments allowing farmers to further evolve their roles and their productions, leading to a more attractive sector overall.”

Indeed, the project highlighted that farming can be combined with other activities and that, “For some, farming will not be a profession for life but rather one of several steps in a career or personal development,” Buchholzer and Bock said. Buchholzer maintained that this study, as well as related outcomes such as videos, will hopefully help boost the image of farming and farmers, showing that farmers are ready to adapt to be “future-proof”.

With this in mind, there is hope that the status quo where seven in every ten (71.5%) farm holders on the EU’s 10.5 million holdings are male and a majority (57.9%) are aged 55 or more⁽³⁾ will change. “Agriculture might be an old profession, but it is not old-fashioned,” Pesonen said. “With the access to new technologies, new knowledge and the opening of old markets, farmers will surely feel incentivised to explore the opportunities to diversify their work, production and income.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Foresight study: Farmers of the Future, <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/who-will-be-farmers-future-foresight-analysis-looks-farming-2040>

(2) DG AGRI, European Commission (2017) Modernising and simplifying the CAP – Summary of the results of the public consultation, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/summary-public-consul-modernising-simplifying-cap_2017_en.pdf

(3) <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-statistical-books/-/KS-FK-19-001>

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Social Farming: a way to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities

Juliette Olivier

The Erasmus+ project, FARMID aimed to foster employment on family farms for persons with mild intellectual disability. Project partner ELO reflects on the experience.



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Mild intellectual disability (MID) affects over four million people across Europe. Due to challenges in their cognitive, academic, communication and adaptive abilities, people with MID (PMID) are more at risk of unemployment than people without disabilities. In Europe, PMID are on average three times more likely to be unemployed than the non-disabled.

On-farm activities can benefit PMID's social inclusion and overall health, yet the potential of such activities to offer a disability-friendly working environment is still very much underestimated. Farmers also lack the training necessary to set up a social enterprise on their farms.

Based on these considerations, the FARMID project (2017-2020), funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, was designed to promote the employment of PMID on family farms, thus fostering social inclusion and improving the financial situation of both PMID and the farmers themselves. To achieve this objective, the FARMID project developed a training programme aimed at equipping farmers with the knowledge, skills and competences necessary to employ and work with PMID.

Through training modules, the project provides farmers with the necessary tools to successfully employ PMID on their family farms. The free training programme contains various elements such as basic knowledge about MID, the skills needed to communicate with PMID, the specific

organisation of work processes for PMID, as well as social, entrepreneurship and marketing skills.

The training programme is based on several outputs highlighting the training needs and experiences of social farming in the four participating countries. We started by giving an overview of the current situation of social entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. More precisely, we developed guidelines on the specific conditions for on-farm PMID employment across the countries of our partner organisations (Austria, Italy, Spain and Slovenia). Farms have specific legal structures compared to other enterprises. The programme detailed the existing arrangements regulating financial subsidies to farmers employing PMID in their farms.

The guidelines were the starting point for discovering similarities and differences between European countries. The most significant difference influencing employment opportunities for PMID across countries is the entrance disability level for financial support. The process of obtaining disability status varies from country to country, particularly for people with intellectual disabilities, and the threshold for subsidised employment of PMID varies consequently.

We also gathered best practices from participating countries to show how employment of PMID is put into practice. One example is the Korenika Farm, an organic



© Korenika Farm

farm located in north east Slovenia that grows and processes plants, herbs, fruits and vegetables. The Korenika farm started social farming in 2008 when the social enterprise Mozaiki came up with the idea of creating a training and employment centre for disabled people. Today, the farm employs 30 people, 22 of whom are disabled or at risk of social exclusion. PMID carry out a variety of activities depending on their individual capacities, such as farming, processing and support services. The working environment has been adapted with the creation of specific tasks and specific measures relating to job safety and tailor-made tutoring.

According to the owner of the Korenika farm, the main challenge at the beginning of the employment process is to create an enabling environment and provide ongoing psycho-social support. He also underlines the importance of understanding that the productivity of PMID is lower and their costs are higher, especially due to the above average extent of absence on sick leave.

