

# THE REVIEW

of the French Rural network

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## INNOVATIONS GENERATING TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT



For this new edition of the journal we have decided to focus on the issue of innovation. The Agri Innovation summit, hosted this year in France for its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ended on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2019. It had set itself the challenge of bringing together all the various European and French stakeholders of innovation and knowledge systems within the food and non-food value chain, from agriculture to forestry, to discuss the concepts of innovation and the transition to agroecology processes.

Although increased participation of farmers remains a challenge, they are involved in developing solutions. Some are “innovators” and they are all entrepreneurs who take risks when they mobilise innovations or expertise. This is one more reason for affirming that agricultural and rural development contributes fully to today’s societal challenges, by taking part in innovations.

Digital, agroecology, collective practices, new forms of economy, etc. All fields covered by the RRN are developing. New approaches are emerging, new organisations are forming and new techniques are being implemented to produce and provide new services.

Apart from dissemination, the issue for the summit, for this edition and more generally for the network is to see to it that today’s innovation is tomorrow’s routine practice and that the legislative, budgetary, regulatory, institutional and informal bodies take into account this new dimension in order to restructure themselves and adopt these practices as new courses of action.

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) and its 200 or so operational groups, its many thematic issues and numerous workshops are at the heart of capitalisation, extension and innovation, particularly in the agricultural, agri-food and forestry sectors.

With its special feature on territorial innovations, the National Rural Network magazine aimed not only at affirming the recognition of the many innovation aspects, but also at affirming that changes occur at various times in the real life of the rural world, citizens, consumers in a region, in a working area, on a daily basis.

Thus, LEADER, like projects by the collective mobilisation for rural development and the network’s regional events, fully play their role of production and capitalisation of expertise, for broadcasting, spreading, appropriation of these new methods in order to meet society’s expectations.

## **Valérie METRICH-HECQUET**

Director General for economic  
and environmental performance  
of enterprises (DGPE)

## **Serge MORVAN**

Commissioner General for the equality  
of the territories (CGET)

## **Jules NYSSSEN**

Director General  
of Régions de France



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# THE INTERVIEW

## "Encouraging the territorial eco-systems to innovate for themselves"

Hugo Bevort is territorial strategic manager at the Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires (CGET) [Commissariat general for the equality of the territories] and is principally responsible for innovation and European affairs. He revisits the role of this institution in working towards development and innovation in the rural areas and the trials being undertaken in the French regions.



### In what ways does the CGET support the creation of territorial ecosystems capable of promoting social and territorial innovations?

Nowadays, the development of a territory depends on the ability of its actors to create links and positive externalities in a context of geographical fragmentation. We therefore have to invent formal and informal structures to bring together persons of goodwill, to help the human and social capital in rural life grow and share good practice. In this respect our territories have many assets on which to build, in particular by means of their networks of associations and volunteers, their cooperatives, etc.

The CGET supports actions, which provide incentives to these territorial eco-systems to innovate for themselves, through project engineering. For example, our support in third places, Fab Labs and in co-working spaces, amounting to some 800 structures in the rural territories, contributes to the increased skill of local actors and the increased range of their

projects. In these key resource areas, the project providers in fact benefit from a "tool box" as regards training and they can take advantage of opportunities to build and consolidate their network among their peers.

### In this context, the CGET is the national authority for coordination of European funding. What does that comprise?

Our role since 2014 has been to check that the rules for use are properly complied with for the four European funds linked with territorial development: the European Fund for Rural Development (EFRD), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and lastly, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). In cooperation with the ministries, we support the Regions in matters principally concerning European regulation, the performance of programmes, their assessment and the exploitation of their results.



*Innovation develops faster on the local scale than on the national scale*

## What is the place of territorial innovation in devising public policy?

The territories who undertake experiments represent a source of inspiration for public policy. Today, innovation is developing faster on the local scale than on the national scale.

In this context the CGET and the services of the other ministries are working in ways designed to complement the work of local actors, elected representatives and associations, in particular by developing styles of governance consistent with the developments we are experiencing. Thus, instead of proposing a hierarchical model of expertise, our role is rather to organise transfer of knowledge between peers (for example, between the towns and cities and the small municipalities involved in the same process of digital and ecological transition, local, sustainable provision of foodstuffs, etc.)

## Can you give us some examples of experiments currently under way in the French territories?

We are currently supporting projects, the aim of which is to identify existing social innovations. In a given territory these projects are federated onto a single, unique platform and a classification

system is developed, in order to be able to identify them more easily (see p. 7). For example, they may be classified by topic, (social, solidarity-based economy, health, support to disabled persons, etc.). The objective is to make communication between

the project providers easier, in order to de-compartmentalise the communities.

Furthermore, by the end of 2019, the CGET will merge with the Digital Agency and Epareca\* to form the National Agency for the Cohesion of the Territories. The initial aim of this new entity will be to develop the national themed programmes focused on small and medium-sized towns, as well as on the rural areas. Moreover, aid will be offered to the territories, which have not yet identified a project, in order to help them design and formalise one.

Finally, the ANCT will invest in R&D and will contribute to the dissemination of social innovation by working towards better definition of the material conditions for its duplication in other territories.

\* National Public Institution for the Management and Restructuring of Trade and Commercial Premises



*Make communication between the project providers easier, in order to de-compartmentalise the communities*

## The Banque des Territoires: a booster for transformation projects

"Modernising the territories and combating the inequalities, which affect them": this is one of the main aims of the Banque des Territoires created in 2018 and piloted by the Caisse des Dépôts Group. Deployed in 16 regional directorates and located in 35 territories, this bank facility is intended for local authorities, local public enterprises, social housing authorities and legal professions. It offers them funding solutions and legal and technical support for town centre regeneration projects, the renovation or construction of social housing, the thermal renovation of public buildings and so on. With the capacity to mobilise 20 billion Euros per year, the Banque des Territoires is one of the major financiers of the 'Action coeur de ville' town centre initiative coordinated by the CGET and intended to regenerate the town centres of 222 medium-sized municipalities. In particular, it supports the development projects of small and medium sized local authorities.



[www.banquedesterritoires.fr](http://www.banquedesterritoires.fr)





## INNOVATIONS GENERATING TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

A synonym of progress and response to the myriad challenges in rural development, innovation is spreading at high speed throughout Europe's territories. But what is innovation in rural areas? How can its success be ensured? What are its impacts and benefits? An overview of initiatives and trials implemented by actors in the rural areas of France in close cooperation with citizens with the aim of supporting young people entering the labour market, offering new services to isolated persons, facilitating setting up a farming business, encouraging new partnerships and economic dynamics, etc.

## Maisons de services aux publics: innovative responses to the needs of the territories

Intended to provide local support services for coping with administrative procedures for the user in all the territories, the Maisons de services aux publics, piloted by the CGET are innovating in the field of services to the population. Some of them are changing into third places, while others try out a solidarity-based car-sharing system.

*"The initiatives offered by the 1,340 Maisons de services aux publics are as varied as is the number of MSAPs," declares Clara Lolivier, coordinator of policy on accessibility to CGET services. Training in IT tools and the use of the Internet, FabLab, homelessness, solidarity-based grocery supplies, collection point for recycling IT material as well as a local car-sharing system, the MSAPs are free to innovate in the services they offer in order to respond to the needs of their territory. "In addition to the partnership base common to all the Maisons, with partners such as the Caisse d'allocations familiales (family allowances), the Caisse primaire d'assurance maladie (health insurance), Pôle emploi (job centre) or the Poste (Post Office), each MSAP is able to form the partnerships it deems necessary for its population," confirms Clara Lolivier.*

This freedom to form partnerships is an asset for the rural territories, which contributes to developing initiatives adapted to the day-to-day needs of the users. Thus, for example, the MSAP in Ayen (19)

manages a car-sharing system backed by a local currency called Ecosyst'M.

The winner of the Grand Prix des Maisons 2017, this solidarity-based system promotes mobility for isolated persons and supports the economy of the local shops. Another example is Réalmont (81), where the issue of housing, which requires high energy-consumption, prompted the MSAP of the Centre Tarn to create information offices for the Departmental Housing Information Agency and the Urban Planning and Environment Architecture Council (CAUE). The MSAP can also become centres of innovation and creation. This is notably the case for the Maison in Mézières-en-Brenne (36). The "Brenne Box" project, which was also a prize-winner in the Grand Prix des Maisons 2017, has transformed this MSAP into a third place bringing together a co-working space, a cyber space and a mini FabLab intended to promote and generate the local entrepreneurs' ideas.



