



European Rural Networks' Steering Group

Final Report 2nd Steering Group Meeting

Brussels, 12 June 2015



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Activities carried out to date	3
Progressing the priority themes - options for 2015	5
First reflections for 2016	8
Monitoring and evaluating the work of the Rural Networks	9
Wrap-up session	10
Annexes	11
Annex I - Workshop: Group I Themes	11
Annex II - Workshop: Group II Themes	16

Introduction

Note: Presentations can be directly downloaded by clicking on the link provided

9.30 – 9.45

**Opening remarks by
Aldo Longo,
Director,
Directorate H, DG
AGRI**

Aldo Longo welcomed the Steering Group (SG) members and introduced the structure and various sessions of the day. He highlighted that the first session in the morning covers various activities carried out by the ENRD Contact Point and the EIP-AGRI Network, also from a member/stakeholder point of view. The second morning session focuses on how priority themes (previously identified by the SG) can be developed further based on feedback from participants.

During the afternoon session, SG members have the possibility to provide first reflections for the work of 2016. Some feedback on the work on 'monitoring & evaluation' and 'self-assessment' of networks will be provided.

Activities carried out to date

9.45 – 10.35

[Highlights of ENRD activities, Paul Soto](#)

This session started with a short presentation of the main ENRD-CP activities carried out in the new programming period, by the ENRD Contact Point Team Leader, Paul Soto. It covered the ENRD-CP thematic work on 'Stakeholder Involvement' and 'RDP Implementation', training workshops, knowledge development, networking and communications activities.

[Feedback from the first LEADER/CLLD Subgroup meeting, Radim Srsen](#)

Radim Sršeň, president of ELARD (European Leader Association for Rural Development) presented the key messages and outcomes of the first LEADER/CLLD Subgroup meeting of 21 April 2015, including the eight themes agreed there.

[Subgroup on Innovation for agricultural productivity and sustainability, Jan Willem van der Schans](#)

Jan Willem van der Schans from the Agricultural Economics Research Institute (NL) presented the Innovation Subgroup meeting of 10 March 2015, the twelve priority themes agreed and the activities planned for the nearest future.

Q&A

Brief summary of discussion

Several points were raised concerning innovation, in particular:

- the importance to provide more guidance and practical support to the EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs) early on, and the relationship between OGs and multi-actor partnerships in research programmes (FP7, H2020);
- concern that the work of some EIP-AGRI Focus Groups tends to be distant from reality and focused on technical details;
- the question of how priorities for 2016 will be selected;
- the need to know more about entities supporting innovation and the role of NRNs, especially in regionalised MS (such as DE).

DG AGRI representatives took note of these points, promised to ensure these concerns will be further addressed during the Innovation Subgroup meeting in June and encouraged MS to exchange experiences on these topics.

Other points raised:

- the importance of being clear who are the target groups for certain activities; CP Team Leader agreed, saying there are two main types of stakeholder groups, institutional and civil society actors, it is important to bring them together and build their capacity;
- the question of whether in the presented ENRD activities the activities of the Evaluation Helpdesk were also included, as for example, no mention had been made of the recent training in Portugal on LDS evaluation. The response from DG AGRI was that the primary focus is on those activities which involve several MS; the activities of the Evaluation Helpdesk were not included in the presentation;
- the request for the Assembly and Steering Group to also discuss rural development support from the Investment Plan for Europe; DG AGRI representatives promised to find out more about it.

Progressing the priority themes - options for 2015

10.35 -10.45

[Progressing the priority themes - options for 2015](#),
Michael Gregory

Mike Gregory of the ENRD CP introduced the workshop session on the 10 priority themes which had been selected during the 1st Steering Group meeting. A thematic fiche on each theme had been provided prior to the meeting (and hard copies also circulated on the day) to inform the discussion.

