

ENRD Seminar on Stakeholder Involvement

26 March 2015, Brussels



Final Report
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I. Introduction

Background

“Increasing the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of rural development” is one of the **key objectives of National Rural Networks (NRNs) as well as the ENRD** as set out in the EAFRD Regulation. Stakeholder involvement (and the implementation of the ‘partnership principle’) in rural development is vital already at the early stages of rural development programme development and implementation.

Networking and rural networks are supposed to be key tools and mechanisms to facilitate this process. Therefore, identifying the right stakeholders early on in the programming, engaging them in rural development through various networking activities and improving rural development programme implementation through their involvement are key concerns for rural networks, as well as Managing Authorities and rural stakeholders themselves.

The ENRD Contact Point of 2014-2020 has selected ‘stakeholder involvement’ as one of its core themes/focus areas during 2014-2015. In order to address this theme, an **‘integrated work package’ has been developed**. This covers a range of ENRD activities that strongly build on each other, including meetings of a Thematic Group, Issue 19 of the ENRD Rural Review on Stakeholder Involvement, and preparatory workshops within the 1st Rural Networks Assembly and the 1st NRN meeting.

Objectives

The first ENRD Seminar (held on 26 March in Brussels) formed part of the stream of ENRD work on stakeholder involvement. The overall objective of the event was **to share experiences** among various stakeholders and enhance the **capacity of networking as a tool for increasing stakeholder involvement**.

The Seminar brought together more than 140 participants from 26 Member States to discuss effective stakeholder involvement in rural development. Participants included over 60 ‘grassroot’ stakeholders involved in agriculture, forestry, sustainable management of natural resources and territorial development. They engaged directly with representatives of European stakeholder organisations, Managing Authorities, Network Support Units, DG AGRI and other EU institutions.

Method

The seminar combined different methodologies: plenary sessions, panel discussions and workshops. (The detailed Agenda can be found in *Annex I* of this report.)

The main emphasis was on **identifying, presenting and discussing relevant ‘stakeholder involvement’ practices, experiences and examples** brought by participants, identifying lessons learnt and developing recommendations for rural networks. For this purpose:

- three workshops were organised in the morning to discuss stakeholder involvement

in **local planning and and project implementation**;

- three workshops were organised in the afternoon to discuss stakeholder involvement in **policy formulation and implementation**.

In total, **18 different practical examples were presented** to set the scene for 20 theme-specific discussion groups¹.

All presentations (including plenary & workshop) delivered during the seminar are uploaded on the relevant [ENRD website page](#)².

How to use this report

This report summarises the main outcomes of the sessions of the Seminar, with particular emphasis on the outcomes of the 20 discussion groups during the morning and afternoon workshop sessions.

Although it is challenging to summarise the richness of the discussions and the diverse experience brought by different participants in a single report, this report aims to provide a simple overview (the main body of the report), as well as a detailed summary of the outcomes (in the annexes).

This report can be used as **'toolbox on stakeholder involvement'**, depending on the background and interest of the reader.

The main part of the report provides **key lessons and networking recommendations on stakeholder involvement** at project, local planning and policy levels.

More **specific recommendations/suggestions supported by practical examples** are summarised in the annexes by discussion-topic. Often the relevant sections of annexes can also be accessed *by clicking on titles/headings and examples* in the main report.

¹ Please note that several 'stakeholder involvement' examples were also provided by participants prior to the event and are uploaded on the ENRD website, and can be accessed through the following link: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/uploaded-files/s1_participants-examples_20150326.pdf

² <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/en-rd-events-and-meetings/enrd-stakeholder-involvement-seminar-20150326>

II. Opening remarks

- In his introduction *Markus Holzer* (DG AGRI H3, Head of Unit) highlighted the importance of the diversity of stakeholders present at the event. He stressed that a specific aim of the event is to discuss how grassroot-level stakeholders can get involved in rural development.
- *Paul Soto* (Team Leader, ENRD Contact Point) [in his presentation](#)³ stressed that the starting point for this event is “*people & places*”. He then talked about why stakeholder involvement is important, what we mean by it, who the key rural development stakeholders are and what levers and opportunities there are for improving stakeholder involvement now.



- *Edina Ocsko* (ENRD Contact Point) [in her presentation](#)⁴ introduced the purpose of the morning workshops, also highlighting the wide range of backgrounds and expectations of stakeholders.

³ http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/uploaded-files/s1_plenary_soto_introduction.pdf

⁴ http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/uploaded-files/s1_plenary_ocsko_am_workshops.pdf

III. Morning workshops: Improving stakeholder involvement at local planning and project levels

Objectives

The main purpose of the morning workshops was to present and discuss **stakeholder involvement practices and examples at the local planning and project levels** in three main thematic areas:

- Workshop 1 on [involving farmers and other stakeholders in projects aimed at a more competitive agriculture](#), with particular focus on:
 - [‘learning from peers’](#) (farmer-to-farmer exchange),
 - [involving young farmers](#)
 - [involving stakeholders within the food supply chain](#).
- Workshop 2 on [Involving stakeholders in projects and local strategies aimed at the sustainable management of natural resources](#), with particular focus on:
 - [involving farmers](#),
 - [improving local communities’ capacities](#),
 - [collective approaches to environmental issues](#).
- Workshop 3 on [Involving stakeholders in integrated local strategies aimed at a more balanced territorial development](#), with particular focus on:
 - [hard-to-reach groups/ engaging youth](#),
 - [hard-to-reach areas](#),
 - [urban-rural linkages](#),
 - [local strategy planning](#).

Throughout the discussions, the main challenges, aspects that worked and did not work, as well as main lessons were identified.⁵



⁵ The introductory presentations of workshops on examples and on main lessons from discussions can be accessed through the [ENRD website](#).

Main outcomes

Some cross-cutting findings were identified through the 10 discussion groups of the morning workshops as presented below. More detailed outcomes (including specific examples) related to the specific topics can be found in *Annex II*.

Engaging with farmers

- **Farmer-to-farmer exchange** is important, as farmers often learn best from their peers. Examples include the [monitor farm, focus farm and other farm-to-farm exchange](#) experiences in different Member States and farmer-to-farmer co-operation with regard to environmental objectives (e.g. [agri-environmental schemes in Wales](#), or [study visits in the Czech Republic](#)). **Co-operatives** have a crucial role (although co-operation/trust needs time to develop, especially in Central and Eastern European Countries).
- **To involve farmers successfully** it is important to identify subjects that are relevant and specific enough; there has to be clear (financial or other) benefits for farmers (e.g. you need to ask why farmers would want to implement agri-environmental measures); results have to be practical; flexibility is needed in project design. Examples and lessons learnt on how to best involve farmers include a [LIFE project in Wales](#), a [Water protection project in Sweden](#), and a [conservation project in Hungary](#).

Engaging with all types of local stakeholders

- It is **crucial to link farmers and other stakeholders** (e.g. marketing chain participants, financial organisations, environmental organisations, tourism organisations, consumers, etc.) - see for instance [Strategy on Natura 2000 in Bulgaria](#). Linking with research stakeholders is crucial in many respects, examples include [pilot public procurement in the Rhone-Alpes](#), or the [Scottish Environmental LINK](#). At an overall level, networking can particularly add value through creating trust between stakeholders and enable regular and effective communication.
- Diverse stakeholder involvement is particularly important to address **issues with a wider relevance** than the agricultural sector, such as food supply chains (see for instance the [Vegetable co-op](#) example in Slovenia) or generational change in rural areas. Networking within the rural development context should focus on areas where exchange among various stakeholders brings added value, i.e. where there are clear benefits for the wider rural community.
- In the local development context it is important to look beyond rural areas, and create **links between urban and rural areas**. A number of useful stakeholder engagement practices have been identified within the [urban-rural context](#).

- **Young people**, especially children (early education) and schools can be seen as a particularly important target group to achieve long-term improvement, e.g. to raise awareness about environmental issues (see for instance the [‘Farms in Towns’](#) project in Belgium, and [food supply chain examples](#)). Young people are not only target groups, but can also be mediators in the local development process, i.e. they can be instrumental in involving other rural stakeholders in rural development. One of the discussion groups specifically focused on [how to involve youth](#).

Methods, tools and approaches for stakeholder engagement

- **Advisors play a key role:** In the context of working with farmers, there is a need for facilitators/advisors that farmers trust. This is important, for instance, to overcome some of the suspicions that farmers may have of new schemes and some of their fears that environmental measures will be in direct conflict with their financial objectives ([see example on agri-environmental measure improvement in Sweden](#)). Local animators that local stakeholders/community members trust also play an important role for stakeholder involvement in the wider rural development context (e.g. with regard to the development of local strategies).
- **Organising consultations, seminars at the local level** is an important networking activity to build trust and involve stakeholders in local development. Informal and face-to-face contacts and creating commitment at the local level are crucial in this regard. One has to think about **longer term stakeholder involvement** (i.e. not one-off activities), and this requires regular contacts and keeping up to date with changes that take place at the local level. Setting-up a local development strategy with [the involvement of local stakeholders coming from remote areas in Greece](#) is one example for creating long-term involvement/commitment of stakeholders.
- **One size does not fit all:** There are important differences among Member States and in the ways individuals interact and learn. This may include basic agricultural conditions (e.g. [access to land and capital, involvement of young people in agriculture, culture of co-operation among farmers](#)). This implies that different stakeholder groups would need to be involved in different ways. Exchange is needed to understand the details of practices across MS, i.e. what works well in certain situations and why is important.
- It is important to **learn about new methods and try different approaches** in different contexts, as well as to develop pilot programmes. Networks could usefully identify and spread the use of new methods for creative stakeholder involvement, especially in the context of engaging rural stakeholders in local planning. An example is the [‘U-Theory’](#) applied in the Netherlands.

