

PROJECTS BROCHURE

The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2014-2020



European Network for Rural Development

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union (EU). The ENRD contributes to the effective implementation of Member States' Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and co-operation across rural Europe.

Each Member State has established a National Rural Network (NRN) that brings together the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. At EU level, the ENRD supports the networking of these NRNs, national administrations and European organisations.

Find out more on the *ENRD website* (<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>)

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

The EAFRD Project Examples brochure forms part of a series of ENRD publications that help encourage information exchange. Each edition of the brochure features different types of projects that have received RDP co-finance from the EAFRD.

Past editions of the EAFRD Projects Brochure can be downloaded from the ENRD website's publications and media section.⁽¹⁾ The *RDP Projects Database*⁽²⁾ contains many additional examples of EAFRD assistance to rural development initiatives.

(1) <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/publications-and-media>

(2) http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm

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Inspiration for 2014-2020

This EAFRD Projects Brochure considers the new European Union rural development priorities for the 2014-2020 programming period. It looks at existing EAFRD projects to ask what inspiration we can take from the past to help us achieve these priority objectives in the future.

The brochure refers to the ideas and achievements of more than 50 projects - implemented using EAFRD funding support from the 2007-2013 programming cycle. Of these, twelve are highlighted and presented in more detail, to reflect particular approaches to achieving the new priorities.

The brochure aims to give readers three distinct types of insight:

1. The brochure seeks to be a useful tool for anybody seeking to access EAFRD funding through their national or regional Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020. It shows some of what can be done and the types of projects that could attract future funding support.
2. The brochure aims to contribute to better awareness and understanding of the new EU rural development priorities and ways in which they can be worked towards in practice. By showing how practical efforts on the ground relate to the achievement of policy objectives, the brochure sets out to make the priorities less theoretical and more tangible.
3. The brochure serves to highlight some of the achievements made by individual EAFRD projects and the overall positive contribution made to rural development goals by the Fund in the 2007-2013 period. EAFRD projects have made a real difference to the lives of many individuals and communities in rural areas and this is reflected in the projects presented.

The brochure is structured in six sections – one for each of the 2014-2020 EU rural development priorities.

The EU Rural Development Priorities 2014-2020⁽¹⁾

Priority 1 - Knowledge transfer and innovation

Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas.

Priority 2 - Farm viability and competitiveness

Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable management of forest.

Priority 3 - Food-chain organisation

Promoting food-chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture.

Priority 4 - Enhancing ecosystems

Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry.



Priority 5 – Resource efficiency

Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors.

Priority 6 – Balanced territorial development

Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Each section begins with a brief presentation of the priority and what delivering on that priority can mean in practice.

A number of projects are then briefly presented whose ideas and approaches reflect different aspects of the overall priority. These do not aim to represent a comprehensive guide to the types of project that could be relevant, but to provide a range of interesting examples.

Following this overview information for each section, two projects are presented in more detail. These project case studies provide more information, quotes and photos that highlight the work of the project and some of the key messages to take forward.

Further information on many of the projects mentioned in this brochure can be found by visiting <http://docs.enrd.eu/projects>. For some of the cases, presentation videos are also available to be watched – links are provided in the project boxes following each case where relevant.

Visit the RDP projects database on the ENRD website for further inspiring examples.⁽²⁾

We hope that this projects brochure will help inform and inspire the next generation of EAFRD projects. We look forward to hearing from our readers about the successful and innovative projects that take European rural development practice forward over the new period. Transfer of good practice can make an important contribution to the achievement of rural development objectives in Europe.

The ENRD Contact Point Team

(1) All of these priorities contribute to the cross-cutting rural development objectives of innovation, environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

(2) http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm

Priority 1

Knowledge transfer and innovation

Priority 1 for rural development policy in the EU, 2014–2020, is: “Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas.”

Delivering on this priority means supporting the development of the knowledge base in rural areas and improving the links between research & innovation and rural stakeholders on the ground.

EAFRD projects in the 2007–2013 period have already demonstrated some of the methods for linking rural activities with applied research as well as different approaches to transferring knowledge among rural stakeholders. The following section provides a brief overview of the kinds of relevant ideas and practices developed by EAFRD projects, followed by two detailed case study examples.

For more information on delivering rural research and innovation, 2014–2020, visit: www.eip-agri.eu

Developing innovation

EAFRD-funded projects have undertaken **applied research** to address rural challenges. For example, an Estonian project developed a system of **automatic weather stations*** to protect against the potato blight disease, whilst a Greek project developed the use of **nanotechnology in the production of pottery*** to increase the quality and reputation of this speciality rural product.

*The case study on page 5 presents an Italian project that developed scientific understanding of native flora to support rural horticultural businesses.**

Importantly, **innovation does not have to be high-tech**. Innovative EAFRD-funded projects can address a wide range of new methods, approaches and practices for supporting rural development. For example, a Spanish project supported the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility in rural businesses to reduce their costs and improve both their productivity and their reputation.

Transferring knowledge

An important area of focus for EAFRD projects has been to **raise awareness of existing knowledge and good practice**. A project in France developed an information pack and organised regional meetings of over 700 forestry owners to develop understanding and implementation of sustainable forestry practices.

Training activities have been used by EAFRD projects for transferring knowledge. For example, a project in Northern Ireland (UK) developed a **collective training model** that educated over 7 500 family farmers on themes of FarmSafe Awareness, Animal Welfare and ICT for farm families.

*See page 6 for a case study of a project from Wales (UK) that developed a Farm Enterprise Competition that served both to identify and disseminate innovative farming practice.**

EAFRD projects can also deliver very specific types of **professional and vocational training**. For example, a project in Poland gave over 2 200 farmers practical training on how to carry out on-farm food processing to improve the supply chain of small and medium farms. It used a specially constructed demonstration food-processing line, supported with technical and legal guidance.



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Applied research project delivers direct benefits to horticultural businesses in rural Italy

The *Potplant* project in Italy shows how applied research can be used to deliver important benefits for rural businesses, creating jobs and improving competitiveness. It specifically brought together horticultural businesses and scientific researchers to provide horticultural growers with new ranges of well-adapted, commercially attractive plant products.

Connecting research with practice

The Potplant project involved two-and-a-half years of applied research by three scientific organisations enjoying state-of-the-art research and development laboratories. The research focused on the conservation and management of native flora and also plant propagation and breeding techniques.

However, it was the partnership with 11 horticultural businesses that was central to the project's success. The nurseries needed the research to help them choose the right species and to implement the best production methods. At the same time, the researchers needed the nurseries' understanding of the needs and requirements of their customers in order to grow new products that were well adapted to the market.

"We shared our different perspectives and this led to the research being 'demand-led', and not simply and purely 'supply-led'. This was good because it produced synergies that could not have been possible if the research had been purely supply-led."

Roberta Ceriani

Native Flora Centre of Lombardy

Roberta Ceriani from the Native Flora Centre of Lombardy in Galbiate highlights the priority given during the project to developing the co-operation: "We actually started this partnership very early during the process of writing the project itself. This was very useful because we sat together around the table and we got to know each other."

As Ms Ceriani explains, the partnership approach continued throughout the project: "We worked as a kind of 'producer group', which linked rural development research with the development interests of the nurseries and horticultural businesses."

