

Minutes of the Civil Dialogue Group on Rural Development meeting 20th of May 2016, Brussels

Summary compiled by Kristiina Tammets

Civil Dialogue Group handled following themes:

- Collaboration with other EU institutions, policy designing
- State of play of the amendments of RDP
- ESI funds and EFSI – synergies and complementarities
- Simplification of the CAP with focus on Rural Development
- EIP-Agri: H2020 multi-actor approach linking with RD Operational Groups
- New public procurement legislation and EAFRD
- The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region

Tom Jones from European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) highlighted in his speech important documents that should be taken into account in designing the rural development policy. These documents are [European Rural manifesto](#); [conclusions of the event](#) that ENRD Contact Point and DG AGRI jointly organised on ‘Unlocking the Potential of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)’ on 1st of February 2016 in Brussels for MAs; [Reports of Court of Auditors](#) on rural development. Many times he brought forward **that LEADER has been the fantastic way of developing rural areas and CLLD multifunding approach is a very positive development that has great value for this programming period.**

Following key issues were brought forward that need to be taken into account for future policy making:

- To make sure that there is no long gap between programming periods. Experience showed that it is too late to approve the program 31.12.2013 by Commission that has to start 01.01.2014 in member states;
- To improve territorial cohesion in different programs and institutions in rural development. Rural areas can't work in isolation and they have to guarantee coherent regional development involving people in larger scale and to build bridges between universities and local stakeholders. Holistic development involves also rural-urban linkages. Creating new bridges between different funds is needed to achieve. Quality of the programs and the conditions having continuity considered being very important;
- To assure that there are clear and visible achievements of implementing the programs;
- To give higher priority to women's role in rural development;
- To listen to the voice from local communities regarding public services (including broadband) is extremely important;
- The role of monitoring committees is crucial to guarantee the needed amendments in RDPs (Rural Development Programs) to assure necessary flexibility and implementation accordance with real needs;

- There is no mid-term review in this programming period. In 2017, 2018 the Commission has evaluation questions to MAs, to help to improve the next period.

Amendments of RDPs

The Civil Dialogue Group meeting continued with presentation by DG Agri people about RDP amendments:

- There is possibility for member states to make amendments into RDP once a year. 55 RDPs have been submitted to make amendments of which 43 already have been approved. The main amendments were related to technical issues, financial corrections, eligibility conditions and calculation methodology corrections;
- **Major types of changes related to CLLD were:** introducing SCO (Simplified Cost Options), propose to change population limits, eligibility changes, distribution of tasks between MA/PA and LAGs. Minor changes covered clarifications and editorial modifications.

Priorities of RDPs:

- The special attention has to be paid on evaluation activities. Under priority 6A, 6B which also have strong linkages with LEADER/CLLD implementation DG Agri are planning to reach to the following outputs: 1.9 million training places, 3.9% of expenditure goes to knowledge transfer, advice and co-operation; 15250 co-operation projects. Jobs creation - there have been expected 117500 new non-agricultural jobs: 44500 through LAGs and 73000 from other diversification activities. Allocations for LEADER/CLLD from national rural development plan budget are highest in Germany with 14%, Spain and Estonia second with 9%.

Public procurement and simplification

- Public procurement regulation is slowly moving in the understanding that not only price matters, but also quality of the product or services. There has to be reasonable balance between price and quality. From 2018 there will be a requirement of e-submission for all contractors;
- High priority is given to the simplification for the beneficiaries. ESIF High Level Group is dealing with simplification issues. E-Governance is the major issue. Simplification initiatives for rural development have to be described more precisely.

Horizon 2020

- [Horizon 2020](#) is the biggest EU research and innovation Fund ever with nearly € 80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020) – in addition to the private investment that this money will attract. It promises more breakthroughs, discoveries and world-firsts by taking great ideas from the lab to the market;
- There have been calls for projects under H2020 for period 2014-2015, and 2016-2017; the third call will be in 2018-2020. Multi-actor activities will be given priority. They see that NRN-s (National Rural Networks) have big role in developing multi-actor activities;



- Evaluating the applications the following criteria are important: opportunities for end-users, the added value for end-users has to be illustrated - what kind of problem the knowledge will solve for end-users; sufficient involvement of key actors – non scientist, we need to see the complementary knowledge, language of practitioners is important. Projects need to include bridges between scientific and practitioners world; involvement of EIP-Agri Operational Groups are strongly recommended; clear role of the actors have to be presented as well as dissemination of results at different levels have to be assured; intensive knowledge exchange must be included to contribute to the projects outcomes; non-researchers acting in the projects are essential;
- Under Horizon 2020 calls in 2014-2015: 16 new multi-actor projects, including 7 thematic networks were implemented. Multi-actor approach is growing in 2016-2017: 371.5 million € have been planned for the multi-actor projects.

Strategy for Alpine region

EU Strategy for the Alpine region (Austria, Germany, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia, and Switzerland) is focusing on economic growth and innovation; mobility and connectivity; environment and energy. Leadership and ownership to implement the Strategy is on national and regional authorities.

Upcoming events

DG Agri informed that on 5.-6.09.2016 there will be conference in Cork, Ireland, which main aim is to help us to talk about future rural development policy. Commission aim is to bring together the stakeholders and formulate key points, which have significance for future policy making. Commission would like to achieve active discussion about what is working and what is not working. Civil Dialogue group members are invited to participate in the conference. The Cork event has also its historical background because common rural development policy has been formulated through [Cork declaration in 1996](#).