

# ENRD

magazine

Connecting Rural Europe...

Summer  
2013

English

MAIN STORY

## LEADER EVENT 2013: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR THE FUTURE



Funded by the



European Network for  
Rural Development



# Dear Reader,

**W**e're letting the sunshine in with this summer edition of the ENRD Magazine which is packed with all the latest news from the European rural development community!

The LEADER Event 2013 was bigger than ever. With the participatory approach very much front and centre, the almost 500 people from 34 countries had a truly interactive experience. The event is part of a wider consultation process the ENRD has initiated with the LEADER community and it forms an important milestone on the road to Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). A key take-out was the need for on-going communication between rural development actors at all levels. So what better time to read all about how the network is building bridges to successful future programming.

As always, the ENRD Report, NRN Focus and LEADER in Action sections are the place to find a round-up of the many exciting networking activities taking place across Europe.

In our Over to You section we visit Italy to learn about a great rural development educational campaign and take a peek into a Finnish sauna to capture the spirit of LEADER at the LINC Event 2013!

Communication is a topic of major interest to everyone in the network, so we feature two inspiring examples from Poland and Italy, taken from the ENRD's online Communicating Rural Development Gateway. Meanwhile, our Rural Focus for this issue looks at innovation – a hot topic and one that is set to play a greater role in rural development policy in the 2014-2020 programming period.

This magazine is an example of networking in action. It would not be possible without the network's valuable contributions. So, thank you for your continued support. We look forward to featuring even more of your stories in future editions!

Finally, we extend a warm welcome to Croatia — who became the 28<sup>th</sup> EU Member State this summer. Congratulations!

The cover image of people at work during the harvest in the Molise region of Southern Italy was awarded the third prize in the Rural Employment category in the Images of Rural Europe competition ([www.ruralimages.eu](http://www.ruralimages.eu)). The image depicts the creation of a 'stiglio' — a traditional way of storing hay by pressing it around a pole. The photo was taken by Mario Folchi, a professional photographer, and submitted by the LAG Molise Verso il 2000.





# Table of Contents

## ENRD Report

2

A round-up of all the latest ENRD news, including a special feature on the LEADER Event 2013.

## Communicating Rural Development

10

We delve into two inspiring examples of rural communication from the CRD Gateway - a visual identity project and a great social media initiative.

## NRN Focus

12

From Sweden to Spain, we zoom-in on National Rural Network activity around Europe.

## Images of Rural Europe

17

The ENRD's Images of Rural Europe photo competition shows rural Europe at its finest. Enjoy the view!

## Over to You!

**Italy:** Read all about RURALand — an ambitious and successful education campaign.

21

**Finland:** The recent LINC event built team spirit and cooperation, both inside and outside of the sauna!

23

## LEADER in Action

25

A selection of innovative projects and events from Local Action Groups (LAGs) all around Europe.

## Rural Focus

30

Rural development policy is prioritising innovation. Find out what's in store.

## EAFRD Projects

32

We highlight a diverse selection of rural development projects supported by the EAFRD, including one from Ireland to modernise a traditional family seaweed business.

## In Your Own Words

34

We turn the microphone over to you and hear what you have to say...

## Out & About

35

Smile...you're on camera! A selection of recent images from the network.

Diverse culinary, cultural and social traditions mix at the International Fair at the LEADER Event 2013 in Brussels.

# ENRD *Report*

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union. Read all about our latest activities.

## LEADER Event 2013: Building bridges for the future

**N**early 500 rural development practitioners from all over Europe gathered in Brussels for the third ENRD LEADER Event 2013. This year's edition was held on the 17-18 April and was about **Building Bridges for the Future...between different stakeholders, for better programming of LEADER.**

### ENRD consultation

'The event is part of a wider consultation process which the ENRD has initiated with the wider LEADER community. Together we have shared ideas on the better design, development and delivery of LEADER to ensure successful future programming at national, regional and local level,' explains Marina Brakalova, from the ENRD Contact Point.

For the first time the LEADER Event brought together representatives from Local Action Groups (LAGs), Paying Agencies, Managing Authorities, National Rural Networks, and European organisations, with the support of the ENRD, to share experiences, lessons learnt and to try to find ways of enhancing the new LEADER programming landscape at national, regional and local level.

*'Local development has never before had such a role in EU policy-making as now...'*

Petri Rinne, President of ELARD,  
speaking at the LEADER Event's opening plenary session.

### Real-time exchange

Open exchange and a participatory approach were central to the event's methodology. This allowed the participants to express their expectations, network with other rural development practitioners, understand lessons learnt from current LEADER implementation through practical examples and discuss potential new transnational cooperation projects. The participants also got to enjoy LEADER in action at the international fair, where local products and craftwork were showcased alongside live traditional music.

### From LEADER to CLLD

From the current to the new programming period and from LEADER to Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), the participants worked together to build a bridge to better rural development. All agreed that more information is needed to ensure continuity in the next programming period.

'The LEADER Event 2013 demonstrates that the bridge for better programming is being built... we need to see this on-going communication between the key actors at all levels,' concluded Rob Peters, Head of Unit, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission.



© ENRD Contact Point

## Design, develop and deliver

In the new multi-fund context, LEADER/CLLD will be broadened to all European structural and investment fund priorities while remaining an essential part of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) funded by the EAFRD. The LEADER Event 2013 gave participants an opportunity to consider the following three aspects of LEADER.



© ENRD Contact Point

### Design

**When designing a programme for the 2014-2020 period to capture the added value of LEADER:**

- Managing Authorities should balance the time required for effective consultation with the need to get the programme right from the outset.
- The programme should be flexible, allowing LAGs to deliver what is needed for the end beneficiaries as well as for the administrative requirements.
- Evaluation requires the involvement of an array of stakeholders with real knowledge of LAGs and LEADER.



### Develop

**To develop effective Local Development Strategies (LDS) and Local Action Groups:**

- Good local analysis ensures that a LDS has the focus right and makes it clear how it will be evaluated.
- The LDS must embrace all stakeholders and all socio-economic needs.
- The seven LEADER principles should inform the LDS evaluation criteria design to ensure commonality.

### Deliver

**To deliver the LEADER approach more simply and efficiently:**

- Better communications between LAGs, Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies is key to sharing experiences, problem-solving and building trust among all stakeholders.
- More efficient payment systems could be implemented through the innovative use of financial tools such as systems of prepayment and umbrella funds managed by LAGs.
- Multi-funding support is facilitated through the introduction of national and European 'one-stop-shops', harmonised rules and the adoption of single application forms.
- Networks should be created and strengthened, whether they are LAG networks or rural networks.



# Showcasing LEADER

© ENRD Contact Point



Sharing relevant practices and experiences was at the heart of the LEADER Event 2013. The 27 case studies presented during the event covered themes ranging from territorial development to stakeholder engagement to implementing and evaluating Local Development Strategies (LDS). They were a real source of inspiration...

## Transnational Cooperation (TNC): Top tips!

- **Start early** — TNC projects should ideally be planned with the LDS
- **Clear agreement between all the parties involved is crucial**
- **LAGs should take advantage of technical assistance support**
- **NRNs should provide targeted support**

© Romantiline Rannatee



### Case study: Territorial Development

A LEADER project successfully rebranded the coast of Pärnu County in Estonia as the Romantic Coastline to increase awareness of the natural beauty of the region. According to Mercedes Merimaa, Manager of Pärnu Bay Partnership, 'our region is becoming more and more popular thanks to this sort of bottom-up initiative.' The project involves local entrepreneurs, NGOs and municipalities.

[www.rannatee.ee/parnu-estonia](http://www.rannatee.ee/parnu-estonia)

## Online LEADER resources

LEADER is a local development method that empowers local actors and plays an essential role in delivering rural development policy in Europe. Here are some great online LEADER resources:

### LEADER Event 2013

Overview, newsletter and presentations:

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/leader-event-2013/en/leader-event-2013\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/leader-event-2013/en/leader-event-2013_en.cfm)

Videos:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/videos>

Photo gallery:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/images>

### LEADER Gateway

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

### Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/clld/en/clld\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/clld/en/clld_en.cfm)

### Transnational Cooperation (TNC) Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/leader/en/transnational-cooperation\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/leader/en/transnational-cooperation_en.cfm)

### LAG Database

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/local-action-groups/>

© Stefan Lindnert



### Case study: Improving Stakeholder Engagement

Youth in Halland (Ung i Halland) is a project that is getting young people involved in rural development. It enables young people to apply for up to €1 700 funding for modest projects ranging from setting up a music studio to building a skate park. The youth umbrella project is run by two LAGs - Kustbygd Halland and Landsbygd Halland - and is linked to a wider youth engagement project involving 49 of the 63 LEADER areas in Sweden.

[www.ungihalland.se](http://www.ungihalland.se)



© Tim Hudson

*Agriculture needs to be a driver of the Europe 2020 strategy in the countryside.*

## Agreement on CAP Reform

The European Union has succeeded in reforming and modernising its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The agreement reached on 26 June 2013 ensures that the CAP will play a key part in achieving the overall EU objective of promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by: providing EU citizens with high quality, affordable food; supporting 12 million farmers in becoming even more competitive and efficient; and keeping the countryside alive and preserving its heritage for future generations.

The reformed CAP will be greener, fairer and more flexible, taking account of the diversity of the 28 Member States. The rural development component of the CAP retains its successful approach whereby Member States and regions design their own multi-annual programmes on the basis of a set of measures available at EU level. These programmes will continue to be co-funded from the national budgets.

However, rural development measures will no longer be classified at EU level into 'axes' with associated minimum spending requirements. Instead, Member States and

regions are to decide, on the basis of sound analysis, which measures they use (and how) in order to achieve targets set against six broad priorities.

The six priorities cover: the fostering of knowledge transfer and innovation; enhancing agricultural competitiveness and the sustainable management of forests; promoting food chain organisation; restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems; promoting resource efficiency and the transition to a low-carbon economy; and promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

At least 30% of the budget of the rural development programmes will have to be allocated to agri-environment-climate measures, support for organic farming or projects associated with environmentally-friendly investment or innovation measures.