Real benefits for horticultural businesses

The project's research activities focused on improving and increasing the supply of native plant species for sale in the horticultural market, providing direct benefits to rural businesses. Ms Ceriani continues, "Through [the partnership] approach, we could transfer

our scientific research and results to the nurseries, and make real innovations for them."

"It was very useful for us to be involved in the research project from the beginning because this helped us to gain the result that we wanted."

Francesca Beschi

Azienda Agricola Antica Pieve. Horticultural Nursery.

The project was an interesting proposition for nurseries and 11 horticultural businesses took part. Francesca Beschi's family business produces and sells perennial plants and was one of the horticultural companies that participated in the project. "We were interested in the way we could make use of scientific knowledge to help us to improve the quality of our plant products."

The benefits of the project to the rural businesses were very real. "An increasing number of our customers are interested in native species, especially those that can be certified with a quality mark," explains Ms Beschi. "We now have a new supply chain of high quality, native plant species that are very attractive for our customers. This is a real innovation for us and it has helped us to improve our competitiveness because we can now offer our customers a much better choice of native species."



The Potplant project showed how researchers and rural businesses can co-operate to produce mutual benefits.

© ENRD CP Tim Hudson

Finally, the project partners are keen to highlight that the project's efforts in promoting native flora are not only good for local businesses but also good for the local environment. Non-native species can sometimes become a pest if they grow out of control. On the other hand, native species tend to be well adapted to local environments, can be more resilient and better support local biodiversity.

"The Potplant project not only created new scientific knowledge and business benefits, but it also helps to conserve our regional biodiversity."

Francesca Beschi

Azienda Agricola Antica Pieve. Horticultural Nursery.

Project Title	Potplant
Type of beneficiary	Private companies and Research Bodies
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total project cost: € 215 748 • RDP contribution: € 106 374
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-static/app_templates/enrd_assets/pdf/research-and-innovation/9_POTOPANT-project-in-Italy_en.pdf • www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqSL-CgioCI
Contact	centroflora@parcobarro.it

Welsh sheep farming competition develops and transfers knowledge

The *Farm Enterprise Competition* in Wales (UK) is a good example of an EAFRD-funded project using a competition to both identify and raise awareness of innovations in rural areas. The competition specifically explored knowledge development and transfer in sheep farming.

How the competition was organised

The EAFRD-funded competition was organised by the Farming Connect organisation in Wales (UK). Teams of three sheep farmers were tasked to combine their

skills, experience, and ideas to agree a plan for rearing 50 lambs on 2.5 hectares of upland fields. Their brief was to find optimal management techniques that could be applied to improve the overall competitiveness of local lamb businesses.



© Farming Connect

The project was carefully designed to focus specifically on development needs of the regional sheep farming sector.



© Farming Connect

This useful project encouraged young farmers to put research into practice and led to innovation.

“The Farmer Enterprise Competition brings together essential business and innovation principles... and demonstrates the importance of mentoring and knowledge transfer. It shows how important and beneficial it is to adopt an enterprising, business-like and strategic approach to farming and emphasises the clear benefits of animal health planning, benchmarking and using Information Technology.”

Rebecca Evans

Deputy Minister for Farming & Food for Wales

To ensure a fair competition, organisers provided all the lambs and land on the same research farm. The teams had to design the grazing strategies, animal health planning, use of information technology, and lamb selection etc. for their plot. They did not need to deal with the actual day-to-day husbandry.

Six teams entered the first year's contest in 2013. Specialist judges followed the teams' progress after establishing assessment criteria that included: choice and management of fodder crops; production costs; and the weight gained by lamb flocks. Winners would be the team that produced the best quality lambs in the most cost-effective manner.

“There was a big variation in lamb growth rates. Lambs on [two of the six] plots grew at an average of over 120g/day or nearly a kg per week. This matches the performance of many lambs on lowland systems and shows what can be achieved from hill lambs with good management.”

Catherine Nakielny
Competition judge

The 2013 winners won their prize for their achievements in sound cropping decisions that the judges considered were well informed by attention to detail. The three farmers – aged 25, 24 and 18 – were presented with an electronic tablet device at an official award ceremony.

Next generation

Valuable lessons were learned from all the competitors' ideas. Analysis of the results was subsequently written up and widely publicised through regional farm advisory services to reach and benefit a broad range of livestock farmers. The findings included the conclusion that “There is no ‘right or wrong’ system of lamb production – it's the management of that system [that makes the difference].”

A second edition of the Farm Enterprise Competition was already launched in 2014. All five of the teams studied the previous project results as part of their planning process and profitability factors were awarded a high priority by the young farmers' proposals.

“We are looking forward to learning more about finishing systems and when to select lambs in order to get the best out of them.”

Beca Glyn

Farmer Enterprise competitor, 2014

Organisers of the *Farm Enterprise Competition* remain pleased with the interest that has been shown by the new entrants. They believe it underscores the potential for rural development projects like this to strengthen the innovation, co-operation, and husbandry skills of the next generation of Welsh lamb producers.

Project Title	Farm Enterprise Competition
Type of beneficiary	Government agency
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: €18 500 • EAFRD contribution: €10 175
Further info	www.menterabusnes.co.uk/farmingconnect/farmers-enterprise-competition
Contact	farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk

Priority 2

Farm viability and competitiveness

Priority 2 for rural development policy in the EU, 2014-2020, is: “Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable management of forest.”

Delivering on this priority means improving the economic performance of all farms, principally by increasing revenues and/or decreasing costs. Means of increasing revenues include improving product quality and strengthening market access. Farm viability in the long-term also means support to young farmers for generational renewal in the agricultural sector.

EAFRD projects in the 2007-2013 period demonstrated productive methods for improving farm viability and competitiveness, including through initiatives to take quality produce straight to the consumer, modernising production methods and developing new ways of working together.

Improving production methods

Farm viability can be improved by **modernising production methods** both to improve quality and reduce costs. An EAFRD project in Greece **modernised processing, packaging and cleaning equipment*** to improve quality and standards in tomato processing. A project in Lithuania introduced modern equipment for processing natural textiles, which enabled improved quality and the development of new products for business development.

Reducing the consumption of water, electricity and other resources is a key means of limiting costs and thus improving the viability of rural businesses. Similarly, **extracting economic value from waste products** has significant potential for improving balance sheets. (See section 5 for illustrative examples of both aspects).

*The case study on page 9 presents a French project that delivered a Territorial Supply Plan to support viable long-term forest management.**

Increasing market participation

EAFRD-funded projects have supported farms in improving their **direct access to consumers** through shorter supply chains – see Section 3 on Food-Chain Organisation.

Working in **co-operation at territorial or sector level** can help the viability of many farms and rural businesses. A project in Spain brought cork-producing territories together to explore innovation, create a common marketing platform and deliver shared tourism products. Meanwhile, a **transnational co-operation project*** included product awards and the achievement of designation of origin protection to provide important support for the marketing of typical products from its regions.

Supporting young farmers

A project in Flanders (Belgium) directly supported a young farmer to take over ownership of a farm, including help with all legal aspects and the development of a business plan. Other means of supporting young farmers have included a project in Wales (UK) that provided a rural leadership programme to 60 young people.

