

**NSU Peer-to-Peer Training Workshop:
“Networking for Innovation in the 2014-2020 RDPs” (Draft: 12 February 2014)**

Location: *Ghent, Belgium (18-19 March 2014)*

Background

Support for innovation has been a key priority for EU rural development for many years. Innovation objectives were clearly stated in the *Community Strategic Guidelines for rural development for 2007-2013* and were reinforced by the 2010 CAP Health Check. This trend towards increasing support for innovation continued within the CAP 2014-2020.

The new EAFRD rural development regulation (No. 1305/2013) deeply embeds innovation within post-2013 rural development policy by:

1. Introducing innovation as a cross-cutting objective that must be integrated into all priorities adopted by Member States in their RDPs;
2. Enshrining innovation within the “horizontal” Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas;
3. Including rural development policy as a key tool for supporting the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI), and;
4. Introducing a new aim for networking by national rural networks (NRNs), namely to “*foster innovation in agriculture, food production, forestry and rural areas*”, including the specific obligation to implement activities “*regarding the provision of networking for advisors and innovation support services*”.

Workshop Aims and Objectives

This workshop is generously hosted by the Vlaams Ruraal Netwerk (Flemish Rural Network) and aims to bring together representatives of the network support units (NSUs), DG AGRI, the ENRD Contact Point, EIP-AGRI Service Point and other interested organisations in order to:

- a) build a **common understanding** of the role of the NRNs in promoting and supporting innovation in accordance with Art. 54 of EAFRD Regulation No. 1305/2013;
- b) **explore and clarify** how the ENRD, EIP-AGRI network and NRNs can most effectively work together;
- c) identify and discuss **specific activities** that the NSUs can include in their future annual work plans (AWPs) for helping to promote and support innovation.

Specific objectives of the workshop are:

- explore how networking activities can support innovation as a cross-cutting theme in all RDP priorities and what organizational set up and support is needed on national level to support this
- explore and clarify the specific relationship between the NRNs, the EIP-AGRI and the ENRD, and;
- raise awareness of the work of the EIP-AGRI Service Point and the future co-ordination of their work with the NRNs and ENRD.

The workshop will include a mixture of presentations and interactive discussions that combine authoritative guidance on key issues with creative and productive interaction between participants. A key focus of this process will be the facilitation of active and practical peer-to-peer learning.

It is intended that the participants will leave the workshop with a clearer understanding of: i) the relevant decisions that need to be made at national level regarding networking and innovation, and; ii) the practical actions that will need planning for NRN/NSUs

A workshop report will be prepared and distributed after the event.

Outline Programme (draft)

Tuesday, 18 March

12:00 – 13:00	Registration
13:00 – 13:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction and welcome by Vlaams Ruraal Network• Hello and Check-in – “who is here, why we are here and what do we expect?”• Goals of the workshop

Setting the Scene

A series of short presentations followed by reflection, feedback and facilitation to help develop common understanding and provoke discussions –possible use of a café format for table-based discussions.

This opening session aims to clearly articulate the intention / philosophy behind the strengthening of innovation in the 2014-2020 policy and to clarify what this new framework means for the activities and the set up of the NRNs and the services provided by the NSUs. This will help to clarify and plan how NRN and NSU activities must be organized (in relation to the choices made within the RDP). A joint presentation from the ENRD CP and EIP SP will clarify the roles of the EU level networks and the support available to the NRNs and NSUs

13:15 – 14:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovation in EU Rural Development Policy 2014-2020 (DG AGRI)• Networking for Innovation - a joint presentation from the ENRD Contact Point and EIP-AGRI Service Point• <i>Reflection, feedback, discussion and conclusions</i>
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14:45 – 15:15	Break
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Networking and Innovation.....what do we know?

Continue with table-based discussions to dig deeper into our collective understanding of how rural networks can promote and support a culture of innovation amongst rural stakeholders

15:15 – 17:00	<p>Guided discussion using World Café methodology – suggest three questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How broad is the innovation theme in the new rural development regulation?2. What are the tools available for NRNs to promote / foster innovation in rural development?3. What are the enabling conditions for NRNs to most efficiently and effectively promote / foster innovation? <p><i>Feedback and conclusions from World Café discussions</i></p>
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18:30	Social programme and dinner
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Wednesday, 19 March

09:00 – 09:15	Summary of Day 1 and introduction to Day 2
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Existing Best Practices in Networking for Innovation

Case study presentations or a poster session

09:15 – 10:30	<p>Present selected examples of successful networking for innovation – focus on necessary enabling conditions, governance , organizational set up, resources and concrete activities</p> <p><i>Reflection, feedback, Q&A</i></p>
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10:30 – 11:00	Break
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Networking for Innovation in 2014-2020 <i>Three parallel workshops to identify, discuss and exchange practical actions that the NSUs can include in their forthcoming annual work plans (AWPs) for helping to promote and support innovation. Each workshop could kick-off with short presentations (or be linked to best practice case studies above).</i> <i>Some experiences could come from organizations and models that had similar objectives, but were not necessarily NRN related.</i>	
11:00 – 12:00	Topics for discussion might be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of NRNs in implementing the EIP-AGRI • LEADER and innovation in 2014-2020 • Promoting innovation through best practices (“Towards Best Practice ver. 2.0”)
12:00 – 12:30	Feedback from workshops

12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
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Open Space: “Focusing on Your Questions about Networking for Innovation” <i>Open Space session offering the opportunity for participants to set the remaining agenda of the meeting by bringing their own questions and issues forward for discussion – focus on practical issues / conclusions</i>	
13:30 – 14:00	Setting the Open Space agenda
14:00 – 15:00	Open Space Discussions - focusing on your questions and practical issues
15:00 – 15:30	Feedback from Open Space Discussions
15:30 – 16:00	Workshop conclusions and check-out