



Networking issues 2007-2013

John Edwards

Leader+ Observatory Contact Point, Brussels

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Why network?

Improving the quality of policy through the following actions:

- Sharing experience (positive and negative)
- Spreading good practice
- Information and training
- Creating synergies
- Building co-operation projects under Leader
- Drawing lessons for future policy

⇒ All actions more efficient with **short communication lines**



Networking until 2006

- Strongly focused on Leader:
 - Legal base: Leader+ guidelines
 - Obligatory for Leader+ programmes
 - Open to other organisations involved in territorial rural development

- Networking structures:
 - Member State level: National Network Units
 - EU level: Observatory of Rural Areas (Leader+ Contact Point)

- Plus other informal networks (LAG associations, Rural Development organisations)



Networking 2007 - 2013

- Wider scope: covering all aspects related to RD at Community level, including Leader
- Legal base: Technical assistance - Council Reg (EC) No 1698/2005
- Scope for increased financial support
- Networking structures:
 - Member State level: National Rural Networks
 - EU level: European Network for Rural Development



European Network for Rural Development (Art. 67)



- To interface with the national networks and administrations
- Roles include:
 - Collecting, analysing and disseminating information on Rural Development measures and good practice
 - Providing information on developments in rural areas in the EU as well as third countries;
 - Organise meetings and seminars at EU level;
 - Setting up and running expert networks to facilitate exchange of expertise and support implementation and evaluation of Rural Development policy;
 - Supporting the national networks and transnational co-operation initiatives.



National Rural Network (Art. 68)



- To bring together and support the organisations and administrations active in rural development
- Structure to be established either within the competent national authorities or by selection through tendering procedures
- Roles include:
 - identifying and sharing good practice
 - organising exchanges of experience and know-how
 - preparation of training for LAGs in the process of setting-up
 - technical assistance for inter-territorial and transnational co-operation activities between Leader groups
 - Participation in networking at EU level



Networking needs in the programming period



- Programme needs evolve as the programming period advances
- Programme launch:
 - training and information tool on the RDP
 - production of methodological tools and a communication kit
 - basic information on the website comprising a glossary related to concepts used in rural development policy
- Programme implementation:
 - processing of implementation data and evaluation
- Programme consolidation:
 - databases
 - collection, analysis and dissemination of best practices



Strong interaction between European and national networks



- Collection and dissemination of data
- National networks can provide expertise at EU level
- EU network can identify networking best practices
- Support to transnational cooperation



Common issues to consider at EU and national level



Policy issues

- How to integrate the three axes of the EAFRD
- Avoid a segmentation of the network into four sub-networks
- Mobilisation of stakeholders beyond the Leader actors (participation is only obligatory for Leader actors)
- Develop horizontal activities, create working groups on horizontal issues)
- Different levels / intensity of networking: *Informing* versus *activating*



Common issues to consider at EU and national level



Management issues

- How best to operate the national rural network? In-house (managing authority) versus out-sourcing (single or multiple contracts)
- Structure that will be close as possible to LAGs
 - *Short communication lines!*
- Sufficient resources, skills and expertise (“animators”)
- Start preparations early so network can support the programme from the outset and access the European network



We are still here...!

Leader+ Observatory Contact Point

**81, Rue du Marteau
B-1000 Brussels
BELGIUM**

Tel: +32 (0)2 235 20 20

Fax: +32 (0)2 280 04 38

contact.point@leaderplus.org

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/leaderplus>