More information...

[www.maisondeservicesaupublic.fr/content/rencontres-nationales-des-maisons-de-services-au-public-les-initiatives-locales-valorisees](http://www.maisondeservicesaupublic.fr/content/rencontres-nationales-des-maisons-de-services-au-public-les-initiatives-locales-valorisees)

## The Carrefour des innovations sociales: engine for development and project-sharing

Launched by the CGET and the La Fonda Association, the Carrefour des innovations sociales [crossroads for social innovation] identifies more than 7,000 projects managed by associations, foundations, public actors, citizens, etc. A real search engine for social innovation in France, this digital platform offers an overview of all the initiatives set up to respond to the challenges of society in the territories.

*"A lever for the attractiveness and the regeneration of the territories, social innovation still needs to be more visible," state Morgane Luraski and Alexia Gazel, public innovation operations managers at the CGET. Confronted with this finding, in 2018 the CGET and the La Fonda Association launched the Carrefour des innovations sociales. Comprising a search engine and interactive mapping, this digital platform, accessible to everyone, aims to become a precious tool for the development and dissemination of initiatives in the territories. "For example, a national map allows a rural regional network to discover all the projects developed in its territory. The platform also offers the possibility of making a search by topic and therefore of seeing whether another actor has developed a response to a given issue and then contacting him to*

*find out how it was done, what funding was available, etc."* point out the operations managers. For a project provider, the Carrefour des innovations sociales represents in particular a means of finding the right person to contact for the development of his project.

To date, 7,358 projects on housing, inclusion, health and sustainable development have been referenced on the platform thanks to web scraping technology. They originate from the **sites of 19 "sourcers" representative of the social innovation eco-system**: Avise, the Veolia Foundation, Bretagne Créative, AG2R la mondiale and so on. *"The project is provided by a group of some fifty actors: national and local associations, foundations, support and advisory structures, financiers and resource centres, such as the Rural Network,"* explain Morgane Luraski and Alexia Gazel. By the end of the year the group also intends to bring together even more closely the social innovation eco-system by creating, for example, time for sharing good practice and by putting project providers in contact with each other.

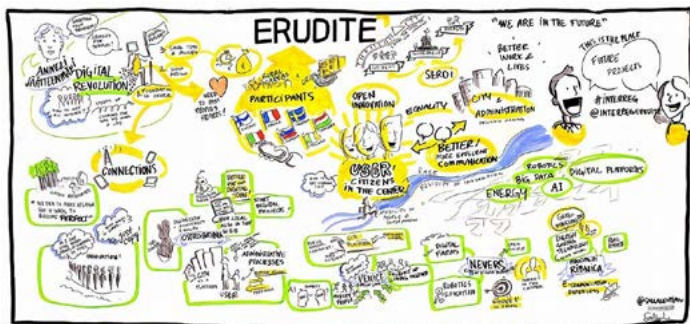
More information...

[www.carrefourdesinnovations sociales.fr](http://www.carrefourdesinnovations sociales.fr)



## Digital innovation for and with the population

The Interreg Project provided by Nièvre numérique, ERUDITE brings together a group of 10 European partners. Their common factor? They are convinced that open innovation - co-construction with the inhabitants - is the best solution for developing new digital services in the rural areas. The project was presented at the ENRD NetworX forum and at the EIP-AGRI seminar on "Multi-level strategies for digitalisation in agriculture and in the rural areas".



It illustrates the potential of digital innovation for development in rural areas. Provided by the Nièvre numérique, the 2016-2020 ERUDITE (Enhancing Rural and Urban Digital Innovation Territories) Interreg Project brings together 10 partners from seven countries – Sweden, Finland, Ireland, France, Italy, Slovenia and Hungary – around two questions: What uses are possible for fibre optic installed across our territories? How can we involve the inhabitants in this debate? *"We are all interested in the process of open innovation,"* confirms Jean-Dimas Malot, assistant director of Nièvre numérique. *What projects do you want to introduce? What is your vision of the future?* ***Asking the population makes possible constant development of the territory.*** In his department, 135

inhabitants have expressed their ideas during workshops open to everyone. The result? Five projects are currently being developed: a distribution platform for local culture, an agricultural third place, a retirement home, a platform for bringing young people and businesses into contact with each other and a network of sensors intended to measure the consumption and production of energy in a TEPOS or Positive Energy Territory.

The second part of the ERUDITE project is the sharing of experience and good practice between European partners: *"For example, our visit to a nursing home for the elderly (EHPAD) in Sweden gave us the idea of integrating a prototype pillow into our project for a retirement home of the future,"* was the example given by Jean-Dimas Malot. The partners are also working on developing a Social and Economic Return on Investment (SEROI) methodology to calculate the social return on investment of the services provided by their projects. *"The idea is to determine the indicators, which allow us to prove that our projects have an impact, other than economic, on the territories. This involves, for example, estimating the financial value of the well-being of an elderly person in a nursing home. It is an original, experimental process, which is interesting a lot of people."*

### More information...

[www.nievrenumerique.com/ERUDITE](http://www.nievrenumerique.com/ERUDITE)

## Three questions to:

Kerstin Rosenow, director of the Research and Innovation Unit, DG Agri



## What importance is afforded by the Commission to the digitalisation of the rural areas?

### What policy is being pursued on this subject?

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) "for a productive and sustainable agriculture" encourages innovations and promotes the sharing of knowledge by establishing a better link between research and farming practices. The EIP-AGRI network has

## What are the great challenges to be faced?

Developing infrastructures, high speed Internet and digital skills for the farmers, performing reliable analyses of the costs, advantages and socio-economic impact of digital technologies in the farming industry, etc. There is still much to be done. Among the principal challenges can be cited the appropriation of digital technology by the users, the management of agricultural data, the interconnectivity of the digital services and products and the need for investment. There are no simple answers. This is why we support group work with projects such as SMART-AKIS, the Smart Agri Hubs or *Internet of food & farm 2020*.



## Towards new systems to facilitate setting up as a farmer

Designing and deploying a new type of legal and economic support for responding to the generation renewal required in agriculture: this is the aim of the MCDR #HAPPYTER# project, which is intended to supplement policies for setting up as a farmer, co-operating and modernising farming.

*"Generation renewal in farming is a burning issue. For every farmer starting out, there are 3 or 4 farmers leaving on the national scale."* Claire Lavour sounds the alarm. The co-manager of the CIAP (Coopérative d'Installation en Agriculture Paysanne) Pays de la Loire, she coordinates the MCDR #HAPPYTER# project (Innovative territorial farming alliances to support renewal in the farming environment) *"We want to **assist project providers, who have not come from the farming environment**, to access the means of production thanks to innovative systems,"* she explains. This desire starts from a finding: family solidarity plays an important role in setting up in farming and in ensuring the existence of farms. *"Setting up outside a family framework is more complicated: no*

*available land, no gradual learning process, fewer networks, etc. The project providers need to be anchored in the territory, but they also need help in accessing funding, self-help networks and structuring a lasting marketing model."*

To support them, #HAPPYTER# is testing legal and economic tools in the Great West. These include: le Stage Paysan Créatif (the Creative Farmer Training Course), a programme on territorial immersion for project providers. *"For one year they benefit from the status of vocational trainee with the **support of farmer-advisers and a local support group**. They learn about technical issues, administrative and account management, marketing, etc."* Another system used, start-up funding gives access to funding to a maximum of 40,000 euros for the first investments necessary for starting up. The farmer starting up his business also benefits from legal, tax and accounting support.

## LEADER, instrument for the social and vocational integration of young people

Between 2017 and 2019 in the south of Calvados, the Mission Locale Caen la Mer Calvados Centre has been testing a project intended to encourage private landlords to accept young people in difficulty as tenants. Named "Un logement d'abord" [Accommodation first and foremost] this original operation has benefited from the support of the Sud Calvados LAG and LEADER funding.