Rural development will henceforth operate in closer coordination with other policies through an EU-level Common Strategic Framework and through Partnership Agreements at national level covering

support from European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds (the EAFRD, ERDF, Cohesion Fund, ESF and EMFF).

In the new period, Member States and regions will have the possibility to design thematic sub-programmes to pay attention to issues such as young farmers, small farms, mountain areas, women in rural areas, climate change mitigation / adaptation, biodiversity and short supply chains. Higher support rates will be available within sub-programmes in some cases.

The reform places Europe's farms on a more secure financial footing, will improve global competitiveness and will help to ensure the future viability of our rural areas.

### References:

**Political agreement on new direction for common agricultural policy:** [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-613\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-613_en.htm)

**CAP Reform – an explanation of the main elements:** [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-13-621\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-621_en.htm)

## Land stewardship promotes biodiversity

The value of land stewardship as a complementary tool for nature protection and biodiversity conservation was highlighted at an international workshop held in Barcelona on 29-31 May 2013. It was part of a series of initiatives organised within the LandLife project, which is funded by the European Commission under the LIFE+ programme.

LandLife aims to exchange, enhance and promote expertise in the management of nature sites and to spread the concept of land stewardship among landowners, public and private organisations and a wider public in general (e.g. citizens).

The ENRD's work on environmental services includes the preservation of biodiversity.

The EU Rural Review #15, which is available from the ENRD website - <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eu-rural-review/> - provides a practical reference document about the environmental aspects of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs), including a check-list of key points to be addressed during the programming process.

## Almost 40% of RDP funding yet to be spent

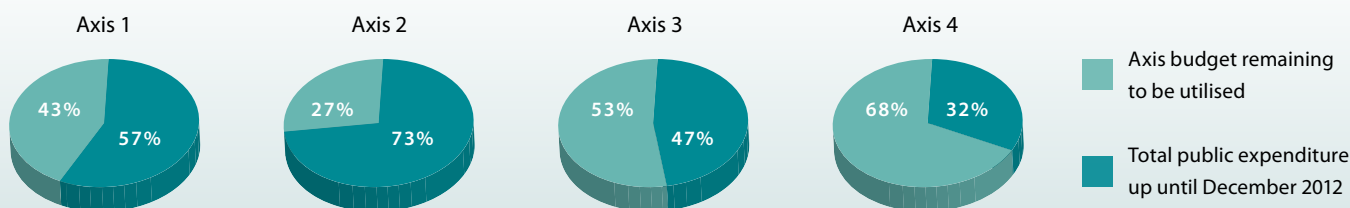
The 88 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) currently being implemented across the EU have programmed a total public expenditure of €152 billion, €96 billion of which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). By the end of 2012, the total expenditure realised amounted to 62% (€94 billion) of the overall budget, meaning that 38% (€58 billion) remains to be spent by the end of the present programming period.

At Member State level and by programme axis there are notable levels of divergence. For example, the highest total public expenditures were found in Ireland (85%) and in Luxemburg (82%) whereas

in Bulgaria (46%), Greece (48%) and Romania (43%) less than half of the programmed budgets had been distributed by the end of 2012.

Rural Development Policy in Figures (<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rural-development-policy-in-figures>) is a unique ENRD resource that monitors RDP performance by measure, financially and in terms of output. The data is complemented by analysis of the linkages between policy priorities, allocated resources and real-life outcomes. It's a must for anyone interested in EU rural development!

### Percentage of total RDP expenditure allocated per axis



Source: RDP in Figures, 2012

## Seminar on urban-rural partnerships

Urban-rural linkages are currently high on the cohesion policy agenda. Improvement of territorial cohesion through better urban-rural partnerships in future European development programmes is needed according to experts who converged in Warsaw on 24-25 April 2013 for the 2nd European seminar on sustainable urban rural partnerships.

Some 150 people participated from an impressive range of institutions and networks – including the European Commission, Committee of the Regions, European parliament, OECD, Managing Authorities and the ENRD. This year's conference covered themes ranging from governance to financing to public service partnerships and the role of the private sector.

The rapid process of urbanisation is driving social and economic change and is redefining the traditional urban-rural divide. Many voices are now calling for new policy approaches to best connect urban and rural stakeholders and better meet their dynamic developmental needs.



Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Polish Minister of Regional Development, delivers the key note address at the opening session.

Existing administrative or territorial boundaries may no longer accurately reflect realities on the ground. The concept of functional regions having a strategic focus on needs may prove more useful for planning purposes. The ENRD CP representative highlighted the added value of networking in this context and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) was also recognised as offering potential solutions, thanks to the 20-year track record of the LEADER-inspired 'bottom up' approach.

For more information about this event: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/rurban/2013/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/rurban/2013/index_en.cfm)



The Polish dance ensemble Mazowsze – who benefit from EU support under the European Regional Development Fund – performed at the event.



# Welcome Croatia!

In December 2011 leaders from the EU and Croatia signed the accession treaty that paved the way for Croatia to become the 28<sup>th</sup> EU Member State on 1 July 2013. The ENRD welcomes this official development! Croatian rural development practitioners have long been part of European network events.

Višnja Jelić Mück, President of the Croatian Rural Development Network, outlines what EU accession means to the Croatian rural development community.

The rural development community is identifying the best way to integrate the needs of local areas into the European rural development framework. Our biggest challenge is on shifting mind-sets to get rural development prioritised on the Croatian policy agenda.



© Croatian Rural Development Network - HMRR

The creation of an efficient institutional framework for rural development is of the utmost importance to allow Croatia to benefit fully from EU membership. In development terms, there is a growing discrepancy between urban and rural territories. We need proven approaches and effective tools to tackle what can be complex and multidimensional problems.



© Croatian Rural Development Network - HMRR

EU membership is already making a real difference to Croatian rural development. Don't forget that rural development policy has a short history here; in reality its origins are linked to the beginning of the EU accession process.

For Croatia, which is a country rich in diversity, the recognition of national, regional and local level differences is a very precious policy feature. In addition, the bottom-up approach, assisted by EU financial support, is bringing a wave of enthusiasm to small local communities and underpinning the process of democratisation in rural areas.

In preparation for the 2014-2020 programming period, the Ministry of Agriculture undertook, in April, a national campaign presenting the main traits of the new programme. Clearly more dialogue and an open exchange of views on the draft programme will be needed going forward. The HMRR advocates a broader approach to rural development based on our survey of Croatian IPARD beneficiaries which found that there is a lot of support for strengthening the rural economy and infrastructure beyond agricultural-related aspects.'

## Fact file: Croatia

Population: 4.3 million

Area: 56,594 km<sup>2</sup>

NRN: [www.hmrr.hr](http://www.hmrr.hr)

- Croatia became the 28<sup>th</sup> EU Member State on 1 July 2013.
- 48% of the Croatian population lives in rural areas.
- Rural areas constitute 92% of national territory.
- Agriculture plays an important role in the Croatian economy: both in terms of total GDP share and as a source of employment.
- Croatia has an agricultural structure characterised by a lot of small family farms (the average farm size in Croatia is 2.4 ha) and some large state owned agri-businesses. Land fragmentation and low levels of production remain a constraint.
- Despite good climate conditions, the country suffers from deficits in the agri-food sector.
- Croatia is self-sufficient in the production of potatoes, poultry meat, eggs, corn, wine, sugar and wheat.



## Innovation needed to drive competitiveness

Expect to hear a lot more about innovation in the 2014-2020 programming period. It is the subject of a series of high-level events and initiatives and has now become a real buzzword for agriculture and rural development.

A Knowledge Transfer Conference held in Dublin by Teagasc – Ireland’s Agriculture and Food Development Authority – in June 2013 examined the future expanded role of Farm Advisory Services (FAS) in providing effective innovation support to farmers. Noting the increased global demand for food that is produced in a resource-efficient and sustainable manner, the discussion among policy-makers, advisory services managers and other stakeholders sought to tease out the advisory services activities that have the greatest impact in terms of increased knowledge uptake and use on farms, as well as the degree to which FAS could benefit from international networks.

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for Agriculture Productivity and Sustainability was recently established in order to improve innovation support systems for farmers and the adoption of new and relevant technologies. At the end of June, a seminar dedicated to rural development programming for innovation took place in Madrid. Programming authorities and the members of the ENRD Focus Group on knowledge transfer and innovation discussed possible approaches for 2014-2020.



*Pictured at the conference from left to right: Dr. Gordon Purvis, UCD, Professor Gerry Boyle, Director, Teagasc, Dr. Tom Kelly, Director of Knowledge Transfer, Teagasc, Ms. Inge Van Oost, EU Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Professor Alex Evans, UCD and Dr. Hugh Brady, President, UCD.*

© Liz O'Sullivan

### Innovation references:

- The EU Rural Review #16 on Knowledge Transfer & Innovation:**  
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eu-rural-review/Rural-Focus-on-page-12-of-this-ENRD-Magazine>
- The EIP programming seminar:**  
[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/events/madrid-06-2013\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/events/madrid-06-2013_en.htm)
- The Teagasc conference:**  
<http://www.teagasc.ie/events/2013/20130612.asp>

## Joint Coordination Committee and NRN meeting

The issue of effective communications in the context of future rural development programming was discussed at both the 11<sup>th</sup> Coordination Committee meeting and the 18<sup>th</sup> NRN meeting, which were jointly held in Portugal on 6 June 2013.

Useful tools for sharing experience and knowledge on communications, including the ENRD’s Communicating Rural Development (CRD) Gateway were presented, alongside updates on ENRD activities such as the Youth and Young Farmers in rural areas initiative, the

Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Focus Group and planned ENRD CP activities for the next year.

In addition, the 3<sup>rd</sup> peer-to-peer exchange under the Pilot NSU Training Programme was held the following day. The training offered participants advice and guidance on the main challenges and steps to be followed in planning and delivering an effective communications plan.