*See page 10 for a case study of a project that provided business start-up support to help a young farmer in Lithuania to realise her ambitions.**



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French project demonstrates territorial planning for sustainable forest management

The Barrois area of France used EAFRD funding to support territorial supply planning to improve management of forest resources. The planning helped promote sustainable exploitation of timber resources whilst supporting different aims including recreational use, respecting forest habitats and preserving the long-term role of the forest in mitigating climate change.

Territorial Supply Plans

EAFRD support was used to produce a territorial supply plan (TSP) for the forest of the Barrois area in France's Lorraine region. The plan is a good practice method for optimising management of forest resources for different needs and uses, including the exploitation of timber resources, use of the forest by tourists and the provision of environmental services.

"The TSP is a real decision-making tool covering essential environmental, economic and social aspects! This tool can balance consumption against the resource available in order to avoid conflicts in the cost control and reliability of wood supplies."

Christophe Antoine

President, Joint Association of Pays Barrois

The TSP for Barrois evolved from a strategic climate-action initiative aimed at boosting local forests' ability to provide renewable energy fuel and prevent greenhouse gas emissions. The regional authorities knew that they had a larger than average area of forest compared to most French regions, which made it a tangible territorial development asset. However, they were also aware that they needed to know more about their woodland resources.

The project worked to provide accurate information on territorial forest stocks. It assessed the quality and quantity of different types of wood stocks in different locations, as well as different options for harvesting, extracting and commercialising the territory's different timber reserves. Analysis looked at prospects for improving the processing capacities of local timber mills and scenarios for use of forest biomass in wood fuel boilers.

Useful findings

The TSP assessment provided forest managers and stakeholders from Barrois with an effective decision-making tool. As well as up-to-date information on the availability of wood resources, new data was developed to determine the logistics and costs of mobilising unused timber reserves, including expenditure required to purchase specialised machinery and build access roads in forests.



© Tim Hudson

Forests provide us with a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits that are reflected in tools like the Barrois TSP.

The results enabled forest managers to deliver an action plan balancing the different socio-economic and environmental interests. Notably, it provided evidence that more timber resources could be exploited without threatening other social and environmental interests. The project partners agreed a set of performance targets and milestones for measuring the project's longer-term impacts in terms of renewable energy, jobs, and climate change.

"We developed a territorial supply plan to make public authorities and forest owners aware that we have significant unused wood stocks which could be used for energy, without risking the forest equilibrium."

Christophe Antoine

President, Joint Association of Pays Barrois

© Pays Barrois



A variety of woodland stakeholders needed to be involved in order to produce a comprehensive TSP.

The outcomes also identified ongoing forest management challenges. These include the impact of potentially overlapping regional supply chains from Alsace, Luxembourg, and Belgium and the need to avoid duplication of effort between these. Fragmentation of forest ownership was identified as an additional management challenge requiring coordination at a territorial level.

The project team expect to make an interactive version of the TSP available online in the future. This will allow all project partners to see real-time information about the availability of wood supplies in Barrois as well as the requirements for exploiting them. Armed with this knowledge, the regional development stakeholders can make informed choices about investments in municipal heating systems and logistical infrastructure.

"The TSP absolutely must 'touch' the communities that are the owners of the resource. It is a prerequisite for promoting wood fuel energy in rural areas."

Christophe Antoine
President, Joint Association of Pays Barrois

Project Title	Structuring the wood sector on a rural territory: the Territorial Supply Plan
Type of beneficiary	Forestry businesses and authorities
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget: €55 000 • EAFRD contribution: €27 825
Further info	http://www.paysbarrois.com/les-actions-sur-le-territoire/valorisation-des-ressources-locales/structuration-de-la-filiere-bois
Contact	pays.barrois@paysbarrois.com

Lithuanian project shows the value of business start-up funding to young farmers

A young female farmer in Lithuania benefited from EAFRD business start-up support to create a modern, profitable farm. The support helped her to plan her business more effectively and enabled her to buy new equipment to make her farm efficient and competitive.

© Justina Rudminaitė



Justina is one of the many young farmers from around Europe who have been assisted by the Member States' RDPs.

Business planning and start-up support

Justina Rudminaitė from Lithuania's Ukmergė district used EAFRD support to help set herself up in business as a young farmer. Justina wanted to continue in her family's farming footsteps and already had access to land as well as some equipment. However, this equipment was very old and in poor condition. She needed some start-up support to help create a modern and competitive farm.

Being an ambitious young person with a lot of ideas and aspirations for her business, she wanted to invest in modern machinery that could better help

her to fulfil her plans and cultivate the types of crops that she wanted to grow. “As a young person I am full of ideas that I want to try out and implement,” says Ms Rudminaitė. These include the use of “new technologies, new products and new approaches.”

“It was necessary to modernise the equipment that was used for working the land to ensure quality and faster work... This support gave me the chance to implement my business ideas.”

Justina Rudminaitė
young farmer, Lithuania

First of all, Ms Rudminaitė had to create a business plan. This planning was a crucial stage to ensure the long-term success of her new enterprise and helped her understand the business needs of her farm and better plan her efforts.

Ms Rudminaitė remembers that, “I was able to plan my business and the assistance meant that I was able to work in a more organised way.”

She received funding to contribute to the costs of purchasing new equipment, including a mechanical sower, hydraulic cutter, equipment for spraying fertiliser, and machinery for grinding seeds. “I decided to purchase equipment that was needed for spring sowing work. [It] provides much better and more comfortable working conditions for the people using it. It also costs less for fuel and repairs,” she highlights.

By making it possible to carry out the work much faster and with much less effort, the support helped Ms Rudminaitė create a modern, profitable farm.

“[The project] helped me a lot to modernise my farm... and that allows me to compete with other farms, because I can do better quality work faster, which creates better conditions for my fields and provides good quality crops.”

Justina Rudminaitė
young farmer, Lithuania.

One young farmer amongst many

The EAFRD offers particular opportunities to young people to establish themselves as farmers, either individually or as partners in their family's farm. Higher payment rates are offered to young farmers as part of EAFRD financing packages and skill training is encouraged to help young farmers make the most of support.

The Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture highlights that 2215 young farmers received business start-up support in the 2007-2013 period. “This helped the implementation of new ideas and the establishment of new jobs. Hence, this aid at the European Union level is very important for young farmers,” says Ministry representative Jonas Pupius. He goes on to highlight that there are around 20 000 farmers in Lithuania



© ENRD CP Tim Hudson

Justina is proud of her farm and she keeps a close eye on options for improving crop quality.

under 40 years old and that each will be able to apply for business support of up to €70 000 in the 2014-2020 period.

“Young farmers are the future producers of food and they also represent the future managers of the land. They bring new ideas and innovations to agriculture and rural development.”

Jonas Pupius
Ministry of Agriculture, Lithuania

Project Title	Business start-up support for young farmers
Type of beneficiary	Young farmer
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget €40 000 • EAFRD contribution €30 000
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.zum.lt • www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-oABG7QSFY
Contact	j.rudminaitė@gmail.com

Priority 3

Food-chain organisation

Priority 3 for rural development policy in the EU, 2014-2020, is: “Promoting food-chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture.”