11.15 – 13.00
Groups discussion
on priority themes

Discussion on
'Group 1' Themes

Participants separated into two working groups, each of which discussed activities around five priority themes. This resulted in messages emerging around the work on all ten previously identified themes as follows:

Simplification: There is a need to identify bottlenecks across the whole delivery system, and identify systems for avoiding errors. At the same time, gold plating must be avoided, and good practice shared, including the role of monitoring and evaluation.

Demographic Change and Social Inclusion: There are a number of specific target groups and significant variation between Member States. Consider the roles of stakeholders such as social NGOs and civil society groups, and how to focus on all relevant groups including urban poor, migrants, young farmers and Roma.

Multifund Approaches: This approach requires a simple and agile system, particularly for CLLD, and also the guidance and collaboration of activities including DGs. There is a need for dissemination of information on approaches and coordination. Networks can help roll out the delivery. Guidance on evaluation must specifically consider LEADER/CLLD including at the LAG-level.

Starting up NRNs: There is a need to develop the competence of NRNs on particular issues, and to engage at a deeper level with stakeholders. Good practice can be used to support activity and making sure stakeholders views are reflected in activity.

Evaluating Network Activities: The responsibility for formal evaluation will come from the Evaluation Helpdesk, and guidance on monitoring and self-assessment from the Contact Point, but these will be linked. There is a clear need for good practice, and ensuring the engagement of stakeholders and rural actors in evaluation activities. Training of NRNs on evaluation and the use of SMART indicators was considered as essential.

Discussion on
'Group 2' Themes

Advisory services, knowledge transfer and innovation: Strengthening the understanding of both the needs for advice and the considerable diversity of sources of provision was the priority. This should lead to greater traceability and transferability of advice and its effectiveness in improving the value delivered e.g. by linking between sources, strengthening connections and improving quality. Research institutes, universities and auditors should be involved to help achieve these improvements.

Local food, short supply chains, urban rural and small farms: The importance of considering this from the demand side was paramount in improving market orientation - practical examples will be valuable. Involving the wider set of supply-chain actors from local to international chains, considering their perspectives and widening the scope to include other products and activities should be considered. There is however a risk of insufficient focus and perhaps the different elements should be specifically addressed. EIP-AGRI Operational Groups have a strong potential here.

Pillar 1 Pillar 2 linkages: This topic is inextricably linked with 'Simplification' and has an almost horizontal relevance. Despite this, the issues were most clearly manifested in relation to agri-environmental considerations, associated data and indicators. The inter-linkages of Pillar I-Pillar II in terms of evaluation should also be tackled, starting from an overview of how this is done at Member State level. The SG has an important role to play as a unifying discussion platform here, a Thematic Working Group could be valuable.

Green economy, jobs and growth: The relevance of this topic is wider than agriculture and rural development; other policy fields should be included - e.g. waste - not least as they impact on agriculture and rural development. The concept of the circular economy is being addressed by EIP-AGRI but should be developed more widely.

Climate change: The priority here is to strengthen recognition amongst farmers and others involved of the relevance of this topic to their activities, both as a responsibility and an opportunity. Whilst awareness raising is important, it is necessary to move beyond this through practical work and examples with appropriate involvement from advisors.

14.30 – 15.00
Plenary discussion
on progress on
priority themes

Following feedback reports from the rapporteurs of the two discussion groups (see above summary and Annexes I and II for more detailed reports of the discussions on the ten themes), SG participants discussed their initial reactions to the overall findings.

It was highlighted that the first SG identified a total of 10 priority themes. It was confirmed that the current priorities can still be adjusted in terms both of missing topics and the specific focus of each theme.

In line with the mandate of the SG, these views on how the priority themes can best be incorporated into the work of the networks will be taken into account in the programmes of the Rural Networks.

It was identified that every theme is characterised by different support needs such as need for discussion, guidance, knowledge sharing, peer-to-peer learning or also collection and exchange of good practices. The activities or tools utilised to address the related support needs will therefore be differentiated by theme.

First reflections for 2016

15.00 – 15.30

First thoughts on the strategic lines for 2016.

There was an expressed desire to narrow the strategic topics in the immediate future, so that there is a focus on the urgent issues and on the outcomes to be achieved. These outcomes should reflect NRN needs and consider the tools required to deliver them.

