



RUR@L

ENRD Newsletter

March **EN** 2011

NEWS

ENRD REPORT

Stakeholder Survey on the Future of Pre-accession Assistance (IPARD)

DG AGRI has launched a 'stakeholder survey' as part of a broader consultation process on the future of post 2013, pre-accession assistance in the area of agriculture and rural development (IPARD). All interested in this issue, in particular those working with SAPARD/IPARD and pre-accession assistance are invited to complete the survey. The deadline for contributions is 31 March, 2011. For further information, click [here](#). To complete the questionnaire click [here](#).

DG AGRI Publishes Forestry and Rural Employment Reports

Two studies, recently undertaken by DG AGRI, have been made available on the Europa website. One examines prospects for the supply of wood and other forest products, from areas with fragmented forest-ownership structures. Click [here](#). A second study on employment, growth and innovation in rural areas has also recently been completed and a more detailed account of this will feature in the next *Rur@L* News. Click [here](#).

DG AGRI Launches Facebook Page!

In our fast changing world, static websites are becoming less popular. Facebook and Twitter are the tools people use to stay updated and in touch with the world. If you're interested in the CAP, DG AGRI is now on Facebook and Twitter.

[EU-Agri](#) is a fan page with news about agriculture from different sources. [Agri-Publi](#) is another fan page with the latest publications by DG AGRI. [Dacian Ciolos](#) is the Commissioner's fan page where he communicates about his views and impressions. The Commissioner's spokesman, Roger Waite, is also on Twitter ([ECspokesRoger](#)), which is mainly used by journalists and politicians.

POLICY BRIEF

Seminar Highlights Importance of ICT to Rural Areas

The importance of Information Communications Technology (ICT) to the development of rural areas in Europe was the focus of an ENRD seminar held in Brussels, on 10 February, 2011.

The event entitled "ICT and rural areas: building the knowledge society at grassroots level" provided a useful platform for discussing the implementation of ICT policies in rural areas and how this has been implemented in different Member States.

The seminar, which was attended by around 140 ICT and rural development stakeholders, examined the role of rural development policy concerning broadband infrastructure and its utilisation. The seminar also focused on reviewing the needs of rural areas, regarding the current ICT requirements

of agriculture, as well as those of the food industry and rural areas generally.

The seminar also included issues relating to the new Digital Agenda for Europe and the EU Broadband Strategy. A focal point for the event

was the sharing of good practice regarding ICT projects in rural areas and collecting ideas for future rural development policy and "post-2013" discussions. Participants heard that some 184 rural broadband projects have been approved through 37 different RDPs. However, currently broadband accessibility is at 77% in EU rural areas, compared to 100% in EU urban areas; and given the importance of ICT to rural development, this imbalance needs to be redressed.

Speaking at the event, John Hannafin, from the Tipperary Institute in Ireland said it "truly demonstrated the breadth and diversity of projects already supported by the EAFRD". However, it was noted that there is a real need for more investment in ICT infrastructure in rural areas and for greater incentives for the rural population to use new technologies. Click [here](#).

"[The ICT event] truly demonstrated the breadth and diversity of projects already supported by the EAFRD."

John Hannafin

The Tipperary Institute in Ireland



Seminar participants also heard about the importance of broadband and wireless access, to US rural development policy, as a means of revitalising the economy, creating

new jobs and providing improved services in rural areas. In addition, an interesting perspective was shared on rural broadband schemes and ICT use in Ireland, Hungary and Sweden.

Three simultaneous workshops were also held, which addressed key strategic issues.

In general, the seminar underlined the importance of ICT as a cornerstone for the development of rural areas.

Click [here](#).

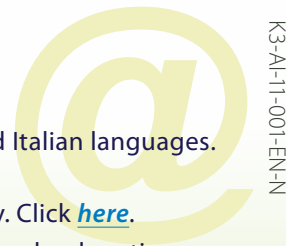
Please note: 'Rur@L News' is an online publication; for further information, please go to <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>





NEW ONLINE...