## New NRN cluster for multi-fund strategies

Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) is a highly relevant topic for rural development stakeholders, a fact reflected by the strong level of interest in the new NRN thematic cluster on CLLD. The cluster was launched at the combined Coordination Committee and NRN meeting held in Portugal in June 2013.

Led by the Hungarian NRN, the cluster is supporting community-led strategy development in the 2014-2020 programming period. By concentrating the work of individual networks, the cluster will avoid duplication of effort. One of the primary challenges to deciding

upon an approach to CLLD in the various Member States has been finding a way to successfully integrate the various programmes’ rules. As of June 2013, many Member States were still undecided as to whether to take advantage of the multi-fund CLLD approach.

The CLLD NRN Cluster aims to tackle the information gaps that remain with regards to the future application of the multi-fund approach. The work plan is centred on enhancing cooperation and exchange of experience and providing practical guidance and tools to assist NRNs and other stakeholders implementing CLLD.

## Better programming for mountain areas

Building on the ENRD's Successful Programming Seminar held in Brussels in December last year, the Italian NRN, in collaboration with Euromontana, organised a conference in Rome, on 6-7 June 2013, to inspire innovative programming for the development of mountain areas.

The event was targeted at Managing Authorities, those involved in rural development programming generally and a range of mountain stakeholder groups. The future programming landscape was presented in the context of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) and the scene was set for robust discussions on how to plan effective intervention in favour of mountain areas that promotes sustainable development, economic growth and the creation of new jobs.



### References

#### Euromontana website:

<http://www.euromontana.org/en/agenda/conference-a-rome-d-euromontana-inspire-la-programmation-pour-les-montagnes.html>

#### 'Peak Performance', a European Commission Staff Working Document on mountain farming:

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/rurdev/mountain-farming/working-paper-2009-text\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/rurdev/mountain-farming/working-paper-2009-text_en.pdf)

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/rurdev/mountain-farming/working-paper-2009-anne.xes\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/rurdev/mountain-farming/working-paper-2009-anne.xes_en.pdf)

## ENRD Contact Point Visits



*Jean-Michel Courades, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, giving a presentation to the Swedish LAG representatives.*

### Expert groups from Morocco and Tunisia

In the framework of the EU's MEDA programme, 15 public sector representatives from Morocco and Tunisia and one representative of the European Association of Development Agencies visited the ENRD Contact Point on 27 February to learn more about EU rural development policy.



*Representatives from Morocco, Tunisia, the European Association of Development Agencies and the European Commission.*



*Students from Hungary participating at the presentation about the ENRD.*

### Students from Hungarian university

Students from István University in Hungary visited the ENRD CP in Brussels on 13 March 2013. The interactive session enabled the students to get answers to questions about regional rural development initiatives, Local Action Groups (LAGs), best practice and project examples, the LEADER/CLLD approach and the upcoming changes expected in the 2014-2020 programme period.



# Communicating Rural Development

The ENRD's online Communicating Rural Development (CRD) Gateway celebrates excellence in communication. Here, we delve into some great examples...

## Italy: Connecting with social media

The Italian Local Action Group Marghine in Sardinia has been quick to see the added value of social media for its communications activities. It has been actively using Facebook over the past four years to promote events, expand its network and connect with stakeholders. The interactive nature of social media allows the LAG Marghine to get valuable feedback about the day-to-day impact of its rural development initiatives. This dialogue helps to build trust and understanding in its partnership approach. The Facebook page now has over 500 followers and is a good example of how to integrate a social media tool with other communications channels and benefit the overall effectiveness of an organisation.



## The inside story

*Anna Pireddu, Director of the LAG Marghine provides insight into the role of social media for LAGs:*

'We decided to use social media as one of our key communication tools, because it is a powerful, relatively inexpensive - no investment is required, although staff have to allocate sufficient time to manage the page - and transparent way to obtain feedback from citizens. It has allowed us to identify both challenges and opportunities.

Facebook allows for fast and easy connection with our community, increasing informal interaction and strengthening relationships. We have seen that regularly sharing ideas leads to new collaboration opportunities.

Social media is also driving our communications style towards a more tailored approach - both immediate and personal - that is very cost-effective.

It should be noted that using social media is enjoyable! It's a flexible medium that rewards experimentation. We use it to: "take the pulse" of an initiative; listen and learn from others; steer discussions when immediate feedback is required; pilot ideas; and to engage our followers. It is also easy to monitor - we can track our most successful posts and use this knowledge to inform future outreach activity.

We constantly update our Facebook page with new content, including responses to comments, questions and indeed criticism. Since sharing our experience through the ENRD's CRD Gateway we are delighted to see

that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of visitors. So, we are now very motivated to become even more active!



© LAG Marghine

LAG Marghine Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gal-Marghine-Fondazione-di-partecipazione>



Access inspiring examples of rural development communications on the CRD Gateway:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/communicating-rural-development/eafrd>

## Poland: **Getting the visual identity right**

Communication plays a vital role in supporting rural development policy implementation - be it in inspiring beneficiaries to access available funds or in broadly demonstrating the policy benefits to European citizens. The CRD Gateway showcases all types of communications products - from advertisements to publications to social media - that have been developed for rural development campaigns targeting different audiences. Something all successful outreach efforts have in common is the use of a consistent visual identity. The Polish Rural Development Programme (RDP) is one such example: it benefits from a strong corporate identity that drives recognition and promotes greater visibility.

### The inside story

*Agata Markuszewska, from the Polish National Rural Network Support Unit, explains how the Polish RDP corporate identity supports rural development:*

'The current visual identity developed for the RDP 2007-2013 is a continuation of an approach that began when the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development first created a logo for the EU Rural Development Programme 2004-2006. The original idea was to differentiate the programme from others financed by the Structural Funds.

We understood early the benefits of having a well-defined visual identity; one that represents what we stand for in the Polish rural community. The RDP visual identity is our statement about how we intend to bring positive and sustainable change to rural communities.

The main challenge was to find an identity that incorporates the role, function and rationale of the RDP. Working with professional designers helped us through the complex process of creating a visual identity. Things like choice of font, colour palettes, motifs, and patterns are all extremely important choices that require careful consideration.

Once the visual identity is agreed, it is crucial that it is used consistently! That is why, as part of the process, we developed a visual identity manual that specifies all of the technical details.

I'm glad to report that the RDP visual identity regularly receives very high scores in the annual evaluations conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development. The overall feedback from the rural development community is that we have projected an image of professionalism and authenticity, whilst simultaneously communicating core values.'



Link to Polish RDP 2007-2013:

<http://www.minrol.gov.pl/pol/Wsparcie-rolnictwa-i-rybolowstwa/PROW-2007-2013>



## NRN Focus

National Rural Networks (NRNs) are set up by Member States to bring those involved in rural development together to help implement EU rural development policy. This section features all the latest NRN news.



RDP beneficiary Gayle Hegarty from Homecraft Revival.

### UK – Northern Ireland: **Celebrating inspirational rural women**

To coincide with International Women's Day on the 8 March 2013, the Rural Network for Northern Ireland published a guide featuring 28 women who have created innovative businesses, ranging from handcrafts to timber engineering, and from baby foods to engineering heat loss prevention systems.

The publication showcases female entrepreneurs who have been supported by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (RDP). The women's active role in Local Action Groups is also shared in the publication, which can be downloaded from: [http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/download/files/Women In Rural FINAL.pdf](http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/download/files/Women%20In%20Rural%20FINAL.pdf)

The inspiring publication forms part of the work of the Women in Rural Development Thematic Working Group, which, over the last year, has brought together over 180 women at three seminars and is contributing to research on gender mainstreaming in the RDP by an academic from Queen's University Belfast.

### Sweden: **Cows jump for joy at agri-environment event!**

On the 5 May 2013, over 1 000 people witnessed the uplifting sight of cattle jumping for joy as they were let loose in the fields following their winter-long enclosure at Osaby Manor, just outside Växjö. The dancing cows may have been the main attraction, but this popular annual event was also a great opportunity to talk about the environmental benefits of agricultural enterprises.

Organised by the Swedish NRN, the participants - a mix of the public, politicians and the media - got to see agri-environment measures in practice while enjoying locally produced food and networking opportunities. The event also saw the launch of the NRN's awareness-raising initiative 'Grass is Greener than Gold' which is promoting examples of rural activities that produce environmental benefits and strengthen competitiveness in the green industries. Further information is available from: <http://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/miljonytta>.



Chairman of the Latvian Rural Forum Valdis Kudiņš (on the right) and coordinator of Preiļu District Partnership, Valija Vaivode (on the left) address the participants.

## Latvia: First meeting of Rural Communities Parliament

From the 6-8 of June, over 160 rural development practitioners, policy-makers and politicians came together in Rīga and Preiļi to address issues of strategic importance to the sustainability of Latvia's rural communities. The rural parliament provided insight into rural community life in Latvia through a travelling workshop that saw participants visit four communities along a 350km route from Rīga to Preiļi. The event stimulated discussion on a wide range of topics including sustainability of the rural way of life, the social economy and the role of Community-Led Local Development in strengthening local economies. The event finished with an open-air fair of local food and practical workshops, culminating in a Resolution of the First Latvian Rural Communities Parliament. More information about the rural parliament can be found at: <http://laukuforums.lv>

## Poland: Supporting young rural entrepreneurs

Twenty-five young people came together in Krakow on the 7-9 May to take part in a start-your-own-business training. The initiative took place under the framework of the Polish NRN's action plan and as part of an agritourism effort focused on the development of rural youth entrepreneurship.

'We had a very successful training session with really engaged young people. It was a surprise for many of them that business success largely relies on the attitudes of the people involved and not just on the funds invested in the project,' explains Renata Idzik from the Galician Centre for Education (*Galicyjskie Centrum Edukacji*).