The FARMID project has now ended but its partners continue their commitment to provide tools for farmers to develop a social

enterprise linked to the on-farm employment of PMID. If you are interested in employing people with disabilities on your farm or, more broadly, in starting a social farming activity, or on promoting such initiatives in your organisation or networks, do not hesitate to contact us.

i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on FARMID's results:

<http://www.farmid.bc-naklo.si/results/>

FARMID's e-learning platform:

<http://www.farmid.bc-naklo.si/e-learning-platform/>

ELO is currently involved in two Erasmus+ projects relating to social farming:

- FARCURA, a project focused on the social inclusion of all marginalised groups in rural society <https://farcura.eu>
- CARE-T-FARMS, a project that provides the tools to design and implement social farming activities throughout Europe <http://www.care-t-farms.eu/index.php/en/>

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Rising to the rural connectivity challenge

Ashya Lane-Spollen

For the sustainability of rural communities, reliable high-speed broadband can make all the difference – and it all comes down to improving the lives of rural people, in the immediate as well as the long-term.



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As the world grows ever more digitally dependent, so do we. More and more of life's necessary activities have moved online, and those of us with a slow, unreliable or even no connection, are at a rapidly growing disadvantage.

Freshest in our minds is the early 2020 lockdown: confined indoors, our internet connections became our lifelines.

If you had a reliable, high-speed connection, you minimised your sense of social isolation via seamless audio and video calls with family and friends, and kept in touch with colleagues, customers and suppliers; you ordered your necessities from online shops in a matter of minutes; you performed business, personal and household administration with little hassle; you were able to continue working towards a professional qualification, or homeschool your children; and you were able to stay on top of the news and find reliable information.

If your connection was not up to the task, you could spend minutes waiting for a simple webpage to load and allow you to add a single food item to your virtual shopping basket. In many households, families had to choose between parents using the internet for work, news and necessities, and allowing children sufficient bandwidth to join online classes. Doing these simultaneously just wasn't an option.

Perhaps more importantly, we relied almost exclusively on reliable high-speed broadband to stay connected with one another, to talk, to see each other's faces, to reach out for help. Beyond a doubt, then as now, poor connectivity contributes to the isolation of vulnerable people.

2020 has also acted as a pressure cooker for many other ills of society, connected once more to disadvantage and isolation. It is clearer now than ever that, for the future of our society, education, access to reliable information and experience of the wider world are critical.

For those living in rural and remote areas, and young people especially, the internet's 'information highway' is a road out of isolation, a pathway to education, understanding, wider opportunities and a richer life. This enrichment is key to growing socially responsible communities and empowered individuals.

Alongside this are the more immediately felt improvements to our day to day quality of life. Good connectivity can be the difference between young people and families putting down roots in rural areas or leaving them to seek better education and work opportunities; between farmers and agricultural businesses thriving or struggling; between being able to age well at home, in the heart of your community, or having to move away to find the medical care and daily support you need.

For the sustainability of rural communities themselves, reliable high-speed broadband can make all the difference – and it all comes down to improving the lives of rural people, in the immediate as well as the long term.

Many rural communities have suffered gradual depopulation for years, as Europe's population ages and the 'opportunity gap' between rural and urban areas widens.



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Digitalisation and connectivity, however, can help reverse this trend, as they make many opportunities accessible from anywhere in the world – so long as you have a good connection.

Urban areas currently have the advantage in this too, as urban population densities and infrastructure combine to create a more cost-effective environment for private investment in broadband networks than in rural areas.

There is, however, a growing trend of self-starting broadband projects driven by rural communities and municipalities instead of telecommunications companies. Arising across Europe, these projects can succeed in changing the lives of their community members as well as ensuring the future of their communities as a whole. For rural and remote area inhabitants, communities and businesses, these projects can be transformative. They can bring a broad range of lasting social, economic and environmental benefits through the services and technologies they enable.

In order to support rural and remote communities to realise this potential, the European Commission has published a 'rural broadband handbook'. The handbook presents useful information for those planning a rural or remote area broadband project, as the challenges can be unexpected and the experiences of other such projects, presented in the handbook, can provide valuable insights in overcoming them.

The challenges of deploying broadband in rural and remote areas not only include the more obvious ones – lower population densities, longer distances and rougher terrain – but also the less obvious challenges that can determine the success or failure of a

project. These include project planning: getting the right technical and legal advice; making the right choice of technology and business model; choosing the right partners; knowing the ways of keeping costs down; knowing how to secure and combine funding sources; and more.