Feedback by an **expert panel** on the key messages of the three morning workshops is summarised in *Annex III*.

IV. Afternoon workshops: Improving stakeholder involvement in rural development policy formulation and implementation

Objectives

The main purpose of this session was to identify ways in which networks can contribute to rural development policy formulation and implementations. Discussions took place in workshops grouped as follows:

- Workshop 4 focused on the question: ‘**How can NRNs support stakeholder networks in engaging more effectively with policy-makers?**’
- Workshops 5 & 6 focused on the question: ‘**How can NRNs successfully bridge stakeholders with policy-makers?**’.

THE AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS WERE INTRODUCED BY THE PRESENTATION OF ELENA SARACENO ENTITLED ‘[MANY WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION](#)’⁶.



Throughout the discussions:

- **Specific (common) challenges** for stakeholder involvement and the role of rural networks were identified,
- **Recommendations** were formulated for networks, Managing Authorities (MAs) and stakeholders on how to overcome these.

⁶ http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/uploaded-files/s1_plenary_saraceno_introd_pp.pdf

Main outcomes

The main recommendations are summarised in the box below. Detailed descriptions of the specific recommendations (as well as **supporting examples/practices**) can be found in the tables in Annex IV. The detailed information presented in the tables can also be accessed by **clicking on the questions/recommendations below**.

Recommendations on stakeholder involvement for NRNs, MAs and stakeholders

1. Which stakeholders should NRNs focus on?

- ✓ [Create representative stakeholder committees](#)
- ✓ [NRNs are 'networks of networks' - Involve intermediaries as connectors to stakeholders on the ground](#)
- ✓ [Identify and focus on active stakeholders \(including those who 'have a voice'\)](#)
- ✓ [Mix stakeholders & views](#)
- ✓ [Engage and focus on specific groups / consider marginalised groups](#)

2. How should NRNs work with stakeholders/ NRN members?

- ✓ [Focus on specific needs & issues](#)
- ✓ [Specialise – use limited resources wisely](#)
- ✓ [Try new ways of engaging with stakeholders](#)
- ✓ [Motivate members through identifying relevant topics of interest & build trust](#)
- ✓ [Meet stakeholders regularly](#)

3. How should NRNs create the links between stakeholders & policy-makers

- ✓ [NRNs should credibly represent grassroots stakeholders](#)
- ✓ [Involve MAs and other institutional stakeholders](#)
- ✓ [Send clear \(evidence-based\) coordinated messages](#)
- ✓ [Collect and present evidence for stakeholder involvement](#)

4. How can MAs make stakeholder consultations and the work of NRNs more effective?

- ✓ [NRNs need clear mandate and responsibilities](#)
- ✓ [Take NRNs and partnership principle seriously](#)
- ✓ [NRNs should ideally be set up before the RDPs are being drafted](#)
- ✓ [Need to connect with rural reality](#)

Recommendations on stakeholder involvement for NRNs, MAs and stakeholders

- ✓ [NRNs and stakeholder organisations need adequate resources](#)

5. How can NRNs/MAs & Stakeholder Organisations work together?

- ✓ [Identify the areas where stakeholder-NRN cooperation can add value](#)
- ✓ [NRNs/MAs need to identify the right tools for stakeholder participation & cooperate with stakeholder organisations](#)

6. What can stakeholders do to become more active in networks?

- ✓ [Stakeholders also need to be proactive with the network](#)
- ✓ [Stakeholders need to be aware of their opportunities/channels and make their voice heard](#)

V. Afternoon panel discussion

Some of the key messages from the panel members - *Chris Head (UK-England)*, *Mathilde Houze (Regional MA, FR)*, *Alistair Prior (UK-Scotland)*, *Catia Rosas (PT)* - and participants in reaction to the findings of the workshops are summarised as follows:

- The **NSU mandate** is a key point. Although considerable effort is made in many countries to ensure there is a separation between the MA and NSU, there is still some confusion on the tasks and roles of different bodies. It is important to discuss topics within the NRNs that do not necessarily form part of the MA agenda.
- **Policymakers should be also actively engaged** in the debate. NSUs should find new and effective ways of engaging policy-makers.
- For the NSU to **effectively engage grassroots stakeholders**, it needs to demonstrate to them the added value of their involvement. It is important to ensure constant flow of information between the grassroots stakeholders and the NSU. NSUs should work to achieve recognition not only from the top but also from the bottom.
- The main point of bringing stakeholders from all levels together is to approach diverging sectorial interests within a common platform. For effective engagement and actual results, **networks should convey the message that everyone is working together to achieve common objectives**. The ENRD has a role to play here by making the case for joint projects/objectives at European level to be achieved by the joint efforts of all NRNs and their stakeholders

VI. Next steps

The event was positively received by participants (see details of the participants' feedback in Annex VI). It is hoped that the ideas, examples and lessons on 'stakeholder involvement' from this Seminar will support the work of not only rural networks, but also Managing Authorities, stakeholders and their organisations, as well as European Institutions.

Findings of the seminar will be carried further through the work of the Thematic Group on Stakeholder Involvement. Initial findings of the Seminar fed immediately into the the 2nd Thematic Group meeting (27 March). The Thematic Group's final report (due in July 2015) aims to provide more concrete recommendations for rural networks, Managing Authorities and stakeholders with regard to stakeholder involvement in rural development policy for the coming years.

Annex I: Agenda of the Seminar

1st ENRD Seminar (2014-2020) on

'Increasing stakeholder involvement in rural development'

Date/time: 26 March 2015, from 8.30 am to 5pm

Location: Renaissance Hotel (Brussels, Rue du Parnasse, 1050)

Overall objective: To contribute to the improved understanding and capacity of networking as a tool for increasing effective stakeholder involvement in rural development.

Specific objectives

- To identify the key stakeholders involved in RD(P) and the ways in which their needs can be met by greater involvement.
- To identify the main channels through which stakeholders are able to influence rural development.
- To identify the practical tools and methods available to rural networks for improving the effective involvement of stakeholders in rural development policy implementation.

Timing 🕒	Agenda item
8.30 – 9.00	Registration
9.00 – 10.00	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome by DG AGRI, <i>Markus Holzer, Head of Unit H3</i> • Welcome & Presentation on 'Stakeholder Involvement & purpose of the Seminar', <i>Paul Soto, Team Leader of the ENRD Contact Point</i> • Introduction to the morning workshops, <i>Edina Ocsko, ENRD Contact Point</i>
10.00 – 10.30	Coffee break
10.30 – 12.00	Morning workshops: <u>Improving stakeholder involvement at local planning and project levels</u> <p>Workshop 1: Involving farmers and other stakeholders in projects aimed at a more competitive agriculture</p> <p>Introductory presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from peers: The monitor farms experience, <i>Peter Cook (UK)</i> • Engaging young farmers, <i>Jannes Maes (BE/CEJA)</i> • Ecological Collection and Distribution Centre for Vegetables - Cooperation of stakeholders within the food supply chain, <i>Ales Zidar (SI)</i> <p>Workshop 2: Involving stakeholders in projects and local strategies aimed at the sustainable management of natural resources.</p> <p>Introductory presentations:</p>

Timing 🕒	Agenda item
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving and accompanying farmers in the restoration of blanket bogs in Wales, <i>Arfon Williams (UK)</i> Improving local communities' capacity to deliver environmental outcomes: the Eco-museum project in Monti Sibillini National Park, <i>Ennio Merlini (IT)</i> A collective approach to farmland conservation: The Dutch example, <i>Remco Schreuder (NL)</i>
	<p>Workshop 3: Involving stakeholders in integrated local strategies aimed at a more balanced territorial development</p> <p>Introductory presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Youth involvement in the Swedish Village Action Movement, <i>Josefine Heed (SE)</i> Informal network of animators in remote areas, <i>Anastasios Perimenis (GR)</i> 'U-Theory' for strengthening rural-urban linkages, <i>Marga de Jong (NL)</i> Regional Deals, <i>Marieke Kok (NL)</i>
12.00 – 12.30	<p>Feedback from morning workshops – Panel of Experts</p> <p>Participants: <i>Kirsten Birke Lund (DK), Henk Kieft (NL), Elena Saraceno (IT)</i></p>
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 14.30	Introduction to the afternoon workshops
14.30 – 16.00	<p>Afternoon workshops: <u>Improving stakeholder involvement in policy and implementation</u></p> <p>Workshop 4: The experience of rural stakeholders in shaping rural development policy and implementation</p> <p>Introductory presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing hard-to-reach stakeholders into rural development policy implementation, <i>Simonas Barzda (SK)</i> The experience of NGOs and other organisations in shaping rural development policy implementation, <i>Trees Robijns (Birdlife)</i> Experience from Estonian Rural Parliament, <i>Anneli Kana (EE)</i> <p>Workshops 5: Networking as a tool for shaping rural development policy and implementation</p> <p>Introductory presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members involvement in Swedish NRN activities, <i>Sofia Lindblad (SE)</i> Interactive evaluation of RDP delivery with target groups, <i>Henk Kieft (NL)</i> Thematic working groups within the framework of the Austrian Monitoring Committee, <i>Martin Leitner (AT)</i>

Timing 🕒

Agenda item

Workshops 6: Networking as a tool for shaping rural development policy and implementation