Working towards the socio-vocational integration of young people in precarious circumstances by making it easier for them to find housing is the aim of the "Un logement d'abord" project. Implemented between September 2017 and January 2019, it was provided by the Comité local pour le logement autonome des jeunes [local committee for autonomous accommodation for young people] (CLLAJ) at the Mission Locale Caen la Mer Calvados Centre. *"The idea was to reassure the landlords and to set up a **"win-win" relationship between the owners and the young people**"* summarises Yohan Heriveau, project manager at the Mission locale. *"The first ones agreed to sign a lease with the Mission locale, authorising us to sublet, as well as to offer rent-free months in exchange for renovation work undertaken by the young tenants. In parallel, the latter were monitored by an accommodation counsellor, a vocational integration counsellor and a building "tutor" to allow them to work on their vocational project, on developing social skills and to prepare them for assuming their obligations as future tenants: knowledge of systems for help with accommodation, their rights and duties as a tenant, etc."* Six young people took part in this experiment, the first of its kind in France.

Innovative because they looked at accommodation as *"a support point for integration"* and cooperated with an institutional partner, the Mission Locale and private actors, the landlords, it was logical that the project should receive the **support of the Sud Calvados GAL**. In fact it came within the framework of the strategic axis of "constructing a network of local services of quality, adapted to the inhabitants" and the action information sheet. *"Supporting persons*

*in difficulty in their social and professional integration". "Apart from the substantial financial support from the European Union, the LEADER operations manager, Mailys Gautier, has been a great support in guiding us through the procedures. Moreover, the constructive comments of the programming committee contributed to developing the project to the maximum,"* confirms Yohan Heriveau.

### LEADER: the originality of a methodology at the service of territorial innovation

Sometimes mentioned in relation to delays in payment for files, the LEADER system is above all a process, which promotes the organisation of initiatives and is an important vector for innovation in the territories. The interest and originality of this European instrument relies on the involvement of the local actors. By giving to small communities and territories the means of governance of projects, which mix civil society and elected representatives, LEADER makes it possible to fund territorial innovation. Initially the Community Initiative Programme and then integrated into FEADER (second pillar of the CAP), LEADER has preserved the DNA of local development and allows this to be more fully recognised by public policy. This is essential in order to promote the cooperation and de-compartmentalisation of the actors. The ingredients of territorial innovation rely in fact on their capacity to cooperate, a co-construction philosophy, the interface between thematic horizons and different types of actors, etc.

### Social innovation, engine for rural development

Assisting those on limited incomes to combat fuel poverty, offering retired persons the solution of sharing a home in the centre of the village, encouraging new partnerships and economic dynamics in the rural areas, etc. Focus on the assets and benefits of three innovative projects currently being developed in our rural areas.



#### Enerterre: solidarity-based building projects for renovating one's accommodation

In the territory of the Parc Naturel Régional des marais du Cotentin et du Bessin, an area of natural marshland, many traditional houses built of earth are deteriorating and are scarcely or poorly insulated. What can be done, when their residents do not have the means to renovate them? The Enerterre system, provided by the association of the same name, offers a solution of mutual aid and support to households with limited incomes: collective renovation building projects supervised by professionals, on which the owners of the premises and volunteers work side by side. This innovative, solidarity-based initiative was recently awarded the prize for the best social inclusion project in the ENRD Rural Inspiration Awards competition. It is now used on the European scale as part of the Helps project funded by Erasmus+.

More information...

<https://helpsproject.eu>

#### Habitats des possibles: offering shared accommodations for retired people in rural areas

Offering housing on a human scale, secure, adapted to the problems of ageing, founded on mutual support and participation in local life. This is the kind of project provided by the Habitats des possibles association for retired people in rural areas. Located in the heart of a village, this accommodation for 5 to 10 persons will combine private spaces of a one bed-sitting room with a shower room and kitchenette with shared spaces: kitchen, sitting room, workshop; garden, and so on. At present the association is assisting local authorities to set up projects in conjunction with their residents and health professionals and the social assistance authorities in the territory. For those already retired or those about to retire, the residents meet in workshops to share their expectations, to participate in their choice of construction, to define the future rules of communal living and mutual assistance, etc. Currently three projects are under way and a new call to the territories will be made in early 2020 in order to identify the next small communities in the South West, where shared accommodation should be constructed.



More information...

[www.habitatsdespossibles.org](http://www.habitatsdespossibles.org)



#### TRESSONS: analysing and boosting the impact of the ESS on rural territories

Third places, recycling centres, locally-sourced shops, craft and trade cooperatives... The ESS (Social, Solidarity-based Economy) is at the heart of the socio-economic dynamics in rural areas. A prestigious national project steered by Avise and the RTES (Network of local authorities for a solidarity-based economy), TRESSONS intends to demonstrate this within the next three years, through studies, portraits of territories and projects, and then to contribute to strengthening it by promoting cooperation and by testing new support formats. Its purpose is to equip and support the actors in rural development in revealing and consolidating initiatives at the service of rural life.

More information...

[www.avise.org/actualites/lancement-du-projet-tressons](http://www.avise.org/actualites/lancement-du-projet-tressons)



## "Innovation from the local actors is the key to territorial development"

Pascal Chevalier is a professor of geography at the Paul Valéry Montpellier 3 University in the ART-Dev (Acteurs, Ressources et Territoires dans le Développement) Research Unit. An expert in cooperation and innovation in rural areas, he explains how the development of resources relies on collective initiative and new forms of governance.

### Can you define the concept of 'territorial capital', on which you are working?

The capital of a territory rests on three pillars, starting with the natural and human resources at its disposal: natural environments, the countryside, agriculture, tradition, culture, history, etc. The potential of these resources is revealed and developed by collective initiatives. This is where the second pillar comes in, in other words, the social capital. This is the ability of the inhabitants to take initiatives, to work together and to organise themselves into networks of all kinds, that is, networks of professionals, associations, family or friends. Finally, the territorial capital also depends on the various forms of governance, which develop there, such as the 'pays', the Local Action Group and other organisations, which bring a technical and legal framework to the project initiators.

### In this context, how is innovation organised?

At the interface of these three pillars, three types of innovation may develop. First of all there is technological and technical innovation, which provides the tool for developing new initiatives. Next, social innovation takes on a variety of forms, depending on the territory, from the complementarity between the public and private sectors involved in the projects, to the initiatives in the social and solidarity-based economy (ESS). Finally, the innovation of use

consists in developing the local heritage as never before, for example, through e-tourism, by finding support from new economic and legal provisions.

### What are the assets of and the brakes on cooperation and innovation in rural areas?

The appropriation of the innovation by all the local actors is at the heart of territorial development. If the local population is heavily involved, you can jointly build ambitious projects, including those that start from natural resources, which are difficult to make viable. The example I am thinking of is the Pays Gévaudan-Lozère, located on a granitic plateau between Lozère and Cantal, which has historically acted as an interface between the communities. Without the resources of the Auvergne or the Aveyron, notably in terms of renown, the inhabitants of this territory have been able to create viable agri-tourism projects by investing in the local culture.

Conversely territorial innovation can be held back when the rigid attitudes of institutions freeze the scope of projects. Similarly, if there is low density of social capital, that is, the associations and networks are not particularly developed, it is more difficult to ensure the continued existence of the initiatives and civil society tends to rely more on the public sphere.



## LEADER European seminar: honouring cooperation



On 29 and 30 April in Lille the LEADER France seminar devoted to cooperation between rural areas welcomed local action groups (LAG) from 14 Member States. On the programme: round table, themed workshops and speed dating to promote cooperation and to clarify the issues.

Among the fundamental principles of LEADER, cooperation makes it possible to prepare in a group, concrete solutions to common issues by benefiting from engineering and specific funding. The round table at the European seminar organised by LEADER France was the opportunity to take stock of this process deployed on a cross-border scale. In this context the speakers called for consideration of rural communities in all their variety (coastal, mountain, outermost and overseas territories, etc.) and

across the diversity of actors involved: public and private sectors, farmers, associations, etc. In the context of the LEADER project cooperation may in particular be prompted by the themes used in twinning arrangements between municipalities (culture, agriculture, youth and so on). Here, the issue is to transform these local dynamics into true cooperation agreements with objectives, mutual initiatives and analyses.

To promote the sharing of experience and to start new cooperations, the seminar also offered methodological workshops: design of and stages in European cooperation projects, coordination, the legal and financial aspects, etc. Finally, a determined period of speed dating promoted meetings in order to put in place the bases for possible future partnerships.