Delivering on this priority means supporting producers to better reach their customers, including through more direct selling, better relationships with retailers, and improved quality assurance and marketing. It can also mean supporting farms to better manage risk.

EAFRD projects in the 2007-2013 period have already demonstrated some of the methods for improving links between producers and retailers or directly between producers and consumers. Projects have also shown the power and potential of increasing demand for local produce through local marketing campaigns highlighting product quality.

Linking producers with consumers

EAFRD projects have supported actions looking to **close the gap between agricultural producers and consumers**. For example, a Spanish project enabled local processing of organic meat, facilitating a direct relationship between producers and customers who could better trust the quality of the produce. A project in Estonia supported an entrepreneur in introducing a mobile squeezer to provide **organic apple juice through local supply chains***.

*The case study on page 13 presents a co-operation project between partners in France and Portugal that looked at how to shorten supply chains in peri-urban areas.**

Developing market demand

Work on food-chain organisation can usefully focus on **promoting demand**, especially for local products. A French EAFRD project encouraged people to buy and eat local produce, including through a **green guide to local gastronomy*** that explained the advantages of buying local, seasonal produce and promoted regional dishes using local ingredients.

*See page 14 for a case study of a project from Spain that delivered a joint marketing campaign for local products involving 20 LEADER Local Action Groups in the region of Aragon.**

Risk management

EAFRD projects have also supported efforts to improve **risk management** in agriculture to ensure smooth operation of the food-chain. A project in Finland developed new software to process data from cattle with **electronic ear tags***, which facilitates management of large herds and reduces the risk of mistakes with individual animals. A research project in Estonia experimented with different fertilisers, intensities and sowing techniques to improve productivity and reduce risks to grain crops.



© Tim Hudson

* find more project information at:
<http://projects.enrd.eu/foodchain>

French-Portuguese project shortens food-chain links between rural and urban areas

The project ‘Enhancement of peri-urban areas through short supply chains’ shared ideas and experiences, and designed new methodologies for enhancing linkages in local food supply chains. The project focused on peri-urban areas, which are rural areas located close to larger towns and cities.

This transnational co-operation project between rural territories from France’s Pays du Mans and Portugal’s Península de Setúbal examined good practice in shortening local supply chains in peri-urban areas. It aimed to harness the significant potential for improvements in these important areas linking urban markets and service centres with the producers of food, energy, and other benefits in rural areas.

“Sharing complementary experiences helped to guarantee our success. We discovered that important buyers in our market did not have a good knowledge about the availability of local produce from Pays du Mans.”

Hélène Penven
Pays du Mans, France

Benefits of co-operation

Pays du Mans commune was the lead partner for this project, which evolved from previous LEADER activities. The coordinator, Hélène Penven, highlights how the transnational dimension helped to bring new ideas: “In France, the interest was very focused on local authorities, but after the first project meetings we realised that we could achieve more by involving more organisations.”

The French partner set up a steering committee to bring in different viewpoints, including representatives

of local authorities, the regional development agency, agriculture, trade, academia and research. “We learnt from our co-operation that potential benefits existed in expanding our strategy beyond just public sector canteens, like those from schools and public buildings,” highlights Ms Penven.

In Portugal, a special conference was held to exchange good practice approaches.⁽¹⁾ This included useful discussions about an effective short supply chain between food producers and consumers around Lisbon and Setúbal (PROVE project). Food jobs, product quality, direct sales, and environmental sustainability were all shown to benefit from this type of rural development action.

“We all know how to grow the produce. What is more difficult is to sell what we produce.”

Maria Simões
PROVE producer, Portugal

Several exchange visits took place. “We saw from our Portuguese partners that they were having a lot of success improving supply chain links with private restaurants. Conversely, our ideas about targeting public sector customers helped the producers from Portugal to discover new outlets in these markets too,” continues Ms Penven.

(1) http://www.adrepes.pt/eventos/_EN/ivisitas.html



© CEM/JICA-Pays du Mans

New urban markets for local farm products were identified during the project's knowledge exchange processes.

Delivering shorter chains

One of the key project outputs was a Charter of Commitment for farmers and restaurant owners to develop short-supply commercialisation of quality products. The Charter takes account of the different demands and expectations of each actor to make the local supply chain durable and efficient, covering aspects such as minimum purchase quantity, minimum offer quantity, provisional planning, definition of quality products, and logistical organisation.

Along with sustainability goals around providing environmentally-friendly food that had lower carbon footprints, social considerations were also strong. The main approach of the project was to increase the mutual awareness of urban consumers and rural producers to improve the supply of fresh rural produce. The project also developed new partnerships within the food producer networks and between the organisations that were buying food.

“Our project demonstrated urban-rural complementarity by creating new supply chains links between food producers and commercial caterers from restaurants and canteens.”

Hélène Penven
Pays du Mans, France

Project Title	Enhancement of peri-urban areas through short supply chains
Type of beneficiary	LEADER Local Action Groups
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget €50 662 • EAFRD contribution €27 864
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.paysdumans.fr • www.adrepes.pt
Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helene.penven@paysdumans.fr • ADREPES@adrepes.pt

Local food for local people in Spain

The EAFRD-supported project *Pon Aragon en Tu Mesa (Put Aragon on Your Table)* developed a series of actions to promote local food in Aragon. The project aimed to bring local producers and customers closer together thus improving the food-chain.

Coordinated co-operation

The project has been based on the co-operation of 20 Local Action Groups in Aragon who identified a common interest in promoting local products to local people in the region. Hundreds of farmers, food producers, restaurants, shops, local associations, public sector bodies and technical service providers are involved.

The project covered all types of agro-alimentary products which are produced or processed in rural Aragon. The project partners collectively supply a huge range of fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products, honey, oils, spices, cereals, confectionery, wines and other drinks, as well as processed and canned foods.

The partners developed a series of actions coordinated under the joint marketing initiative ‘Put Aragon on Your Table’. Effective coordination is a cornerstone of the project’s success, with management decisions having to take account of a great many different stakeholders’ requirements.

“The project aims to put Aragonese products on the table of the Aragonese people, giving a positive impulse to rural development and promoting the tourism opportunities provided by the food produced in the region.”

From the *Pon Aragon en Tu Mesa* website



Promotional stands helped to increase awareness and appreciation of regional food.

Marketing tools

Project outputs targeted regional consumers and tourists as well as shops, distributors, hotels and restaurants. They have included promotional material

for a variety of specific local products, a collection of recipes using local produce and a toolkit of activity books for schools.

Workshops and promotional events were organised in different regional locations, including cooking courses using local products. The project created nine rural food trails for both locals and tourists to follow in Aragon.

The food trails and local food were promoted through a dedicated series of features on regional radio. Each feature focused on a different area of the region, highlighting some of the most typical foods from each and inviting listeners to submit their own recipes. The feature attracted coverage from national radio.

A dedicated project website provides a central resource of project events and materials, including guides to regional producers and a search feature for restaurants serving regional dishes in Aragon. As part of the overall marketing strategy, the project developed a strong web presence, including Facebook page, Twitter account and online videos via YouTube.

Benefits of short supply chains

Encouraging people to eat local products can increase demand to the benefit of local farmers, as well as local restaurants and tourist establishments who can market themselves accordingly. At the same time, eating local reduces transport distances, saving costs

and related emissions; as well as saving time, thus keeping food fresher and supporting quality.