The training provided background skills needed to set up a business. Topics addressed included the legal structure of businesses, sources of external financing, taxation requirements and business management. Each participant received one-to-one support and was given the opportunity to work on a business plan for their own business idea, the majority of which were based on new hotel and catering facilities. Further information is available from: <http://ksow.pl/news/entry/4260-podstawy-przedsiębiorczości-dla-młodzi.html>.



© Fundacja Programów Pomocy dla Rolnictwa FAPA (Foundation of Assistance Programmes for Agriculture)

Students from the vocational school who took part in the entrepreneurship training.



© RwdR

A visit to a local donkey farm formed part of the seminar on social agriculture.

## Belgium - Wallonia: Seminar highlights role of social agriculture

The Regional Rural Network in Wallonia, Belgium, held a seminar on social agriculture on 2 May 2013 in Martelange. Attended by 40 participants, the event focused on the results of a pilot project implemented by a local LAG - a short video about it can be viewed here: <http://www.parcnaturel.be/fr/fermes-sociales.html?IDC=1433&IDD=3708> - and provided examples of social agriculture initiatives from elsewhere in Belgium and Europe. Workshops were held on topics including organic vegetable farming and social inclusion.

Following a number of presentations from LAG-supported social agriculture initiatives, the delegates undertook field visits to a local host farm leading green care projects. 'The seminar enabled us to address social farming, which provides not only an opportunity to strengthen social ties but also to meet a growing societal demand,' notes the seminar co-ordinator, Xavier Delmon.

## Germany: Conference promoting public-private partnership

On the 17-18 June 2013, the German NRN together with the Association of Regional Management Austria, the Swiss NRN and the Bavarian Network of Regional Management organised a conference to identify how the public and private sectors working together can create stronger local economies.

The event was held at Lake Constance - which borders the three countries - and gathered 100 delegates, comprising Local Action Groups, universities and research institutes, regional authorities, businesses and other institutions. Specific topics addressed included product development and regional marketing, the role of business in regional development, business clusters and local and regional corporate social responsibilities.

In addition to the formal sessions a 'knowledge market' was set up on the second day of the conference that presented 10 practical examples of how public-private collaboration can produce successful results.

Further information is available from: <http://www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/service/veranstaltungen/dreilaenderdialog>



© Willkommen bei neuland

The team of organisers from Austria, Germany and Switzerland.



© Mike Schepers



*Pride of Platteland (POP) rural development award winners.*

## Netherlands: Solar-powered ferry wins rural development award

In the grand setting of Castle Groeneveld in Baarn, the Dutch National Rural Network announced the winners of its rural development awards on the 14 May 2013. A jury selected three of the awards with an additional award chosen by the public. Short videos were made for each of the nine projects shortlisted for the public award.

The winner was the Keimpe Tille Ferry from Friesland; a volunteer-run summer ferry across the canal at Franeker. The original ferry service closed in 1963 meaning that the communities on either side of the canal who had previously been very close saw links diminish due to the longer road journey. Old links have now been re-established and the ferry, which operates during the summer months, is skippered by one of 35 volunteers and run on solar energy. The initiative also contributes to tourism through the development of a new cycling route that includes the ferry crossing. Local food businesses benefit from sales at the ferry terminal terrace cafe. Further information is available from: <http://www.netwerkplatteland.nl/pop-prijs-2013-genomineerden>

## Spain - Catalonia: International seminar on rural youth migration and employment

From the 21-24 May 2013, a gathering of 50 rural youth representatives, policy-makers, rural development agents and researchers from Italy, Northern Ireland, Romania and Spain met in Solsona in Catalonia to debate and share good practice regarding rural youth migration and employment.

The workshop sessions, which focused on issues such as youth services in rural areas and how to encourage young people to settle in rural areas, were complemented by two plenary sessions that were open to the wider public.

Miquel Rovira Comas, President of the Associació d'iniciatives Rurals de Catalunya (the Catalan regional rural network which hosted the event), noted that, 'LEADER has the potential to improve the situation of rural youth but it still has opportunities that have yet to be taken into account.'

The official seminar conclusions highlight the need to implement integrated youth policies that assist rural youth by developing local economic opportunities, taking into account both traditional and innovative employment potential. Further information is available from: <http://www.arca-dr.cat/seminar-on-rural-youth-migrations-and-employment>

© Associació d'iniciatives Rurals de Catalunya



*Opening of the seminar by the regional authorities.*



© Krista Kõiv Estonian Rural Economy Research Centre

Estonian study group in Visby, Gotland.

## Estonia: Food study tour to Gotland

A 26 strong delegation from Estonia travelled to Gotland, Sweden's Food Capital 2013 ([www.government.se/sb/d/14470/a/201282](http://www.government.se/sb/d/14470/a/201282)), in May 2013 to visit a wide range of food producers and retailers. The study visit, which was coordinated by the Estonian NRN and guided by the Estonian Honorary Consul in Gotland, attracted delegates from a range of backgrounds including representatives from local food networks in rural areas, the Estonian RDP Managing Authority and Payments Agency.

'Enterprises in Gotland are very small and therefore they are very diversified. Every enterprise has its own "boutique" shop where you can buy farm products,' explains Reve Lambur from the Estonian NRN.

The three-day tour incorporated over 15 different producers and retailers including dairies, farm shops, meat producers, bakeries, vegetable producers and a confectioner. It also included a meeting with Gotland food inspectors. Further information is available from: [http://www.maainfo.eef/index.php?article\\_id=3149&page=3265&action=article&](http://www.maainfo.eef/index.php?article_id=3149&page=3265&action=article&)



© Krista Kõiv Estonian Rural Economy Research Centre

Visit to a small slaughterhouse.



***‘A quiet village at 4 in the afternoon’ by Rafael Torres, Spain***

‘Poblado tranquilo a las 4 de la tarde’ features the picturesque streets of Castellar de la Frontera, a small village in Andalusia, Spain. It was submitted by the LAG Asociación para el Desarrollo de la Campiña y los Alcores de Sevilla to the Images of Rural Europe competition under the Rural Diversity category. Enjoy more great images of rural Europe by visiting: [www.ruralimages.eu](http://www.ruralimages.eu)



# Protecting forest biodiversity

## RDP Projects Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)



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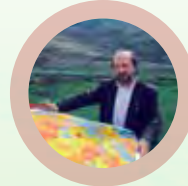
CONNECTING RURAL EUROPE

### ENRD Contact Point:

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B - 1000 Brussels Fax: +32 2 280 04 38  
Belgium E-mail: info@enrd.eu



# RDP Project Postcards



# Restoring traditional dry-stone walls

## RDP Projects Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)



© Hellat Rumvoit



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# Protecting forest biodiversity

Integrated approach protects landscapes and rare birds

## PORTUGAL

The Integrated Territorial Interventions (ITI) in Portugal, through a combination of RDP measures, support biodiversity conservation and landscape maintenance in Natura 2000 areas. The Herdade do Fervedouro farm in the region of Tejo, a property of 200 ha, maintains groves of native trees and shrubs and conserves a network of ecological corridors thanks to the support of forest-environment payments. This and other farms that are part of the ITI are helping to maintain extensive grazing systems, reduce land abandonment, preserve important landscape features and increase bird populations.

### Measure 225: Forest-environment payments

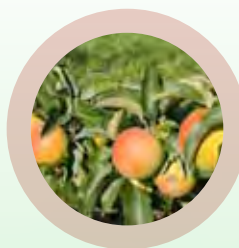
Total project cost: € 25 000  
EAFRD contribution: € 20 000

Find out more about this project:

[http://www.drapc.min-agricultura.pt/drapc/iti\\_tejo\\_internacional.htm](http://www.drapc.min-agricultura.pt/drapc/iti_tejo_internacional.htm)

## RDP Projects Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)



# Restoring traditional dry-stone walls

National park protects local agricultural heritage

## ESTONIA

Estonia's Matsalu National Park is a valuable natural heritage site. As part of the park's landscape conservation work, dilapidated dry-stone walls used as traditional land boundaries needed to be restored. The work involved: clearing vegetation; identifying original stones that had fallen, become buried or moved; sourcing new stones to fill gaps; and restoring the walls to their original condition. As a result, 220 meters of dry-stone walls have now been restored. Aside from improving the park's overall attractiveness, the walls also offer valuable habitats for amphibians, reptiles, small mammals and birds.

### Measure 216: Non-productive investments

Total project cost: € 5 900  
EAFRD contribution: € 4 700

Find out more about this project:

<http://www.rmke.ee/subject-headings/for-hikers/national-parks/matsalu-national-park>

## RDP Projects Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)



# Enhancing Europe's biodiversity capital

RDP Projects Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)



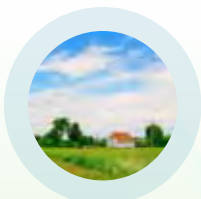
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*Discover EAFRD co-funded rural development projects from across Europe in the ENRD's RDP Projects Database!*