### Thibault Guignard

President of LEADER France and the Pays de Saint-Brieuc Local Action Group

*"Although it requires time and energy to put it in place, cooperation can make a significant contribution, notably at the cross-border level. It opens up meetings with other European actors and is also a vector for territorial cohesion: by working on a cross-border project the local actors learn to know themselves better. Among the most interesting cooperation projects, can be cited those, which include strong involvement of the civil society, for example focussed on professional training for volunteers in the cultural sector. However, finding partners to cooperate with on common issues is sometimes tricky for the LAG. During this seminar, thanks to the speed dating, they are able to meet each other in accordance with their priority working areas. Our objective is also to give them the methodological tools, for example for drawing up a cooperation agreement."*



### Mylène Larrieu

Organiser of the Adour Landes océanes Local Action Group

*"On one hand our local action group works on farming, forestry, tourism and culture; on the other, there is a new focus on the social, solidarity-based economy (ESS) and circular economy. We are currently taking part in our second LEADER programme and we want to renew our experience of cooperation, in order to benefit once again from the advantages of this system. During the previous programme (2007-2013) we had developed cooperation in nature-based, rural tourism. For the current programme we are turning our attention to short food chains and local supply (development of local products, identifying these products for the consumer, etc.). The seminar helps us to find new partners in Europe, who are also working on these subjects. Globally, cooperation enriches our practices and gives them greater prestige thanks to the exchanges involved and has positive consequences for territorial development. Cross-border cooperation, in particular, de-compartmentalises the rural areas in Europe and shines a spotlight on all that is built there."*



## LEADER study: the French Local Action Groups under the microscope

Who are the 339 local action groups in France in the current programme? What territorial dynamics are they putting into action? What are the main themes of their local development strategy? The answers to these questions and to many others are expected in several months' time once the results of a study conducted by the National Rural Network on the implementation of Measure 19 of the EAFRD are known: support to promote local development under the LEADER (CLLD) provision.



It has a double purpose: to draw up an inventory of the LAG territories and to offer an analysis of the key trends resulting from the LEADER approach in the local areas. The study was entrusted by the National Rural Network to three firms specialising in local development (Extracité, Auxilia and Ytes) and will be finalised by September 2019. What are its main objectives? ***"To provide a national vision of how to implement LEADER on the national territory, to show the diversity of situations and to better understand the developments arising from the territorial reforms on the LEADER project territories,"*** is the summary of Pierre Lézier, consultant in territorial development in the Extracité cooperative.

Initiated at the end of 2018, the study on LEADER Measure 19 of the RDP 2014-2020 is divided into several phases. The first, completed in February, consisted in drawing up a comprehensive overview of the selected LAG within the 2014-2020 programme: legal form, supporting structures, strategies implemented, place of private partners, campaign files and so on. This work relied on the analysis of all the agreements and candidatures from the LAG territories, together with a questionnaire sent to 339 French local action groups. Fifty-six per cent of them (190) responded to a number of questions on subjects such as the setting up of the programme, their methods of organisation, their links with other territories, their margin for development, their issues and problems, their funding plan, etc. The second phase of the study is currently concentrating on the analysis of the different strategic choices operated for LEADER by the management authorities, as part of the 27 RRD. This phase relies in particular on communication with the Regions. *"How have they appropriated Measure 19? What importance has been allocated to the medium-sized towns or to particular features of the territories? What are the links with other European or national provisions?"* are the questions posed by Pierre Lézier to illustrate his point. **In the next few months all the collected data will contribute**

**to the production of a cartographic atlas.** *"It will take into account the diversity and extent of the local action groups, the thematic typology of the local development strategies and also the different choices made with respect to organisation and communication."*

The results of the study will be presented during the 4th quarter of 2019, in particular at National Rural Network events or regional meetings. *"They will demonstrate LEADER's plus-value, the impact of the NOTRE and MAPTAM laws, the introduction of other European, national or local provisions,"* comments the consultant. The main lessons learned from the study and the diversity of situations in the local action groups, the number of which has risen from 223 to 339 within the 2014-2020 programme, will be illustrated by focusing on some of the local action groups. *"It can already be pointed out that 81 public establishments for cooperation between local authorities (EPCI) as compared with 18 previously, support Local Action Groups,"* confides Pierre Lézier. *"A high degree of heterogeneity between the territories can also be observed. There are, for example, 52 LAG in Nouvelle-Aquitaine as opposed to 17 in Normandy and there are LAGs with 11,000 inhabitants (Pays Dlois) and others with 170,000 inhabitants (the bocage [terrain of mixed woodland and pasture] in the Vendée), which necessarily have different realities and implementation and organisational practices."* **A tool for capitalising on and sharing good practice,** the study is also intended to promote the setting up of networks, the search for partners and the emergence of joint projects at the national and European level, which will inter alia make it possible to create local action group files on the National Rural Network site. *"It will also contribute to working on ways to improve and to showing that, despite an identical regulatory framework, there are different ways for the local action groups to make the LEADER provisions their own and to make good use of it and the European funding at the heart of the rural areas."*

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*Drawing up a  
comprehensive  
overview of the  
Local Action Groups*

## LEADER/CLLD sub-group meeting: current situation and prospects for the programme

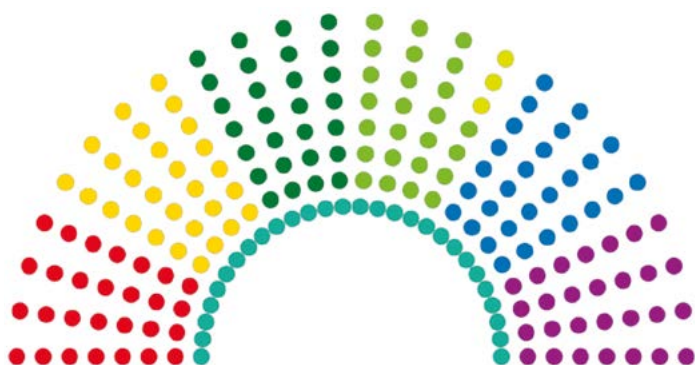
At the end of January, the LEADER/CLLD sub-group meeting of the Assembly of the European Network for Rural Development was held in Brussels for the sixth time since 2015. The participants met with the objective of improving the quality of the implementation of LEADER/CLLD and discussed in particular the post-2020 legal structure, self-assessment by the LAG and the paths to pursue to improve the implementation of LEADER.

What progress has been made with the legislative proposals for the CAP post-2020? What has LEADER achieved and what good practice has emerged? Which joint initiatives should be encouraged as priorities? These were some of the many items for discussion last 31st January in Brussels. Welcomed by Neda Skakelj, DG AGRI Head of Unit, the participants at the sixth meeting of the LEADER/CLLD sub-group started the day with an inventory of the implementation of LEADER by the 3,070 local action groups (LAG) referenced in the ENRD. These contextual elements then gave rise to discussions between the management authorities, the national rural networks and the EU organisations on the progress achieved by the Member States implementing the programme, the LEADER/CLLD joint initiatives, the ENRD priorities, etc. Illustrated by **examples from Austrian, Finnish and French LAG** the subject of the achievement and monitoring of self-assessment by the LAG was particularly comprehensively discussed. This was an opportunity for the Région Île-de-France to share its experience on the joint construction of the mutual procedure of self-assessment of the five local action groups in its territory. These presentations were followed by discussions on the communication initiatives to be set up to make optimum use of good practice and achievement in LEADER to promote it with policy-makers, the media and the public at large.



An overview of the actions and events in 2018 has contributed to identifying several levers for action for optimising the implementation of LEADER. These include: the need for simplification, harmonisation and flexibility in the programme to ensure that the local action groups are appropriately supported and the necessity to improve communication and networking in order to highlight LEADER's added value and to increase the possibilities for transferring its achievement to other locations. Two main questions have punctuated the discussions: How do we minimise the current bottlenecks in implementing the programme? How do we optimise the current success factors and those for future programmes? To answer these questions **the participants have made a number of recommendations**. "*Find the right balance between the rules, the directions and the independence of the LAG*", "*improve and extend the use of information systems and new technologies*", "*invest 20% of the LAGs' time in peer training and networking*", "*involve the participating parties more, especially the young people, in designing local strategies*", "*introduce a monitoring system more focused on the risks*", etc. The assembly concluded the day by recalling the importance of constant exchanges and discussions between the participants and at the level of the Member States, in order to improve the implementation of LEADER in the territories and communication on that which has been achieved and maintained.

“  
*How do we optimise the success factors in the current and future programmes?*”



More information...