Engagement of the SG and Assembly members

The SG and Assembly members can be involved in the planning of focused activities. There is a need to ensure the dissemination of information and knowledge ahead of meetings and by participants. Therefore, an active period of communication before the 2nd Assembly meeting to improve engagement would be beneficial.

Themes with a longer 'life-span', RDP analytical work (supporting the thematic work of the networks)

Moving into 2016 should see us moving from the start-up phase, firmly onto the next operational phase. This needs to be reflected in the next Assembly meeting, which should look to move forward from the initial discussions of the first meeting, bringing in the different perspectives.

New ideas?

It is important to think about practical examples being brought to meetings and also the information flow and where work can be carried out in more detail.

Cross-cutting issues such as simplification, LEADER, and monitoring and evaluation should also be considered. How EAFRD-funded projects can contribute to the broader EU2020 Agenda should be examined and emerging potentials identified. The networks should not be overly prescriptive in the planning of themes and work; there is a need for flexibility.

Monitoring and evaluating the work of the Rural Networks

15.30 – 15.45
[NRN Self-assessment: outcomes of the 2nd NRN meeting in Latvia, Edina Ocsko](#)

Self-assessment became an increasingly important topic for NRNs towards the end of the 2007-13 period. This trend is continuing in 2014-2020. NRN self-assessment is important for: understanding achievements (outputs & results) of networks; continuously improving networking activities; and demonstrating the added value of networking.

Edina Ocsko shared the outcomes of the session dedicated to this topic during the 2nd NRN meeting held in Latvia 12-13 May 2015, at which self-assessment was included among the key elements of network planning (i.e. intervention logic and action planning).

Objectives of that session were to:

- Start discussion about the NRN self-assessment framework;
- Discuss common output indicators that networks may collect;
- Start discussion about wider achievements and results of NRNs.

It is important that meaningful discussions around network self-assessment takes place already at the beginning of the programming period. There is scope and interest for further joint working among NRNs & European Networks on this theme. Participants stressed the importance of working together and building on existing experience from the previous programming period.

Wrap-up session

15.45 – 16.30

Civil Dialogue on Rural Development,
Peter Pascher (Civil Dialogue Group)

Peter Pascher, Chairman of the Civil Dialogue Group (CDG) on Rural Development gave an overview of the CDG. Its three strategic priorities are: implementation of RD policy; future RD policy; and collaboration with the Rural Networks and other expert groups.

The CDG has stressed the need for compliance with the Code of Conduct on Partnership in developing and approving the RDPs, which in general is taking too much time. Make effective use of existing instruments: “More best practice, more exchange and keep it simple.”

Next Steps & Events, **Markus Holzer**

The most important and relevant upcoming events for the SG members are:

- NRN meeting and Conference on LEADER/CLLD – Milan, Italy, 24-25 September 2015 – we are invited to be part of Expo Milano
- Conference on peri-urban and urban food systems with Netherlands’ farmers– also in Milan at same time as NRN meeting
- Innovation subgroup 2nd Meeting – 23 June 2015
- Rural Networks Steering Group 3rd Meeting – October 2015
- Rural Networks Assembly 2nd Meeting – 26 November 2015

New EIP-AGRI Focus Groups on ‘New entries into farming’ and ‘Innovative solutions to water scarcity at farm level’ were also highlighted.

Closing remarks,
Markus Holzer

Markus Holzer brought the meeting to a close by thanking SG members for their participation. He found it a very interesting and useful meeting and hoped that SG members felt the same.