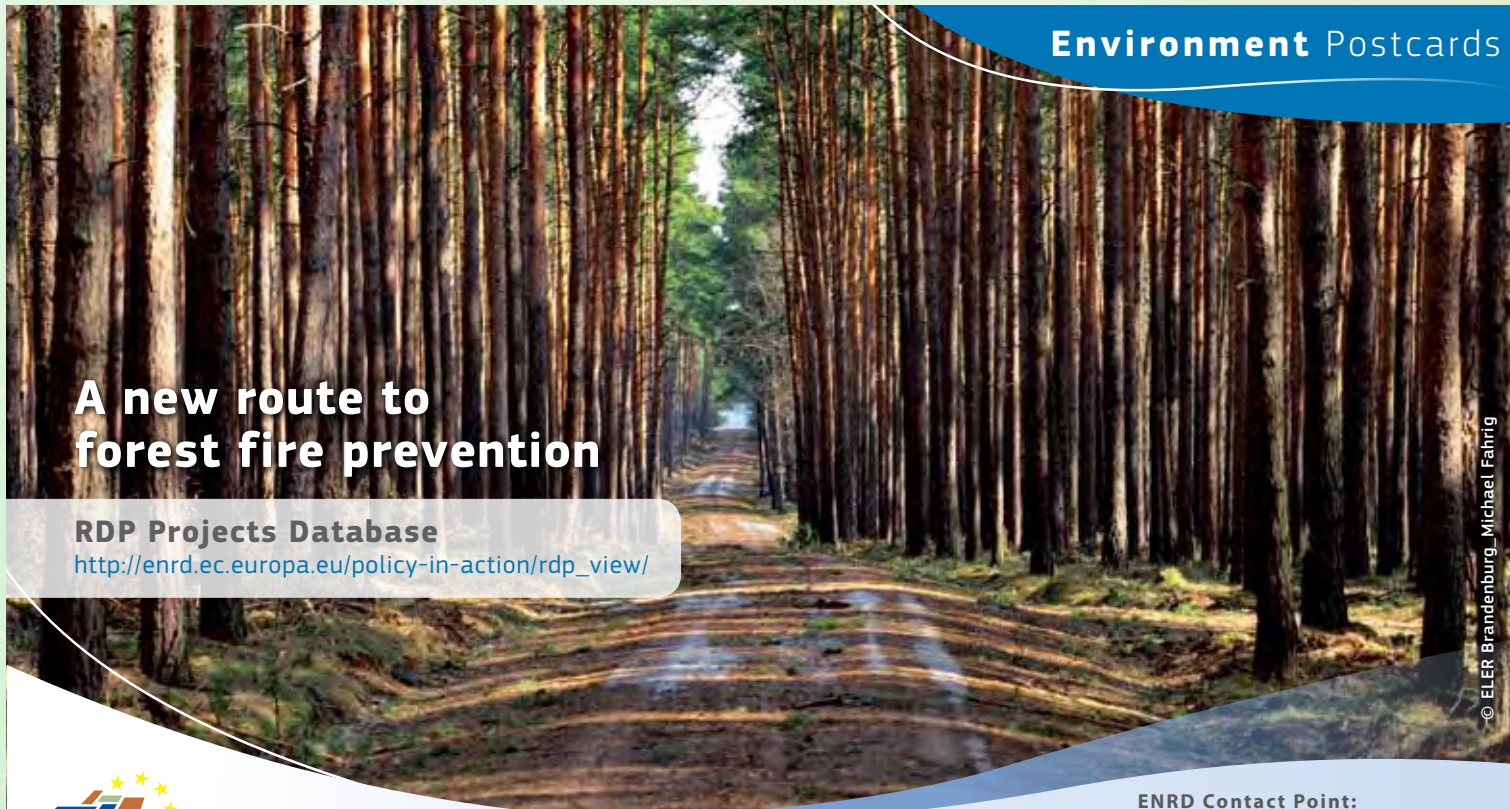
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)



# A new route to forest fire prevention

RDP Projects Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)



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# Enhancing Europe's biodiversity capital

Agri-environment scheme is win-win for farmers and nature



## IRELAND

Participation in the Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS) helps farmer Kim McCall to run his 83 ha farm while contributing to the preservation of local biodiversity. Kim maintains 10 ha of species-rich grassland and a 3.5 ha meadow of traditional hay. He has revitalised 180 metres of old hedgerow and has planted a traditional orchard of 19 native apple trees. Kim sees this participation as a win-win situation - in return for good farm planning and management, farmers receives payment to help maintain and develop Europe's biodiversity 'capital'.

### Measure 214: Agri-environment payments

Total cost: € 4 000 per year  
EAFRD: € 3 000 per year

Find out more about RDP projects:

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)

RDP Projects Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)



# A new route to forest fire prevention

Enhancing the fire prevention infrastructure



## GERMANY

The project involved the construction of a 1.8 km road in a forest that used to have only narrow, barely passable routes. In an emergency, fire fighting services would have needed to invest more effort and time to get into the core zone of the forest. Thanks to this project the fire trail is now part of the integrated forest management and fire prevention mechanisms. There are also small fire protection strips at the edges of the forest.

### Measure 226: Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions

Total project cost: € 34 300  
EAFRD contribution: € 34 300

Find out more about this project:

<http://www.brennerei-sellendorf.de>

RDP Projects Database

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/)







***'Man and his horse' by Daniel Penciu, Romania***

This striking image was taken in Bukovina, a historical region located on the slopes of the Carpathians and the adjoining plains that straddle the Romanian and Ukrainian border. The region has an active forestry sector, but as the image shows, it also knows how to maintain the charm of bygone ages. The photo was submitted to the Rural People category of the Images of Rural Europe competition by the LAG Bucovina de Munte.



### ***'Strawberries' by Domenico Boccia, Italy***

The strawberries featured in this photograph are from the Campania region of Southern Italy. The farm's ethos is about harmony with the natural world. The strawberries are cultivated using biodynamic agriculture - a type of organic farming that emphasises the interrelationship of soil, plants and animals in a self-sustaining system. The photo was submitted to the Images of Rural Europe competition by the LAG Gal Cilsì.

## Over to You!

In this section, we ask ENRD stakeholders to share stories that matter to them and which have relevance for everyone in the rural development community.



# RURALand: A window onto the rural world



**R**URALand is an ambitious, demanding and successful education campaign promoted by the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and realised by the Italian National Rural Network.

*This article was contributed to the ENRD Magazine by the Italian NRN ([www.reterurale.it](http://www.reterurale.it)).*

The project highlights the role of agriculture in preserving rural landscapes, cultures and environments that are of universal value. The objective is to make children, teenagers and young adults more aware of their surroundings and how their own behaviour can positively influence the environment and society.

### Education and territorial development

Studies show that children's knowledge of agriculture tends to be limited and that

general awareness of rural development challenges is poor. Education is key to facilitating better understanding of the environmental issues facing rural areas and, thanks to this interactive project, young people are getting ready to become active citizens.

The RURALand project, which began in 2009 with the pilot Rural4Kids project, has now grown into four initiatives with specific target groups: RuralBaby (age 3-5); Rural4Kids (age 6-10); Rural4Teens (age 11-16); Rural4Youth (age 18+).

## The Rural Times

The Rural Times was a national journalism competition, targeting Rural4Kids and Rural4Teens, that involved 1 500 primary and secondary schools throughout the country, more than 2 000 teachers and 37 500 students, who published 587 press and 280 online articles. The participants got to improve their writing skills while rediscovering their regions' typical products and resources.

RURALand has been the subject of exhibitions, radio campaigns, television broadcasts and has featured in children's magazines. It is well known throughout Italy. 'We have built an active network of schools and universities across the country, involving more than 80 000 students,' confirms Paola Lionetti, NRN Manager for RURALand. The active network allows students and teachers to learn, ask questions and share ideas.

### Sense of responsibility

Encouraging reflection on the correct use of natural resources and the essential role of rural areas in Italy's cultural identity is particularly opportune noting the Common Agricultural Policy's focus on the four main challenges facing rural areas: biodiversity protection; proper management of water resources; climate change adaptation and mitigation; and energy saving.

RURALand lets teachers and children reflect on themes such as quality of life and sustainable development, ultimately leading to greater commitment to the preservation of Italy's natural heritage. RURALand delivers interactive educational activities about the four main rural challenges.

### Creating links

The theme of the RURALand project is that 'we are all linked.' The campaign highlights how the challenges involve everyone and are influenced by even the youngest members of society. The students appreciate that the rural world is not simply a source of raw materials for food; it is also a producer of vital environmental resources such as air, water and landscape that need to be kept healthy and clean.

### Research-action methodology

RURALand initiatives, which are targeted by age group, share a common approach: a preliminary phase provides training both in classrooms and in the field; the next phase introduces students to real-life rural challenges and opportunities through study visits and fairs; and finally the national level phase connects rural and urban children, teachers and families through competitions and communications platforms (blogs, Facebook, website, etc.).

'The integrated teaching approach with hands-on experience allowed students to get involved more easily, by applying the research-action methodology. Students were the main actors, sharing what they had learnt with other students,' says Elena Signorile, Coordinator of the Rural4Teens Pilot Phase.

### Food for thought

The pedagogical approach is not limited to fact-finding, it develops cognitive, functional and relational abilities so that students become builders of their own knowledge and aware of their own behaviour.

The changing global economy and increasing pressure on natural resources have encouraged discussions about the role of civil society and the concept of public goods. 'The first stage focus was to bring the rural world to schools, now we are working to bring schools to remote rural areas,' explains Paola Lionetti.

RURALand is inspiring Italian youth to become more conscious of the importance of rural life. As Susanna Paradisi, Coordinator of the RuralBaby pilot phase comments, 'before participating in the project, children did not fully grasp certain concepts. This project has, for example, enabled more responsible behaviour towards water saving and waste.'

### Next steps

RURALand now encompasses many local, regional and national project initiatives. The online forum is regularly visited by more than 7 000 people. The organisers intend to keep growing, by tackling new subjects such as waste and its environmental impact and by aligning university education more closely to rural reality by encouraging more hands-on experience and field visits.

For more information about RURALand: [www.ruraland4.it](http://www.ruraland4.it)



© Italian NRN

Inter-generational learning activities at school help build bridges across ages.

## Rural4kids evaluation: Highlights

- Interactive learning approach strengthens students' abilities
- Awareness-raising through incisive messaging that illustrates both problems and solutions
- Use of concepts that have relevance to the daily life of the children and their families
- Online platforms provides a useful space for sharing experience, comments and ideas



LINC participants admire the surroundings in Northern Savo, Finland.

# Introducing LINC: a unique networking experience

**T**he international LINC event is a popular networking fixture on the European rural development calendar. The fourth edition was held in the central region of Northern Savo in June and it gave the 200 participants from 15 European countries a real sense of Finnish culture and tradition. Both inside and outside of the sauna!