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/6th-rural-networks-leaderclld-sub-group-meeting\\_fr](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/6th-rural-networks-leaderclld-sub-group-meeting_fr)



## Agricultural Council: a challenge and an asset for agro-ecological transition

Last May in Paris the NRN (National Rural Network) organised a seminar devoted to the Strategic Agricultural Council, spearhead of the agro-ecological transition at national and European levels. This was an opportunity to take stock of the issues of an evolving practice, against a background of legislative and societal developments.

The Egalim and Essoc laws, the new CAP, the separation of advisory activities and the sale of phytosanitary products were among the issues discussed. A key tool on accelerating the transition towards agro-ecology, the Strategic Council for farmers is at the heart of current regulatory activity. The seminar on last 16 May shone a spotlight on the role of the agricultural advisor, his challenges and his development in a frequently complex and uncertain context.

The day opened with the summary of a study on the conditions of deployment of strategic advice in the agro-ecological context, conducted by Charles-Antoine Gagneur and Olivier Thiery (see report below). This was followed by reference to the challenges for the council at the European level, acknowledging that its implementation and its effects are very diverse depending on each Member State. The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) also presented the experiences of an Agricultural Council set up in Scotland.

Reports and feedback on these experiences next allowed the audience to better identify the objectives and functions of the Strategic Council. Sometimes scarcely known to the farmers, it comes into its own in the key moments of life on the farm: setting up, development or diversification of the activity, resumption, family changes, etc.

In the afternoon, three workshops gave the participants the opportunity to debate and share good practices. The first workshop was devoted to the links between the Agriculture Council and the sharing of know-how and knowledge via the AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems) network. The second focussed on training for agricultural advisers and the potential solutions for improving this in the knowledge that as yet there is no specific initial training and that continuous training is distributed over several disciplines.

Finally, the third workshop was dedicated to the question of certification of the Strategic Council. One of the current challenges is to certify this support without standardising it, in order to preserve the variety and flexibility of the responses offered to the farmers. In fact, the Strategic Council brings in a wide diversity of formats and tools, of farm diagnoses with quantified indicators with open dialogue, during which the farmer defines his values and objectives, the means at his disposal and those, which he would be able to mobilise.

**Christian Decerle, farmer and President of the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Regional Chamber of Agriculture**

*"The Agricultural Council makes sense because a growing number of farmers have doubts about the future of their*



*profession and their businesses. They are looking for strategic support on the economic and technical level, but they also want advice on their positioning and the individual and collective levers, in order to cope with certain issues. It is when there is a change of status, for example when a farm changes hands, that the risk that the business will be weakened is highest. The farmer may also have difficulty in stepping back and taking stock because he is overworked or has a cash flow problem and may therefore head towards an adverse situation. In this context the adviser can allay the worries of the farmer or the group of farmers and bring a pragmatic view on the issue. The ability to support a farm manager requires know-how that is hard to find, solid people skills and a certain amount of experience."*

**Charles-Antoine Gagneur, associate researcher at Eduter AgroSup Dijon and consultant**

**Olivier Thiery, researcher in applied social sciences and consultant**



*"Organisations have created tools for strategic counselling, a term, which covers a variety of situations. Globally, we are talking about a service relationship, in which the farmer sits down with an adviser to give in-depth consideration to building a long-term vision, starting from the existing position and taking account of the uncertainties, a possible course of action and the ways of regulating this course of action. This is also a way of escaping from isolation when confronted with a difficult situation or a complex business development. However, this role is still not sufficiently developed by reason of the difficulty in mobilising the necessary skills (technical know-how, empathy, etc.). In addition, farmers are not always able to distinguish what return on investment they may expect from a given type of support. In accordance with the decree on the separation of sales and advisory activities in the use of phytosanitary products, strategic counselling will become obligatory. This poses the question of finding out how farmers are going to accept it in this new framework. At the moment, it forms part of the tools, which can restore their control over innovation, their work and their decisions."*

## Forests and climate change: responding to innovation needs in the forestry sector

Which species should be planted in a scenario of increasing temperatures? Which forestry practices and tools should be promoted to ensure forest renewal? Supported by EIP AGRI many forestry experts in France and in Europe are tackling the subject of adapting forests to climate change. Their work assists the forestry practitioners, advisers and managers to respond to the challenges of climate change in the forests in the Regions.

An exceptional wave of drought in Northern Europe, devastating fires in regions normally little affected, such as the United Kingdom, Latvia and Sweden, pine and spruce forest ravaged by *Dendroctonus*, a bark beetle... In 2018 the forests suffered the full force of a number of devastating phenomena linked, to a greater or lesser degree, to climate change, at a time when they play a major role in mitigating the effects of greenhouse gas emissions. What adaptation strategies should be implemented to boost their resilience in this situation? Which tools, training or forestry practices should we deploy, while taking into account the specific features of each region? Responding to these **major issues requires an innovative approach involving many actors**, and this is the approach promoted by EIP AGRI within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy. Through its support of focus groups, European projects involving many actors, operational groups and themed networks, it encourages the cross-referencing of work, knowledge, actors, scales, etc. with the purpose of deploying an innovative approach to tackle together one of the major challenges of our century.

In the context of national organisation by EIP AGRI, the Rural Network entrusted the AFORCE network via the National Centre for Privately-owned Forests (CNPf) with undertaking a themed expert assessment, entitled **"Forestry and Woodland Sector, Climate Change and Innovation"**. Conducted from 2017 to 2018, this assessment established state-of-the-art-knowledge and practices in this area, set up and organised inter-regional working groups, assessed the results and made recommendations. *"Organised with the support of the Regions, the six workshops made it possible in particular to bring the actors involved in adapting the forests to climate change together and informing them of the funding packages available for forestry innovation,"* remarks Benjamin Chapelet, manager for the Europe project at the CNPF. *"Most of them were already aware of the major projects, such as INCREdible, but they did not know that these projects were supported by the EIP. They are anticipating further discussions and sharing on these issues, which affect them in their own regions, as well as in neighbouring regions."* To date, some 10% of the European operational groups are working on forestry issues: *"This is too few at a time when climate change has to become a priority and when the EIP is offering a response to research needs in the forestry sector: observation of developments and impact, testing of new species and forestry methods, site-specific forestry diagnoses, etc."*



In parallel with this expert assessment task, a focus group comprising twenty or so European experts also undertook work on adapting to and fighting climate change. Intended to identify the priorities for R&D and tools for decision-making, it defined six issues for future operational forestry groups. These included: the deployment of methods for promoting the use of deciduous species in forestry renewal, the development of tele-detection systems for monitoring signs of die-back and health risks and also the development of plans for adaptive forestry management taking into account the risks and opportunities linked to climate change. *"Starting from the specific issues for the end users - the forestry managers, the operational groups are innovating and re-inventing the traditional and vertical R&D pattern. They are providing coherence and are asking the advice of researchers on practical questions,"* Benjamin Chapelet assures us.

Researchers, development workers, forestry advisers, trainers, managers, foresters, public decision-makers - more than 140 professionals have recently become aware of the brakes, the levers and the recommendations, which have emerged from the work undertaken under the aegis of EIP AGRI. This work has in fact contributed to fueling the discussion on the choice of species and forestry practices at the AFORCE symposium. Organised last April in Montpellier, the event marked the tenth anniversary of this network, which comprises the main bodies involved in the transfer of knowledge to forestry managers: ONF, CNPF, Inra, Irstea, IGN, FCBA, and EFI...

### Two EIP-AGRI reports on adapting forests to climate change

- **"Forestry practice and climate change"**  
Focus Group Report No. 24 "New practices and tools for adapting to and mitigating climate change in the forestry sector", 36 p., January 2019
- **"Forest and woodland sector, climate change and innovation"**  
National themed expert assessment report, 49p., March 2019.

More information...