Annex I - Workshop: Group I Themes

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
Simplification	<p>Issues :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for methods for identifying bottlenecks in the entire delivery system and level at which solutions are required - Proportionality of controls - Systems for dealing with risk/error rates without additional complexity - Key role of auditors - Different issues and speeds of implementation in MS - Consider conflict between gold plating and simplification at MS level <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smaller more technical workshops - Practical guidance - Good practices – Cross EU comparisons - Multispeed approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination and communication between different actors in delivery chain (MA + PA) especially auditors - What is role of NRN? Does it have resources and capacity - Some activities require “big data” there is potential for cooperation here - Consider conflict between gold plating and simplification at MS level 	<p>Practical information adapted to needs of actors in delivery chain</p> <p>Cross-EU comparisons</p> <p>Sharing of information on Simplified Cost Options and on Results-based measures on agri-environment</p> <p>Exchange of Good Practices on simplification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider conferences such as Copa Cogeca organised events, although smaller events can have greater impact in dissemination

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
Demographic Change + Social Inclusion	<p>Issues:</p> <p>The theme needs refinement and focus, and the theme cannot be to ‘engineer’ demographic change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are a number of specific target groups with different problems: - Youth including young farmers - Roma - Migrants and asylum seekers - Food poverty among city dwellers <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primarily through Leader Groups - The social economy and social NGOs are another channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different MS are concerned with different target groups and issues - One alternative is to deal with all issues and target groups under one umbrella - Another to work with the clusters of countries concerned with each one - Key role of Leader groups - Important to involve other agencies and funds involved in social inclusion - Consider how to improve the attractiveness of conditions in rural areas 	<p>Consider the role of external actors such as civil society groups</p> <p>Exchange of information on social inclusion funding and how it is applied (e.g. Czech Republic)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider breaking down this subject to specific topics
Multifund Approaches	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measuring the success of LEADER/CLLD has emerged as one priority topic of the ENRD CP capacity building survey. - Real multifunding only concerns a limited number of MS and regions - Multifunding raises the bigger issue of ensuring a simple and agile delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve other DGs and funds - Consider collaborative activity in multifund approaches 	<p>Information and seminars to enable and analyse CLLD, and to ensure coherence and co-ordination</p> <p>Look at examples of variation / multiplicity of approach to suit the specific circumstances (e.g. Netherlands)</p>

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
	<p>system for CLLD to ensure it fulfils its objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation-requirements for multi-fund are urgently needed - Need to analyses bottlenecks - Need to take into account “end to end” solutions (from EC regulations to implementation in MS) that take into account audit considerations <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networks can help rolling out the delivery system for Leader/CLLD measure (as with EIP-AGRI OGs) - The EC guidance on monitoring and evaluation should be extended to CLLD and the LAG level - Need real time examples of promising solutions from more advanced MS 		<p>Turn design into reality – use Good Practices to illustrate how Multi Fund is use, especially in CLLD</p>
<p>Starting up NRNs</p>	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to develop the competence of NRNs in particular issues <p>Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to broaden involvement – go beyond the usual suspects/organisations - Also need to deepen involvement – ensure participants communicate with their members 	<p>Wider communication and involvement.</p> <p>Ensuring good systems for getting views of stakeholders on ground and reporting back information</p>

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NRNS can focus on new or more complex or more strategic measures and support their rolling out - There is a strong potential for NRNs in regionalized countries to work on common problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve stakeholders from the very start of the programmes 	<p>from representatives to members on the ground</p> <p>Using good practices to support NRN activities</p>
<p>Evaluating Network Activities</p>	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differences and the interrelation between NRN evaluation and NRN self-assessment needs to be considered: independent evaluation looks at the impacts, whereas self-assessment focusses on improvement of delivery. - Formal evaluation is the responsibility of the Evaluation Helpdesk - Monitoring and self- assessment is the responsibility of the Contact Point. - However, both are closely linked as data and results from the second feeds into the first - The resource requirements need to be proportionate <p>Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The involvement of advisors and farmers is key - Consideration of resources required for Monitoring and Evaluation - Self-assessment tools (using CP self-assessment toolkit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Capitalise’ on good practices existing around EU - Awareness raising and exchange on monitoring and evaluation / self-assessment activities

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support with the identification of smart indicators - Capacity building and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A training of NRNs on evaluation is considered essential. - Exchange of good practices between NRNS 		

Further general remarks on the topics

Four of these topics are principally about ‘how’ to do things as opposed to ‘what’ to do (simplification, multifund approaches, starting up NRNS and evaluating networks)

For these topics it is necessary to provide practical technical examples based on good practice across Europe which are adapted to the specific needs in different MS. This requires smaller scale, more flexible forms of working that recognizes the different levels and speeds of development and supports real transfer from more advanced to the less advanced.