Many consumers also enjoy knowing their food is produced locally and having the chance to talk to producers or retailers about that. Producers also gain from such interaction because they get to know useful information about their customers' purchasing patterns, interests, and loyalty factors.

Making food 'supply chains' shorter in this way is an issue that many Rural Development Programmes are keen to prioritise, because of the many complementary benefits it brings. The approach developed in Aragon to support this provides an interesting example of how such projects can be developed.

"Collaborative projects like this have proven their worth and the interest they have for our rural areas."

Luis Marruedo

Director General of Rural Development, Aragon, Spain

Project Title	Pon Aragon en Tu Mesa (Put Aragon on Your Table)
Type of beneficiary	Local Action Groups
Project funding	Total RDP funding: €2 750 000
Further info	www.ponaragonentumesa.com
Contact	info@ponaragonentumesa.com



© Pon Aragon en Tu Mesa

The project worked with restaurants to promote cooking with local products.

Priority 4

Enhancing ecosystems

Priority 4 for rural development policy in the EU, 2014-2020, is: “Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry.”

Delivering on this priority means restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity in rural areas. In agricultural areas this can mean the promotion of high nature-value farming, and/or improved management of water and avoidance of pollution from fertilisers and pesticides. It can also mean improved soil management and the prevention of erosion which can damage ecosystems and conservation of agricultural genetic resources.

EAFRD projects in the 2007-2013 period have shown ways of supporting agri-environment schemes (which pay farmers for the provision of environmental services). They also supported initiatives which directly intervened to promote local biodiversity including by planting indigenous plants and tackling various forms of pollution.

Promoting environmental management

EAFRD projects have directly supported **delivery of agri-environment schemes**. For example, a project in Greece created a five-year **agri-environment scheme*** in the specific context of vineyard management that not only promoted the local natural environment but supported high quality wine production. A Spanish project developed and implemented tools to support the development of business models for entrepreneurship in protected natural areas.

*The case study on page 17 presents a German project that demonstrates good practice in implementing results-based agri-environment payment schemes.**

EAFRD projects have also demonstrated other ways of **supporting agri-environment schemes**. A project in Austria set up a nationwide network of 50 farmers to **monitor agri-environment results***, specifically counting and recording plants chosen as environmental indicators to improve knowledge and awareness of the impact of agriculture on biodiversity. Another project in Austria published four brochures to **communicate the opportunities and potential of agri-environment schemes*** to farmers.

Biodiversity interventions

EAFRD projects have undertaken **direct interventions to protect and enhance ecosystems**. For example, a project in Flanders (Belgium) **grew and planted seedlings of indigenous flora***. It also established a new indigenous plant quality label and thus marketed seedlings to encourage further planting. A project in Austria worked to deactivate drainage systems to restore wetlands, proving aquatic habitats for birds and tourist opportunities for the local community.

*See page 18 for a case study of an international co-operation project on how to protect Europe's bees and their essential role for both biodiversity and the bio-economy in the EU.**

Other project approaches have looked to **directly tackle pollution** that can threaten ecosystems, notably through negatively impacting water and soil quality. An Estonian project improved the efficiency and effectiveness of bio-compost production, saving ten litres of naphtha with each 7m³ of compost produced. A rather different project in Northern Ireland supported the development of an innovative business to remove chewing gum and other non-biodegradable debris from streets and pavements in predominantly rural areas.



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* find more project information at:
<http://projects.enrd.eu/ecosystems>

Results-based agri-environment payment scheme shows benefits in Germany

Germany has been at the forefront of pioneering results-based agri-environment methods. The **PAULa** project's support for species rich grasslands from Rheinland-Pfalz represents good practice in its approach to implementing a results-based agri-environment payment scheme (RBAPS).

RBAPS are schemes where farmers and land managers receive payments for delivering a specific environmental result or outcome. These results-based approaches offer farmers the flexibility to use their knowledge and experience to manage the land in a way that benefits biodiversity alongside their normal farming operations.

"There are three key success factors for implementing results-based schemes. Firstly, we need understanding and acceptance of the schemes by agriculture and nature stakeholders. Secondly, we need suitable indicators that are easy-to-use and practical for the monitoring. Thirdly, it is important to have good advice and guidance about how to implement the schemes."

Dr. Rainer Oppermann

Institute for Agro-ecology and Biodiversity,
Mannheim, Germany

Establishing a flexible scheme

Inge Unkel from the RDP Managing Authority for Rheinland-Pfalz in north-western Germany explains how, "In Rheinland-Pfalz, one Ministry covers both nature conservation and agriculture. Thus this type of scheme allows us to implement a common approach across both our nature conservation and agricultural activities... The development of the scheme did not involve any major problems, but we needed some additional expertise for our staff who check the results."

The RBAPS model used in the project is less rigid compared to other more standardised agri-environmental models, which tend to impose tighter controls on farm operations. Susanne Venz, an agricultural advisor to farmers in Rheinland-Pfalz highlights that, "The main advantage for this results scheme is that it gives farmers more flexibility, which increases the acceptance of the scheme by farmers."

Lena Berger is a young farmer who receives payments from PAULa for protecting wild flowers that grow in her family farm's hay meadows. Lena feels that she and her farm have benefitted a lot from the Rheinland-Pfalz RBAPS saying, "In comparison with the former schemes, we can now decide when we mow the meadow. We can consider the weather conditions and



© Tim Hudson

Agricultural advisors play vital roles in helping train RBAPS farmers to identify wildlife species and monitor results.

the growth of the meadows, and so we can produce better fodder quality for our farm."

"Farmers asked for more flexibility compared to former management-based schemes, and we implemented their proposals through the results-based scheme."

Inge Unkel

Rheinland-Pfalz RDP Managing Authority

Enabling self-monitoring

Farm advisors, such as Ms Venz, are an important factor for the schemes' effectiveness. Guidance often involves training farmers in techniques that they can use to monitor the wildlife in their fields themselves, for example counting species along a defined path, known as a transect. "I explain the species to the farmer and I show them how to plan the transect across the meadow, as well as how to do the monitoring along the transect," notes Ms Venz.

Building farmers' capacity to self-monitor can help make RBAPS simpler to administer and control, because biodiversity results are typically easier to check than management actions, often requiring only one visit from funding bodies. In comparison, checking management actions from conventional agri-environment schemes can require two or three monitoring visits.

Lena Berger has had no problems in measuring her nature conservation results. "The farm advisor gave me all the materials I need and I was shown how to monitor the species. I go through the fields before the first cut of the meadow, and I use the guidance materials that have been provided by the advisory service. The advisors are always available if I have any questions."

Ms Berger also now knows a lot more about the biodiversity value of her meadows. "Through this results-based approach I have learned more about the species richness here in the meadows and I am more convinced than before about the importance of looking after it," she highlights.

"The scheme's evaluation shows that the number of species has increased over the years since 2008. And the numbers of farmers participating in the scheme has also increased."