[www.reseau-aforce.fr](http://www.reseau-aforce.fr)



## "Building the forest of tomorrow together"

Laure Ferrier, Director of the Regional Union of Forested Municipalities (URCOFOR) in Normandy



We sense the changes linked to climate change, but how are we to tackle them? The question is posed by Laure Ferrier, the organiser of the EURO FORNORM operational group. Initiated in 2018 as part of the RDP of Haute and Basse Normandie, this operational group steered by URCOFOR Normandie is intended to create and organise a network of Norman forested rural areas. It brings together professionals from the forest and woodland sector, researchers and teachers in higher education, associations, elected representatives, citizens, etc. They are all involved in dealing with the same issue: the future of the Norman forest with regard to climate change. *"Our forests are going to evolve in the coming decades and this will entail **environmental but also economic and social changes**,"* explains Laure Ferrier. *"Species like beech will no longer have conditions suitable for producing timber, for example. In addition, in order to respond to the current need for timber construction, the processors are encouraging forestry owners to replace them by softwoods, but is this the right solution? There are a number of uncertainties. This is why we are supporting an ambitious project: building the forest of tomorrow in Normandy together."*

In 2018 the EURO FORNORM operational group - Emergence and organisation of an innovative, operational network for the forested rural areas in Normandy - contributed to setting up a regional task force and to **encouraging exchanges on a variety of subjects between the professionals and users of the forest**: development of the local woodland, access for the public, species to promote, carbon storage, protection of the biodiversity, etc. This dialogue was supported by several regional initiatives: outings to the public and private forests open to everyone and guided by the foresters, together with a symposium on the future of the Norman forests. The symposium brought together some hundred participants, half of whom were elected representatives and local authority technicians. *"Having listened to the expectations and approaches of each party, we are now about to restart the debate,"* says a delighted Laure Ferrier. This year the operational group is in fact suggesting new innovative actions, such as participating in role play, which will quiz the participants on climate change and forestry management. Meetings on specific cases and outings in the forest with associated theatre are also programmed. *"The EIP grants the means to organise an innovative campaign over the long term by bringing together actors with diverse and complementary profiles,"* says the organiser with approval.

\* Examples: Communauté d'agglomération Seine-Eure, PNR des Boucles de la Seine Normande, Métropole de Rouen Normandie, PNR Normandie Maine, PNR du Perche, Ecodiv laboratory (URA Université de Rouen Normandie – IRSTEA), Mesnières-en-Bray School of Forestry, Région Normandie, DREAL, ADEME, CRPF, ONF, ProfessionsBois (timber professions)



## "Developing new tools to influence forestry choices"

Roland De Lary, Director of CRPF Nouvelle-Aquitaine, the regional forestry ownership centre



The first is a pillar of the forestry economy in the Landes. The second sees its population decline and hit by two diseases, phytophthora and canker. The maritime pine and the chestnut are the two forest species under close study by the Precision forestry in Nouvelle-Aquitaine operational group. Begun this year and steered by the National Centre for Forestry Ownership (CNPFF\*), this group is working towards the aim of sustainable management of the forests. It intends **to develop and disseminate technical and economic tools** destined to help managers in their forestry choices, in particular in the context of climate change. *"From the scale of the forests themselves to that of the individual tree, the aim is to use modern technologies to optimise forestry operations"* summarises Roland de Lary, Director of the CRPF Nouvelle-Aquitaine. *"When is the right time to make a clearing in a population of maritime pines? What is the state of the trees and what development is possible in a chestnut coppice? How much carbon can it sequester? Our tools are specific and practical and*

*ought to allow foresters, technicians and researchers to undertake fast field measures via their Smartphone."* The project anticipates in particular combining tools for early warning of climate changes: BioClimSol, the ARCHI architectural tree analysis method and Climafor, the forest GHG inventory assessment tool. *"These three solutions brought together and put together with a participative database may give our forests a real future,"* believes Roland de Lary. *"The EIP is a valuable lever for setting up a partnership with public, economic and scientific actors and for responding to the innovation needs of the sector."*



\* in partnership with ONF, Inra, IGN, FCBA, the Purpan School of Engineering, the Department for the health of the forests, the cooperative Alliance Forêts Bois and the Communauté de communes de Fumel Vallée du Lot.

## The MCDR projects exhibited at the Salon de l'Agriculture

From 23 February to 3 March, the Rural Network stand at the Salon de l'Agriculture welcomed many actors in search of information or partners. They spoke in particular with providers of MCDR projects on issues such as generation renewal in farming, the role of forests in the development of the territories and diversity in the workplace in agricultural smallholdings.

The agro-ecological transition, renewal of rural life, urban-rural relationships, the settlement of young farmers... The 2019 edition of the international Salon de l'Agriculture gave the NRN and the Ministry the opportunity to broach a variety of subjects, which are at the heart of reality for the territories. Present at the National Network stand, the MCDR project providers had the opportunity to present the challenges in their work in promoting rural development. This was the case in particular for Vincent Jannot, project manager for the MCDR TERREAU "Transfer of successful experience in the rural environment: dissemination, agriculture, uses", piloted by the Terre de Liens Association. He came with his partners to present a preview of the "PARCEL" tool: a food

converter, which makes it possible to assess food production capacity in a territory or on a farm and reciprocally to calculate the agricultural land surface required to feed a given population. Accessible as open source as of September 2019, the purpose of this tool is to provide advice and support to farmers, citizens and local authorities in food strategy for their farm or their territory.

The projects and investment policy operations manager at APCMA France, Marie Sergent for her part promoted the MCDR Madame project: *"Its purpose is to promote diversity in trade across several rural areas, in the AURA and PACA regions, in the knowledge that some trades are currently very gender-biased and that only 25% of rural trade businesses are managed by women,"* explains Marie Sergent. *"The project consists in undertaking a sociological investigation of diversity in the workplace in order to identify good practices and to test innovative solutions. Our presence at the Rural Network stand allows us to increase our visibility and to talk with other MCDR project providers."*

More information...

[www.reseaurural.fr/centre-de-ressources/actualites/le-reseau-rural-au-salon-de-lagriculture-echanger-rencontrer](http://www.reseaurural.fr/centre-de-ressources/actualites/le-reseau-rural-au-salon-de-lagriculture-echanger-rencontrer)

## MCDR, NR and technical advisers: creating links between the national and regional levels

Some sixty participants came to Paris on 7 February to attend the presentation of the 21 MCDR projects and workshops organised by the ENRD, the ASP (Services and Payment Agency) and the Rural Development Observatory. It was a morning marked by the variety of procedures highlighted and the richness of the discussions.



The settlement of young people, the agro-economic transition, agro-forestry, equality between women and men, ESS, IT, food governance, services to the population - the diversity of topics covered by the 21 MCDR projects exhibited on that day reflected

the dynamism of the actors involved in the projects who are closest to the needs and realities of the territories. Having presented their initiatives, the project providers were invited to discuss with their peers, in an informal, wide-ranging way, in order to create bridges between projects, suggest fields for study or work on common themes. Among the subjects covered were key questions on rural development, such as capitalisation, cooperation and the sustainability of initiatives. In parallel, many workshops were offered, in particular by the ENRD on developing projects at the European level, by the Observatoire du Développement rural (ODR) on assessing rural development policy and by the ASP on the administrative questions to which project providers may seek answers. *"The discussions opened up perspectives to me: I discovered new MCDR projects on which we would be able to work across different sectors,"* was the opinion expressed, for example, by Cécile Bonnefoy-Claudet, operations manager at the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Regional Council and coordinator of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Regional Network.

More information...

[www.reseaurural.fr/centre-de-ressources/actualites/journee-mcdr-rrr-referents-techniques-tisser-des-liens-entre-les](http://www.reseaurural.fr/centre-de-ressources/actualites/journee-mcdr-rrr-referents-techniques-tisser-des-liens-entre-les)



## The 1<sup>st</sup> National Agro-forestry Practices Competition honoured five farmers

Initiated as part of the REUNIR-AF project, the National Agro-forestry Practices Competition presented awards to farmers involved in sustainable agriculture. Praised for their exemplary agro-forestry practices, these winners received their prizes during the Salon de l'Agriculture in Paris.

They all have a special relationship with rural trees and have chosen to integrate them and to promote them within their production systems. At the Salon de l'Agriculture last February, five farmers were awarded prizes as part of the 1st National Agro-forestry Competition. Organised by the MCDR REUNIR-AF project and co-organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the standing conference of the Chambers of Agriculture (APIA) and the Afac-Agroforesteries organisation for the promotion of rural trees, the purpose of this event is to *"make all actors in the rural world and the territories aware of the different ecosystem services to which agro-forestry can provide answers,"* explains Sylvie Monier, REUNIR-AF organiser for the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. **Trees are sometimes seen as an inconvenience to farming, whereas they can have a relevant place in the agro-ecology of a farm.** *"This competition highlights the many benefits for biodiversity, agricultural production, the conservation of the countryside, soil erosion, the image of farming and so on."*

*"We have researched a variety of different situations and have come across approaches illustrating agro-ecology,"* explains Sylvie Monier. For this first edition, the competition was held between June 2018 and February 2019 in four regions: Pays de la Loire, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Centre - Val de Loire and Auvergne - Rhône-Alpes. **A committee made up of agronomists, ecologists, zoo-technicians, landscape gardeners and agro-forester farmers** visited the land of 15 farmers, who were pre-selected by regional panels of judges and who have profiles in various production sectors, and made their assessments. They analysed the agro-forestry practices on three scales: the land itself, the land within its farming system and the land within its territory and its

countryside. The same criteria were observed for the land of each of the candidates - diversity or tree and shrub species, capacity for biodiversity, infiltration of rainwater, production quality, resilience, etc.