Through 12 individual case studies, the handbook demonstrates the impact of different approaches to planning and implementing rural broadband projects. It outlines the most common success factors and replicable good practices and provides a list of 18 essential recommendations. The handbook also guides project organisers to further resources for advice and support, such as Broadband Competence Offices, the Guide to High-Speed Broadband Investment, as well as the lead contact for each project illustrated.

i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The Rural Broadband Handbook: 'Facing the challenges of broadband deployment in rural and remote areas':

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/broadband-handbook-facing-challenges-broadband-deployment-rural-and-remote-areas>

Broadband Competence Offices Network: www.bconetwork.eu

Guide to High-Speed Broadband Investment:
<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/broadband-investment-guide>

The ENRD Projects and practice database features a number of EAFRD-supported rural development projects improving ICT technologies in Europe:

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/_en?f%5B0%5D=im_field_enrd_prj_focus_area%3A17129

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Interview – Can the Common Agricultural Policy protect wildlife?

Clare Taylor

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been a powerful tool for steering Europe's farming practice and land management since its inception in 1962. The 2021-2027 CAP will account for around one-third of the EU budget and contains a number of changes aimed at delivering on the goals of the European Green Deal. I talked to BirdLife Europe policy officer Harriet Bradley, about whether this reformed policy represents an opportunity to halt biodiversity loss.



Clare Taylor,
energy and
environmental
journalist
clareannetaylor@gmail.com

BirdLife is a global partnership of conservation organisations that advocates for increased nature protection to conserve bird species. In 2017, BirdLife Europe adopted a paper 'For an EU Budget serving nature and people'⁽¹⁾, calling for more policy focus on protecting and recovering biodiversity, especially through improved farming practices.

"Birds are an indicator of general biodiversity health," explains Bradley, "and numbers of farm-dwelling wild bird species have declined by 57% since 1980 in step with the intensification of agriculture."

The Commission's proposal for the 2021–2027 CAP reform signals that nature restoration is moving up the political agenda. Three of its nine new priority objectives, for example, are climate action, environmental care, and preserving landscapes and biodiversity. Another new element is the design of 'Eco-Schemes', to replace the green direct payments mechanism.

Could this be an opportunity to embed biodiversity recovery into Europe's farming practices?

"A lot is left to the Member States," says Bradley. The new delivery model focusses on results at national and

regional level according to the CAP's objectives, rather than on compliance with a set of EU rules. No standards have yet been set for contributing to these objectives, and Member States are not subject to a minimum spending requirement for Eco-Schemes.

The proposal is currently going through the negotiating process in the European Parliament and at the European Council, where minimum thresholds will either be fixed, or left up to Member States.

"Most of the money remains in direct payments," says Bradley, "so it's all going to depend on what the conditions are on those payments."

At the same time as the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 were published, the Commission released a staff working document, 'Analysis of links between CAP reform and Green Deal'.⁽²⁾ The document emphasised the importance of enhanced conditionality.

What requirements would be needed to adequately protect Europe's biodiversity?

"One of the critical things for nature is to have some habitat in the farm landscape," says Bradley, "this is

(1) https://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/birdlife_europe_position_mff_post2020.pdf

(2) https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/sustainability_and_natural_resources/documents/analysis-of-links-between-cap-and-green-deal_en.pdf



a key gamechanger.” Once a certain amount of farmland is left to space for nature (natural vegetation or habitat) a sufficient biodiversity network can develop.

Under the new CAP, Member States must set a minimum requirement for non-productive areas in farms as a baseline for payment, but the minimum percentage has not been determined yet. “Most scientific studies set it at 10–14%, whilst more will be needed at landscape level.” While the European Commission’s original proposals emphasised the importance of this requirement, subsequent amendments have weakened it by re-introducing options such as growing certain crops on land that should be left to nature.

Peatlands are a carbon sink and a critical habitat for many species. “At the moment farming on wet peatlands is often not eligible for CAP support, whereas farming on drained peatland is. If wet peatlands are made eligible for payment in the next CAP that could make a huge difference.”

The Commission has proposed setting crop rotation as one of the conditions for subsidies. “The Parliament went slightly further by adding a requirement to include a leguminous crop in the rotation, but the Council have weakened the requirement. If the final outcome includes a minimum crop rotation it would make a big difference for reducing pesticide use as well as maintaining healthy soil.”