The fifth territorial topic (demographic change and social inclusion) is extremely broad. There was also a debate about whether to cover all aspects in a comprehensive way or to break down the subject into its components and concentrate on working with those MS particularly concerned with certain elements. In the longer discussion group the latter approach was favoured.

Annex II - Workshop: Group II Themes

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
<p>Advisory services, KT, Innovation</p>	<p>Issues :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get advisory services (AS) to work ‘out of the box’: encourage advice on sources of funding other than EAFRD (e.g. EIP-Health) - Understanding the need for advice and training the advisors accordingly: how is it done in other countries? - Traceability of advice / giving farmers the possibility to judge the service provided: Who? To whom? What is the added value? Did it work? What are the outcomes? - Supporting a higher quality advice through the provision of quality information (e.g. inter-connecting multiple sources of information, databases, etc.) <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of RDPs: support to and use of advisory services. - Analysis of the capacity, roles and focus of advisors (e.g. on innovation aspects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include <i>applied research institutes</i> and <i>universities</i>. Consider their role in: 1) providing independent knowledge to advisors to improve the quality of their services; 2) training and education - Involving <i>auditors</i> directly is key to help solve the issue of complicated implementing rules hampering the take up of advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection of good practices is not enough: more focus is needed on their transferability. - Study visits can help the understanding of success conditions for good advice.

Further specific points arising from the discussion on ADVISORY SERVICES

The Pro-AKIS work showed that there is a very diverse system of Advisory Services across the EU and could provide a basis for further developing the understanding of the advisory role.

The ENRD CP could work on looking at AS in different MS to identify transferable practices, assessing and looking at how advice can be better joined up to improve it. This could include exchange on advisor training programmes.

It will be important to know how many RDPs will be using the measure in implementing this work. In Germany the AS measure accounts for 1%-2% of the EAFRD budget apparently due to the complexity of the implementation rules deterring MA uptake. This is also affecting the number of Operational Groups supported.

In some regions the AS might be dealing with other issues than the EIP. It was suggested that despite EIP bringing together different stakeholders it is not sufficiently targeted on the AS, on the other hand it was important to assess the knowledge of the advisors on the topic of innovation.

Training is needed for the AS about how to deal with the Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 issue and the new CAP rules.

Knowledge Transfer support is needed for cooperatives and farmers which focuses on guiding them to produce what they can actually sell rather than vice versa.

Study visits strengthen in depth knowledge, helping to understand the success factors, the problems and those problems not immediately evident.

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
<p>Local food, short supply chains, urban rural, small farms</p>	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at the topic from the demand's side: improving market orientation (commercialization processes) not only public procurement. - Consider the use of standards as a tool contributing to transparency: how are they shaped? - Include the wider set of agri-food supply chain actors such as logistic services and processors (e.g. from artisanal and family producers to supermarkets) - Expand the topic to include non-food and forestry - Alternatively the focus should be strengthened within the theme or it should be subdivided into different elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at the whole sets of supply chain actors (perspective generally missing) - Consider the role of EIP-AGRI operational groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field trips and visits at the local level to look at real challenges and the solutions adopted

Further specific points arising from the discussion on LOCAL FOOD – SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS

There is a real need to carefully consider what networks can add to the multiple activities and actors in this field.

Including the wider set of actors in the chain is not sufficient, there are many actors in the chain who work in isolation. Work is needed on cooperation and linkages within the supply chain. Both urban and rural bodies are involved in the short supply chain and ENRD-CP should look at how we can contribute to bridging this gap.

