



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas.

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RDPE Network

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RDPE01 / March 2009



In summary

The RDPE Network will facilitate the exchange of good practice and experience between:

- the four axes of RDPE;
- the policy design, programme management and implementation elements of the RDPE; and
- stakeholders at local, regional, national and European levels from across the public, private and third sectors.

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An introduction to the RDPE Network



RDPE Network



What is the RDPE?

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) is a six-year (2007-2013) funding programme, with a budget of £3.9 billion, that will bring into effect the rural development priorities or axes of the European Union Rural Development Regulation:

- Axis 1.** improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors;
- Axis 2.** improving the environment and the countryside;
- Axis 3.** improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy; and
- Axis 4.** building local capacity for employment and diversification.

What is the RDPE Network?

The Network is being set up, in line with the European Union Rural Development Regulation, to support the implementation and evaluation of the RDPE through the exchange of good practice and experience.

Although many networks related to rural development already exist in England, the RDPE Network will work with and build on, what is already in place, in order to provide support to the implementation of the RDPE overall.

Similarly, in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, networks are also being put in place to support their respective rural development programmes.

Who is the RDPE Network for?

The RDPE Network is for everyone involved in the design, programme management and programme implementation of the RDPE, to enable them to share and use good practice and experience.

What difference will the RDPE Network make?

The Network will make a real contribution to the RDPE, by helping to add value to the funding available, through making sure that everyone involved with the RDPE can benefit from sharing the good ideas and experiences that are developed, whether at policy level or by people and organisations locally.

What is happening elsewhere in the UK and Europe?

At a UK level, a UK National Rural Network is being developed to link the four rural development programme networks in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This will also provide a direct link to the European Commission and other networks across Europe.

At a European level, the European Commission has recently established the European Network for Rural Development. This will bring together the rural development networks from all the member states in the European Union.

The role of the Commission for Rural Communities

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) has been asked by Defra to co-ordinate the establishment, development and operation of both the RDPE Network and the UK National Rural Network. This work will complement and use the CRC's ongoing activities to identify and promote lessons learnt and good practice and learn from international best practice.

The CRC is well placed to carry out this role, having responsibility to provide:

- the voice for rural people, businesses and communities;
- evidence-based, objective advice to Government and others; and
- monitoring and reporting on the delivery of policies nationally, regionally and locally.

Making it happen

While the CRC has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the RDPE Network, its success will only be possible with the participation of everyone involved with rural development. As a first step, between now and January 2009, the Network is listening to those individuals and organisations with an interest in the RDPE, to build a picture of existing activity and opportunities for joint working in order to avoid duplication and seeking feedback and views on networking needs.