- The ENRD website is now available in the German and Italian languages. Click [here](#).
- New videos and photos available in our Media Gallery. Click [here](#).
- Improved ENRD web banners now available in the download section. Click [here](#).
- **ATTENTION LAGs!** New Leader Cooperation Offers have been posted on the website. Click [here](#).



EAFRD Projects Brochure – Showcases Diversity of Project Examples

The 'EAFRD Projects Brochure' is fast becoming a flagship ENRD publication, with the most recent edition focusing on Information Communications Technology (ICT). Click [here](#). As with all editions of the brochure – it includes an array of project examples, ranging from computer training to e-tourism – all intended to inspire and inform readers on the huge array of possibilities for use of the EAFRD to fund rural development projects in rural areas across Europe. This is the second brochure in the series, which will regularly feature projects from all 27 EU Member States. Future themes will include 'green growth' and 'Leader', as well as other proposed themes such as 'entrepreneurship', 'food' and 'renewable energy'. The brochure showcases selected projects from the 'RDP Projects Database', which will for the first time, represent a one-stop-shop for rural development projects from all EU countries and covering all RDP axes. "These are

invaluable tools for those interested in RDP projects. They tell a story about how the EAFRD is being used in practice, by everyday rural businesses. And of course the main thing is that these are user-friendly tools for people in rural communities," says Tim Hudson of the ENRD Contact Point. The soon-to-be-launched database will initially feature around 200 project examples on the ENRD website – with this figure set to increase following further expected NRN contributions. According to Mr Hudson, "This is a very exciting initiative and we will continue to collect more and more project examples. If someone has an interesting EAFRD project then we encourage them to speak to their NRN about submitting it for the database". In addition, the ENRD will be including videos as part of its growing suite of products, and is particularly interested in any existing or possible footage of RDP projects. Please contact news@enrd.eu.



NRN FOCUS

Focus Groups on Leader Implementation – Reports Now Available

A series of reports on the work of the ENRD Focus Groups, on specific aspects of Leader, namely the 'bottom up approach', 'innovation' and 'cooperation' have been concluded. These reports are now available to download from the ENRD website. Click [here](#) for further information.

Mid-term Evaluation Report Results on NRNs

The mid-term evaluations of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) were finalised in each EU Member State by 31 December, 2010 and are currently under examination by the Managing Authorities and the Commission's services. These external evaluations examine the degree of utilisation of resources and the effectiveness and efficiency of the RDPs. They will also provide valuable insight into the perceived effectiveness of the National Rural Networks (NRNs). The ENRD Contact Point will compile a report on this, to be presented at the next NRN meeting in Germany on 27 April, 2011.

Polish and Portuguese LAGs Sign 'Cooperation Declaration' at Seminar

A cooperation seminar involving Local Action Groups (LAGs) from Portugal and Poland was held on February 11, in the Portuguese district of Santarém. In total, 24 representatives (from two Polish and six Portuguese LAGs) met to discuss joint organisation of various actions: cooperation projects to support economic development and local entrepreneurship; expanding marketing opportunities for local products; and promoting rural tourism. After the seminar a 'signature ceremony' was held, where participants signed a declaration of cooperation between the two countries. Click [here](#).



COUNTRY FOCUS



Slovenia

Size: 20,273 km²

Population: 2 million

Slovenia is a relatively small European country with a unique natural heritage, characterised by relief diversity, rich nature systems and rich forests. The Natura 2000 areas cover more than 35 percent and forests almost 60 percent of the entire Slovenian territory, giving Slovenia one of the largest shares of protected and forested areas in Europe. In general, Slovenia is quite sparsely populated. Low productivity remains the key problem for the agriculture sector in rural areas; the food processing industry and the forestry sector also play an important role in the economy. However, generally all three sectors are facing restructuring processes and there is strong potential for the growth of organic production, as well as the establishing of local markets in Slovenia. Rural areas have an aging population with young people leaving to find opportunities elsewhere. However, those rural areas that are close to urban centres are experiencing population increases. The environment is well preserved and has a favourable species and habitat status, supported by a sound infrastructure for sustainable farming and forest management. For further information, click [here](#).



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Published by: Rob Peters, Head of Unit, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission.
This publication does not necessarily express the official views of the Commission.

ISSN 1831-4864



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