LINC is an initiative of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and National Rural Networks from Austria, Estonia, Finland and Germany. The objective of LINC - which stands for LEADER Inspired Network Community – is to stimulate networking between LEADER areas in Europe.

## Cooperative ethos

While the LINC event continues to grow in popularity since it was first held in Austria in 2010, the ethos remains the same. LINC is about cooperation and the meetings are designed to reinforce the principles underlying LEADER and to promote the networking and sharing of experiences among the LEADER groups and rural actors.

## Team spirit

LINC is designed to build team spirit, improve working relationships and achieve cooperation goals more effectively. Event

activities promote networking in new ways. Participants are given the opportunity to exchange information, learn from one another and develop new ideas.

## Innovative networking

A unique aspect of LINC is its strong focus on networking outside of formal seminars and workshops. Participants get to share knowledge and discuss good practice all while interacting in sports and cultural events and indulging in local culinary traditions.

*This article was contributed to the ENRD Magazine by the Rural Network Unit of Finland ([www.mmm.fi](http://www.mmm.fi)).*



Enjoying the sports, from left to right: Miguel Martin, Emilio de Frutos, Hugo Calvillo and Carlos de la Fuente, LAG Sierra del Jarama, Spain.



© Finnish NRN

LAG manager Pirjo Ikäheimonen from Finland enjoys the LEADER sauna.

### LINC 2013

The Finnish LAG Ylä-Savon Veturi ry ([www.ylasavonveturi.fi](http://www.ylasavonveturi.fi)) hosted this year's LINC event, which was held on 11-13 June 2013. The Finnish National Rural Network's support unit took care of the communications, promotion and the international partner search for the event - with the assistance of the European Network for Rural Development.

'LINC is an excellent forum combining presentations and knowledge with the sharing of good practices,' emphasised Jaana Husu-Kallio, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, in her opening address to the event.

From the participants' point of view, 'LINC is a great opportunity to know what others are dealing with and we are building connections for the future,' explained Kristiina Liimand, LAG manager of Tartu Rural Development Association, Estonia.

Judit Rácz, from the LAG Felső in Hungary agreed: 'LINC inspires me to move forwards and to enjoy my work while developing my territory.'

The theme of LINC 2013 was on wellbeing and in particular the sauna. Throughout Finnish history, the sauna has been the birthplace of new ideas and inventions and those present also appreciated this traditional source of inspiration. In addition, the local Iisalmi cultural centre, which served as the main stage for the event, set up a

special LEADER Activity Zone that was open to all participating LAGs. The Zone provided a space where LAGs could present their international projects and other activities.

### The LEADER Sauna

At the LEADER Sauna delegates took the opportunity to brainstorm, form new international partnerships and to shape and to develop ideas for the forthcoming programme period; breaking the ice with a potential new business partner is certainly a lot easier while lounging in a pool and exchanging ideas...

Many participants from different European regions admired the purity of the local surroundings, enjoying natural landscapes that were not taken for granted. For Petra Supakova from the Slovakian LAG Vrsatec, who was visiting Finland for the first time, 'the best thing about LINC is meeting new people, exchanging experiences and doing things together.'

### Next steps

Since its inception, LINC has grown rapidly to become a shining example of LEADER in action. 'I have come across lots of good practice and a fantastic LEADER spirit,' notes Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen, Senior Inspector, Ministry of Employment and Economy, Finland.

This year's edition, 'was very successful,' confirms Kirsi Hakoniemi from the Finnish network support unit, 'we know this both from personal experience and from the positive coverage of the event in the Finnish media.'

Looking to the future, Sari Hyttinen, from the host LAG Ylä-Savon Veturi ry, hopes, 'that the LINC method will be used in the next programming period as well.'

Next year, Austria will be the host country for LINC 2014.

**For more information about LINC:** [www.info-linc.eu](http://www.info-linc.eu)



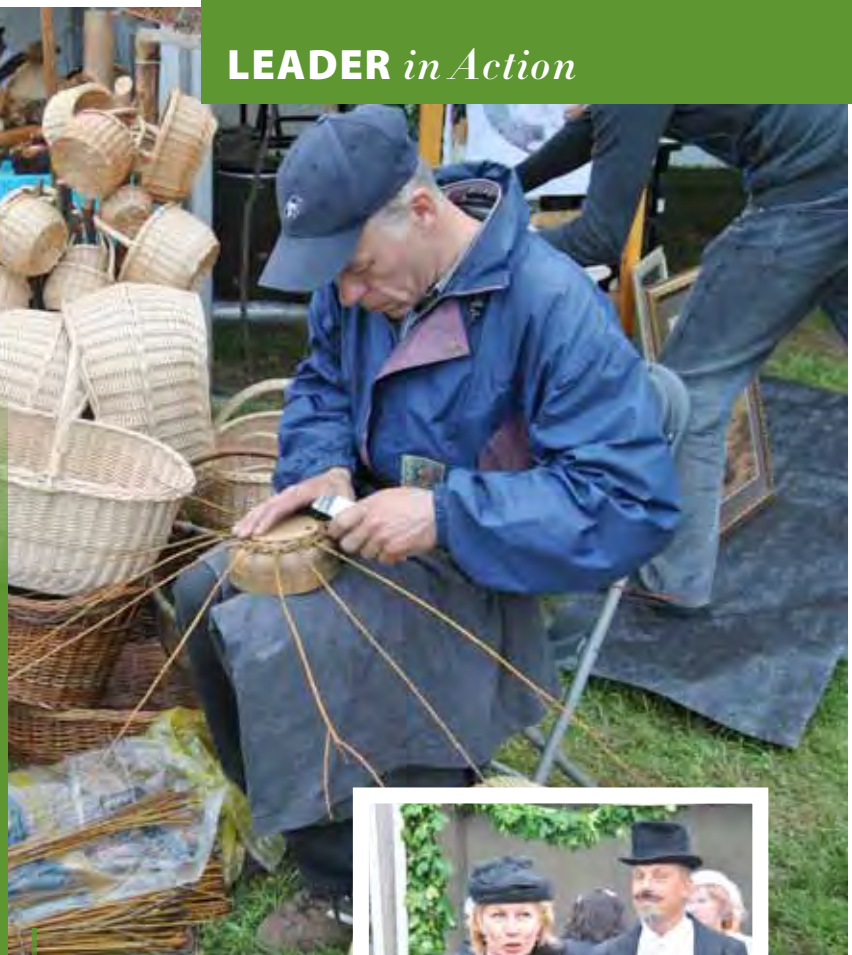
© Finnish NRN

The winning couple in the traditional wife carrying competition, Māris Krūmiņš and Agnese Jankuna, from Latvia.

# LEADER *in Action*



Local Action Groups (LAGs) are local public private partnerships who work to promote LEADER's 'bottom-up' approach to rural development in the EU.



Fair visitors and participants were shown dishes and got involved in craft production.



© Simonas Puvšaškis & Egdirijus Giedraitis

## Lithuania: Transnational fair celebrates regional diversity

From 23-26 May 2013, over 450 participants from six countries took part in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Transnational LAG Fair. The theme of the event was the preservation of distinct ethno-cultural regional identities. Organised by the Lithuanian NRN and the Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture, the event was held at Raudonė Castle, one of the most beautiful places in the country.

'The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen and expand international links, to enable the exchange of best practice and to discuss both existing and new joint projects. We feel that this year's

event achieved this and was a great success,' notes Žaneta Jucaitytė from the Lithuanian NRN.

The international delegates evaluated the event very positively. A conference for LAGs and NRNs on the first day of the event focused on the 2014-2020 programming period and best practice examples from LEADER. The fair provided the main networking experience, as the participating LAGs presented their regions and projects.

Further information is available from: [www.kaimotinklas.lt](http://www.kaimotinklas.lt)



In the evening, music from all five regions of Lithuania filled the air.



© Martin Batt

Visit to the LEADER-funded Eagle Observatory on the island of North Harris.

## UK – Scotland: Transnational partners go west for wildlife

In April 2013, the Outer Hebrides in West Scotland hosted the latest stage in a transnational nature tourism project involving partner LAGs from England, Finland, France, Hungary and Portugal, as well as by new partners from Wales. The meeting shared good practice amongst a broad range of practitioners, from IT professionals to nature reserve managers.

'The project is designed to help areas like the Outer Hebrides to exploit the characteristics of small communities and to develop nature-based opportunities to develop new tourism products,' explains Councillor Alasdair MacLeod, chair of the LEADER LAG Innse Gall.

The international delegates got to take part in the best nature-watching experiences that the islands have to offer – from golden eagle watching on the Island of Harris to a boat trip to the Shiant Islands which are home to hundreds of thousands of seabirds including puffins, razorbills and guillemots. They also participated in the Outer Hebrides Tourism Industry Association's annual conference.

Further information is available from: [www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk](http://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk)



© Martin Batt

Delegates boarding the ferry at Berneray, North Uist, to sail to the Island of Harris.





## UK – Wales: **International conference on community work in rural areas**

**L**ocal Action Group PLANED, in partnership with the ELARD and ENRD, held an international conference in Pembrokeshire, Wales on 13-15 May 2013 about Community-Led Local Development.

Over 80 delegates from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK heard from Petri Rinne, President of ELARD who told the conference that LEADER funding must not be used to 'fill the gaps' in public sector funding. Instead the focus must be on LEADER-supported growth to tackle key issues such as youth unemployment.

Mr. Rinne's views were supported by Conference Chair Peter Davies, the Sustainable Futures Commissioner for Wales, who also urged more of a 'bottom up' approach, during this period of economic challenge, with greater democratic engagement and community and private sector action.