Susanne Venz
PAULa Farm Advisor

Project Title	PAULa agri-environment schemes 'Kennartenprogramme'
Type of beneficiary	Farmers managing species rich grasslands
Project funding	PAULa scheme received 60% EAFRD and 40% national funding (2007-2013).
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/rbaps/fiche/species-rich-grassland-artenreiches-grunland-kenna_en.htm • http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/rbaps/videos/DE-video.htm
Contact	dlr-rnh@dlr.rlp.de

Co-operation project protects the vital role of Europe's bees

The **Bees and Diversity** project worked to protect Europe's bees and their crucial role in preserving biodiversity and supporting the bio-economy through plant pollination. The project involved seven EU Members States in common initiatives to support bee populations across Europe.

Large proportions of Europe's plant species depend directly on pollination by insects, and particularly bees. Meanwhile, bees also provide economic value by producing honey and other useful products, including beeswax and royal jelly.

"Bees are critically important in the environment, sustaining biodiversity by providing essential pollination for a wide range of crops and wild plants."

European Food Safety Authority

Transnational conservation initiatives

Addressing the recent declines in bee populations is not an issue only for one region or one country. This motivation led to partners in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Slovakia and the United Kingdom joining forces to help protect bees and, consequently, biodiversity.



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Bees are not only important for nature conservation but they are also widely used as sources of income for European rural areas.

© Axel Mitzka



The project helped to introduce innovations like this example of a 'beepass' that was the first of its kind in Germany.

Co-operation between the countries saw each area implementing a localised set of actions aimed towards the same overall objective of bee conservation. The actions covered three common themes:

- Information and education to raise awareness about the relevance of bee conservation and the existence of risks to bees;
- Beekeeping activity in the rural economy involving promoting bee products and providing beehives; and
- Land management work to help enhance bee habitats through planting of bee-friendly crops and/or other practical conservation efforts focused on public green-spaces.

The project particularly targeted reducing the threat posed to bees by pesticides and improving the availability of quality food, which is particularly needed during critical periods of the year like autumn and in geographical areas lacking biodiversity. The partners also sought to encourage domestic bee keeping to promote bee numbers.

"We are currently training 12 bee keepers to form a bee co-operative to maintain 30 beehives in the RDP localities."

Merthyr Tydfil LEADER Group, UK

Communication and exchange

The project invested significantly in communication campaigns targeting key decision-makers like farmers and public authorities, as well as the broader public. Slovakian partners prioritised work with schools on communicating the value of bees to children. French partners had similar interests and were keen to publicise a novel beehive model designed for educational purposes.

Another important element of the co-operation strategy was the exchange of information and ideas between partners. Many useful new ideas were generated and shared through networking sessions. These have been documented and disseminated through the project's multi-lingual website.

In Denmark, the concept of 'city bees' was developed and promoted, including as a means of offering niche marketing possibilities. The project helped install beehives on public land and plant bee-friendly flowers in grass verges alongside roads and waterways. The project also established a new bee information centre.

Project partners learnt about an interesting new experience from one of Finland's soft fruit growing regions, which demonstrated the potential for using bees as a means for spreading beneficial fungus around strawberry fields to protect the crops against pests. This was achieved in tests by 100 beekeepers with 300 hives by placing the beneficial fungus at exits to the hives.

"A consensus about the needs to preserve nature on a European scale is necessary for the project to succeed also on a local scale."

Lolland LEADER Group, Denmark

Project Title	Bees and biodiversity
Type of beneficiary	Nature conservation groups and agri-food firms
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget € 441 913 • EAFRD contribution € 252 901
Further info	www.bee-leader.eu
Contact	camille.matz@paysvoironnais.com

Priority 5

Resource efficiency

Priority 5 for rural development policy in the EU, 2014-2020, is: “Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors.”

Delivering on this priority particularly means improving the efficiency of water and energy use in the agricultural sector and related industries and making increased use of renewable and sustainable resources. It also means improving the exploitation of waste materials, by-products and residues. The climate resilience aspect of the priority means the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change, while adapting to unavoidable impacts of climate change.

EAFRD projects in the 2007-2013 period have already demonstrated methods for achieving these resource-efficiency goals and illustrative examples are set out below.

More sustainable energy consumption

EAFRD projects have demonstrated innovative approaches for **reducing mains electricity consumption** in agricultural settings. A project in Wales (UK) designed and demonstrated a farmhouse that functions entirely off the mains electricity grid by using renewable resources. A Spanish project monitored the energy use of 56 municipalities and public administrations through a network of 13 local energy managers to promote greater energy efficiency.

*The case study on page 21 presents a project from the Netherlands that established a geo-thermal energy plant to heat food and horticultural production using renewable resources.**

More sustainable water consumption

EAFRD projects have **optimised water consumption** to reduce wasting water whilst meeting agricultural needs perfectly. For example, a project in Flanders (Belgium) used specialist software and satellite technology to enable farmers to **accurately measure and provide for crop irrigation needs***. A project in Greece replaced a simple water abstraction system with an electronic system based more accurately on farmers' specific needs.

*See page 22 for a case study of a project from Malta that developed a more evidence-based approach to water extraction and use of treated water for irrigation purposes.**

More sustainable use of other resources

The case study on sustainable forest management in Section 2 on Farm Viability provides a useful example of possible approaches to the **sustainable management of forest resources**. Meanwhile several projects, including some in Latvia have used EAFRD funding to support **afforestation to meet multiple needs including carbon storage*** for climate change mitigation.

EAFRD-funded projects have also demonstrated numerous ideas and opportunities for **making better use of other resources**, including waste and by-products. One project in Estonia developed a rural business in making cellulose fibre wool for insulation or road construction from waste paper, whilst another showed both how to make bio-compost efficiently from manure using worms and how to make this economically viable by developing relationships with potential customers.



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* find more project information at:
<http://projects.enrd.eu/resourceefficiency>

Dutch greenhouses tap into renewable energy in the Netherlands

The *Green Well Westland* project used EAFRD support to establish a new state-of-the-art geo-thermal energy plant to heat the commercial cultivation of food and horticultural crops by a group of Dutch greenhouse businesses, providing financial and environment benefits.

A business cluster in Honselersdijk near the Dutch coast used a multi-million euro rural development project to harness the geo-thermal reservoirs present under the ground to heat large greenhouse complexes. The aim was to avoid the significant financial and environmental costs typically associated with their high energy consumption rates.

"The Green Well Westland project used €2 million of EU funds for this [geothermal] plant here that pumps hot water from 2800 meters underground to heat our greenhouses."

Jos Scheffers

Kwekerij Zeurniet, Honselersdijk



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The greenhouses that are now heated by geothermal energy are important sources of employment for the project area.

Establishing a geo-thermal plant

Jos Scheffers is one of the owners of the greenhouse companies that use Green Well's climate-friendly energy and he explains, "This project started with five greenhouse companies. We are all small companies and our good co-operation helped us to successfully realise the project."

Each of the five companies invested in a share of the renewable energy plant as part of their long-term business plans. Along with EAFRD funding, further support was provided by the Westland municipality in order to assist the cluster members achieve their goals.

Initial survey work proved essential to the project's success. Mr Scheffers highlights, "If you want to start a geothermal project it is very important that you make a good geological survey... You need to find suitable layers of sand and stone that contain water for the location to be a geothermal heat source. It won't be possible unless these conditions are suitable."