A study⁽³⁾ recently published in *One Earth* shows that the current agricultural subsidies are supporting the richest and most polluting farms. It also found that the CAP reform has the potential to deliver enormous benefits for sustainability.

Why has it proven difficult to mobilise the CAP to protect biodiversity?

“There is a nexus of interests in intensive farming,” says Bradley. “Big farm lobbyists work in tandem with the pesticide and machinery industries.”

But unsustainable practices are affecting everyone. A synthesis study⁽⁴⁾ published in *Science Advances* in 2019, shows crop yields already falling globally due to biodiversity loss. “Increasingly farmers are realising that the old system isn’t working.” New natural farming networks are springing up in Europe; those that are switching to nature-friendly methods are seeing benefits such as increased pollination and natural pest control.

Is there potential to use the CAP to scale up already successful projects?

“We know from LIFE projects that conservation projects work,” says Bradley, “and they are efficient relative to their cost. With the right support, biodiversity does bounce back.”

With the current CAP transitional period expiring in 2022, and with Member States expected to file their national Strategic Plans already this year, it is extremely likely that a final deal will be agreed in the months to come. With negotiations still underway, the green architecture of the CAP remains one of the main issues of contention. Whatever the final CAP, the success of conservation efforts will rely largely on the ability of Member States and regional authorities to channel CAP funds into sustainability and wildlife protection.

i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

IEEP and IFOAM (2019) CAP 2021-27: Using the eco-scheme to maximise environmental and climate benefits, <https://ieep.eu/publications/cap-2021-27-using-the-eco-scheme-to-maximise-environmental-and-climate-benefits>

IFOAM, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Supporting Europe’s farmers and developing rural communities, <https://www.organic europe.bio/what-we-do/common-agricultural-policy-cap-post-2020/>

Examples of projects linking agricultural practice and biodiversity include:

Farming for Nature, an Irish network of farmers working with environmentalists: <https://www.farmingfornature.ie/about/>

For information on successful conservation projects: <https://www.thebrideproject.ie>

(3) Scown M.W., Brady M.V., Nicholas K.A., ‘Billions in misspent EU agricultural subsidies could support the Sustainable Development Goals’, *One Earth* 2020: issue 3, <https://theconversation.com/eu-subsidies-benefit-big-farms-while-underfunding-greener-and-poorer-plots-new-research-144880>

(4) Matteo Dainese et al., ‘A global synthesis reveals biodiversity-mediated benefits for crop production’, *Science Advances* 16 Oct 2019: Vol. 5, no. 10, <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/10/eaax0121>

A FOCUS ON... CAPITALISING ON EAFRD-FUNDED PROJECTS

INTRODUCTION

Making the most of successful projects

The collection and dissemination of examples of EAFRD-funded projects is a core task of both the EU and National Rural Networks and is a topic that has been touched on from different perspectives in previous editions of the Rural Connections magazine.

Following the recent ENRD workshop for NRNs 'Valorising successful projects', which took place on 24 November 2020, this edition of Rural Connections takes a look in particular at how NRNs capitalise on project results and increase the visibility of good practices when using EAFRD funding. We also share the thoughts of some of the winners of the ENRD's Rural Inspiration Awards (RIA) on the success factors of their projects and how this EU-wide recognition has impacted their activities.

The NRNs regularly collect project examples and good practices, so as to share these among their rural development stakeholders at the national level. The ENRD then works as a sounding board for these examples at the European level. Annually, it gathers no fewer than 100 EAFRD-supported projects and practices in an online database to disseminate these through a constellation of communication channels.

In 2019, the ENRD launched the Rural Inspiration Awards to act as a showcase. Now in its third edition, the initiative encourages the mapping of successful projects using RDPs to reach one or more rural development policy objectives. The finalists of each RIA edition are promoted in dedicated communication campaigns through social media, the ENRD website and publications (notably the EAFRD Projects Brochure). Projects are shared in the framework of ENRD events such as thematic group meetings and workshops, often giving the floor to the project holders themselves. They are also used and promoted by other institutions and organisations. Such projects are great real-life examples of how EAFRD support is making a difference in rural areas across Europe.

A key success factor in promoting EAFRD-funded projects is the synergy between the ENRD, NRNs and other national and regional stakeholders, including LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) and LAG networks and other organisations that play a key role in promoting project examples at the national and local level. NRNs' role in identifying and submitting high quality entries from their country to the Rural Inspiration Awards is central for the competition's success. Sometimes NRNs go the extra mile, translating publications and communication materials into their own languages (beyond the six official ones used by the ENRD, namely English, French, Italian, German, Spanish and Polish). These collaborations enable reaching the grassroots level and maximising knowledge sharing through networking.