Introductory presentations:

- Stakeholder Tour 2014 by the Flemish Rural Network, *Ariane Van Den Steen (BE)*
- Virtual Think Tank - Telephone conferences as a tool for dialogue on rural development policy, *Nils Lagerroth (SE)*

16.00 – 17.00 **Feedback from afternoon & closing**

- Feedback from 3 workshops
- NRN-MA-Stakeholder Panel Discussion: *Chris Head (UK-England), Mathilde Houze (Regional MA, FR), Alistair Prior (UK-Scotland), Catia Rosas (PT)*
- Closing remarks, *Paul Soto, ENRD CP*

Annex II: Detailed outcomes of Morning Workshop discussions

Workshop 1: Involving farmers and other stakeholders in projects aimed at a more competitive agriculture

Topic 1: Learning from peers

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<p>Monitor farms, Scotland [Note similar to Welsh model]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer to farmer exchange Farmer volunteer to host the self-improvement group for 3 years Community group formed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating for 10 yrs in Scotland Response to crisis – Farmers had to change how they organise their systems to make their farms sustainable All work together to improve profitability of the Monitor Farm and hence improve profits of all farms in the area Through joint work: constructive criticism, identify the problems, share experience, cost the options, set targets, trial solutions Important part is to ‘spread the word’ to others “During 3 years you get 10 years of development” (through sharing/learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual interest vs cooperation: monitor farms may not work the same way in all countries/cultures – in many cases farmers see each other as competitors (less willing to share – especially CEEC) It takes time to develop. Important is the process and building trust and confidence (e.g. financial details about the farm is harder to share) The bigger the group is the less efficient it becomes (15 is an ideal number) 3 years is the ideal time There is pressure on the monitor farm, it has to be the right one.
<p>Farmers’ groups, Sweden</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer to farmer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very strong focus on ‘competitiveness’. 	

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They aim to work with those who are willing to (has strong potential to develop) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers to support each other for development/profitability... 	
Focus Farms, Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer to farmer The main beneficiary is the 'focus farm' here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to monitor farms – but the incentive system is different: the focus farm gets financial support and often is seen as the main beneficiary (note: in the monitor farm scheme the monitor farm does not get direct financial support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme was popular as the 'focus farm' got financial support (they were often seen as the real beneficiaries) The community-development/social aspect was weaker – they are going to change this practice in NI. Bulgarian colleague mentioned that he thinks this model would work better in his country: more neutral (clear benefits for the focus farm – in other model the monitor farm has to share too much information)
University farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universities, farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The advantage may be that they are more 'neutral' (monitor farms are often not the 'typical farms') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are not seen as the 'real farm'

Main lessons for the discussion group:

- **Peer-exchange is generally important** – make it possible for farmers to meet. Internet is also a possible mean to exchange (especially for young farmers). One of the advantage of these models is it's flexibility (should not become bureaucratic)
- **Transferability?** It's not for everyone. The same practice may not work in all circumstances (e.g. in CEEC there is less willingness to cooperate/share). Transferability very much depends on the specific context/cultural differences, etc. A toolbox of various models (what works where and when) could help transferability.
- The right model also depends on the **type of personalities/ways of learning**. Essentially there are three types of learning [mentioned by Tom Jones, EESC:]: 1. Learning through sharing/group model; 2. Knowledge transfer (e.g. visit to other country bring back knowledge and apply in own circumstances); 3. Entrepreneurial farmer (willing to innovate, try out new things – more individualistic).
- One needs to **try different approaches** – especially if the budget (on what to support) is limited: have to decide what to focus on.

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be benefit in these things for those involved. The benefits of these models are much wider (and longer term) than the simple 'experimentation/testing' and improved profitability – social benefits, improved negotiation skills, etc. • The individual benefits are clearer, the main question is 'What difference it makes in the wider rural development context?' Need to link these experiences to the wider rural community. • Need to involve other types of stakeholders in the exchange: farmers connection through tourism, sustainable management of natural resources, village shops, etc. 			

Topic 2: Young farmers

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<p>CEJA: various methods and tools, EU-wide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication campaign, raising awareness about demographic problem in EU farming • Mentoring women for entrepreneurship project • Multi-farm EU project 	<p>Stakeholders expected to have been included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young farmers, many EU and MS level organisations (including as signatories), wider public • Young women entrepreneurs, young farmers • Young farmers, other farmers and their families, EU organisations • 100 Young farmers, decision-makers in EU institutions 	<p>Not all the initiatives were aimed at the project and local strategy level. Achievements (not complete – only those provided in presentation or discussed) included:</p> <p>In general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive influence on the CAP for 2014-2020. More recognition and specific measures directed to support young entrants to farming <p>Specifically:</p>	<p>Major challenges to engaging young farmers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial constraints • Time and distance constraints (young farmers already have farms to run, and often the commitments of young families) • Young farmers do not access to information to find invitations, opportunities or proposals for themselves. <p>CEJA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offers modest financial support to facilitate young farmers engagement.

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment ‘round table’ (DG REGIO funding) • Policy influencing actions aimed at EU level decision makers (e.g. promotional-testimonial videos, face-to-face meetings) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Employment round table) Recommendations disseminated to policy makers • (Multi-farm EU project) Transfer of successful multifunctional practices between farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • endeavours to disseminate information and encourage exchange • specifically targets young farmers in the provision of specific information
<p>Thematic Group on Young farmers (focusing on new entrants), <i>Sweden</i></p>	<p>Stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations representing young farmers (Young farmers and potential young farmers) • Finance and financial organisations specialists • (Food and farming) industry organisations 	<p>The work of the group is on-going. No specific and demonstrable achievements as yet.</p>	<p>Major challenges already identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effecting generational change in farms (ownership and management) • Access to capital <p>What appears to have potential (i.e. may (provisionally – not definitive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing young people about a wide range of ‘greening’ opportunities.
<p>Farms in Towns, <i>Belgium-Flanders</i></p>	<p>Main stakeholder group: Children (other stakeholder groups not elaborated during the discussion)</p>	<p>Main achievement is an increased awareness of the importance of agriculture and – specifically – how good (healthy and environmentally ‘friendly’) food is produced.</p>	<p>No specific challenges elaborated during the discussion.</p>

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
Agricultural cooperative initiative – specifically for herbs, <i>Portugal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 Young farmers • Marketing organisations • Wider public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young farmers improved their marketing, publicity and information including through newspapers • Increased income for the farm businesses involved • New entrants into agriculture • Increased awareness of the products (and benefits of local production) in the wider public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One aspect that worked well was harnessing the increased interest in farming as a business prompted by the recession.
<p>Mobility Advisory Group, Bulgaria</p> <p>Advocating and facilitating the adoption of sound HNV farming practices</p>	<p>Mainly young farmers (self-selecting stakeholder group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability is both the major challenge (ensuring that the promoted practices are environmentally positive and sustainable in practice) and the major achievement. 	
<p>Personal perspective on the workshop discussion topic by the two young farmers who participated in the discussion</p>	<p>Young farmers organisations and rural organisations (including for example the rural parliament)</p>	<p>It is vital that farming opportunities and support and more generally awareness raising initiatives (both to young farmers themselves and the wider public) recognise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The positive in agriculture and food production (environmental sustainability, animal welfare, production of healthy and organic food) – AND – b) That farming is a business and farmers and their families need a decent income 	
<p>Main lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not just farmer-to-farmer exchange, other stakeholders are vital (marketing chain participants, finance, environmental organisations). 			

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcoming ‘traditional’ generational change constraints (access to land, access to capital, facilitating succession) requires both multiple stakeholders and should be based on specific opportunities and business models. • Different countries have very different issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant differences in the manifestation of the challenges of (lack of) access to land and access to capital (leading to different solutions needing to generated) ○ In some southern European MS there is a renewed interest in agriculture by young persons due to the economic down turn (lack of jobs in cities) ○ In some MS there is interest from new young entrants to farming stemming primarily from enthusiasm for healthy living, organic production and environmental and ecosystem protection. These young people often do not come from farming or even rural backgrounds. • This diversity of issues means that different stakeholder groups need to be involved in different situations. This can mean not only the usual rural/agricultural interests, but also, for example, social sector stakeholders operating in urban areas. • It is important to always remember the need to generate positive attitudes towards farming and farmers and rural areas generally. This involves a wide set of stakeholders and ‘multipliers’. Particular attention should be paid to schools. Linking kids with farming should be based on a recognition that some may wish to become involved directly in agriculture but it is positive for society for all to recognise the value of good production systems and healthy food as everyone is a consumer. 			
<p><i>Note: the group did not discuss foresters per se.</i></p>			

Topic 3: Food supply chains

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
Vegetable co-op, Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers • LAGs • Public kitchens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved co-operation among farmers (through networking for example) to overcome distrust • Engaging with public kitchens to improve supply • Increased emphasis on education: Engaging directly with school children (education) • Improving consumer awareness • Improved co-operation between farmers and consumers (“fork to farm”) to produce specific types of food to respond to the needs of specific groups of consumers • Specifying that 30% of produce must be locally sourced 	<p>The major challenges to engaging with farmers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distrust felt by some • Lack of a collaboration culture • Lack of market awareness <p>The challenges to engaging with consumers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge on farming • No previous experience of the tastes and types of produce grown locally <p>The challenges with public kitchens are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of previous experience in dealing with direct farm supply • Lack of product knowledge
Supply Chain co-operation, Croatia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers • LAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged with farmers to consider co-operative supply • Used contracts to secure supply 	Difficulty in engaging in collaboration
Pilot Public Procurement, Rhône-Alpes, France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers • Public Sector Schools 	Delivered a pilot programme for school supply involving co-operative supply to schools in the region which has been rolled out to other regions across France	<p>There needs to be more linkages to research to make evidence clearer on the benefits of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externalities • Organic produce • Health benefits