Conference delegates participated in a range of study tours and workshops including a practical session looking at the local economy and identifying what people can do to make money flow into an area faster and to remain in the area longer. The speakers' presentations are available to download from: <http://www.planed.org.uk/4.html>

*PLANED Conference: (from left to right) Petri Rinne, President of ELARD; Kate Lindley, PLANED; Jane Howells, PLANED; Helen Murray, CEO PLANED; Robin Mogg, PLANED Chair; Sarah Hughes, PLANED; Peter Davies, Sustainable Futures Commissioner for Wales; Carola Gunnarsson, Vice President Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions; Edina Ocsko, ENRD Contact Point; Tony Brinsden, Chair of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.*

## Portugal: **LEADER highlighted as local development tool**

**A** seminar on local development approaches in Portugal, held on 9-10 May 2013, heard about the role LEADER is playing in territorial development and cooperation in development. The meeting which was held in Lisbon, was organised by In-Loco, a Portuguese not for profit group which specialises in animation, training, research and organisational support for sustainable communities.

The meeting which was attended by 180 people, included participants from government departments, municipalities, local development associations, universities and other civil society organisations. Jorge Revez, from the LAG Terras do Baixo Guadiano, told the meeting, 'LEADER is one of the most interesting approaches in terms of local development, particularly in areas of low population density. It allows local actors to join forces and builds consensus on the model of spatial development. It requires an increased capacity from stakeholders.' Further information is available from: <http://www.in-loco.pt> and <http://www.atbai.xoguardiana.pt>

© Nelson Dias



*Speakers from left to right: Dina Ferreira, Paulo Areosa Feio, Rosa Maria Simões, Nelson Dias.*



© LAG Mullerthal

*Françoise Hetto-Gaasch, Minister for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses and Tourism and Romain Schneider, Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development officially open the wellbeing trail.*

## Luxembourg: International seminar on forests

A forest seminar in the Mullerthal region, welcomed 93 delegates from LAGs in Luxembourg, France, Sweden and Finland. Organised by the local LAG (Mullerthal) on 23-25 April 2013, the topics discussed included family forestry, multifunctional forestry and forest reserves. New ideas for forestry were deliberated in an open and creative forum setting. The delegates also took part in a series of interesting field trips, seeing innovative forest kindergartens, wood processing and forest tourism and products.



© LAG Mullerthal

*The excursion on tourism and forest products visited the Martbusch campsite in Berdorf, Luxembourg.*

The seminar culminated in the official opening of a new nature trail by Françoise Hetto-Gaasch, Luxembourg's Minister for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses and Tourism and Romain Schneider, Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development. Two further forest seminars will take place in Finland and France later in 2013 as part of this transnational project. More information is available from: <http://mu.leader.lu/fr/news/seminaire-sur-les-forets-23-25-avril-2013-mullerthal/>



© Tommy Nilsson

© Tommy Nilsson

## Sweden: LEADER LAGs and FLAGs Attend National Conference

**A**round 200 representatives from 53 LAGs and 11 FLAGs met at their annual national conference on the 14-15 May 2013, on the coast of Sörmland County, south of Stockholm. Preparation for the 2014-2020 programming period and approaches to Community-Led Local Development were top of the agenda.

There were also opportunities to consider issues around project and funding compliance and how to deal with the transition period between programmes. 'We recognise that this period is challenging for our LAGs and FLAGs as they try to bring their existing Local Development Strategies to an effective close while already planning for the next programming period. We hope that all the delegates left the conference full of new ideas and enthusiasm,' said Hans-Olof Stålgren, from the Swedish National Rural Network, which coordinated the event.

Further information is available from: <http://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/huvudomraden/leader/natverkstraffarforleader.4.694182f211c99670d3c80005773.html>

## Cyprus: Culinary workshop for children

**T**wo educational workshops were organised by the Cypriot LAG Larnaca in the Environmental Information Centre of Larnaca, on the 23-24 April 2013. Around 90 primary school students from the communities of Kellia, Livadia, Lefkara and Agios Theodoros took part.

During the events a nutritionist demonstrated various aspects of a healthy Mediterranean diet and a skilled chef presented simple and hygienic methods of preparing different sandwiches and various kinds of salads. Students then had the opportunity to create their own sandwiches and their own salad, under the guidance of the chef. The workshops were completed with a tour of the Environmental Information Centre and all participants shared several souvenirs, including an educational game on the proper diet for children.

The initiative forms part of a cooperation project entitled 'Gastronomic Routes and the Culture of Flavours' involving 13 LAGs from Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Portugal all of which share common culinary traditions. One of the main objectives of the project is to raise awareness of these tasty and healthy traditions and to awaken local identity and pride.



*LAG and FLAG representatives are led by soldiers from the main town square to the fortress in Nyköping where the conference dinner was held.*



© 123rf

# Rural *Focus*

EU rural development incorporates a diverse range of issues from forestry to rural finance to emerging challenges such as climate change. In this edition, we focus on innovation.



© Tim Hudson



© Tim Hudson

## Promoting future rural innovation

**U**nder the reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), knowledge transfer and innovation are key drivers of sustainable agriculture and rural development.

In an ever-changing world, the European Union's growth strategy for the coming decade - Europe 2020<sup>1</sup> - is resolutely fixed on creating a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

If the importance of knowledge transfer and innovation for agriculture and rural development has long been recognised, there is also now widespread agreement that such knowledge transfer and innovation systems need to be reinvigorated.

### Mind the gap

'There is an innovation gap between research and practice, in terms of researchers inventing things that are not picked up sufficiently,' notes Professor Erik Mathijs, from Belgium's Catholic University of Leuven, and there is a need to, 'bring together research policy and rural development policy to bridge that gap.'

The reformed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is set to provide a real innovation boost. The amount of funding to support research, innovation and knowledge-sharing under the CAP will be doubled.

The new rules for the second pillar provide a more flexible approach than at present and measures will no longer be classified into four axes. Instead Member States and regions will be able to decide which measures they use in order to achieve targets set against six broad priorities.

Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas is one of the identified rural development priorities. By prioritising innovation in rural development, ground-breaking ideas can get noticed more quickly and knowledge exchange can be optimised.

### What is innovation?

Innovation can be understood in many ways. It can involve new and improved products, processes or services, or their adaptation to new geographical or environmental contexts. As Inge Van

<sup>1</sup> [www.ec.europa.eu/europe2020](http://www.ec.europa.eu/europe2020)

Oost, Policy Officer, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission puts it, innovation is, 'ideas put into practice with success.'

In other words, it is only when a new idea becomes mainstream that it is termed an innovation. The innovation process is moving away from the top-down use of science and technology and towards more collaborative forms.

There is a wide consensus that more interaction among farmers, researchers and rural entrepreneurs is needed: an interactive innovation model, based on voluntary participation, is expected to characterise future innovation in agriculture and forestry.

## Funding support for research, innovation and knowledge-sharing will be doubled under the new CAP

### Making it happen

The recently launched European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability is a significant development. It is establishing effective interaction between agriculture, the bio-economy, science and other sectors at EU, national and regional level. 'Marrying sustainability and productivity,' is a key target for any innovation initiative within the EIP emphasises Ms Van Oost.

The aim of the EIP is to take a 'facilitator approach,' says Mr Mathijs, who is a member of the EIP Steering Board. The EIP will seek to coordinate existing rural development and research funds and will, 'put in place an innovation brokerage that will bring those worlds together.' The EIP is to establish operational groups consisting of farmers, foresters, researchers, advisers, NGOs, agri-businesses, rural development authorities and other key actors.

According to the proposed rural development regulation for 2014-2020, the establishment and operation of operational groups can be supported under the cooperation measure. These groups will also be eligible for support under other measures, such as knowledge transfer and information actions, investment in physical assets, advisory services, and farm and business development.

### Setting targets

Two headline targets have been identified for the EIP. The first is to promote productivity and efficiency in the agricultural sector by reversing the recent trend of diminishing productivity gains by 2020. The second is to secure the sustainability of agriculture (by securing soil functionality at a satisfactory level by 2020).

The EIP adheres to an interactive innovation model that focuses on forming partnerships using a bottom-up approach. This form of knowledge exchange can generate new insights and mould existing tacit knowledge into solutions that are put into practice more quickly. By stimulating innovation in this way, the 2014-2020 programming period is set to be a great time for new ideas!

## Innovation: key references

### EU Rural Review - Issue 16

Issue 16 - Knowledge Transfer and Innovation in Rural Development Policy - provides a great overview of the rural development innovation journey so far and a glimpse into future challenges and opportunities.

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eu-rural-review>



### Focus Group on Knowledge Transfer and Innovation

The ENRD Focus Group on Knowledge Transfer and Innovation (KT&I) analysed how RDPs support KT&I in practice under the current policy framework. The Group also provides recommendations about how to promote KT&I in the next programming period.

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/research-and-innovation-gateway-development/kt-innovation/kt-focus-group>

### EIP for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability

For more information about this new interface for innovation actors:

[www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/](http://www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip/)

# EAFRD Projects

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) co-finances many successful rural development projects all around Europe. We profile some inspiring examples...

## Rural youth promote country life

*A cooperation project between Belgium and the Netherlands.*

An innovative Flemish-Dutch rural youth engagement project is using social media to help counter the 'brain drain' of young graduates from the countryside to big towns. High school students have been encouraged to think about and express the unique opportunities their region has to offer.

The transnational cooperation (TNC) project, involving the LAG

Meetjesland-Leie-Schelde from Belgium and Noordoost Friesland from the Netherlands, has inspired a group of young people to promote the added value of their local areas. The teenage participants have been involved in the design and the production of regional marketing campaigns to raise awareness among rural youth of the comparative benefits of country living.

A mix of audio-visual and social media – including Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WeetjesOverDeMeetjes](http://www.facebook.com/WeetjesOverDeMeetjes) – have been used to highlight a wide range of themes from culture to landscape to education. The campaign was promoted through social media, regional and municipality websites. The project has also featured in a number of regional television broadcasts. The EAFRD contributed just under a third of the total funding of €40 000.



© Katrien De Merlier

## A sustainable future for rural Portugal

*Inter-territorial project illustrates value of renewable energy.*

As the beginning of the current programming period, five Portuguese LAGs came together around a shared idea. They wanted to illustrate the potential of renewable energy sources for rural areas. Following a pilot phase, extra funding was needed to push forward with the planned activities. In all, €549 300 has been invested, with 68% coming from the EAFRD.

