

Citizen's Summary

The implementation of the National Rural Network's Specific Programme (PSRRN): a summary for the benefit of citizens State of progress in the autumn of 2016

The National Rural Network: a sounding board for projects for rural development

■ National Rural Network : who is it for, and why?

The concept of rural areas extends beyond a merely geographic and demographic definition. Stakeholders in rural regions are coming up **with solutions to current** development issues on a daily basis. In the words of the geographer, Martin Vanier, during the national seminar on 29th June this year, *"being from less densely populated areas constitutes a vital resource and not just a constraint, and rural areas can be regarded as urban society's most precious areas"*.

The idea of a rural network is a **European initiative** which aims to develop, share and provide information so as to be a sounding board for all initiatives which relate to rural development. Within this context, the National Rural Network (RRN) contributes to discussions and debates about rural areas and policies that further their development. It organises discussions between stakeholders and develops relevant local practices in conjunction with regional rural networks. Finally, it liaises with the European Rural Development Network (ERDN), alongside other Member States. Local food governance, agro-ecology, the circular economy, the social and cooperative economy, the link between rural and urban environments: these are the principal shared issues, on the subject of which the RRN facilitates meetings between stakeholders involved in the sustainable development of rural areas (elected representatives, administration, associations, syndicates, businesses, etc.).



In his introduction to the seminar, the Minister reiterated the purpose of the Rural Network: *"our future lies in the rural environment, contrary to popular belief. This must be affirmed in projects which relate to the environment, to renewable energy and to changes in agriculture and agro-ecology"*. The Minister continued, *"our ambition for rural life is to modernise these regions: adapting them is important, but our primary objective concerns life in these rural areas, the responses that we can provide to the needs expressed by people on a local level. In short, this calls for sharing, collective ambition and more solidarity"*. In this respect, the Rural Network is a tool which should prove useful in preparing for the future in rural areas

- **In real terms, what has it achieved in 2015 and up until today?**

The French Rural Network is mainly a means of coordinating stakeholders. This is why its organisation relies on appropriate governance and consists of various committees which allow the expression and adoption of ideas by the various stakeholders in rural development. This governance now incorporates the changes in regional organisation linked to the decentralisation and merging of regions that has taken place since the previous programmes.

This is why the year 2015 has been devoted particularly to launching this organisation. The visibility of the RRN's activities will be revealed in 2016, with activities open to those involved (seminars and initial output) which go beyond the mere commissioning of the Network.

In a more operational way which focuses more on the day-to-day monitoring of the functioning of the network, executive committees convene its 3 leaders (the Ministry of Agriculture, the French Regions Organisation, the Secretariat for the Equality of Territories) once a month and one-off monitoring committees were convened in June and in December 2015, which were attended by the European Commission in order to guarantee consistency in the organisation of the programme. Finally, for each section, advisory committees are convened for discussions with those involved (April 2015 and May 2016 for the LEADER initiative, March and December 2015 for the PEI (European Partnership for Innovation)). The results of these consultations are then consolidated within the Rural Network Committee, which is composed of members elected from amongst members of the RRN, which met on 3 occasions during 2015 and once in 2016. The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee itself met 3 times in 2015. Although activities in the public eye primarily consist of seminars, **a number of meetings allow the various networks to connect** whilst respecting varying levels of involvement, such as the meetings between the Regional Rural Networks and the Agora of the projects for collective engagement in rural development. These opportunities to meet allow the 'cross-pollination' of expertise between the parties involved. In addition, two General Assemblies were held (the first on 27th November 2014 and the second on 30th June 2016). Once the scheduled time for sharing information is over, these opportunities to meet, which bring together a considerable number of stakeholders and experts in rural life, are also occasions to organise working groups; they serve to enhance dialogue via the flow of knowledge and provide a forward-looking perspective on current changes in the rural environment.

All European programmes meet evaluation requirements and from 2015, two practical guides offering a method for analysing performance indicators, responses to specific questions concerning the methods of evaluation as well as checks on operational capability will be produced. Besides these methodological tools for evaluation, an Observatory for Rural Development (ODR) has also been established for analysing the use being made of the PDRs' measures over time and for carrying out more specific research and syntheses. This has resulted in a large database to which all regional stakeholders have access (see the ODR focus).