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
			This is a potential role for EIP
Fresh Fruit project, UK (England)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs • Local authorities 	Programme giving fresh fruit to employees to improve health	Linkages with research
Terre de liens, France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs • Farmers 	Voluntary programme, which managed to attract €43m of investment to purchase land, and make it available to farmers	Challenge of creating a long term vision for food chains, but can attract investment
Study Tours, Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers • LAGs 	Study tour to Austria, Poland, opening up discussions using relevant examples	Relevance of some examples for stakeholders in Poland

Main lessons:

- Using networking - for example preparing for a tender
- **Education:** dealing directly with children / citizens / students and targeting consumers not markets
- Direct co-operation; the **'fork-to-farm'** principle. **Starting with the consumer and their needs** and working back
- Developing **pilot programmes:** using success in methodology as a demonstration
- Using **research and innovation:** using EIP to discover the sociological and health benefits related to shorter chains and local food systems
- **Future farmers:** creating the opportunity, the networking and the availability of land for the future generation of farmers
- **Public procurement:** sharing good practice across the EU, getting the message across
- Electronic systems and tools: **using technologies** to access markets
- Future health: emphasising the **benefits of fresh food**
- **Community engagement:** using the community as a focus, and concentrating on benefits to the local economy

Workshop 2: Involving stakeholders in projects and local strategies aimed at the sustainable management of natural resources

Topic 1: Involving farmers in the sustainable management of natural resources

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<p>Five year LIFE project to restore upland blanket bog, Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project area is several thousand hectares of drained blanket bog owned by an environmental NGO (RSPB) and by the government forestry agency and adjoining similar land, used as rough grazing by local sheep farmers. Blanket bog is very important for wildlife and as a major soil carbon resource. The aim was to demonstrate rewetting the blanket bog by blocking drainage channels, to improve wildlife habitats and restore the bog to active growth (storing more carbon) 	<p>A particular effort was made to show neighbouring farmers exactly what the project was doing, because experience (of previous projects) had shown that farmers would be worried about the effect on their farms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers now understand why the grazing areas (that have been used for centuries) are important for wildlife, not just farming The farmers were so convinced of the benefits of the project that a number of them asked for their land to be included too A 'common language' has been established between farmers and conservationists The success of the project led to the Welsh Government including a target in the RDP of rewetting all blanket bog in Wales by 2020 The farmers were employed as contractors to work on blocking the drainage channels, so project funding was of direct benefit to local people 	<p>The neighbouring farmers were worried about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would they be allowed to continue grazing the bog? were they being "pushed off the hills"? would the wetter bog be a risk to the health of their sheep (from parasites/infections associated with wet ground, or being trapped in the water-filled ditches) <p>Site visits for these farmers were a particularly important way of gaining their interest, understanding and support. The farmers saw (over the five-year period) that there was no increase in sheep losses from disease/drowning, and that there were benefits for them (e.g. the peat dams created to block the drainage channels acted as bridges giving both the sheep</p>

			<p>and the farmers (on quad bikes) easier access to parts of the grazing areas.</p> <p>When the farmers asked for their land to be added to the project, this increased the area from 5,500 ha to 8,500 ha. Additional funds had to be sourced quickly (Welsh government provided this).</p>
<p>Improvement of the implementation of agri-environment measure, Sweden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four year project within 2007-13 RDP, will be continued in the 2014-20 RDP. • Facilitator employed to act as channel of communication between farmers and managing authority 	<p>Joint project between MA and Swedish Farmers' Association (facilitator was from the SFA), targeted specifically at farmers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved implementation of RDP measures • Better understanding of the objectives and purpose of RDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a facilitator from the SFA helped gain trust and acceptance of the farmers
<p>Developing a strategy for the sustainable development of a Natura 2000 area, Bulgaria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The method used a series of workshops, each with breakout groups for specific stakeholder groups, then plenary session to discuss jointly. The workshops covered: analysis of current situation, objectives, initial visions. 	<p>Four groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local authorities (responsible for the common pastures) • farmers • young farmers • consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reached a common vision through a majority voting system • Achieved a common understanding and resolved misconceptions that had arisen simply because people had not understood • It was considered very important to involve the local people and to build trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project had no money to implement the vision they developed for the Natura 2000 area, but the people involved want to implement it and intend to do so through their own organisations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a series of bilateral discussions and in the final stage of the process stakeholders voted on a number of alternative visions for the area. • There was no facilitator employed, but at the first workshop the four stakeholder groups discovered that they already had common objectives. 			
<p>Main lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve farmers early, using a facilitator who understands farmers and is trusted by them. • Make sure the subject is relevant to farmers' current concerns about their land and business. • Farmers want see practical results for themselves, and to understand what benefits and costs are for them. • Project flexibility and/or additional funding makes it possible to respond to opportunities identified by farmers during the project (and avoids disappointment). 			

Topic 2: Improving local communities' capacity to deliver environmental outcomes

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<p>Improving local communities' capacity to deliver environmental outcomes: the Eco-museum in Monti Sibillini National Park, Italy (presentation by Ennio Merlini, WWF)</p> <p>https://it-it.facebook.com/pages/Ecomuseo-dei-Vissuti-e-Saperi-dei-Monti-Sibillini/259261157441028</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Authority of the National Park Monti Sibillini Mountain Community Monti Azzurri Municipalities of San Genesio and Cessapalambo Farm "La Quercia della Memoria" Communication group "Ephemeria" Farmer's Association "Coldiretti" WWF Italy LAGs Sibilla (IT), Piceno (IT) and Oulujärvi (FI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local communities engaged horizontally Bottom-up approach shown as an effective mean for larger planning Discovery of stakeholder's role in cultural and environmental conservation (match-up environmental and cultural aspects → ecosystem approach) Found in RDPs financial mean to achieve the area's potential Change from "regulatory approach" to "common approach" in the way the area was managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At all scales, there are different bodies and legislation to bring together in the discussion Bottom-up approach, but initiated by an organization (WWF) (promoting from inside the community, where same problems are shared → need to overcome challenges). The framework of a Transnational cooperation project, involving a Finnish LAG, allowed Italian communities to learn how to engage in European partnerships, and aware of their capacity and role in policy-setting <p>When considering financing the strategies and the actions planned, special attention should be paid to the identification of proper means to cover the whole cycle of the initiative and adequate timing</p>
<p>Scottish Environmental LINK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement "Europe's living landscapes: Cultural heritage as a force for rural development" (A joint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europae Archaeologiae Consilium, Europa Nostra, European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), European Council for the Village and Small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment includes biodiversity protection, but also geological, water and other natural resources, soil protection, etc. Research, education and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment = science based => very difficult to include farmers in the outcome

<p>statement on the Common Agricultural Policy, July 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape and heritage protection and enhancement amendments proposed under the Direct Payment Regulation 2011/0280 (COD) • LEADER and Heritage-opportunities for rural communities (briefing paper) 	<p>Town (ECOVAST), European Federation of Farm and Village Tourism (EUROGITES), European Landowner’s Organisation (ELO), International Association Rurality-Environment-Development (R.E.D), The rural investment Support for Europe (RISE)Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeology Scotland • Archaeology Scotland and LEADER groups (case studies) 	<p>in the ground have to go in hand with any environmental initiative.</p>	
<p>Water protection project, Sweden (Swedish farmers Association in Finland)</p> <p>http://www.greppa.nu/om-greppa/om-projektet/in-english.html#.VSUZtPmsUSE</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve objective indicators and measure results (more research, more follow-up) • Society should support the farmer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a win-win situation for everybody involved (= farmers) = look at the economically point of view • Farmer should be the centre. Advisor, scientists, authority,... should support the farmer • Develop a group advisory system with ‘live’ examples • Farmers should always be involved (next to all the others)
<p>Several examples, Slovenia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational and promotional activities about the importance of sustainable agricultural practices • Involvement of different expert associations in preparation of AE measures related with nature conservation • Inreasing general awareness of the importance of Natura 2000 in 	<p>Mix of the following, according to different examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert societies • Farmers (some were willing others not) • Farm advisors • Agricultural advisors (very interested to cooperate) • Institute for nature conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-environmental measures suitable or not? = ask, explain what they can do. The final scheme must be viable, designed to be suitable, and achieve results! • Better understanding of nature conservation issues (why adapted agricultural practices are needed, ...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with other sectors: agriculture, environment, waterboard, etc. • Challenges to acknowledge the sustainable practices (support in financial ways). • All stakeholders must be aware of possibilities and limitations of RDP (sometimes expectations are too high)

<p>agricultural landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Rural development Vipava • Cultural association Komen • Local primary schools <p>= round table organised by MA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of additional materials/explanations for farmers (ppt, photos, leaflet, etc.) • Better general awareness of the importance of Natura 2000 sites • Farmers realised how valuable land they have and that they need to do just few small changes in land use to be more suitable for endangered species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stakeholders must be prepared to accept a compromise • All stakeholders must take into account not just ecological needs of certain species/HT but also if a requirement is acceptable/feasible also for the farmer(s)
<p>Reference to Court of Auditors report “Is Agri-environment support well designed and managed?” (<i>Comment by Riccardo Passero, Italy</i>)</p> <p>http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR11_07/SR11_07_EN.PDF</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to target better the RD policy for environmental areas? ENRD could play a role by organising an event on collective approaches to avoid scattered interventions. • More coordinated approach: measures (214) are not applied at farm level => • Natura 2000 rules: agreement with Coldiretti • From farm-based level to a an ‘areas’ level inside a region => territorial and environmental approach mixed

Main lessons for the discussion group (last 10’):

- **Improve communication** with the people in the community and value their contribution.
- Other stakeholders should recognise that **only the farmer knows what s/he needs** for their land and business – so ask them! (and listen to the answers).
- Involvement of all types of stakeholders: human input should be taken into account – improved community involvement. **Civil society should be empowered** to have a say.
- Think about **why farmers would want to implement agri-environment measures** and if these measures are feasible for their farm.
- In 2014-20 make full use of all the opportunities for **collective approaches** (especially to agri-environment) and for combining RDP measures.
- Remember that **water and cultural heritage** are also an important part of the environment.