The geo-thermal plant that the project constructed also includes an equilibrium control for the groundwater levels. The system pumps hot water up from the geothermal reservoir through one set of pipes into a heat exchanger on the surface. A second well then returns the cooled water back to the subterranean aquifer.

"We produce 2400 tonnes of top quality orange paprika each year. The EU funds made it possible for us to switch to a sustainable heating system. The heat is used to help us grow high quality produce."

Ted Zwinkels

Zwingrow, Honselersdijk

Sustainable benefits

Results from the project have been very positive for the Green Well cluster, which receives a consistent supply of low cost, simple and clean energy. "The project's main benefits relate to huge savings in the use of natural gas heating from fossil fuels, and thereby we help the environment by reducing CO₂ emissions by 10 million cubic metres per annum", says Mr Scheffers.

Green Well's considerable climate benefits were acknowledged by the Dutch authorities through an 'Inspiration Award'. This prize was attributed not only to the project's ability to provide green energy, but also to the cluster's success in building a demonstration plant that can encourage more geothermal energy generation to heat the region's businesses, homes, and community facilities.



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RDPs are able to invest sizable amounts of funding to help establish large-scale projects like this renewable energy plant.

“Geothermal projects make significant contributions to reducing CO₂ emissions and can help governments to meet their environmental targets for 2020. We now have plans to develop a logo for Europe’s geothermal projects.”

Jos Scheffers
Kwekerij Zeurniet, Honselersdijk

The project even exceeded expectations. “Once we started operating the geothermal plant we discovered we could produce more heat than expected, and so five more greenhouse companies are now using heat from the project,” highlights Mr Scheffers. Each greenhouse company is receiving important

competitive advantages from utilising the cheaper geo-thermal energy source.

Project Title	Green Well Westland
Type of beneficiary	Business cluster
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget € 14 000 000 • EAFRD contribution € 2 000 000
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.green-well-westland.nl • www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4P8Yxsd62E
Contact	info@green-well-westland.nl

Evidence-based water-conservation measures aid the Maltese isles

The *Recharging national groundwater reserves* project was a government initiative in Malta. It used rural development funds to help the islands’ authorities gain knowledge and provide infrastructure for tackling the decline of vital groundwater reserves.

“Climate action is very important for us here in Malta. We live on a small island State with limitations regarding water and also we have a relatively hot climate.... We are using support from the Rural Development Programme to mitigate the effects of climate change.”

Marilyn Tanti
Maltese RDP Managing Authority

Water wise

This water-conservation project was led by Malta’s Water Services Corporation (WSC). It sought to address the significant threat to Malta’s groundwater quality and quantity posed by over-exploitation and contamination. These threats posed serious environmental challenges. Furthermore, as WSC’s

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Water is an increasingly scarce and precious resource for Maltese farmers.

Dr Paul Mucallem observed, “Most economic activities, such as agriculture, actually depend on groundwater.”

The project recognised the central place of agriculture in managing water resources. Estimations for Malta’s National Water Management Plan to 2027 estimated that farmers extract nearly 19 million cubic metres of water from the ground, compared to only about 13 million cubic metres by the public water supply services for use as tap water.

Agriculture was therefore the focus for a strategic set of coordinated project actions to both help ensure adequate supplies of irrigation water for agriculture, and increase knowhow about what needs to be done to properly protect Maltese water for future generations. More than €22 million was allocated to the project’s groundwater reviving work on Gozo and Malta.

Providing proof

To achieve an evidence-based approach to water conservation, the project provided metering of all agricultural private boreholes. However, an important task of the project was then to communicate with farmers to reassure them that the intention was not to use the meters to impose new tariffs on the agricultural sector.

“The meters are purely data tools and we will not charge farmers for the water they use. We are not going to use the meters as a revenue generator but to collect data to significantly reduce water extraction.”

Konrad Mizzi

Malta Minister for Water Conservation

Beyond metering, the project supported the use of alternative water sources for irrigation. Minister for Water Conservation, Konrad Mizzi, explains, “Treated sewage is normally dumped at sea. We refine it further and create what is known as ‘new water’. The project provided the pipelines for conducting this treated water to the various agricultural areas. “Through this, we can recharge the water lost to extraction and make it available to farmers for irrigation,” he continues.

Looking ahead

The project has supported replenishment of groundwater supplies with the aim of reducing the pressure to rely on expensive desalination plants for water supplies. This will provide long-term benefits essential to rural development in Malta in the medium-to-long term.

The authorities continue to explore additional proposals to boost the conservation of water by agriculture, including supporting farmers with rainwater harvesting and improved river basin management.

Water meters installed by the project act as key tools for long-term monitoring of agricultural resources.



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Further long-term options involve encouraging a transitional shift towards plant and animal products that consume less water. This applies not just to commercial agriculture but also to public parks and private gardens.

“In my opinion this project helps Malta to have a better control on the quantity and quality of groundwater resources. Thus reducing the need for energy-intensive technologies to produce potable water supplies. This reduction in energy requirements will actually reduce Malta’s carbon footprint which is obviously the focus of any energy or climate change strategy.”

Dr Paul Mucallem

Malta’s Water Services Corporation

Project Title	Recharging national groundwater reserves
Type of beneficiary	Public water authority and farmers
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget €2 222 000 • EAFRD contribution €1 499 850
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.wsc.com.mt • www.youtube.com/watch?v=bi3evNmAad0
Contact	stephen.galeasstjohn@wsc.com.mt

Priority 6

Balanced territorial development

Priority 6 for rural development policy in the EU, 2014-2020, is: “Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.”

Delivering on this priority means ensuring balanced territorial development that benefits wider rural communities. It means enabling the diversification of the rural economy beyond dependence on agricultural activities and reaching out to groups at risk or marginalisation to include them fully in rural life and the rural economy.

Example EAFRD projects from the 2007-2013 period set out below show some of the possible approaches for promoting diverse economic activities in rural areas and for reaching out to specific target groups, such as young people. Approaches that have supported the provision of services adapted to the rural context are also relevant here.

Rural economic diversification

Some of the most promising EAFRD projects supporting economic diversification have tapped into the **significant growth potential of rural tourism**. A project in Estonia developed a ‘Romantic Coastline’ marketing campaign and tourist information tools. A co-operation project between Polish and Swedish partners explored the marketing and testing of **new products for rural tourists***.

*The case study on page 25 presents a co-operation project that explored the untapped potential of rural qualities and characteristics to promote tourism in five EU countries.**

Reaching groups at risk of exclusion

EAFRD projects have demonstrated valuable ways of supporting the **integration of young people into the rural economy**. A UK project provided young people with ten-week work placements in rural businesses. Meanwhile, a project in Catalonia (Spain) provided a range of training and support tools to create links between young people and rural job opportunities.

Other groups supported to contribute to the rural economy include **people with intellectual and physical disabilities**. A project in Northern Ireland

(UK) created a social enterprise providing work opportunities for people with autism in a chocolate business. A project in Spain created a social economy co-operative in the dairy sector including 163 people with intellectual disabilities.

Providing rural services

Mobile service provision specifically for rural areas has been demonstrated by projects in Belgium and Lithuania, which established a **mobile library*** and a non-commercial portable cinema respectively.