Finally, it is vital that this system, instigated by the European Union and aimed at creating dialogue between stakeholders and at creating knowledge and mutual acceptance of the different circumstances of Member States concerning issues relating to rural life, should conserve **a high level of visibility and clarity in Europe**; this is why so-called publicity issues, which consist in emphasising its European nature and the funding provided by the European Union, are so important. To this end, a style manual, an editorial policy, communication aids and digital tools (newsletter, posts on social media and promotional items) have been produced.

The Rural Network also incorporates a prospective mandate for rural development; this is a tool designed to allow the preparation of future phases of rural development policy. To achieve this, it is designed as a forum for monitoring and detection but also for connecting with research into good practices in regional development. These challenges, which are being used as a basis for the post-2020 PAC and also allow full participation in the European Union's smart specialisation strategy (known as S3), are evident in the national initiatives for coordination which are pinpointed below.



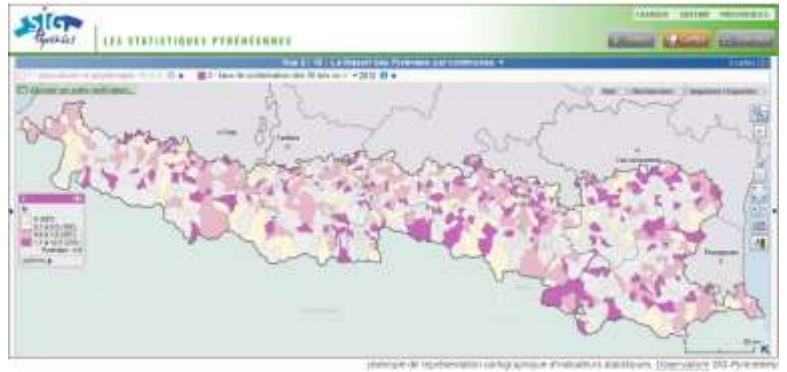
■ **Focusing on concrete achievements**

The Observatory for Rural Development: this is a database administered by INRA which is equipped with various software packages for data mining, synthesis and processing, which make it an effective system for finding information on rural development and a tool for monitoring and forecasting rural, and particularly community-based, development policy, ranging from the local to the national level.

The ODR's website

https://esrcarto.supagro.inra.fr/intranet/carto_joomla/

An example of the mapping generated by the ODR.



Voire de détail : <http://www.esrcarto.fr>

Its visibility is ensured by a dedicated website and Directory of Rural Networks (www.reseaurural.fr)



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Le Réseau rural français

Le Réseau rural français est un réseau national de réseaux locaux de territoires.

Accueil - Accueil

CORRESPONDANTS DES RESEAUX RURAUX REGIONAUX

REGION	RESEAU	PRENOM	TELEPHONE DIRECTEUR	EMAIL	TELÉPHONE FIXE
Bretagne	RESEAU BRETAGNE	YVES	02 99 58 00 00	yves@reseau-bretagne.fr	02 99 58 00 00
Centre-Val de Loire	RESEAU CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE	YVES	02 47 88 00 00	yves@reseau-centre-val-de-loire.fr	02 47 88 00 00
Île-de-France	RESEAU ÎLE-DE-FRANCE	YVES	01 70 37 00 00	yves@reseau-ile-de-france.fr	01 70 37 00 00
Normandie	RESEAU NORMANDIE	YVES	02 31 00 00 00	yves@reseau-normandie.fr	02 31 00 00 00
Pays de la Loire	RESEAU PAYS DE LA LOIRE	YVES	02 51 00 00 00	yves@reseau-pays-de-la-loire.fr	02 51 00 00 00
Occitanie	RESEAU OCCITANIE	YVES	05 61 00 00 00	yves@reseau-occitanie.fr	05 61 00 00 00
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	RESEAU PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR	YVES	04 91 00 00 00	yves@reseau-provence-alpes-cote-d-azur.fr	04 91 00 00 00
Rhône-Alpes	RESEAU RHÔNE-ALPES	YVES	04 78 00 00 00	yves@reseau-rhone-alpes.fr	04 78 00 00 00
Alsace	RESEAU ALSACE	YVES	03 88 00 00 00	yves@reseau-alsace.fr	03 88 00 00 00
Grand Est	RESEAU GRAND EST	YVES	03 83 00 00 00	yves@reseau-grand-est.fr	03 83 00 00 00
Nouvelle-Aquitaine	RESEAU NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE	YVES	05 57 00 00 00	yves@reseau-nouvelle-aquitaine.fr	05 57 00 00 00
Hauts-de-France	RESEAU HAUTS-DE-FRANCE	YVES	03 20 00 00 00	yves@reseau-hauts-de-france.fr	03 20 00 00 00
Normandie	RESEAU NORMANDIE	YVES	02 31 00 00 00	yves@reseau-normandie.fr	02 31 00 00 00
Occitanie	RESEAU OCCITANIE	YVES	05 61 00 00 00	yves@reseau-occitanie.fr	05 61 00 00 00
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Rhône-Alpes	RESEAU RHÔNE-ALPES	YVES	04 78 00 00 00	yves@reseau-rhone-alpes.fr	04 78 00 00 00
Alsace	RESEAU ALSACE	YVES	03 88 00 00 00	yves@reseau-alsace.fr	03 88 00 00 00
Grand Est	RESEAU GRAND EST	YVES	03 83 00 00 00	yves@reseau-grand-est.fr	03 83 00 00 00
Nouvelle-Aquitaine	RESEAU NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE	YVES	05 57 00 00 00	yves@reseau-nouvelle-aquitaine.fr	05 57 00 00 00
Hauts-de-France	RESEAU HAUTS-DE-FRANCE	YVES	03 20 00 00 00	yves@reseau-hauts-de-france.fr	03 20 00 00 00