There is a long chain of communication from DG Agriculture to the individual beneficiary, there is a need to **co-ordinate work with stakeholders at every level.**

Topic 3: A collective approach to environmental issues

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
Collective approach to farmland conservation, Netherlands	Farmers, farmers co-operatives and landowners at centre, plus: government bodies, water boards, conservation NGOs, advisors, researchers, civic organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New programme developed with different stakeholders, increased buy-in. • More efficient scheme control, budget savings, shared acquisition of specialist equipment, less paperwork, better tailored measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to work with pre-existing active groups of a certain scale. • Public sector stakeholders also need capacity building.
Farmers market, Lithuania	Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only farmers fulfilling some environmental criteria are allowed to sell their produce at a new farmers' market in the capital city, Vilnius. • Very early stages and too early to say if will fulfil its potential. The hope is that it will provide a financial incentive for farmers to fulfil environmental challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to the financial needs of farmers has shown promise for engaging them on environmental issues.
Conservation project focused on a specific bird, Hungary	Farmers, local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started with awareness raising of species in the local community • Farmers and local communities worked together across wider areas to monitor and protect the bird species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting with awareness raising worked well to build understanding of the need for environmental actions. • Starting with a specific bird also helped to give people a concrete task on which to start co-operation.

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This builds relationships and should make it easier to do future co-operation projects on broader issues in the future.
Agri-environment schemes, Wales	Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation by farmers on agri-environment measures achieves things that are not possible at the level of individual farms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers have bought into and understand the benefits for them of working together on agri-environment schemes. • It is important to make the financial case for working together.
Study visits, Czech Republic	Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers visited farmers in Western Europe delivering agri-environment schemes. • They understood some of their value and how they operated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers feel that they will participate in these ‘nice’ environmental schemes only when they have first improved their economic situation. • It is a very big challenge to convince them it is not something that is only possible in richer Member States. • The culture was away from, not towards, co-operative movements since 1990.
Main lessons for the discussion group:			

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers are the main target group and the main challenge. They are at the heart of everything and they need the most persuading and education to participate in co-operation on environmentally focused actions. Most of the other main stakeholder groups (government bodies, water boards, environmental NGOs, advisors and researchers) already have reasons to participate – financial or environment objectives. • It is essential to make the financial case for both co-operation and environmental schemes. This feels particularly true for farmers in economically poorer regions, but is actually true in most regions. • Working with pre-existing farmers’ co-operatives is ideal (Netherlands), but in many countries these do not exist. The culture and history of countries like Czech Republic has created a lot of suspicion of co-operative movements. • Starting the culture of co-operation represents a culture shift in many Member States/regions. This takes time. It is important to start with realistic aims and start the process of creating a culture shift. The discussion raised some approaches for starting a culture shift: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on a very specific project – it is hard to get people to buy in to a project with very general ‘environmental’ goals. It is easier to choose something very specific that everybody can understand. Use this to build relationships and experience of working together. 2. Start with projects with a clear financial advantage – such as an initiative to deliver more efficient resource use – rather than one with abstract environmental objectives. Don’t focus on climate change to start with as it is not tangible enough. 3. Raising awareness can be an important starting point. Working with schools is a good idea as this can influence families through the children and directly influence the next generation of farmers. Raising awareness of environmental value within local communities is another approach. • Advisors can have a key role to play in engaging farmers in a way that they understand and trust. This is important to overcome some of the suspicions that farmers may have of new schemes and some of their fears that environmental measures must be in direct conflict with their financial objectives. 			

Workshop 3: Involving stakeholders in integrated local strategies aimed at a more balanced territorial development

Topic 1: Hard-to-reach areas

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<p>Setting up a local development strategy with the involvement of local stakeholders coming from remote areas, Greece</p>	<p>Development company setting the LDS, many local stakeholders, local governments, local cooperatives, associations of tourism, local informal networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking increased the contacts and the variety of stakeholders reached by the development company. • Increased knowledge concerning how to diagnose problems and solutions, and creating a more efficient/effective strategy in terms of resources allocation. • A greater contact with local stakeholders created a long lasting commitment to LDS, and therefore helped achieving results with real impact. • More qualitative projects. • Increased trust between the development company and the stakeholders involved. 	<p>...worked well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct informal contact with locals • Use of local animators trusted by the people <p>...less well/challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency of the locals to be conservative • High level of paperwork and red tape. • Time constraints, difficulties to keep up the pace. • Lack of self-confidence of the community in the years of the crisis
<p>Little business development organization (EPAM) being involved in the Rural Networks</p>	<p>EPAM (the local business development organisation), the Portuguese Rural Networks, other stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By building good connections with the Rural Network the organisation achieved in communicating the values of its projects, had the opportunity to increase their visibility and had the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the communications/ networking means with the National Rural Network.

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<p>activates and raising its visibility, Portugal (www.epam.pt)</p>		<p>opportunity to participate to events involving policy makers of national and EU level.</p>	
<p>Main lessons for the discussion group (last 10’):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to achieve effective stakeholders’ involvement it is important to build trust at all levels: local stakeholders should trust policy makers and intermediary bodies such as the NSUs. • Hard to reach areas are often characterised by a generic conservative approach to changes and isolation feelings. Such social challenges increase the importance of creating a network where trust enables communication flows and high engagement levels. • For this purpose it is of crucial importance the presence and the support of ‘local animators’. Local animators should be people widely known and trusted by local stakeholders. Feelings of conservatism were identified as related to the age issues of remote areas where the age average is normally very high. In light of this participants identified that it is of crucial importance to engage with young people that can be mediators with other age groups and with fellow young people. • Further than the presence local animators also the presence of locally based networks can be of great help in involving people in remote areas. Any economic or cultural network in fact could be used to reach people and create new opportunities for engagement in rural development policies. • Seminars organised at local level were identified as a specific methodology that had the power to increase stakeholder commitment to the discussion. Consultation processes as well, even better if based on a one-to-one informal contact, were identified as a way to successfully create commitment from the NSU’s stakeholders and the NSU itself. When involving stakeholders in such activities it is of crucial importance to show the stakeholders that each voice is as important as all the other ones. • It was highlighted that it is important to aim at long term stakeholder involvement: ‘one time involvement’ processes do not achieve the same results that a longer process of stakeholder involvement can reach. One of the main characteristics of remote areas is in fact is the speed at which ‘things happen and change’: contacts between people are slower and farer in time creating the need for a lot of time for any social involvement process to happen. <p>Finally it was reported that it is of crucial importance for engaging local stakeholder to show them what specific and concrete improvements results can be achieved and how are these relevant for them. In order to do so examples of success stories from other member states could be communicated).</p>			

Topic 2: Improving local partnerships in local planning

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
Regional Deal, Netherlands	All local stakeholders, organisations and administrations active within a province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving partnership in a series of “regional deals”, each of them worked better than the previous one. These deals helped stakeholders strengthen a sense of shared purpose and develop trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to get away from the “money-driven” thinking, one should also value the social capital; Project promoters are a link between decision-makers (provincial) and the local community and ensure communication both ways, but this should be looked as a horizontal relationship, not top-down hierarchical; Don’t just invite stakeholders from a “top-down” perspective, be open and let them come to you; Remember to take into account also the second-tier networks within the community (every initiator organisation links with further stakeholders at the local level)
Rural Forum as an advisory body to a Local Economic Partnership (LEP), United Kingdom	All rural stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulating responsibility helps to overcome individual interests and provides “reality check” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This tool ensures rural voices are heard in the local decision-making It is important to go into an “action” mode (and not just talking and planning).

