

ENRD Thematic Group 'Sustainable Management of Water and Soils'

WORKING DOCUMENT

1st TG meeting Group Work

Synopsis of inputs by participants
& next steps

1. Intro

2. Subthemes identified

2.1 Result Based Management Schemes (RBMS) & collective approaches

- Collective approaches are a tool of increasing importance in delivering environmental objectives against traditional management measures. Traditional management support mainly rewards farmers for their compliance with specific commitments they undertake, without however, making them aware of the environmental impact of their commitments. RBMS can ensure the more proactive engagement of farmers through communication and information which can change old practices and cultures.
- Combining RBMS and collective approaches can help build trust between farmers, while compensation is awarded based on the collective assessment of the individual progress achieved.
- Challenges related to RBMS include difficulties in monitoring the impacts of the interventions, while RBMS and collective approaches may have higher transaction costs.

Possible relevant practices / issues for investigation

- Netherlands: Extensive experience on RBMS & collective approaches focusing on biodiversity.
- Germany: RBMS examples in Germany focused on nitrogen efficiency in cooperation with water companies.

2.2 Soil quality and nutrients

- When considering the best ways to address soil quality and nutrients issues, the whole food chain industry needs to be considered.
- Actions to protect soil quality are of particular importance for agriculture but still considered as low priority. As reported, farmers may be required to have a nutrients management plan, without the obligation to use it.
- Finding ways to increase soil carbon stocks while avoiding increasing the nitrogen load in the soil and water (slurry of organic amendments) is a challenge.

Possible relevant practices / issues for investigation

- Netherlands, North Brabant: manure (livestock) is handled in a way that is beneficial in relation to soil and water management.

2.3 Water management

- Water availability is becoming a significant problem for Member States in Southern Europe.
- Farmers are facing the challenge of having to increase production against decreasing water availability.
- RDPs should invest more in providing knowledge to farmers on water pollution.
- Locally-tailored performance indicators need to be defined for water use and efficiency.
- Guidance and/or tools for authorities but also for farmers are required that aim at increasing water efficiency.

- Joint up initiatives / cooperation approaches on water management / efficiency using a mix of RDP measures can be beneficial e.g. M1- 'Knowledge transfer & information actions', M2 – 'Advisory services', M16 - 'Cooperation', and M19 - 'Support for local development LEADER'.

2.4 Knowledge transfer & information

- Multi-Fund approaches could be used to disseminate information & share knowledge covering a range of issues on water and soil management broader than those covered by rural development.
- Farmers shifting away from conventional agriculture into more sustainable practices need to be supported via advisory services and guidance tools, as the transition period can last several years, thus jeopardising the financial viability of the farms.
- Targeted support requires pre-identification of problems/needs and is important to define at what level assessment should take place;
- Farmers involvement is about sharing results and experiences between them on problem solving and it is important towards changing outdated mentalities. Such an approach would also enable to increase motivation and buy-in for soil and water management.

Possible relevant practices / issues for investigation

- Scotland: Demonstration farms are used to share farmers' knowledge and scientists to share their findings and exchange on the different issues. Visits take place every 3 months. The project is called PLAD (Peer to Peer Learning Assessing Innovation through Demonstrations) and it is a Horizon 2020 project.

2.5 Targeted AE measures

- Significant amount of experience on targeted Agri-Environment (AE) support has been accumulated in Finland and Sweden. In Sweden, the priorities for targeting the measures are identified at regional level, while, in Finland this process is carried out centrally by the ministry of agriculture.
- Pilot projects on targeted AE support has been discussed in Finland.

The work of the TG will concentrate on the collection, analysis and discussion of examples of different approaches on sustainable management practices on water and soils supported by Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) at national and regional level in the EU. The focus of this research will be primarily on RDPs, but examples supported under other funding sources of funding will be considered as well, if relevant to inform on more effective implementation possibilities within the RDPs. Relevant projects/schemes examples to be examined can be funded by the EAFRD – including Operational Groups, the LIFE programme, Horizon 2020/FP7, etc.

