

FINAL
THE STRATEGIC AGENDA
OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP ON RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
2015-2020

The strategic agenda for 2015-2020 should focus on topics that contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 priorities as regards the employment, innovation, climate change, energy sustainability and poverty reduction. Furthermore, the CDG should address and further develop on in support Commissioner Hogan's priorities:

- Ensure that EU **promotes growth, investment and new jobs in rural development policies**
- Identify how European agriculture can be **more energy efficient** and can lower its carbon dioxide emissions
- Review **the effectiveness of EU spending on rural development**

Rural development policy aims to foster competitiveness in agriculture, enhance the sustainable management of natural resources and ensure a balanced development of rural areas.

The implementation of the new Rural Development policy and its strong link and coordination with other relevant policies aiming at achieving the EU 2020 goals are elements of significant importance that have to be taken into account by the CDG in the next period. The CDG should strive to establish good collaboration in a productive way with other CDGs i.e. the group on environment and climate and the group on direct payments and greening to avoid overlapping of work on the same policy issues.

In addition, the CDG should play a crucial role in monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of the rural networks by actively participating in their activities.

The discussion on the orientation for the future policies is also essential. The CDG on Rural Development should analyse and make proposals on possible changes that are needed in the RD policy.

Based on the elements presented above the **three main priorities of the CDG on RD are:**

- 1.** To create a platform of expertise that provides support to the Commission in the monitoring and evaluating of the implementation of the new rural development policy and of the Partnership agreements and their contribution to EU 2020 strategy. The CDG will provide feedback by presenting concrete examples from practice.
- 2.** To support the Commission in building future policies and its goals to achieve simplification and effectiveness of EU spending on rural development.
- 3.** To enhance the role and contribution of the CDG in ensuring better policy coordination and coherence in implementing the new CAP (coordination with other CDGs, active participation in the rural networks activities, exchange with DG Regio)

Topics that will be addressed under each priority:

Priority 1 - Implementation of the Rural Development Policy

- a. The CDG will address each of the six strategic objectives of the RD policy taking into account the mission of the policy itself. The discussion will focus on concrete measures and examples based on what is included in the RD programmes

The mission – Art. 3 RDR

“The EAFRD shall contribute to the **Europe 2020 Strategy** by promoting **sustainable rural development** throughout the Union in a manner that complements the **other instruments of the CAP, the cohesion policy and the common fisheries policy**. It shall contribute to the development of a Union agricultural sector that is **more territorially and environmentally balanced, climate-friendly and resilient and competitive and innovative**. It shall also contribute to the development of **rural territories**.”

The strategic objectives – Art. 5 RDR:

- (1) fostering **knowledge transfer and innovation** in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
- (2) enhancing **farm viability and competitiveness** of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests
- (3) promoting **food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management** in agriculture
- (4) restoring, preserving and enhancing **ecosystems** related to agriculture and forestry
- (5) promoting **resource efficiency** and supporting the shift towards a **low carbon and climate resilient economy** in agriculture, food and forestry sectors
- (6) promoting **social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development** in rural areas

- b. The CDG will have an exchange of views on the implementation of the **Partnership agreements** and the impact on Rural Development programmes

- It will provide examples from several members states on the partnership agreements and its impact on the RD programmes
- It will debate on best practise of Code of Conduct of Partnership agreements (Art. 5)
- It will discuss about the implementation of the multi-fund approach and its challenges and opportunities

- c. **Simplification** of existing rules and procedures – focus on those areas which are of most concern to farmers and other beneficiaries and that will reduce the administrative burden
- The CDG will exchange views on the simplification exercise launched by the Commission and will bring concrete examples from its members

Priority 2 - Future Policy on Rural Development

- d. The CDG will look at the **first results of the current funding period 2014-2020** and elaborate on the lessons in order to better implement the current policy and particular to pave the way of the next reform

- Relation between Pillar I and Pillar II, including relevant measures that are overlapping: ANC, young farmers, greening/AEM
- Funds distribution and use per priority and per measures
- Activities performance in terms of quality and delivery and controls
- Stakeholder involvement – tools used for a better involvement

- Discuss the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, also ex-ante evaluation and how they contribute to various pillars including discussion on indicators in terms of the condition of agricultural habitats.
- Assess the impacts of increased control and verification requirements on the effectiveness of the measures. Investigate ways in which spending can be adequately controlled whilst achieving high quality outcomes. Exchange views with the ECA and Commission auditors.

Priority 3 - Collaboration and Coordination with the Rural Networks and other expert groups

e. Promote permanent collaboration between the Rural Networks (ENRD,EIP and the Evaluation network) and the Civil Dialogue Group

- Exchange of views on the outcome and future activities of the Rural networks, the Assembly, steering group and the sub-groups

f. Enhance the role of the Civil Dialogue Group on Rural Development by **improving communication and coordination in the group, with the Commission and with other relevant expert groups (e.g. DG Regio Structural dialogue group) and other CDGs (e.g. Direct payments and Greening)**

- Prepare with all members of the group common positions and resolutions for topics of a high importance
- Organise preparatory meeting before the Civil Dialogue Group of the chairmanship and the Commission in order to discuss and prepare the agenda and the work objectives (including introducing special working methods, e.g. working groups)
- Promote the exchange of views between expert groups mentioned above in order to avoid overlaps

Besides these clearly identified issues, the Civil Dialogue Group should keep some flexibility to take on board and to address any new topic/issue that might emerge in course of the years.