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It helps to focus actions on things considered most important for the rural community
<p>Main lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key is trust (all sides have to build it) The importance of communication, which has to be practical and help explain the complexity of rural issues/policies It is important to reach out directly to the local people (and not just institutions/organisations). A new approach is needed, including reaching out to new actors (young people, old people, women); it is important to use the right tools and channels for each target group (e.g. social media when addressing the young) Co-decision in service provision gives people the freedom to choose and fosters responsibility Perhaps we should have an “ombudsman” (at national or EU level) to represent the local stakeholders who are facing a blockage (e.g. a local group, which has monopolised the activities and realises primarily its own interests) Reflection: it is important to keep in mind the cultural differences across the EU: in some countries people are more self-organised (and need just to be given the space to act), in others they have to be “kicked” into participation Have the capacity to respond when stakeholders become proactive! (as e.g. in Portugal as a result of the crisis) It is important to ensure the involvement of regional authorities; they should channel projects through organisations, this can help overcome individual interests 			

Topic 3: Strengthening urban-rural linkages

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<p>Theory U. Learning from the emerging future. Preparation of Leader, <i>Netherlands</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going beyond usual suspects • Urban stakeholders • Individuals as well as organisations • Hard to reach • Creative people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAG themes more focussed • Shift in the role of the LAG away from one off projects to mobilising, inspiring cooperation and networking • Local ownership increased • New competences and networks levered in 	<p><i>General points from all cases:</i></p> <p><i>Works:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods for bringing in new stakeholder perspectives – especially urban • Deeper listening and analysis of causes of problems • Focus on emerging future trends rather than just on the past • Connect at a deeper level with personal motivations and concerns • Use of a series of methods to break out of old patterns – prototyping, social innovation <p><i>Does not work/barriers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder fatigue/burn-out • Stagnating subsidy culture • Only involving existing organisations • Rural suspicion of urban areas
<p>Bulgarian- Macedonian Cross Border Youth Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people from both countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of participative methods like theatre and prototyping to involve young people 	
<p>Estonian Village Movement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village organisations involving all local stakeholders in a particular village are helping to create similar structures in cities 		
<p>Links between rural CLLD partnerships and counterparts in neighbouring cities (social fund), <i>England</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural and urban 	<p>Breaking down institutional and geographical boundaries</p>	

Practice (methods & tools used)	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better projects and local strategies?</i>	Challenges of implementation in terms of stakeholder involvement <i>What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
<p>You-rural.net, Italy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking youth in remote rural areas and urban areas 	<p>Mentoring and exchanges between young people in cities and remote rural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of experience of CLLD in cities • Demarcation of funds • Rigidity of strategies and boundaries • Lack of connection with policy makers • Dealing with complexity
<p>Main lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to identify and spread the use of a toolkit of new methods for creative stakeholder involvement (eg Theory U) • Methods need to cover outreach, effective listening, problem analysis, scenario and future building, prototyping..... • Bring policy makers into the process with stakeholders • Local strategies must have the flexibility to respond to change and complex unpredictable events • Use cooperation to build up a mosaic of activity from remote rural to urban • More effective use of partnering, study visits, mentoring and other peer to peer forms of exchange • Use social media to the full but don't forget face to face • Identify topics which motivate and energise people to act – for example for urban-rural – food and flooding 			

Topic 4: Hard to reach groups: Young people

Hard to reach, who?

- Farmers and young farmers
- Rural incomers

- Refugees and migrants
- Other ethnic groups
- Women

Works well	Less well
Working hard at it	
Communicating well, at the right time	
Target, both those interested and those who are less interested	
Provide motivation, what is in it for them in participating	Some groups are difficult to motivate
Find the leaders, the mediators, those who others will follow, gain trust, provide access	Leaders can be blockers, can be power games, danger of territorialism
Intermediary may already be there, historic, cultural or statutory, new ones may be required	Possible blocks or assumption that effective engagement has taken place by proxy
Identify the entry points then use appropriate tool	
The skill of the animateur is critical to success	The skill of the animateur is critical and may contribute to failure

Obstacles

- Lethargy amongst the young, for many everything is too easy, they are not used to working for things in the same way as the older generations.
- Some groups feel excluded from and lack real connections to the local community, they therefore become isolated within the community.
- The availability of support and help can be counterproductive, groups or individuals can assume that the presence of such support means someone else will do it, why should they bother
- With such groups there is often a particularly high dependency on a limited number of key individuals.
- Educational attainment is poor in many rural areas; this contributes to more limited capability and preparedness for participation.
- There is little evidence that can be offered to show that intermediaries or animateurs do actually get to the hard to reach, especially if they remain uninvolved.

Lessons, recommendations

- Provision of the right, good quality and effective animation is critical. This means the right people, in the right place, at the right time.
- Do not be complacent, ongoing review of animation and engagement is essential, update, refresh and train to improve and better engage.
- Identify the right entry points or people, ensure that these are door openers not door keepers.
- Do not assume rural stakeholders should fit with your expectations, whether LAG, NRN, RDP or NGO, turn it around, think 'how can we fit their expectations?'
- Focus on identifying and addressing real needs, not just fitting the needs or offering from the programme.
- Meeting the needs of the programme can compromise the intervention, the ability to engage through involving staff and volunteers in dealing with red tape, spending imperatives etc.
- The programme or organisation should serve rural needs, not vice versa.
- Demonstrating tangible benefits for stakeholders motivates participation, demonstrate some early wins, communicate these and their relevance.
- Be inclusive at the local level through active animation, mobilise potential participants and build the demand for involvement.
- Building 'hard to reach' stakeholder involvement takes time, a long term approach is needed, investing in the young and those who are new to the activity or area is a priority.

Examples:

- Targeting the young and unemployed, clear LAG decisions, long term development of 'time to activate' initiative. Ryan Howard
- Village leaders, Polands lowest level of representation, involved to deliver initiative encouraging village involvement in website development, particularly linking the old and young. Patrick ? Poland
- LAG youth parliament groups, involves 2 age groups, teens and early 20s, gives them active involvement in LAG work, leads to work experience for some, some have progressed to representative office elsewhere e.g. mayors. Radim. Czech
- Using specific youth involvement and session in LEADER conference to foster and encourage youth involvement. Alistair Prior
- Involve LAG youth groups with their own budget. Finland

Annex III: Key messages from the expert panel (following the morning workshops)

What are the key challenges of stakeholder involvement?

- In her feedback from Workshop 1 on ‘farmers, other stakeholders and competitive agriculture’, *Elena Saraceno (ENRD CP expert, Italy)* highlighted that involvement of stakeholders for a more competitive agriculture does not only require the involvement of farmers, but also other stakeholders within the wider rural community. Challenges are different across Member States (e.g. access to land, jobs, etc.). Therefore there is a need for a diversity of approaches about who to engage and how.
- In his feedback from Workshop 2 on ‘involving stakeholders in the sustainable management of natural resources’ *Henk Kieft (rural development expert, Netherlands)* emphasised the significance of seeing together the human factor, the capital and nature. It is important to create a culture of working together and through that to create trust (and later common vision). Equally important is to create win-win situations with regard to environment. Bringing together stakeholders to work and cooperate together is a particular challenge, but there are good examples out there that one could build on.
- In her feedback from Workshop 3 on ‘involving stakeholders in territorial development’ *Kirsten Birke Lund (Denmark/ELARD)* also stressed the variety of contexts, traditions, cultures and experiences. She said that ‘time is essential’ to build relationship and trust among stakeholders. We need to allocate time and resources to find out who is out there and then listen to their needs, problems and opinions.

How networks can provide added value?

- *Henk Kieft*: NRNs should involve stakeholders from the very beginning. Face-to-face and personal contacts are vital. Networks have a key role in demonstrating the results of policy to stakeholders.
- *Kirsten Birke Lund*: We should not enforce things on stakeholders, but need to take time to get them involved and build trust. Every meeting should be seen as an investment providing information and knowledge to be taken on board and spread further.
- *Elena Saraceno*: There are many relevant and interesting examples out there that networks can build on. In terms of how soon should people start getting engaged in agriculture, there are examples on pedagogical farms where kids from a very young age can learn to get involved in farming. There are many ways in which farmers can get involved in networking.



Annex IV: Detailed synthesis of the outcomes of the afternoon workshop discussions

1. Which stakeholders should NRNs focus on?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
<p>Create representative stakeholder committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participation of a representative sample of rural stakeholders to formal consultation processes such as the Steering Committee can have a great positive impact on the quality of the policies planning and implementation. Processes that ensure a rotation of representatives' participation to the Steering Committee meeting could increase the possibility for different stakeholders to contribute to the consultation processes. The networks should be a platform for creating collaborative solutions between strong and less strong stakeholder groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'External Working Group' – acts as a 'sounding board' (See examples table below) Stakeholder Committee, Flanders/ NRN Steering Committee (See examples table below) Proposed NRN/National Steering Committee structure in Romania (See examples table below)
<p>NRNs are 'networks of networks' - Involve intermediaries as connectors to stakeholders on the ground</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRNs most often have organisational (rather than individual) members Regional coordinators and animators can play a role here. NRNs should involve intermediary organisations to link with hard to reach stakeholders (e.g. extension services to reach farmers) NRNs can promote/make use of the work that LAGs do on the ground LAGs and farmers co-operatives can be key in providing links to stakeholders on the ground. 	
<p>Identify and focus on active stakeholders (including those who 'have a voice')</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on those who are active and contribute: invite many different stakeholders – be aware that not all will be active 	

1. Which stakeholders should NRNs focus on?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for NRNs to engage with stakeholders who (also) have a voice; People who can speak well get their message across more efficiently Empower inspirational individuals and recognise expertise. Identify new members but also sustain good relationship with members who worked with the network for long (such as LAGs) 	
Mix stakeholders & views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use mixed groups of stakeholders, including farmers, but not only farmers Understanding the varying motivations of stakeholders, e.g. Managing Authorities (meeting targets) compared to farmers (making a living) The NRN should not ‘belong’ to either stakeholders or policy-makers. Rather, it should be the place where these groups can come together. It is also important to involve all the correct specific stakeholders in relation to tackling any specific issue in order to develop a robust common position and recommendations for improvements. Such position should be evidence based and therefore legitimately seen as ‘neutral’. NRNs have to represent different views from various stakeholders. This can be a strength as well as a weakness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups in Greece involving research institutes, farmers, engaging with a mixed group of stakeholders See also examples on ‘steering committee’ structures in the table above (RO, BE, ENG)
Engage and focus on specific groups / consider marginalised groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to engage with specific/new groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with poverty groups, young farmer in Flanders;