Ultimately, the fruitful collaboration between the ENRD, NRNs and stakeholders at the national and local level generates a win-win situation: NRN and stakeholders' inputs on EAFRD-funded projects are key for the dissemination activity of the ENRD, while ENRD outputs (website, events and publications), in turn, provide wider exposure to those projects and their results. Let's keep working together!

A FOCUS ON... CAPITALISING ON EAFRD-FUNDED PROJECTS

REPORT

Competitions to valorise projects at national level

Various NRNs have put in place national or regional competitions to reward the most successful rural development projects. Such events are unique learning opportunities both for the beneficiaries and the NRNs. From a communication perspective, they provide wide visibility to the participating initiatives and help raise awareness of specific aspects of rural development.

Organising such competitions requires a considerable amount of work. It is very helpful for NRNs to have – or have access to – up-to-date databases of project beneficiaries, which provide them with basic information, communication materials and can also help them design the competition criteria. Setting clear submission and selection criteria at the outset encourages project holders to enter the competitions and eventually facilitates the work of the jury. Clear guidelines can also be established for the submission formats (e.g. texts and videos, with precise length limits) to facilitate the evaluation process and provide further communication materials.

Given the increasing importance of digital communications, videos are an ideal format to present and exchange on

projects. They are accessible and versatile communication materials which can be used to give voice to local communities – those best placed to present the actual impacts of an EAFRD-funded project on the ground.

Real-life stories work very well when communicating about rural development. Allowing people to share their views and feelings, their experience with projects and how these affect their lives and the areas they live in – all this makes the message about 'Europe investing in rural areas' more concrete and powerful. Real-life stories narrated by real people provide inspiration and make the audience feel that they too can get involved in the process (see box page 34 – excerpt from Ian McCafferty's presentation).





Nils Lagerroth, Swedish NRN

The Swedish Rural Gala has been organised since 2009. It provides great visibility to the winners as many communication channels (on- and off-line) are used before, during and after the competition.

We organise the competition to show the results of the Rural Development Programme and what is a good practice, it also entertains our members!

Read more about the competition in Rural Connections 1-2020 (Focus on... Good practices):

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/rural-connections-magazine-12020_en



Swedish Rural Gala

General objectives:

- Honouring and encouraging rural entrepreneurs
- Inspiration for others
- Show results of programmes
- Initiate discussion on what is Best Practices
- Receiving useful best practices for NRN dissemination
- Good evening show at Rural network general meeting ☺



Ullbagge
"The Wool-ram"



The Swedish Rural Network

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas



Jurgita Pugačiauskaitė-Butrimienė, Lithuanian NRN

When organising a good practice competition, the selection process has to be clear from the early stages. We set clear criteria for the focus area of the project, the project holders, as well as quality and success factors.



Selection model

Approving nominations

- What are the key focus areas?

Identifying possible information sources

- Who is involved?

Setting out criteria (sub-criteria) for good examples

- How to measure "good" and what are success factors of the project?

added value

contributes to several objectives of the RDP

innovative solutions

environmentally friendly




encourages community engagement

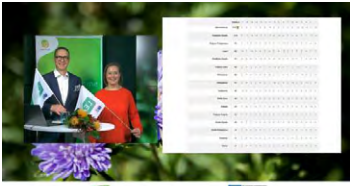


Sinikka Torssonen, Finnish NRN

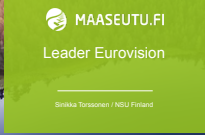
The Finnish NRN's LEADER (euro)vision event was aimed at communicating the impacts of LEADER – not an easy task. The NRN asked LAGs to send information about 'LEADER pearls', projects that really proved to be successful – based on LAGs' experience. LAGs themselves got to vote in a competition that resembled Europe's most famous song contest! Now that expectations for the competition are growing, we need to ensure that the workload does not increase too significantly.

Leader Eurovision


-  LAG's were asked to join regionally and choose "the Leader pearl of the programming period": impressive project, new way of doing things, new cooperation model etc.
-  Videos from all regions (max 2 min.)
-  Videos were sent to LAG's which joined again regionally and gave points (5,6,7,8,10 and 12) to their favourites.
-  Leader Eurovision: live stream from the studio. Regions spokespersons announced how they voted. Results were shown real-time.