As a result, 11 different types of photovoltaic installations, three types of micro wind turbines and Portugal's first micro hydro-turbine under the *Renováveis na hora* legal framework that allows energy consumers to become domestic renewable energy producers, have now been installed! The results

were impressive: 50% of public lighting energy needs are being met in two rural municipalities and carbon emissions have been reduced.

José Coutinho, coordinator of the LAG LEADER Oeste ([www.leADERoeste.pt](http://www.leADERoeste.pt)) explained that the main challenge was finding common criteria for each LAG and complying with the legal and technical requirements. The project has been a real success, strengthening ties between communities and businesses. The five participating LAGs have demonstrated how renewable energy sources can contribute to the diversification of rural communities' economies.



© LAG LEADER Oeste

*Micro wind turbines generate electricity. Their light weight, small size, and flexible configuration allows them to be installed in both urban and rural environments.*

## A smart investment in Irish seaweed

*Traditional enterprise becomes a truly modern business.*

For generations, the Talty family has harvested seaweed on the West Coast of Ireland. Since launching Wild Irish Sea Veg ([www.wildirishseaveg.com](http://www.wildirishseaveg.com)) in 2010 the business has developed well. All seaweeds used are natural, hand-harvested and air-dried to ensure the quality of the product.

To meet growing demand, the family decided to invest in new facilities and they also applied for RDP support. Over €130 000 was required in all to build and equip a 170m<sup>2</sup> unit

for biodegradable packaging and storing. The project benefited from an EAFRD's contribution of €36 960.

Today the project has met its objectives of allowing the business to strengthen its position in the Irish market – it supplies around 500 outlets – and to enter the export market. The business contributes to the local economy, provides employment and is helping to pass on traditional seaweed harvesting skills to younger generations.



© Wild Irish Sea Veg

*Seaweed is rich in vitamins and minerals, and has great potential for use in nutritional supplements.*

## Restoring a traditional Estonian social-cultural landscape

*Repairing a dry-stone wall in Matsalu National Park.*



© Hellat Rumvoit

*A dry-stone wall in Matsalu National Park.*

Estonia's Matsalu National Park is a valuable heritage asset and a rural tourism destination ([www.rmk.ee/en](http://www.rmk.ee/en)). Conserving the landscape for future generations requires permanent work. It recently included the restoration of a dry-stone wall used as a traditional land boundary.

This project is a specific example the ongoing conservation effort to positively enrich the visual landscape, protect historically

important features and maintain traditional rural skills. The restored wall also provides a valuable habitat for amphibians, reptiles, small mammals and birds.

In all, EAFRD funds amounted to 80% of the total cost of this small-scale restoration project. The activities included the clearing of vegetation, identifying and digging up the original stones and repairing of the wall to its original condition.

## Improving the quality of Czech medicinal herbs

*Investment in storage facility promotes quality.*

Medicinal plant cultivation has a long tradition in the region of South Bohemia in the Czech Republic. Locally grown herbs and plants are widely used in the cosmetic, food and pharmaceutical industries.

Byliny Mikeš is a leading medicinal herb producer in the region ([www.bylinymikes.cz](http://www.bylinymikes.cz)). The company purchases, processes and sells all kinds of botanical products and is keenly attentive to the quality of its products and services.

Looking to improve the quantity and quality of its storage facilities, Byliny Mikeš decided to modernise its site and to launch a campaign to encourage the local cultivation of medicinal plants. The EAFRD invested €180 648 – around 30% of the total investment required – which allowed for the building of a new purpose-built storage facility providing optimum storage conditions. This new structure not only helped to



*For centuries, herbs have been valued for their medicinal qualities in the Czech Republic.*

improve the quality of the products, it has increased productivity.

South Bohemia is primarily an agricultural and tourist area with a rich tradition of fish farming. This project provided an important benefit to the entire community by creating jobs, boosting the economy and preserving the traditional medicinal plant harvesting skills.



© Byliny Mikeš s.r.o.

**More information about these projects and hundreds more is available from the RDP Projects Database on the ENRD website:**

[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/en](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en)

**And check out the related project videos in the ENRD media gallery:**

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/en>

# In Your Own Words

We pass the microphone over to you to hear what you have to say. For this issue we hear your views about community and the LEADER approach...

*The LEADER Event 2013 allowed the rural development community to reflect on the nature of the LEADER approach...*

**'LEADER LAGs... are meant to be dynamic and adaptable, locally relevant, accessible and responsive using their local knowledge and understanding to involve local actors.'**



*Jenny Nylund, LEADER Upplandsbygd, Sweden*



**'We all need to communicate well to secure the flexibility to operate in a complex but also wonderful rural environment.'**

*Tassos Perimenis, Lesvos LAG and FLAG, Greece*

*The community of Tracton in Cork, Ireland benefited from LEADER funding to renovate an old school-house building and set up a community centre for local residents...*



**'There's a wonderful community spirit and that's the important thing, and as you grow old, it's lovely to have somewhere to go, something to do...'**

*Carmel Desmond, Tracton All Sorts Quilting Group*

**'I got a job here for a half day, every day of the week. It's great because when you're working all your life, it's hard to sit around...'**



*Laurence Desmond, Caretaker, Tracton Arts and Community Centre*

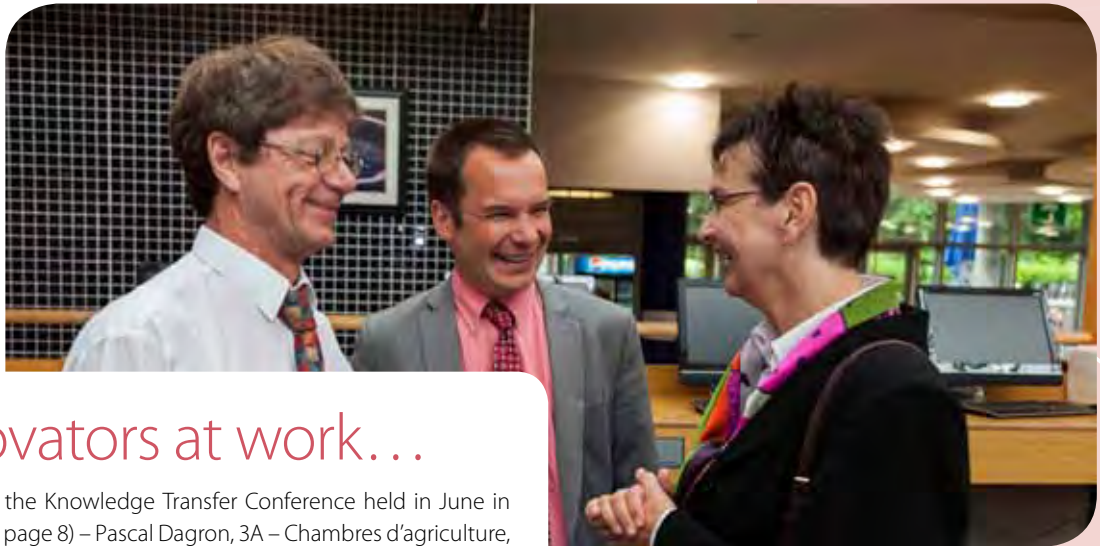


**'All the different community groups can come together to share their interests and learn new skills.'**

*Lisa Rauch, Administrator, Tracton Arts and Community Centre*

*The above quotes are taken from the 'LEADER Event 2013 - Building Bridges for the Future' and the 'Community Centre Project' videos. Both are available from the ENRD media gallery: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/>*





© Liz O'Sullivan

## Innovators at work...

Pictured at the Knowledge Transfer Conference held in June in Ireland (see page 8) – Pascal Dagron, 3A – Chambres d'agriculture, France; Sylvain Lhermitte, French Agricultural Chamber/ENRD and Inge Van Oost, DG Agriculture and Rural Development.

## Out & About

Smile, you're on camera! We select some of our favourite photos from the recent networking activities of the European rural development community.

© ENRD Contact Point



## LEADER candidates

Lauresha Grezda and Enis Gjokaj from the Managing Authorities of Albania and Montenegro network with Ana Nowak from the European Commission at the LEADER Event 2013.



© Patrik Ljungman

## Country music!

Young people involved in music activities in Halland, southern Sweden.



## Flying the flag...

Austrian NRN and LAG representatives at the International Fair held as part of the LEADER Event 2013. All the flavours of Europe were present at this great networking event!



## Enjoying Images of Rural Europe...

An exhibition of winning photos from the ENRD's Images of Rural Europe competition has been travelling around Europe. Most recently, residents in Soria, Spain had an opportunity to enjoy the inspiring images. The photos are also available online: <http://www.ruralimages.eu/>



## A question for the ENRD?

Use the ENRD Infoline at [info@enrd.eu](mailto:info@enrd.eu)  
or call +32 2 235 2020



### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Rural development in 2014-20\*

#### Who manages rural development?

The EU countries choose measures suited to their specific needs and manage their programmes themselves.  
The EU pays part of the costs (co-financing).

#### How much does rural development cost?

##### Where does the money come from?

The CAP budget for 2014-20 for all 28 member countries totals €95 billion (current prices).  
This money comes from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

#### How is the money used?

From 2014, the EAFRD is being incorporated into the new common strategic framework together with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social

Fund (ESF), the Cohesion fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy (sustainable, smart and inclusive growth).

Funds earmarked for rural development can be used for both agricultural and non-agricultural activities, based on six priorities:

- fostering knowledge transfer and innovation;
- enhancing competitiveness;
- promoting food chain organisation & risk management;
- restoring, preserving & enhancing ecosystems;
- promoting resource efficiency and transition to a low-carbon economy
- promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

\*The CAP and agriculture in Europe – Frequently asked questions: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-13-631\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-631_en.htm)

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*Connecting Rural Europe...*

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 by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe.



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