1. Which stakeholders should NRNs focus on?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there are new stakeholders, they need time and capacity building • Where to focus?: Work more with farmers OR Work with those groups that have (unlike farmers) weaker connections to government • Certain groups are more difficult to get involved in policy debate, for instance: refugees, minorities, sometimes old people, newcomers, micro-businesses, in some places there are whole communities that are excluded • With more difficult to reach groups (e.g. new entrants to farming), the NRNs can (a) carry out a study of the specific needs of such groups, (b) make sure some organisation from this sector is involved, even if it is not fully representative (to illustrate problems of this group) • NRNs should identify/map stakeholders, especially those “less obvious”, more “out of the box” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with local representatives of organisations/ minority groups in Sweden

2. How should NRNs work with stakeholders/ NRN members?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
Focus on specific needs & issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRNs should be pro-active in identifying problems (which they can assist with) Always focus on specific issues where practical and demonstrable improvements can be made (developing a 'virtuous circle'). Stakeholder groups to involve and themes of discussion/work should be identified on the basis of a needs assessment that takes into consideration the whole policy cycle, as well as available resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Specialise – use limited resources wisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for NRNs to be selective, i.e. be mindful that resources are limited so not all issues or opportunities can be pursued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Try new ways of engaging with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always try new ways of engaging stakeholders Do not let inflexibility and a fixed mindset impede the need for change Be flexible: do not institutionalise networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Sweden the network always tries new methods, the latest is 'speed-dating'
Motivate members through identifying relevant topics of interest & build trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivate members – identify issues of interest: discuss RDPs, make their voice heard, discuss common problems The relevance of NRNs depends on the influence it can have in facilitating processes; stakeholders have to find something useful in order to get involved. Often things get "lost in translation" between stakeholders and policy-makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think tanks are used to discuss specific/common issues and problems, Sweden (See presentation) YouRuralnet in Italy to involve/inform young farmers in RDP implementation (See examples table below)

2. How should NRNs work with stakeholders/ NRN members?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to provide the structures and build trust between stakeholders (including policymakers). • NRNs should be transparent & informal 	
Meet stakeholders regularly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders need to meet more often/regularly • Do regular consultations • Identify needs through on-going consultations • Effective stakeholder involvement means building relationships, not one-off invitations/consultations. The networks can help ensure continuity of involvement. 	

3. How should NRNs create the link between stakeholders & policy-makers?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
NRNs should credibly represent grassroots stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRNs are linking stakeholders with policy-makers, but should always be closer to stakeholders Stakeholders need to feel that they are the architects of the policy (as well as the recipients) – Stakeholders will come if they feel it is meaningful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive evaluation of RDP delivery/LEADER aspects – with the target group, NL (See presentation) See LEADER-NRN working group examples in table below. NRN creating contact between LAGs and MA, Spain (See examples table below)
Involve MAs and other institutional stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRNs have to involve not just stakeholders but also the MAs The NSU must be politically sensitive when tackling delivery issues which may involve changes to the modus operandi of, for example, the MA or PA Involving those who are making the policy in networking activity (and show to them the value of networking / stakeholders’ engagement). This can achieve the twofold objective of: 1) raise the profile of the issue and make it politically relevant 2) create consensus and generate a shared intent Involving regional and local level authorities or those that are responsible for implementing single measures for example (i.e. technicians) is more effective than involving ‘politicians’. (Provide technical information to operational-level public authorities.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular MA-LAG meetings organised by the network in Ireland (See examples table below) NSU structure proposed for Romanian Network (See examples table below) Aromatic Plant website connecting various stakeholders with influence on policy design (See examples table below) NRN Steering Committee (BE) includes formal institutional stakeholders (See examples table below) Best Rural Development Projects Award, Greece – with the involvement of the Prime Minister (See examples table below) Cluster of Mediterranean Countries to inform RD policy (See examples table below)
Send clear (evidence-based) coordinated messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for NRNs to engage with stakeholders who (also) have a voice. A coordinated message from several places increases its impact with decision makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonian Rural Parliament experience (See presentation)

3. How should NRNs create the link between stakeholders & policy-makers?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actors representing a given stakeholder group should all speak with one voice to be able to have an impact on policy (as demonstrated by the Estonian Rural Parliament) NRNs need to be open and inclusive. But remember, clarity of arguments, and use of evidence is vital. Unlike specialised organisations, NRNs often do not represent specific interests, and therefore stakeholder views are not taken into account Do not try to involve all stakeholders in developing all network positions (and recommendations / decisions). Avoid the risk of always compromising and therefore not sending any clear signals and requests. NRNs should ensure all stakeholders speak the same language and help build consensus 	
Collect and present evidence for stakeholder involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to have adequate measures of success when it comes to encouraging stakeholder involvement Use good practices with clear outputs, including areas where improvement can be made 	

4. How can MAs make stakeholder consultations and the work of NRNs more effective?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
NRNs need clear mandate and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to ensure that all stakeholders have a common understanding of the role of the NRN • Some difficulties understanding the institutional roles, in particular where the NRN/ MA link is (BG / other Eastern Europe) • The failure of the NRN to be mandated to coordinate the consultation process (something that the NRN is better placed to implement than the MA) highlights the importance of strong trust between different delivery stakeholders. • To have a mandate to act upon stakeholder requests, e.g. to organise meetings of stakeholders to evaluate the effects of policies • NRNs need to have some degree of autonomy from the MA. • NRNs often operate within the MA and have limited influence/independence. The independence of NSUs is crucial to stakeholder confidence. Perceived political influence on the NSU is a real problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some participants expressed particular concern with regards the independence of NSUs in some of the Central and Eastern European countries.
Take NRNs and partnership principle seriously	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy-makers need to take NRNs seriously • Policy-makers often chose the easy way (no real interest in stakeholder involvement) • Monitoring Committees are a vital forum for stakeholder involvement 	

4. How can MAs make stakeholder consultations and the work of NRNs more effective?		
<p>NRNs should ideally be set up before the RDPs are being drafted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRNs should be set up well in advance (before the policy is launched, to help prepare stakeholders), at the national as well as EU level! • In many cases the latest RDPs were being drafted (a crucial time in the cycle), the NSU was either not functioning or functioning with limited capacity • Contact Point also being in a transition phase during the crucial development stage of the new RDPs when many networks have questions and other support needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany was an example of good practice here. They used an n+2 funding cycle to ensure that the NSU was still in place and at full capacity during the transition phase from one programming period to the next (funded by the 2007-13 programme).
<p>Need to connect with rural reality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy makers need to see rural reality with their own eyes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lithuanian farmers' organisations have managed to impact legislation in this way
<p>NRNs and stakeholder organisations need adequate resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One general constraint, which needs to be appreciated is that, in the current period of financial austerity, the tendency is for administrations to centralise budget authority (as a way of keeping more direct control of the money). • Need for stakeholder organisations to have some independent source of funding • Shortage of resources can dictate policy decisions in spite of consultation (decision-makers will do what they consider priority to address crisis) • It is difficult for the networks to fulfil their full potential for being the bridge between stakeholders and policymakers if the NSUs are inadequately resourced or mandated to support networking activities. 	

5. How NRNs/MAs & Stakeholder Organisations can work together?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
<p>Identify the areas where stakeholder-NRN cooperation can add value</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRNs are often 'networks of networks': Several NRNs cooperate with other networks (especially stakeholder organisations) – not individuals Specialised networks have to be included as members of NRNs Farmers' organisations often have direct connection to policy-makers and can better address more technical (agricultural) issues through these channels LAGs and farmers' organisations typically have a better connection with local stakeholders than the NSUs. Their connection with local stakeholders should be harnessed as a value added for the wider NRN. Rural Parliaments are another tool/approach that can act as a bridge between stakeholders and policymakers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See examples above on 'network of networks'. Direct connection of farmers to government – Young farmers in Flanders (See examples table below)
<p>NRNs/MAs need to identify the right tools for stakeholder participation & cooperate with stakeholder organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAs/NRNs need to provide support (information, travel, venues, capacity building) without co-opting or taking control of SH organisations MAs/NRNs need to feed back information to stakeholder organisations and stakeholder organisations need to feed back information in time to their own members NSUs have a range of tools available to involve stakeholders more effectively – organising bilaterals and subgroups between stakeholders and policy makers, workshops, toolkits and technical advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working groups, structured consultation process; example is the Leader Working Group of the Polish NRN Online discussion forum to involve relevant stakeholders in the design of the National Forestry Strategy in Italy (See examples table below) Thematic Group on Youth, Sweden (See examples table below) The Thematic Group on young farmers in Italy created direct link between young

5. How NRNs/MAs & Stakeholder Organisations can work together?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online platforms (ITC) can be used for exchange between relevant stakeholders (see example from Portugal, Italy). Dedicated resources are crucial for the success of such tools and make the information ‘work’ (exchange of information alone is not enough). • Thematic Groups are useful tools. Need to pay attention to clearly define the problem/issue to be discussed; open it up, share and disseminate results (e.g. working papers); ensure a wide engagement of the right stakeholders starting with a core group and the getting recommendations from them; invite authorities in (with particular attention to regional and local level authorities / technicians) 	farmers and the MA

6. What can stakeholders do to become more active in networks?		
Overall recommendations	Specific recommendations	Examples
Stakeholders also need to be proactive with the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders need to be proactive with the network. Organisations that join the network must contribute to it. Member organisations of the NRNs need to recognise that they are part of a 'network of networks'. It is not enough for the Support Unit to be active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commissions Observations on the RDPs were requested formally by certain stakeholder organisations but not generally available for comment
Stakeholders need to be aware of their opportunities/channels and make their voice heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal tools are available at European level (mentioned by DG AGRI) in case of non-compliant NRNs: they have to represent partnerships, have a governance structure, etc. Sometimes stakeholders complain to DG AGRI and then DG AGRI asks for clarifications from the MAs. This is a powerful tool. The NRN is putting things forward but it is also the responsibility of the stakeholders to be rigorous with the MA in the cases when something was put forward and it did not happen and ask the MA to justify the reasons for this. 	