Activities central to the concerns of stakeholders

Several hundred projects for **cooperation between stakeholders** such as local action groups (GAL) and PEI (the European Partnership for Innovation) task groups and projects for collective engagement in rural development (MCDR) are operational and are meeting the Rural Network's challenges: cooperation between those involved, **decompartmentalisation**, and **forward** thinking on the subject of rural and agricultural issues. The National Rural Network is organising discussions between those involved, the capitalisation of data and the development of these initiatives.

Projects for collective engagement in rural development

In June 2015, 16 "collective engagement in rural development" projects were selected in order to promote national and inter-regional collaborative projects. 107 partners were therefore involved at a national level. The projects relate to activities linked to agro-ecology, food governance, the link between rural and urban environments, the circular economy and the social and cooperative economy. (*)

The PEI : the European Partnership for Innovation

So as to facilitate the process of establishing connections between those involved in research and stakeholders in the development of agriculture and sustainable forestry, the PEI is encouraging the establishment of operational groups which include stakeholders from both these communities. Changes in cropping itineraries for a reduction in inputs, enhancing the value of pulse crops, the development of new crops, controlling costs in livestock farming systems, improvements in the development of bee colonies, etc. are all subjects covered by the 48 task groups in 7 different regions. This concerns innovation through partnership and cooperation in order to make progress towards better economic and environmental performance. Agro-ecology, cooperation, multi-stakeholder partnerships, interaction with the land: these are these projects' watchwords.



"The PEI: an arrangement for accelerating transitions towards productive and sustainable models for agriculture and forestry"

The first seminar on the PEI to be organised by the French Rural network was held on 30th June 2016.

This meeting was an opportunity to bring together almost 150 participants who had come to find out about this arrangement. The presentations, testimonies and debates were opportunities to demonstrate new features and the relevance of this participatory and bottom-up multi-stakeholder approach, in which regional stakeholders are at the centre of projects.

LEADER: In France, the funds allocated to LEADER have been doubled and the number of GALs nominated will be close to 350 in 2014-2020 compared to 222 in 2007-2013. This implies a more widespread geographical coverage of French territory (60% in 2007-2013) and the inclusion of new GALs that will require technical and /or thematic support. The RRN plans to improve and facilitate the implementation of projects through networking among long-established and new GALs and through a variety of jointly-designed tools.

■ Using the Rural Network, as a local stakeholder or as an ordinary citizen

I am involved in local development, how can I make use of the Rural Network?

It allows me to get in touch with other stakeholders who have already completed projects similar to what I have in mind, or with whom I might be able to build mutually supportive relationships that will help me make progress with my projects. Regional and national calls for projects also allow me to benefit from funding for the launching of projects.

I am an ordinary citizen, how can I make use of the Rural Network?

It gives me access to information on rural development and provides me with opportunities to take advantage of the expertise available on the Observatory for Rural Development's website: <https://odr.supagro.inra.fr/intranet/cartouoomla>

The national seminars are open to everyone.