3 Esityksen nimi 24.11.2020 MAASEUTU.FI



MAASEUTU.FI
Leader Eurovision
Sinikka Torssonen / NGU Finland

 Finding and communicating results and especially impacts is difficult. Do something anyways.

MAASEUTU.FI



David Armellini, French NRN

The collaboration with the regional authorities has made the collection of project information less cumbersome and left the NRN with enough resources to focus on dissemination.

Participating in an EU-wide event such as the Rural Inspiration Awards can boost the visibility of projects and facilitate their promotion at the national level. This was the case for the 'Enerterre' project for example.

To find out more about Enerterre:
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/enerterre-fighting-against-energy-poverty_en

French NRN

Identification and enhancement of projects



Identification of projects :

- At the national level
- At the regional level
- Inter-departmental exchange of information
- Tracking national and regional press articles
- Feedback from the network's association members

Réseau Rural National

- **A project to capitalize innovative programming projects (ongoing)**
- **A capitalization project in the form of booklets of THE LEADER themed projects on programming**

=> Exemple "Les webinaires du RRN (Réseau Rural National) : The valuation of emerging subjects and innovative projects in the Webinars of the rural network"





Simona Radecka, Slovak NRR

Since the beginning of this programming period, the Paying Agency has asked the project beneficiaries to register their projects in the NRR project database. As a result, it has been much easier for us to connect with the projects and produce content for our publications, posters, flyers, newsletters... and our annual good practice competition!



Irma Potočnik Slavič & Sara Uhan, NEWBIE project

The Horizon2020 project NEWBIE – New Entrant Network focuses on the specific needs and conditions of ‘newbies’, new entrants to farming, including both young direct farm successors (who benefit from a supportive environment) and new entrants without any link to farming (and no supportive environment). NEWBIE supports networking and information sharing, stimulating ‘newbies’ to share their experiences and the solutions they find. The project also collects data about ‘newbies’ in the EU.

The NEWBIE Awards set up special evaluation commissions in each of the nine countries participating in the project. The winners received funding to spend on training and producing promotional materials (e.g. videos). The Awards provided recognition at the national level, as newbies were invited to national events dedicated to new entrants.

In Slovenia, the NEWBIE award will be integrated in the national award for young farmers.

<https://newbie-academy.eu>

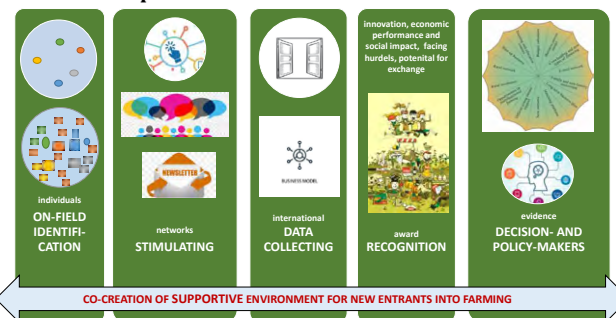
„When Newbies become Visible, Functioning and Participating Farmers!“

Insights into NEWBIE project
New Entrant netWork: Business models for Innovation, entrepreneurship and resilience in European agriculture

Irma Potočnik Slavič and Sara Uhan
University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Geography

ENRD Networking, Valorising and communicating successful projects (NRN workshop, webinar, 24 November 2020)

The NEWBIE process....



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Presentations from the NRN Workshop ‘Valorising successful projects’:

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-national-rural-networks-valorising-and-communicating-successful_en

A FOCUS ON... CAPITALISING ON EAFRD-FUNDED PROJECTS

REPORT

Rural development projects: elements for effective communication

Discussions during the NRN Workshop 'Valorising successful projects' revealed that, to communicate effectively about RDP-funded projects, it is important to highlight what made the initiatives successful and what is the added value for rural areas.