The winners? For example, a dairy cattle breeder in Petit-Mars (44), Yves Clouet from the GAEC des Chênes was awarded first prize in the category "land plot between 5 and 10 years". This farmer farms organically an area of 13 hectares bordered by an ancient, multi-species hedge. In 2012 he planted intra-plot lines of trees with several purposes, including windbreaks for the prevailing winds, food autonomy, developing agro-ecological practices. The panel of judges applauded *"his desire to protect the soil, to ensure the well-being of his animals and using the potential of bio-diversity to adapt to climate change"*. Settled in Francheses (03), Gérard Vernis runs a farm specialising in the organic rearing of 150 Charolais animals. With the aid of a wood workshop and a sustainable management plan for his hedges on a plot of about 10 hectares, this farmer fuels a wood chip boiler and produces wood chip bedding. He was awarded first prize in the category "land plot over 10 years". *"This farmer has a global, innovative vision and promotes the bocage,"* says Sylvie Monier in congratulation. *"He allows his hedges to grow, exploit their wood and studies bio-diversity in a search for agronomic and zoo-technical performance."* Gérard Vernis is also rewarded for his initiatives in passing on value and know-how to his colleagues, students from agricultural colleges and local elected representatives. When the prize was awarded, the panel of judges congratulated him on the fact that *"This farm is a modern show-case for the 21st century of an historic bourbonnais bocage."* Before they concluded, the judges stated, *"All these farmers have demonstrated by example that there is a continuum between farming and forestry, between production and environment, between private interest and seeking the public interest."*

More information...

<https://afac-agroforesteries.fr/lexcellence-des-pratiques-agroforestieres-a-lhonneur-au-salon-de-lagriculture/>



# LIFE OF THE NETWORK

## Forum NetworX

To celebrate its 10th birthday, last April the ENRD organised a European meeting in Brussels for actors for rural development: the forum, "NetworX – Inspiring Rural Europe." Regional rural networks, local action groups and the MCDR TRESSONS were among the participants from France. It was an opportunity to discuss the future of the European network, to develop their initiatives and to discover inspiring examples. Report



National and regional rural networks, themed networks of economic actors, farmers and representatives of LEADER territories were among the more than 400 persons who responded to the invitation from the forum, "NetworX – Inspiring Rural Europe". Organised by ENRD on 11 and 12 April in Brussels, this event highlighted the ten years of work of the rural networks and underlined the importance of acting in a network when implementing rural development policy. Composed notably of representatives of the rural network from Normandy and from Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, the local action groups from the Est Audois and the Pays d'Ancenis and the group working on the MCDR TRESSONS project, the French delegation took part in the many workshops, which punctuated the two days of the forum. Combining reflection, debates and games, they covered subject such as Smart villages, the future of LEADER and the experiences of the local action groups. The French example of Collective Mobilisation for Rural Development (MCDR) projects made a notable contribution to a workshop illustrating the involvement of actors in rural development.

On the NRN stand and in the halls of the "Market Place" the French participants also promoted the MCDR projects, conversed with the local action groups and networks of the other Member States and a wine-tasting of "wines, which speak" was offered by the Est Audois local action group. *"The Market Place was also an opportunity to find out how each rural network is organised, their work topics, their methods, their concerns and so on,"* stressed Marine Rouchouse, project manager for Europe and rural development at Cap Rural, a resource centre for practices and trades in local development, which supports the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes rural network. *"The development sector for a forestry bio-economy in Germany, LEADER territories working together to welcome new inhabitants into the depopulated villages of Aragon, Swedish citizen-reporters sharing rural initiatives in the local media - I have collected many inspiring ideas and examples,"* says a delighted Martha Metais, the organiser of the rural network in Normandy.

## The actors for rural development meet in Brussels

Announced by the Commission, the creation of a future "CAP Network" was also at the heart of the discussions. This merger between the current ENRD and EIP-AGRI Service Point was mentioned by Phil Hogan, Director General of the DG AGRI, during the plenary conference. Margaritis Schinas, spokesperson for the Commission believes that this new network should contribute to the "de-Brusselsisation of Europe". Another high point of the forum was the award ceremony of prizes from the first edition of the "Rural Inspiration Awards", which celebrated the inspiring initiatives funded by EAFRD. From among 176 candidates from all over Europe, 25 projects were nominated for the competitiveness, environment, rural regeneration, social inclusion, LEADER or public procedure prizes. The French inter-regional project for the creation of a label for the sustainable management of hedges conducted by SCIC Bois bocage Energie was one of those nominated in the "Environment" category. Moment of pride for the French Enerterre delegation, a project from Normandy for the ecological renovation of the built heritage for persons in economic difficulty, when their project was awarded the prize in the "Social Inclusion" category.

### "Finding out about the experiences and practices of our peers in Europe"

*Hélène Mauron, LEADER programme manager for the Est-Audois LAG*



"NetworX is a rare and important moment for all the actors in European rural development. For our local action group it is also a major gain in visibility: for example, we have been able to present the range of "wines, which speak" from the Cave Terroirs du Vertige. Partly funded by LEADER, this range can at the same time promote our local area and our heritage, in particular the Cathares châteaux. Each bottle has a QR code, which, when scanned, takes you to a video on the characteristics of the wine, the temperature at which it should be drunk, the château, with which it is associated... The principle has proved very popular. Participating in this forum has also allowed me to find out about the experiences and practice of our peers in Europe. For example, the Eisenstrasse local action group (Austria) has used a crowdfunding campaign to support its projects. I found that an interesting solution to the issue of LEADER funding which may apply à posteriori."

More information...

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/networx-inspiring-rural-europe\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/networx-inspiring-rural-europe_en)



# LIFE OF THE NETWORK

## 13<sup>th</sup> Rural Network meeting in Athlone

## Young farmers testify



In February at a meeting in Ireland, the European rural networks discussed their practices, their future and many other topics, including Smart Villages and generation renewal in rural areas. A young market gardener, Thomas Gibert was invited to present his innovative collective farming model.

It was right in the heart of Ireland in Athlone that the representatives of the 28 rural networks in Europe decided to come together for their 13th annual meeting. Organised by ENRD and the Irish Rural Network on 21 and 22 February 2019, this was an opportunity to "work on communication, the next great events and the practices of each in order to work better together at the European level," according to David Armellini, organisation manager for the French Rural Network. The discussions included networking in the context of a post-2020 CAP (mentioned by the sociologist, Áine Macken-Walsh), Smart Villages, short food chains, implementation of the RDP. **"Specific attention was given to generation renewal in rural areas,"** stresses David Armellini. *"Many countries in Europe are seeing real haemorrhaging in the agricultural professions\* and in maintaining economic activity in rural areas."* How can we encourage the new generations to live in rural areas? How can we help them to start up in farming? Some of the answers were provided by young farmers from Italy, Germany, Ireland and France, who had come to talk of their success. This was notably the case with Thomas Gibert. The co-manager of a jointly run farm (GAEC) located in Haute-Vienne, he presented the farm he has set up together with a group of friends: la Tournerie.