I am a stakeholder who is more involved in the urban environment: is the Rural Network of any relevance to me?

Yes, the Rural Network also aims to promote the link between rural and urban environments; joint projects may be envisaged at both regional and national levels; for example, this link is being strengthened by both the RnPAT (National Network for Regional Food Projects) project, designed and promoted jointly with Terres en Villes, and the AGIS project for "greater participation to promote the setting up of farms", promoted by Terre de Liens.

I am a farmer, what sort of contact could I have with the Rural Network?

Through the stakeholders represented in the Regional Network or through the federations represented at a national level, the Rural Network lends its support to innovative agricultural projects involving farms. For example, this is the case regarding the project supported by SUACI Montagn'Alpes, "support for agro-pastoralism as a territorialised economy in a mountainous area", "Collagro, the farming collectives' network for ecological transition" promoted by FNCUMA and also "Innovate organically" promoted by the Organic Farming Technical College (ITAB).

What is the connection between the National Rural Network and the Regional Rural Networks?

Regional Rural Networks (RRR) are set up by regional councils. They seek to bring together the regional stakeholders within their own areas who are affected by the Rural Development Programme (PDR). The National Rural Network (RRN) is intended to be the "Regions' crossroads", providing a place for co-construction. It plays a detecting, identifying and transferring role, since the answers to problems encountered in one area may sometimes be found elsewhere.

What connection is there with Europe?

The National Rural Network acts as an intermediary between European and Regional levels. Its national team participates in the European Rural Network, along with other Member States' networks, and establishes connections between its activities and those of the Regional Rural Networks. In this way, it helps to increase the exchange of ideas and experiences and encourages French stakeholders to have a broader perspective on what is happening in other countries.

How do I contact the Rural Network?

A directory of Regional Network contacts and an interactive map is available at the following link:

<http://www.reseaurural.fr/le-reseau/reseaux-ruraux-regionaux>

Contact : contact@reseaurural.fr

(*) **Pleaders and Projects for collective engagement in rural development**

The Association for Agricultural Technical Coordination (**ACTA**):

“**DECO AGROECO**”: decompartmentalising and contextualising regional agro-ecology.

The French Agroforestry Association (**AFAF**):

“**RRAF**”: the development of a French Rural Agroforestry Network.

L'Atelier Paysan: “**USAGES**”:

innovation through practice, a driving force for agro-ecology and rural dynamics.

The Centre for International Cooperation in Agronomic Research for Development (**CIRAD**):

“**AgroEcoDOM**”: the inter-regional engagement of rural areas in the local development of agro-ecological practices in the French Overseas Departments.

The Cooperative for Setting up in Traditional Agriculture (**CIAP 44**): “**DEAPNA**”:

developing agricultural entrepreneurship in individuals who do not come from a farming background so as to meet the challenges of generational renewal in farming.

The National Federation of Cooperatives for the Use of Agricultural Machinery (**FNCUMA**):

“**COLLAGRO**”: the farming collectives’ network for ecological transition.

France Clusters:

“**CLUST**”: business inter-clusters, the potential for reciprocity between town and country.

INRA:

“**CAPDOR**”: the capitalisation and dissemination of knowledge gained through partnership-based research schemes concerned with agricultural and rural development.

The Organic Farming Technical College (**ITAB**):

“**Innovez bio**”: innovation in organic food and farming.

The Institute for Oils and Fats (**ITERG**):

“**ECOCIRAA**” the circular economy in agriculture and the food processing industry.

The Christian Rural Youth Movement (**MRJC**):

“**JEUNES**”: focusing on young people in farming and rural development.

Interdépartemental Farming Services (**SUACI** :

“**PASTOR**”: collective innovation to increase support for agro-pastoralism as a territorialised economy in a mountainous area.

French COOP Services:

“**MOOC**”: the creation of a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) in agricultural cooperation.

Terre de Liens: “**AGIS**”:

inclusive agriculture: greater participation to promote the setting up of farms and the passing on of agricultural traditions.

Terres en Villes: “**RNPAT**”:

the establishment of a national network for a jointly-designed and shared regional food project.

The National Union of Permanent Centres for Environmental Initiatives (**UNCPIE**) :

“**Altérité**”: national and regional alliances structured around meeting the challenges of agro-ecology and food governance.