SUCCESS FACTORS

- ★ Personal engagement, dedication
- ★ Personal contacts with customers, peers and the community
- ★ Networking and knowledge sharing
- ★ Coordinated cooperation with other stakeholders
- ★ A good storyline, easy to communicate
- ★ A personal story, a family story
- ★ Good communication materials: photos and videos
- ★ Videos, virtual visits
- ★ Replicability of the project
- ★ Long-term perspective
- ★ Continuity of the project beyond the funding duration
- ★ Impact on the local area
- ★ Focus on the real needs of the area/community and how the project responds to them
- ★ Projects fostering integration/social inclusion in the community



ADDED VALUE

- ✦ Bringing people together
- ✦ Empowerment
- ✦ Local dimension (local solutions, designed by the community itself)
- ✦ Fostering cooperation and innovation (incl. innovative approaches/ways of working)
- ✦ Sharing knowledge, inspiring others
- ✦ Economic and environmental benefits
- ✦ Transferability of the project





© Ekofarma Petra Marada

Petr Marada, Ekofarma Petra Marada, Czechia

WINNER RIA 2020

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/agri-environment-business-focused-adaptation-climate-change-ekofarma-petra-marada_en



My success factors:

- Clear presentation of ideas, goals, activities, problems and different solutions
- Visual communication – to get the message across and target audiences with the right messages
- Connecting with different stakeholders and adapting the presentation to different audiences (e.g. children, other farmers, hunters...)
- On-farm demonstrations; visibility in the press; active participation in conferences
- Showing the results of the intervention through pictures of 'before' and 'after', on-site visits and indicators



© Brickz

Tom Bade, Brickz – Natural Soil Improver, the Netherlands

WINNER RIA 2020

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/brickz-natural-soil-improver_en



My success factors:

- It's an easy story to tell (very practical), appealing also for a general audience
- It's a family story – which ties in with the very idea of sustainability
- We achieved a good balance between a 'unique selling point' and a 'unique telling point'!



© Klimatkollen

Maria Stenberg, Klimatkollen i Greppa Näringen (offering farmers free tailored advice on climate change), Sweden

NOMINEE RIA 2020

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/klimatkollen-i-greppa-naringen-sweden-offers-farmers-free-tailored-advice-climate_en



Our success factor:

- Quantifying success through frequent evaluations
- A regularly updated communication strategy



© Picasa

Seppo Alatörmänen, Kuitua pohjoiseen – High-Speed Broadband Network in the North, Finland

WINNER RIA 2019

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/kuitua-pohjoiseen-high-speed-broadband-network-north_en



Our success factor:

- A close connection with the community by providing real-time, understandable information and door-to-door contacts



© Freepik



“When you talk about communications and speech writing you talk about pathos, ethos and logos. Logos is the reason behind things, e.g. why do we put a policy in place. The pathos is the emotional element. Ethos is the credibility. Real people talking about projects give real evidence of project results. It can be expensive to make videos – and even if you have good technology, it can still be tricky. There are lots of types of software which are widely available. However, having someone with editing skills in your team is of huge importance.”

Ian McCafferty, Head of communications at DG Agriculture and Rural Development

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Rural Inspiration Awards 2020: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural-inspiration-awards-2020_en

EAFRD Projects Brochures 'Rural Inspiration Awards 2019':

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search_en?f%5B0%5D=im_field_enrd_publication_type%3A20484

Watch the ENRD website for the upcoming EAFRD Projects Brochure 'Rural Inspiration Awards 2020', to be published at

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search_en?f%5B0%5D=im_field_enrd_publication_type%3A20484

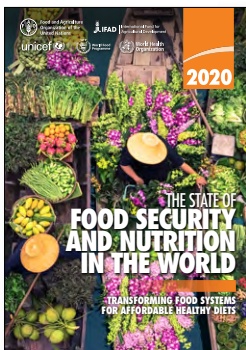
Books & publications

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020

Transforming Food Systems for Affordable Healthy Diets

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The report puts a spotlight on diet quality as a critical link between food security and nutrition. The report introduces new analysis of



the cost and affordability of healthy diets around the world, presents valuations of the health and climate-change costs associated

with current food consumption patterns as well as alternative scenarios. The report then concludes with a discussion of the policies and strategies to transform food systems to ensure affordable healthy diets.

ISBN 978-92-5-132901-6

<http://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1308354/>

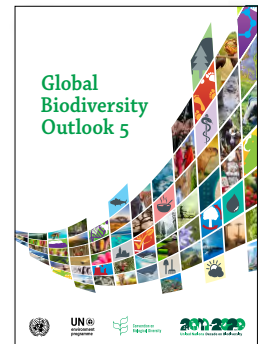
Global Biodiversity Outlook: humanity at a crossroads

UN Environment Programme

The publication presents the latest iteration of the OECD's policy framework on rural development. This newly updated framework reflects several important changes in rural development in recent years and takes advantage of the organisation's latest evidence-based analysis to improve understanding of the diverse and complex socio-economic systems that exist in rural places along with their connection to cities.

