

## Collaboration changes the rural sector

In today's world it is vital to ensure that **networking** extends to every level of rural development, given that consensus, collaboration and collectivism are key elements for survival of rural economies.

The added value of the networking is linked to the long-term viability and revitalization of rural areas. It is also connected with the future of Greek agriculture in the European Union.

Under the line of common interest and having the objective of developing possibilities and opportunities as a goal, a powerful net of constructive cooperations is created, through the development of Rural Networks at community and national level.

The **European Network for Rural Development (ENRD)** operates since 2008 under the authority of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, which is assisted by the "Contact Point". It serves as a point of reference for rural European interconnection and as a platform for the dissemination of ideas and experiences and the day-to-day operation of RDPs as well as the possibilities for their improvement in every Member State.

In this context, associations, agencies and departments of agriculture are involved in rural network of Member States, they get **informed, debate, dis-**

**cuss, conclude and propose.** These participants are coordinated and function as an integrated whole, based on a multi-disciplinary logic that incorporates and connects diverse, but complementary, ways of thinking.

All the above create a forum where experiences, information, best practices in agriculture and animal husbandry can be exchanged and disseminated. Moreover the opportunity of the diffusion of relevant know-how in developing initiatives with a common vision and defined strategic orientations is offered. Transfer, adaptation and dissemination of important achievements contribute to the modernization of traditional forms of organization and production, to the encouragement of sustainable investment initiatives and the detection of new methods and techniques that highlight the local advantages in terms of competitiveness.

Through cooperation, complementarity and active participation, the fragmentation of actions is reduced, obstacles and adversities are blunted and innovation aiming at effective implementation of standards on development projects in the agricultural and agri-food sector is enhanced.

**Networking in rural sector** cultivates the seeds of cooperation for a sustainable and strong Rural Development.

## A better future for everyone



### INFORMATION

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Printed in October 2012



# We collaborate today to support the future of the Rural Development

## Rural Networking: An innovation!

The Rural Development Programme for Greece (RDP) for the programming period 2007-2013, co-financed by the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development** is designed and implemented as part of the **national strategy for rural development**. During this period, a very important initiative was established as an integral part of Rural Development Programs in the Member States of the European Union.

For the first time rural **networking** at European and National level is institutionalized, through the establishment of the **European Network for Rural Development (ENRD)** and the **National Rural Networks** (Articles 67 and 68 of Regulation (EC) 1698/2005).

In Greece, was established the **National Rural Network (NRN)**, which is funded by the **Technical Support of the RDP** and substantially activated in March 2011 with the staffing of its **Support Unit** (Unit E of the Managing Authority). The **Coordination Committee** of the NRN has undertaken guidance and advisory role.



## Involving all actors

The **National Rural Network** is a dynamic platform that facilitates the exchange of experiences and knowledge among stakeholders involved in rural development, promoting their active participation and cooperation.

The NRN has a flexible structure, which includes 79 members and is able to be enriched.

Among them are **administrative services** involved in the management and implementation of the RDP, as well as a number of **organizations** and **institutions** related to rural development, representing categories of beneficiaries of the RDP or activated in areas related to its measures, such as:

- ✓ bodies of agricultural, agri-food and forestry sector
- ✓ chambers
- ✓ research centers
- ✓ environmental organizations
- ✓ LEADER local action groups

## According to Plan

The main objectives of the National Rural Network are the following:

- Development of members linkages.
- Exchange of views, know-how and experience, as well as the submitting of proposals for rural development.
- Development of skills.
- Identification and dissemination of notable practices related to rural development.
- Dissemination of the results of the RDP at local, national and european level.
- Promotion of inter-territorial and transnational cooperation, projects under Axis 4 «Implementation LEADER approach” of the RDP.
- Close cooperation with ENRD and other National Rural Networks.
- Contribution to the RDP evaluation process.

Through a rational and clear targeting of NRN derive the **priority axes** of the **Action Plan**, where details of the activities that have to be undertaken in order to achieve the objectives are reflected.

The Action Plan was updated and approved - along with **organizational NRN Chart** - in May 2011.

## From planning to action

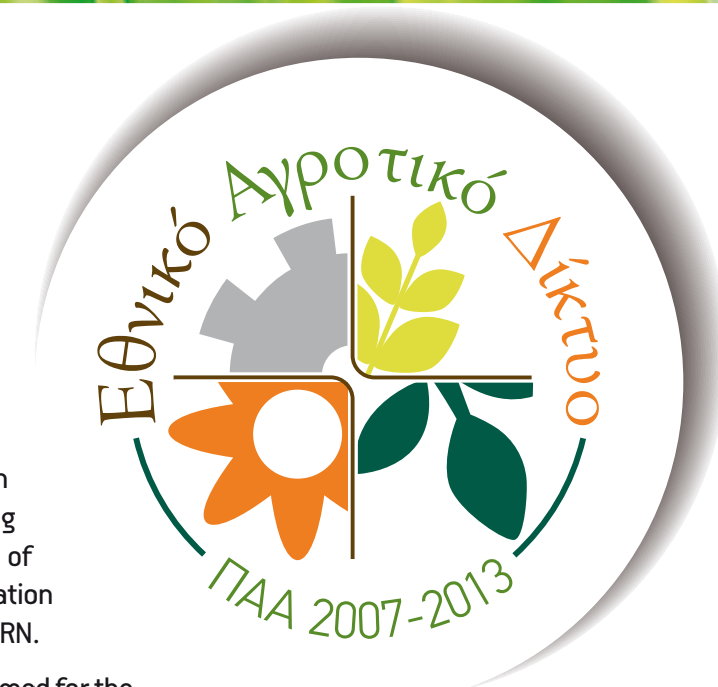
The **most important actions** undertaken within the framework of the NRN relate to:

- Organization of thematic working groups.
- Scientific and technical support on specific issues.
- Conducting seminars, meetings, workshops and conferences.
- Collection and dissemination of notable practices.
- Publications, production of electronic and/or audiovisual information material.
- Creation of databases and data maintenance.
- Constant update of the Greek and English version of the website.

## The Unit that supports

The **task of the NRN Support Unit** includes:

- ✓ Specification and updating of the action plan, action for its implementation, ensuring complementarity of actions with other ones of the Technical Support of the RDP and dissemination of the action results of the members of the NRN.
- ✓ Undertake and coordination of actions, performed for the benefit of members of the NRN.
- ✓ Active participation in activities of ENRD and of Rural Networks of member states.



## Milestones at the start of the NRN

### 7 July 2011

Organization of the **1st Conference of the NRN** in Athens, during which three thematic working groups were set up:

- ✓ **Smart Growth (Research - Innovation)**
- ✓ **Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Public Goods**
- ✓ **Policy for Rural Development within the framework of the Regional Development**

### 1-3 February 2012

Co-organization with the ENRD of the **14th Meeting of the Rural Networks of Member States of the European Union** in Thessaloniki. Along with it a special first meeting of the Rural Networks of Mediterranean Member States, focusing on the development of Mediterranean quality agricultural products was organised. **The NRN was declared by ENRD as the «Network of the month».**