The objective of each example examination on a sub-theme, will be to understand how the selected approach is addressing the challenges related to the specific sub-theme, the existence of key success factors of the selected approach, what the bottlenecks and challenges are, what the role of different authorities and stakeholders is, etc. This information collected will help identify and articulate specific recommendations to be considered for the more effective RDP implementation at local, regional, National and EU level. The collection of information on relevant examples will be based on a proposed structured questionnaire and guidelines developed by the ENRD Contact Point (see section 7).

Initiating & piloting the research work (Nov-Dec 15th)

Given the TG members' indication of interest it is opted to follow a modular research and analysis in different steps as described below. It is foreseen that the analytical work will commence within November 2017 focusing on the most commonly commented / priority topics as emerged from the meeting discussions. Initially, two themes are to be explored in priority until the 2nd TG meeting in December, including 'RBMS and collective approaches', and 'soil quality & nutrients'. The preliminary findings of this work will be presented at the TG meeting in December. This phase of the analytical work will also serve as a pilot phase allowing TG members to assess the working method and steer the activities as required.

The below proposed timeline provides an indication of possible MS to be investigated. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all cases to be examined. Changes to the list may also occur during further inquiry for information on most interesting cases per topic

Indicative focus of research work during the pilot phase

Sub-theme	Priority Member States	Other possibilities
1. RBMS & collective approaches	Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Sweden	France, United Kingdom
2. Soil quality & nutrients	Finland, Hungary, Netherlands	Sweden, Italy

Main research phase (Dec 15th – End of February)

















Based on the findings and assessment of the pilot phase work following the 2nd TG meeting, the collection of information and examples will continue covering a wider range of Member States and examples. The investigation could possibly expand to the other sub-themes, subject to discussion and agreement with the TG members.

* TG members will be requested to provide relevant examples via the structured questionnaire and share other relevant documents / publications throughout the pilot and main research phase.

The following analytical activities are foreseen:

- A. **Desk work** covering existing information including literature review, identifying and listing pilot schemes, projects and examples.
- B. **Targeted work on specific Member States** for each sub-theme, based on the questionnaire part of the attached TG internal working doc. Case studies will include examples mentioned or presented by TG members and other relevant cases identified by the ENRD Contact Point.
- C. **Individual examples** using the structured questionnaire provided either by TG members or other sources such as the LIFE programme, EIP AGRI, ENRD.
- D. **Exploring initiatives of EU organisations** part of the ENRD such as Birdlife, COPA, etc.

Thematic Group work plan

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Draft Scoping paper & Workplan <i>circulated</i> to the Group										
1st Meeting: Refine scope & subthemes	 (24/10)									
Finalisation of scoping paper & workplan										
Pilot research on RBMS, Collective approaches & nutrients										
Preliminary findings <i>circulated</i> to the Group										
2nd Meeting: Discuss pilot phase results & agree next steps			 (15/12)							
Main phase research, focus to be discussed.										
Collection of examples from TG members										
Preliminary findings <i>circulated</i> to the Group										
3rd Meeting: Discuss results & frame TG recommendations					 (20-22/02 tbc)					
Recommendations developed into final report and products										
Draft final report & products <i>circulated</i> to the Group										
4th Meeting: Refine TG recommendations & discuss seminar preparation								 (14-16/05)		
TG recommendations & seminar preparation finalised										
Seminar on Sustainable Water & Soil Management									 (12-14/06 tbc)	
On line exchanges between TG members										

7. Template outline for the collection of examples

Guidelines for the collection of national/regional examples of support to sustainable management of water and soils

(Draft – version 1.0)

Background, objectives and expected outcomes

One working method of the Thematic Group on sustainable management of water and soils (TG) will be the collection, analysis and discussion of relevant examples supported by the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) at national and regional level in the EU. The focus of this survey is on the RDP, but additional examples from other sources of funding within or outside the EU are welcome if they could help to inspire effective implementation of the RDPs in relation to water and soils management.