ISBN 978-92-9-225688-3

<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/global-biodiversity-outlook-5-gbo-5>



Are agri-food workers only exploited in southern Europe?

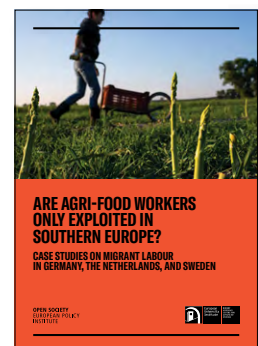
Case Studies on Migrant Labour in Germany, The Netherlands, and Sweden

Open Society European Policy Institute

The Open Society European Policy Institute's study 'Are agri-food workers only exploited in southern Europe?' focuses on production in Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden. These EU Member States have stronger social protections than Italy, Spain or Greece and yet the dynamics driving wage compression and the violation of workers' rights are like those in Southern Europe.

This publication provides recommendations on how the EU and national governments can act to make Europe's agri-food system more sustainable, benefiting farmers, consumers, workers, and the environment.

https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/are-agri-food-workers-only-exploited-in-southern-europe?fbclid=IwAR1wP1V9hIYtmpcjmyeeHYuou__dgCgOFhIGs5_8U3W-o8wIETfpEWdtho4





Rural Well-being Geography of Opportunities

OECD

The publication presents the latest iteration of the OECD's policy framework on rural development. This newly updated framework reflects several important changes in rural development in recent years and takes advantage of the organisation's latest evidence-based analysis to improve understanding of the diverse and complex socio-economic systems that exist in rural places along with their connection to cities.

ISBN 978-92-6-484916-7

<https://www.oecd.org/fr/regional/rural-well-being-d25cef80-en.htm>



Accessibility of services to the population in rural areas

LEADER France and 15 French and European partners published a collection of innovative projects that facilitate access to services in rural areas in France and in other European countries.

The publication is part of the project ACCESS'R – ACCEssibility of ServiceS to the population in Rural areas, which aims to provide answers to this complex problem by identifying and disseminating relevant projects.

<https://accessr.eu/en/2020/09/10/publication-of-accessr-collection-of-experiences/>



Enabling smart rural The open data gap

European Union

This analytical report examines collection, availability and use of open data in rural areas. It does this through the lens of the 'smart city' and asks what the prioritisation of the development of services and products for urban populations and industries means for rural populations and rural industries and their specific requirements. It finds that these are not currently being met, and are insufficiently examined or supported by open data, with the exception of agricultural, fisheries and forestry data in more urban Member States, which is thriving.

ISBN 978-92-78-42089-5

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/18d1354e-db7d-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-159135830>



The EU in 2020

General report on the activities of the European Union

European Commission

The Commission has published the 2020 edition of the EU General Report, a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report details the EU's concerted response to the health and economic crisis, explaining the actions taken in Europe and across the world. Over 1 350 measures were adopted to mitigate the crisis, and protect lives and livelihoods.

ISBN 978-92-76-28705-6

<https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/general-report-2020/en/>

ENRD PUBLICATIONS

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

These are available on the Publications section of <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu> by filling in the online form at <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search>.

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 (DE; EN; ES; FR; IT; PL).

No.30 – Climate action in rural areas



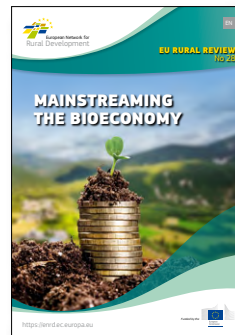
KF-AJ-20-001-EN-N

No.29 – LEADER Achievements



KF-AJ-19-002-EN-N

No.28 – Mainstreaming the bioeconomy



KF-AJ-19-001-EN-N

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 (DE; EN; ES; FR; IT; PL).

Vibrant Rural Areas



KF-AP-20-001-EN-N

Rural Inspiration Awards 2019



KF-AP-19-002-EN-N

Bioeconomy



KF-AP-19-001-EN-N

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

- Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

- You can download or order free and priced EU publications at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publications>
- Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

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