*See page 26 for a case study of a project from Finland providing mobile social and healthcare services in remote rural locations.**

Several EAFRD projects have worked to provide **access to broadband internet**, such as a project in Sweden which showed how community initiatives could **connect even remote rural areas***.

An alternative aspect is demonstrated by a project in Finland providing **child welfare services*** in a rural context using horses as a resource to work with disadvantaged children.



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* find more project information at:
<http://projects.enrd.eu/social>

Transnational co-operation catalyses rural tourism innovation

The *CULTrips* project is an interesting example of an EAFRD-supported project working to harness untapped tourist potential in some of Europe's rural areas. It shows a different way of thinking about increasing rural economic activity beyond agriculture.

"CultTrips' basic aim was to bring tourism into rural regions around Europe where they don't have tourism at the moment. In these regions we wanted to create something different by mixing social tourism with creative tourism," explains Julia Schrell, project manager of a partner LEADER group in Luxembourg.

The approach sought to encourage and enable local people to share stories and cultural practices from their local region with tourists. From the potential visitor perspective, the aim was to allow them to directly experience aspects of local lifestyles, for example through cooking and food workshops, learning local dancing styles or participating in festivals.

"The tourists learn the real authenticity of these rural areas and this is the niche that CultTrips provides."

Julia Schrell

project manager of Luxembourg's Redange and Wiltz LEADER group

The project involved four years of exchange and co-operation covering rural areas from five different countries, who learned from each other during the testing and launching of a new type of cultural tourism involving local people.

Food and cooking lessons were identified as particularly interesting attractions for CultTrip tourists during the project.

Tourism training

The project's transnational teams trained local people who had never before provided tourism services. Skills were developed in topics like how to tell stories about local culture and how to identify interesting cultural products for tourists. An important complementary element was testing of new cultural tourism ideas using 'Pilot Trips'.

Finnish CultTrips coordinator, Esko Lehto, observed that, "The Pilot Trips gave us useful feedback [so that we could improve our tourism offer] afterwards. About 80 to 90 local people offered services... They were a little bit surprised that the guests joined in and could do things such as... row with a wooden church boat in a big Finnish lake."

One of the main challenges of this approach was that it involved working with non-professionals. As Comille Gira, CultTrips chairman of Luxembourg's Redange and Wiltz Local Action Group (LAG), explains "This means you have to produce a big effort to involve these actors but it works with a little bit of patience and time."

"In our region we learned to look at the treasures that we have in a different way because we saw our region through the eyes of all the other regions and they said OK you have this and this and you can be proud of that. And then we started to think oh yes, that's true, and how can we use them."

Karen Imlinger

LAG manager of Austria's Urfahr-West LEADER group



Innovation through co-operation

CultTrips' Lead Partner LAG manager, Fons Jacques, from Redange and Wiltz in Luxembourg, explains that, "Co-operation between the different countries has been a real catalyst for rural innovation. By working together we have all been able to gain additional knowledge that would not have been possible if we worked on developing this type of project as individual rural areas."

Helga Bauer, a CultTrips manager from Austria's Oststeirisches Kernland, provides an explanation: "When you are always 'sitting in your own soup' you can get somehow blind. So when you are together with people from different regions... then you can learn from them. You can see your own region in a different way so I think it was really good for all of us."

A multi-lingual Manual and Toolkit were developed as part of the project in order to help other rural areas take part in the CultTrips concept. These set out methods for involving local people and gaining the desired results.

"Participative forms of cultural tourism are an effective way of creating new economic development opportunities for rural areas. For us this is a very innovative approach to rural tourism."

Marco Parroni
Valle Umbra e Sibillini LAG, Italy



© culttrips.org

CultTrips helped participants to explore the touristic value in their local traditions and customs.

Project Title	CULTrips
Type of beneficiary	LEADER LAGs and rural businesses
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget €617 943 • Total RDP contribution €463 033
Further info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.culttrips.org • www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtuiP2CN-cA
Contact	rw@leader.lu

Cost-effective mobile healthcare services in rural Finland

The *Mallu* does the rounds project provided an easy-to-access medical service to people in rural areas of Finland using the Mallu bus. The bus met important needs amongst rural populations as well as providing the social and health care authorities with vital information about rural healthcare needs.

Meeting rural healthcare needs

The Mallu bus was introduced in 2010 by the South Karelia Social and Health Care District (Eksote). It sought to respond to the significant challenges in supplying cost-effective social services to dispersed populations, especially for the many rural areas experiencing population ageing. Mallu's aim was to offer cost-efficient and flexible services to locations that lacked access to a dedicated healthcare centre.

"When services are centralised, distances grow. Mobile services are a very good thing for clients. Clinic buses can bring many tests and procedures closer to residents."

Jukka Kärkkäinen
National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland

Via the mobile service, nurses provide a coordinated set of medical services. These cover pharmacy tasks such as flu vaccines, small operations like removing

stitches, blood pressure monitoring and related advice. The Mallu bus has also been used to carry out specialised themed services, such as diabetes awareness campaigns.

Planning ensures a fixed route around a catchment area of eight municipalities taking in at least 100 000 potential patients. The nurses aim to visit each site on the route every fortnight. The time the vehicle stays at one location varies from one hour upwards, depending on the need. Patients can book appointments online or by telephone.

“The routing has been developed in close co-operation with village associations.”

Merja Tepponen
Eksote

The main beneficiaries have been elderly people who experience problems travelling to other health centres. However, Eksote Managing Director Pentti Itkonen is keen to point out that, as a matter of principle, “we exclude no one. We offer services to all in need of them. For example if a vacationer from another area who is staying at a summer cottage nearby needs a new prescription, they are welcome in Mallu.”

The value of data collection

On-board computer and broadband equipment connect the nurses to centralised patient information systems as well as more specialised medical staff if needed. They also allow data collection from Mallu’s activities to provide evidence on the service needs of rural residents. This information contributed to a multi-country healthcare study on innovative telemedicine services.

Additional assistance, including dental treatment, has already been incorporated into an upgraded Mallu service. The mobile nurses are also expanding their functions to issue prescriptions for medicines and carry out preliminary care assessments. Results aid cost-effectiveness for patients and Eksote, because the nurses can avoid unnecessary doctor’s appointments.

The success of the bus and the information gathered is already being used by health authorities to support the design of further services and new operating models in South Karelia and nationwide. Eksote is considering visionary new rural development ideas for enhanced healthcare services. These could be delivered through co-operation between more health authorities to provide larger scale and more extensive mobile medical care.

“The social service and health care areas could have a shared vehicle – like a semi-trailer truck that could even fit x-ray equipment. It could make rounds in the border areas of Eastern Finland, from Virolahti to Ilomantsi.”

Pentti Itkonen
Eksote’s Managing Director

Project Title	Mallu does the rounds
Type of beneficiary	South Karelia Social and Health Care District (Eksote)
Project funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total budget € 112 000 • EAFRD contribution € 48 000
Further info	www.eksote.fi/mallu
Contact	merja.tepponen@eksote.fi



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This innovative mobile health care project has been widely welcomed by local residents.

PREVIOUS EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURES

Further inspiring examples of EAFRD-supported rural development projects can be found in the editions of the EAFRD projects brochure produced during the previous programming period. Each edition highlights successful project examples on a particular rural development theme.

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