



NRN Success Stories

How to capitalise upon good/best practices: the creation of a Scientific Committee connecting academic partners and practitioners on the ground – an example from Wallonia (Belgium)

In its mission to identify and disseminate good and transferable practices, the Walloon Rural Development Network created a special approach, namely a Scientific Committee (SC). The SC helps the Network Support Unit in its analysis of the needs of the network, it provides business intelligence on rural development and evolution of the socio-economic part in the debate on rural development guidelines. It supports the working groups, innovative methodological approaches for LAGs, and of course it participates in the capitalisation of good practices and it formulates recommendations.

The main objectives of the establishment of the Scientific Committee (SC) are:

- to develop exchange of experiences between regions and EAFRD beneficiaries and allow transfer of learning to improve the quality of projects developed under the Walloon Rural Development Program (PwDR). This requires the development and dissemination of methodological tools for actors of rural development (trade, expertise, innovation etc.);
- to develop a critical eye on the projects by their analysis and implementation of quality indicators for better understanding of the results of these projects and enable capacity building of actors (training, action research, etc.);
- to support the formulation of recommendations and concrete contributions to the policy of rural development in Wallonia and in Europe; and,
- to contribute to the content of communication tools and animation produced by the Network Support Unit.

The subjects of capitalization can be of two types:

- methods (partnership approach for project design and implementation, stakeholder involvement, etc.);
- transversal themes of rural development (territorial approach, sustainable development, sustainability of projects, etc.).

Composition of the Scientific Committee:

Five academic / research entities formed the Scientific Committee during Phase 1 (2009-2011):

- Department of « Earth and Life Institute/ Environmental Sciences » at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL);
- Department of Economics and Rural Development at the University of Liège (Ulg – Agro biotech Gembloux);
- Department « Socio-Economy-Environment and Development » at the University of Liege (Ulg);
- Methods of Geography Laboratory at the University of Liege (Ulg);
- The Walloon Centre for Agricultural Research – CRA-W.

The Scientific Committee:

- is familiar with multidisciplinary approaches;
- has invested in applied research and / or production of training tools; and,
- has significant experience in supporting, monitoring and evaluation of rural or territorial development projects.

Background and Objectives

Methodology and Activities





Activities of the Scientific Committee:

The two principles that guide the Scientific Committee are multidisciplinary and transversality.

Based on their analysis of the needs of the network, the Scientific Committee and the Network support Unit will offer to the Steering Committee and the General Assembly of RwDR a few questions / key issues to be addressed in transversal discussions bringing together operators of projects related to one or more axes of the RDP.

The Scientific Committee supports the transversal thematic working groups via:

- their participation;
- assistance in the implementation of tools;
- assistance in the capitalization;
- assistance in the construction of indicators;
- the conduct of research activities.

Examples of some productions of the Scientific Committee during Phase 1 (2009-2011) that support the networking between rural development actors in Wallonia:

- studies of practices and mechanisms for trans-communal/territorial cooperation in Wallonia;
- studies of short supply chains of local agricultural products in Condroz-Famenne;
- study on the capacity of farmers to adopt new tools for environmental management such as payments for environmental services;
- designing a visualization tool of a territory (animation tool) in collaboration with the LAG Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse and the LAG Condruces;
- study entitled "Benchmarking of best practices in setting up public-private partnerships in the fight against erosion, flood runoff and mudflows"s
- conducting a study on the economic valuation of eco-systemic services (SES) produced by the Carmeuse company through the rehabilitation of the career of Moha;
- developing an« Energy » topology of Walloon farms for implementation of advice on efficient use of energy (evaluation of energy savings deposits).

**Outputs of the Scientific
Committee**

Author

Xavier Delmon, Walloon Rural Network