*"A farm requires a huge amount of work and considerable financial investment: none of us could have set up on our own,"* states Thomas Gibert. This 32-year old market gardener founded the collective La Tournerie farm with ten other farmers. *"We have 84 hectares on which we farm organically, producing beer, pork, goat and cow cheese, yoghurt, bread or vegetables,"* says the trained agronomics

engineer. Established since 2015 thanks to support from the Plan de compétitivité et d'adaptation des exploitations agricoles (competitiveness and adaptation plan for agricultural businesses) (PCAÉ) and the Terre de Liens Association, the young partners sell direct from the farm and via cooperatives. They have also created a non-profit bar on the farm: *"The social link is a response to the sense of uneasiness in the world of farming,"* states Thomas Gibert. *"In Athlone I have been able to present the many interesting features of our model. To start with, diversified production allows an independent agri-eco system to be created with little input: the animals eat the spent brewer's grain and the unsold vegetables, their manure enriches the soil for growing vegetables, etc. We have returned to peasant farming where the independence of the farm is central. Working as a collective also allows us to share the tasks and to have a lighter work-load. Each of us is on call one weekend in eleven and has three weeks' holiday per year. Finally, we have few debts thanks to the joint purchase of production tools."*



\* In France, one farmer in five is under 40 years of age. In 2013 they represented 18.5% of the farmers in Metropolitan France (Source: SSP, Agreste, agricultural censuses, 2013 structure survey).

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/13th-nrns-meeting\\_fr](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/13th-nrns-meeting_fr)  
<https://terredeliens.org/la-tournerie.html>

More information...

# NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL RURAL NETWORKS

## Web conferences

Distance-learning, free of charge, open to everyone - the six web conferences proposed by the Regional Rural Networks during the course of the first semester of 2019 have continued to share rural development initiatives among actors everywhere in France. Feedback on this experiment in meeting online.

"What is the economic model? What activities does it propose? How is complementarity with the other third places managed? All the major questions, which I was asking myself on how a fab lab works were answered," states Nicolas Faudon. Territorial development manager at AGATE (Agence alpine des territoires), he attended the "Crest 8 Fablab, an innovation and cooperation tool for the economic actors in the territory" web conference. Organised in January by Cap rural, it was the first online meeting of a unique cycle of web conferences, offered by six Regional Rural Networks: Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, Brittany, Normandy, Pays de la Loire and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Programmed from 11.00 to 12.00 on the third Friday of each month, each web conference is structured around the testimony of an actor on site or a specialist in rural development, who is invited to share an initiative or an experience.

The results of a sociological study on the conditions of life for young women in rural areas, a presentation of a local RéGAM or Éco-Glan food governance network, a platform putting agricultural producers and citizen-consumers in touch with each other - these are just some of the many subjects presented and discussed online between January and June 2019. The sessions have been recorded

“  
*To be receptive  
to what is done  
elsewhere  
and not to reinvent  
the wheel*”

## A compendium of experiences in rural development

and can now be consulted on the Rural Network site and are sometimes accompanied by documentary resources. The idea of this innovative format came from Cap rural. "In 2017 we introduced internal web conferences on the experiences of actors in our territory," recounts Patrick Grimault, networking manager responsible for emerging subjects at Cap rural. "We then offered other networks the opportunity to participate in this interesting experiment, in order to extend beyond the regional framework and to bring a larger audience together." "The format is well calibrated," thinks Nicolas Faudon. "There is a good balance between the time given to presentation and that given to discussion." The Youth and Popular Education Counsellor at the social cohesion department, the DDCSPP in Ariège, Catherine Sené followed the second web conference devoted to the sociological study, "Les filles du coin" (The Local Girls). She is also impressed by this new type of meeting: «This makes it possible to be receptive to what is done elsewhere and not to reinvent the wheel. In just one hour I discovered a new angle for my work on the place of young people in rural areas."

Free of charge, open to everyone, with no need to register beforehand, the web conferences are intended to adjust to the constraints of each person's schedule and movements. All that is required is an Internet connection, a webcam, a microphone and the installation of the GoToMeeting video-conference software. The participants then join the meeting by means of a link and an access code provided in advance. "By reason of the distances and the many requests we receive, I think it is essential that we develop this webinar format," believes Nicolas Faudon. "It becomes difficult to organise working sessions for a day or even a half-day at the regional level. We must make more use of lighter forms of discussion," confirms Patrick Grimault. "The door is open to any other Network which would like to take part!"

More information... [www.reseaurural.fr/region/normandie/webconferences](http://www.reseaurural.fr/region/normandie/webconferences)





# NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL RURAL NETWORKS

## Guadeloupe



It is 26 March 2019 in the hemicycle of the Regional Council headquarters in Basse-Terre. The Guadeloupe Regional Network is holding its General Assembly in the presence of the actors in the rural areas, including the four local action groups in the Antilles archipelago: Sud Basse-Terre, pays Marie-Galante, Nord Basse-Terre and Nord Grande-Terre. **On the agenda, the structuring and development of the network: strategy, priorities,**

## The Rural Network structures its initiatives

**methodology, mediation.** The discussions have made it possible in particular to identify the new actors ready to join the Network and to obtain a better understanding of their problems.

Organised by François Charbonné, the Guadeloupe Rural Network is jointly steered by the President of the Regional Council, the Prefect and the President of the Council General. Its principal purpose is to set up a local support network, cycles of reflection on different issues, together with a study and **groups working on priority subjects, such as short food chains, food production and forestry.** In addition, the Guadeloupe network wants to simplify access to information for the actors in rural development by, for example, creating a funding engineering guide and a directory. Other working areas envisaged with the local action groups: the development of agro-environmental initiatives (uprooting of diseased trees, etc.), support in retraining farmers towards planting indigenous or high-value plants and the campaign against a phenomenon of major dimensions: the widespread departure of students.

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## "The pleasure of promoting specific, positive actions"

Christine Lainé, Manager of the National Rural Network



*"Collaborating with persons from a variety of horizons and interests who are aiming for a common objective": this is Christine Lainé's motivation and the common thread of her career in central administration. Elected representatives, scientists, community leaders - these are just some of the actors with whom Christine has already*

*had the opportunity of collaborating. Since January she has had meetings with others. The actors in rural development are "people involved on the ground in conducting specific positive actions, which make things grow," is her appreciative summary.*

Christine Lainé succeeds Arnaud Chatry in the Network's cross-marketing post. She coordinates and monitors the National Rural Network's tenders and action plans, in close association with ASP (Services and Payment Agency). She becomes involved in supporting the regional rural networks, the actors in EPI and

LEADER and also participates in major meetings, such as the Salon de l'Agriculture, the recent NetworX forum in Brussels or also the Agri Innovation summit in Lisieux.

Having worked in the fields of international relations and budget management, Christine has organised events for the Commission for Genetic Engineering, a consultative body, which until 2008 evaluated the risks for public health and the environment inked to the voluntary dissemination of GMO. Christine next supervised the implementation of the "Un fruit pour la récré" [A fruit for break-time] campaign initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, then co-financed by EU funding for a more global deployment in primary schools in Europe under the name "Fruit and vegetables at school".

At the Rural Network Christine now enjoys discovering every day the diversity of actors and subjects; *"It is refreshing and I enjoy taking part in developing projects for conserving the countryside, re-appropriating small villages, more environment-friendly livestock farming, etc."*

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The French Rural Network brings together all the stakeholders in the rural world at the national and regional level to enable them to exchange and work together. The objective is to facilitate the implementation of projects linking agriculture, forestry, trade and commerce, tourism, the environment, services, etc. In the course of its work, the Rural Network offers tools, methods, analyses and recommendations.

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## SELECTION OF PUBLICATIONS



### Becoming an organic farmer - the keys to starting up

Offered by the FNAB, this 24-page guide encourages women to set themselves up in organic farming in the best possible conditions. It is principally structured around the testimony of seven women farmers who have recently set up their businesses!

[www.produire-bio.fr/articlespratiques/devenir-agricultrice-bio-les-cles-pour-sinstaller/](http://www.produire-bio.fr/articlespratiques/devenir-agricultrice-bio-les-cles-pour-sinstaller/)



### Promoting access to employment for women in rural areas

The fruit of studies and work piloted by the CGET, this guide presents the tools, the good practice, legal provisions, public aid and testimonies in order to remove the direct and indirect brakes on access to employment for women in rural areas.

[www.cget.gouv.fr/sites/cget.gouv.fr/files/atoms/files/guide\\_emploi-des-femmes\\_cget.pdf](http://www.cget.gouv.fr/sites/cget.gouv.fr/files/atoms/files/guide_emploi-des-femmes_cget.pdf)



### You mentioned local development? History and founding principles of local development as told by the activists who created them

This work by the Union nationale des acteurs et structures du développement local (Unadel) draws up a valuable inventory of 30 years of local development.

<http://unadel.org/presentation-de-louvrage-vous-avez-dit-developpement-local/>

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