The TG is requested not to discuss sustainable practices for water and soils *per-se*, but to select cases of management that can generate lessons that will contribute to understanding and improving the effectiveness of current Rural Development Programmes.

The members of the group as well as external contributors are requested to source relevant examples according to the following template. The objective is to collect examples across the EU. They will be shared and analysed at the next meetings of the TG. Lessons learnt from the examples, together with the outcomes of the group discussions will inform a summary document on the emerging findings of the TG. It is envisaged that as appropriate the examples will be also made available to the wider public through the ENRD website.

Working process

In order to collect examples of sustainable management of water and soils, the following template is proposed for use. It consists of a semi-structured survey including open questions as guidelines.

The overall aim is to get a description of the examples of sustainable management by points, covering the following aspects:

- a. WHY sustainable management approaches / actions were put in place;
- b. HOW it was done in practice;
- c. WHICH RESULTS;
- d. Suggestions for effective support of sustainable management practices through RDPs.

The latter two points should explicitly include the relevance of the approach examined with respect to the policy framework and funding possibilities as outlined under the 2014-2020 programmes.

This approach aims to ensure –as far as possible- consistency in reporting but takes also into account the variability of the examples in consideration. Therefore, it should be flexible enough to be adapted to the specificities of the single cases and allow a comprehensive description. Examples from other sources than the RDPs should also be supported if they provide added value to this investigation.

The template questions proposed are intended to guide the collection of the relevant information and they are not intended to be restrictive.

Title:

Info provided by:

Name:

Email:

Organisation:

A. General information

Country and Region:
<p>Origin of funding: <i>(please select one or more items)</i></p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> EAFRD <input type="checkbox"/> EAFRD – Operational Group <input type="checkbox"/> FP7 / H2020 <input type="checkbox"/> LIFE programme <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: ... </p>
<p>Actors involved in the example: <i>(please indicate by selecting one or more items)</i></p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Farmer; <input type="checkbox"/> Farmers’ or Producer group or association or Cooperative; <input type="checkbox"/> Agri-food business; <input type="checkbox"/> Private institution / organisation; <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory service / business advice; <input type="checkbox"/> University or Education Institute or Research centre; <input type="checkbox"/> National, regional or local authorities; <input type="checkbox"/> EIP Operational Groups; <input type="checkbox"/> Other actor or other policy, please specify: </p>
<p>Sub-theme concerned: <i>(please select one or more items):</i></p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Result Based Management Schemes <input type="checkbox"/> Collective approaches <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted AE measures <input type="checkbox"/> Water management <input type="checkbox"/> Soil quality and nutrients <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge transfer & information </p>

Between which years was funding received/used?

From	To

Please provide a complete breakdown of funding received for the initiative. The EAFRD contribution + other contributions must add up to the total budget. If other sources were used, please define each in a separate line of the table.

Total budget in EUR	
EAFRD contribution in EUR:	
Other EU policy contribution in EUR:	
National/regional co-financing in EUR:	
Private funds in EUR:	
Other sources (in EUR):	

If applicable - under which RDP Measure(s) was the EAFRD funding provided?

B. Summary description

Describe briefly the approach / example in relation to the sub-theme indicated above. What is it about?

C. Background information / context

What was the challenge or the problem to be addressed? (for instance: depleting water availability, soil degradation, eutrophication, etc.) Which were the set objectives?

How does the approach / scheme work in practice? (for instance: who were the actors involved in the design phase? how does the scheme work on the ground? what is the role of the farmers? how is the effectiveness / results of the scheme/project monitored / controlled? etc.)

What is the role of knowledge transfer, information and advice? (If any?)

D. Conclusions / lessons learned relevant for RDPs

What kind of results / benefits / improvements the approach / example is expected to generate (or that have been observed already)?

What worked well and what did not, and why? (for instance: what are the bottlenecks and how they have been overcome, e.g. administrative requirements, lack of investments, training, resistance among other stakeholders, was the policy environment helpful or constraining?)

What are the “lessons learned” relevant to RDPs? Please provide concrete recommendations that could potentially increase the effectiveness of RDP implementation.