Annex V: Examples/practices identified during the discussion

(Please note that additional examples were presented at the beginning of each workshop, as well as practices were collected prior to the event that can also be accessed from the [ENRD website](#))

Practice & its context	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better policies?</i>	Initial recommendations for networks <i>What can networks do to improve policy? What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
1. Two LEADER NRN working Groups. Approaches to improving the implementation of LEADER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAGs • NSU • Other delivery stakeholders as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One group took a robust and challenging approach. LAGs expressing their frustration with managing bodies who were perceived as making life difficult for the LAGs ('Challenging' group). • The second group took a more inclusive and joint problem solving approach ('positive' group). • The 'positive' group achieved significantly better results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What worked well was a joint approach to problem solving. • What did not work well was a more confrontational approach.
2. NRN Steering Committee, BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National/regional authorities • All institutional stakeholders • DG AGRI (N.B. this was informed orally, but it has not been double checked) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including a comprehensive set of stakeholder organisations on the NRN steering group facilitates more productive thematic working groups and events/seminars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific positive factor is including formal institutional stakeholders on the NRN steering committee as this gives better and more open access to decision makers who are in a position to make practical improvements to RDP delivery
3. 'External Working Group', UK-England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural organisations, • Conservation bodies (NGOs), 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as a 'sounding board' • Highlights main issues of interest from key stakeholders in a more 'informal' but structured way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is useful to have a (more informal) body where key stakeholders are represented and can highlight main issues/concerns

Practice & its context	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better policies?</i>	Initial recommendations for networks <i>What can networks do to improve policy? What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage organisations • New: local growth initiatives (Local Enterprise Partnerships) • Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informs the work of the MA 	
<p>4. Proposed model for NSU in Romania</p>	<p>NSU supported by National Steering Committee (MARD is president) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities, research institutes, museums, • Public authorities and their associations • Relevant ministries and national government agencies • Landowners, commercial farms, forest owners and managers • Small farms • Economic sectors (secondary & tertiary) • Civil and non-profit organisations and their associations • LAGs and similar partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting all relevant network representatives • Connecting different sectors may be done through LAGs and similar partnerships and thematic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to represent/connect all relevant stakeholder organisation representatives • Network members need to be active, it is not enough for the NSU to be active. • The proposed structure of the Romanian NSU includes key stakeholder organisations (NSU as centre – stakeholder organisations as ‘petals’ around it)

Practice & its context	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better policies?</i>	Initial recommendations for networks <i>What can networks do to improve policy? What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic and minority groups 		
5. Best Rural Development Projects Award, Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers, young farmers • Other stakeholders • Prime Minister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform about RD policy and its achievements, raise its profile at national (and political) level and involve/win the interest of other stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve policy-makers as stakeholders in NRN activities
6. Online discussion forum to develop National Forestry Strategy in Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foresters • Micro-businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of relevant stakeholders in the process that lead to the definition of the national forestry strategy for 2014-2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating direct link between stakeholders and policy-making
7. YouRuralnet, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of young farmers and creating a two-way communication channels with them. • Concrete support to young farmers (therefore specifically related to the implementation of Measure 112) and address disinformation issues. • It also served as information platform for interested citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating direct link between stakeholders and policy-making
8. Cluster of Mediterranean Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENRD & NRNs • Farmers • Managing Authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought to the production of a common position paper on RDP quality measures to inform the new policy framework at the EU level (2014-2020). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking stakeholders to policy-making

Practice & its context	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better policies?</i>	Initial recommendations for networks <i>What can networks do to improve policy? What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the process a questionnaire was developed to gather information and opinions from organisations, farmers and managing authorities. 	
9. Collaborative website for aromatic plants, Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various stakeholders including aromatic plant producers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting aromatic plants producers through a collaborative website Scaling-up and become a national-wide network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By involving public administrators at the regional and local level, the initiative eventually promoted a change in the way RDP measures were implemented with positive outcomes for beneficiaries and the sector.
10. Effective communication between farmers' organisations and the government (BE-Flanders)	Young farmer organisation from Flanders and the Flemish government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer's organisation created good connections with the policy managers ensuring that their opinion is listened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural networks have the important role to be a middleman between the government and those stakeholder groups that, differently to the farmers organisations, do not have a direct connection with the policy makers groups. Rural networks are not the best tools to treat matters that are more technical and purely agriculture related e.g. animal breeding.
11. A LEADER event organised by the Spanish Rural Network brought together LAGs and policy makers giving the opportunity to the LAGs to influence the preparation of the National Framework. (Spain)	LAGs and Managing Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The event gave the opportunity for a direct discussion about important matters. Formal requests were advanced by the stakeholders and listened by the policy makers. On the basis 	<p>A number of things helped the success of the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The direct contact between stakeholders and policy makers; The reciprocal openness to take into consideration important requests;

Practice & its context	Stakeholders concerned <i>Which stakeholders were involved?</i>	Achievements <i>What did you achieve through involving stakeholders in terms of better policies?</i>	Initial recommendations for networks <i>What can networks do to improve policy? What worked well/ what did not work well?</i>
		of this request the draft National Framework was modified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic tailored discussions giving the opportunity to speak about and face specific issues.
12. Every 2 months LAGs and representatives from the MA meet in order to discuss key issues. (Ireland)	LAGs and Managing Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result from these meetings it was possible to draft a working document defining the roles of LAGs and MAs. 	
13. Thematic Group on Youth, Sweden	Young people and different stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on various youth-related issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the quality of the NRN output is good then it will be used

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Annex VII: Participants' evaluation results

The evaluation of the Seminar was based on 58 evaluation forms received. The overall evaluation of the event was highly positive. Participants particularly appreciated the opportunities for exchange.

Most people (who provided an answer) indicated that their expectations were met especially with regard to *“gaining new experience”, “hearing about real examples”, “meeting nice new people”, “networking”, “good discussion” and “the importance of the role of stakeholders”*. The morning workshops (that highlighted several practical examples from participants) got particularly high rating.

Some participants highlighted that it is important to provide feedback (post the presentations on the website) after the event, to present practical examples during these events and make it worthwhile for stakeholders to come back, and to offer even more opportunity for networking (e.g. networking dinner the day before).

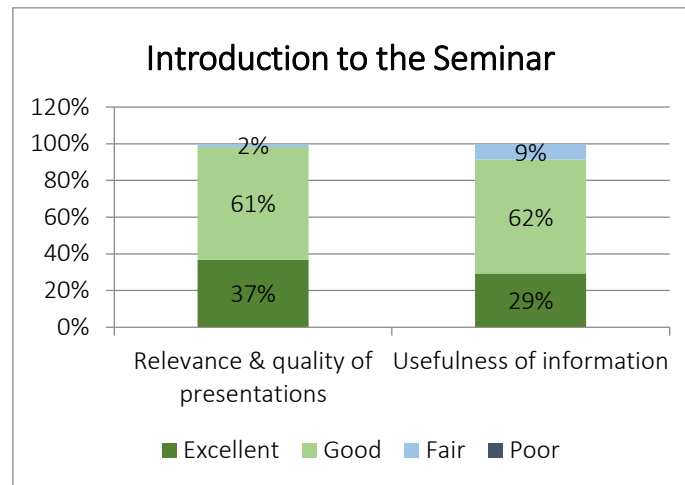
Organisation of the event

The overall organisation of the event was positively assessed by participants, almost all participants indicating that organisational aspects were excellent or good. Very few criticism is indicated with regard to the communication prior to the event.



Introduction to the Seminar

The overall evaluation of the Seminar introduction was positive, most people rating it excellent or good. While the overall evaluation of usefulness was positive, 9% of participants rated it 'fair'.



Workshops

The **overall evaluation of the workshops was positive**, most people rating them excellent or good. People generally appreciated the **exchange about concrete ‘on-the-ground’ examples**, especially during the morning workshops.

While the overall evaluation of **morning workshops** (on involving stakeholders at local and project levels) is highly positive, participants generally appreciated more the topic and the value of discussion and rated the overall usefulness of outcomes slightly lower. No major differences were seen in the evaluation of **individual workshops**. However, among the three workshops Workshop 2 (on sustainable management of natural resources) was rated the highest, followed by Workshop 1 (on competitive agriculture) and then by (the larger) Workshop 3 (on territorial development).

At an overall level, the **afternoon workshops** (on policy formulation and implementation) is positive, however, they were rated lower than the morning workshops. While there are no major differences in the evaluation of **individual workshops**, Workshops 5 & 6 on ‘how NRNs can involve stakeholders in policy-making’ got higher rating (especially Workshop 5) than (the larger) Workshop 4 on ‘how to can NRNs support stakeholder networks’.

