



# Added Value of Networking

## Success Story

Success Story title *Competition "Prima Plattelandsproject 2010"*

Theme *Network communications; Knowledge exchange; Cooperation*

NRN *BE-Flanders* Coordinator *Flemish Rural Network*

Partners *None, but there were different parties in the jury to select the best practices (ENRD, Walloon Rural Network, managing authorities, etc).*

Period *April 2010 – January 2011* Resources *Approx. €24,000*

Geo-location *Prize-giving ceremony on 14 January – Ghent (East-Flanders)*

Beneficiaries *Farmers or organizations who set up rural projects or activities in Flanders, subsidized under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP II)*

### Background

As in all Member States, the rural development program incorporates the establishment of a rural network, aiming at networking and communication between all rural actors. The Flemish Rural Network aims at being the *"driving force that generates group dynamics and gets rural areas on the move"*. One of the assignments of the Flemish Rural Network is identifying and analyzing transferable good practices, but also stimulating cooperation. That's why the network has organized this competition: the search for best practices in rural development in Flanders. Initially, there were five themes: *"added value through cooperation"*, *"care for nature and biodiversity"*, *"communication and education as an instrument"*, *"smart marketing strategies"* and *"smart use of energy in agriculture and rural areas"*. The last theme was rejected, because there weren't any valid candidatures for this theme.

### Main activities

In order to organize such a competition, there's a lot of preparation. At first, there has to be a standard form, accompanied with a regulation, so everything is clear for everybody and everyone is treated equally. In order to raise awareness and reach as many as possible people, brochures and posters were made and spread.

We received a lot of candidatures (35 to be exact) that had to be checked for admissibility. The competition in one of the themes was cancelled because there weren't any valid candidatures. 3 of the 35 candidatures were rejected because they didn't meet the conditions.

Afterwards, the provincial juries decided which of the submitted files could continue to the next round (up to three projects per theme per province). Then an international jury selected the five best candidates for each theme for the whole of Flanders.

After this selection, we have created a website for the people to vote for their favorite project(s). There were 18 qualified projects, divided over 4 themes. This resulted in 5 projects per theme, except for theme *"smart marketing strategies"*. In this theme, there were only 3 projects. No less than 7.300 valid votes were registered! These votes resulted in one winner per theme. The winners were honoured during an event at the agricultural fair in Ghent on 14 January 2011. They got the opportunity to organize an activity concentrated on exchange of knowledge (for the amount of maximum €2,000). Because of the success of this competition we created an English brochure with the winners and the other best practices.



#### Main results/benefits

As mentioned earlier we created an English brochure with the winners and the other best practices for dissemination. We also published this brochure and other additional information on our website [www.ruraalnetwerk.be](http://www.ruraalnetwerk.be).

For the moment, one winner (non-profit organization "Papaver") has used the total amount of €2,000 for activities concerning the exchange of knowledge. Another winner ("Regionaal Landschap Vlaamse Ardennen") has already used 2/3 of its prize money. The other two winners ("Biblioservicebus Zvevegem" and "Délimel, vers van bij de boer") haven't used their prize money, however, they already thought about possible actions. The deadline to use the prize money is the end of 2012.

For example, "Papaver" spent the money on learning from other non-profit organizations in the same sector, but they also took a class about creating and using a good website for their organization.

"Regionaal Landschap Vlaamse Ardennen" attended a seminar in Barcelona about little owls, but it also organized meetings, info moments, ...

So with their prize money, the organizations can organize and/or attend interesting events, educations, etc.

All the winners have mentioned that winning this competition resulted into more awareness and fame.

But also the Flemish Rural Network took advantage of this competition: it got more publicity. So in the end, this competition was (and is) a win-win networking situation for both parties.

#### Contribution of the NSU

The Flemish Rural Network was responsible for the whole event.

#### Contribution of the partners

There weren't really partners, but without the jury, this competition wouldn't have been succeeded (for the jury: see above).

#### Success factors

In this competition, the candidates could prove that they established really successful projects even the projects that didn't win. The dissemination and networking power of this kind of activity is very high.

#### Additional information

A report of the honouring of the winners: <http://www.ruraalnetwerk.be/activiteitenverslagen/activiteiten-vlaams-ruraal-netwerk/prijsuitreiking-prima-plattelandproject>

Reports of the undertaken actions of the winners: <http://www.ruraalnetwerk.be/activiteitenverslagen/verslagen-winnaars-wedstrijd-prima-plattelandproject-2010>

