

New perspectives for Europe's countryside

Towards a new approach to
promoting and funding European
Rural Development

Why do we need to invest in rural areas?

- We want to preserve and enhance the diversity of culture, nature, scenery, food and other products in the rural areas
- We want to maintain and enhance the man-managed environment for the future
- We want to sustain and provide benefits for the urban population

Public benefits from rural areas

- Protection, maintenance and enhancement of environmental services
- Wildlife conservation and biodiversity gain
- Conservation of cultural heritage
- Maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character
- Genetic conservation of livestock breeds and plant species & varieties
- Improving public access and local community involvement
- Underpinning tourism, leisure, rural prosperity, public health and quality of life
- Local rural employment and keeping traditional skills alive
- Flood management and climate change mitigation
- High standards of animal health & welfare and food safety
- Minimisation of all input and output kilometres

Changing European policy: opportunities and threats

- CAP Health Check and EU budget review
- WTO negotiations threaten the status quo
- Less and less farmers receive more and more of the CAP payments
- Effects of EU membership enlargement

Key issues in European policy

- Climate change and environmental resilience
- Concerns about security and sustainability of development
- Animal health and welfare
- Renewable energy targets
- Reconnection and integration

What kind of rural development do we want to promote?

- Linking CAP payments directly to public benefits delivery
- Multifunctionality and diversity
- Sustainability and a sense of localness
- Distinctiveness and differentiation
- Mitigation and adaptation for climate change
- Encouraging market recognition of public goods and services
- Reconnecting urban populations with rural areas
- Enhancing community structures in rural areas

How do we promote this rural development?

- Evaluate the public benefits required
- Establish partnerships, collaboration and knowledge networks
- Organise public funding on a long term basis
- Educate and inform the public
- Use public funds to attract private investment and support
- Combine regulations, advice and incentives for land managers in appropriate balance
- Utilise cross-sectoral approaches
- Enhance multifunctional land use

How do we finance this rural development?

- Public private partnerships at local level
- Combining capital investments for restructuring with annual payments for ongoing public benefits
- Cost-pricing the delivery of public benefits
- Recognising economies of scale instead of flat rate payments

Which parties must be involved?

- Rural communities
- Consumers and taxpayers
- Farmers and private landowners
- Local, regional and national governments
- European Commission and European Parliament
- Private sector; e.g. food processing industries, supermarkets, local entrepreneurs
- Parties from other sectors: tourism, health, water, energy, education, etc.

Why do we need European collaboration?

- Environmental challenges don't stop on the border
- Economy is globalising, therefore we have to collaborate to meet the associated challenges
- Collaboration brings about a frame of reference
- You come up with solutions that are good for both you and your neighbours
- It helps achieve agreements which can provide a sound basis for EU funding

Recommendations

- All CAP direct aid payments need to shift from agriculture to a wider range of rural public benefit services and the policy emphasis needs to shift from agriculture to environment and rural development
- Adopt a multi-functional and cross-sectoral approach to land management and the provision of public goods and services
- Find new instruments for funding rural areas and organising land management and public involvement
- Assess the value of public-private partnerships, seek a good blend of public and private involvement and encourage private enterprises to invest in rural areas
- Dissolve the boundaries between the economic, ecological and community sectors
- Achieve necessary change through graduated measures