There are specific issues in relation to artisan processors where EU legislation prohibits or prevents a significant proportion of food production taking place. due to overregulation;

Involving retailers and major actors in working together with the short supply chain actors was thought to represent one way to support larger numbers of small farmers and help drive rural economies. Others disagreed suggesting a need to narrow focus and exclude big players to protect small scale production whose interests do not really coincide with big businesses.

Standards and small businesses do not work well together, these should be shifted towards 'platforms of transparency' which should be easier for small businesses to work with.

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
<p>Pillar 1 Pillar 2 linkages</p>	<p>The topic is closely linked to ‘simplification’ and was thought to have an almost horizontal relevance</p> <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give consideration to <i>permanent pastures</i> / preservation of HNV areas and issues of eligibility under Pillar 1: what support can be offered by Pillar 2? <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicate a Thematic Group to the topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on impact indicators (for Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 jointly): what data exist for calculating indicators across EU MS and are they updated? What to do in terms of evaluation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider the value of SG as discussion platform around this issue (two distinct CDGs are established on direct payments and rural development but no link is made between the two fora) - It is necessary to involve the ECA 	

Further specific points arising from the discussion on PILLAR 1 AND PILLAR 2

Some questions were raised over the need for the ENRD to address this given the body of work to date and the links established, it will be important not to unpick this work within MS and to focus on where networks can make a difference.

Others maintained that there is a need for help with the correct interpretation between EC and PAs of how and who should link the two pillars. In ES the NRN will work on this and in their action plan they have included activities on the topic.

Involving the Pillar 1 authorities will be essential, pillar 2 work may provide the link.

There may be merit in looking at simplifications under P2 and determining if and how these can be transferred to P1.

There appears to be a need for work looking at the error rate and controls in both pillars, this should involve the ECA.

Data sources are often outdated (BG HNV from 2006) and this has an impact on the values and indicators used, is work required on sources and revised indicators?

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
Green econ, jobs & growth	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The topic deserves a wider approach going beyond agriculture / rural development policy. If e.g. waste recycling and composting are considered, other policy fields need to be looked at. - There are policy areas and regulations which farmers have to cope with to become actors of the 'circular economy' - This may be a consideration which should be picked up throughout the thematic work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve other policy areas /institutional actors at the EU level who are dealing with the topic (e.g. DG SANTE; DG ENV) - Consider the work of the EIP-AGRI on the topic of circular economy 	

Further specific points arising from the discussion on GREEN ECONOMY

It will be important to connect with the EIP work on green economy and especially circularity.

Theme	Issues & Activities	Participation	Dissemination
Climate change	<p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider renaming the topic and making use of more practical terms such as ‘energy efficiency’ and ‘land management’ which will have stronger recognition amongst those targeted. Climate change should also be understood as an opportunity. - Awareness raising is just the starting point: it needs to be followed by the provision of practical examples. <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of RDPs on climate-related measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The involvement of advisors and farmers is key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Capitalise’ on good practices existing around EU

Further specific points arising from the discussion on CLIMATE CHANGE

There are a lot of CC related actions in the RDPs and awareness raising is important but we need to prompt support and more concrete action on this. Making this more concrete for those involved is highly important.

There is a strong appetite for an ENRD CP Integrated Work Package on this topic.

Advisory Services should be involved and it will be important to consider the role they could play particularly in relation to the support for the multiple roles and responsibilities which farmers have here.

Good practices are needed but it is important to also look at the failures as there are also many lessons to be learnt from there.

There are issues associated with farmer involvement in ‘big data’ management which need to be addressed.

Further general remarks on the topics

Participants stressed the need to ensure activity in the MS between Assemblies and Steering Group meetings. Whilst involving the right people is extremely important this also has to be at the right time.

For all the themes greater focus on 'why' the field of activity proposed was important was required in order to understand what it was that was being sought.

One MS suggested that ex-ante evaluation (or ex-ante synthesis) should be discussed in the SG, for example exploring to what extent do the RDP strategies support Europe 2020? What are concrete examples how the RD funds contribute to Europe 2020?