



Rural Development  
Programme  
of the  
Republic of Slovenia  
2007 - 2013

**ANNEX 15:**  
**ACTION PLAN**  
**PROPOSAL FOR THE**  
**RURAL NETWORK**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Rural Development Programme for the RS 2007-2013 is aimed at competitive adaptation of the agricultural and food industry sector to the single market requirements, promoting the safety and quality of food products, development of alternative sources of income in rural areas and at the preservation and sustainable development of multifunctional forests.

The preservation and development of rural areas, their natural and cultural heritage, values and tradition serve as groundwork for further development of tourism, small business and service activities. At the same time it ensures equal settlement as well as sustainable and equal development of all regions in the country.

The establishment and operation of the network shall contribute to successful information on the objectives and measures of the rural development policy and other development policies of the country as well as the EU. Good awareness shall enhance the efficient implementation of the measures, the networking of development players, experience exchange and cooperation.

The national rural network is aimed at promoting the cooperation and mutual help between individuals and organisations involved in the rural development and thus ensure appropriate representation of the rural interests and information flow at all levels. The rural network shall connect and join all who endeavour at different levels for the development of Slovenian rural areas. The network shall provide for meetings, coordination and support to overall development ideas and projects from rural areas, for information and education actions of all operators engaged in the development of rural areas and interested public as well as represent the interests of the members at the national and international level.

## **2. RURAL NETWORK**

### **2.1 Short presentation of the rural network**

Council Regulation (EC) No 169/2005 foresees in Article 68 the establishment, operation and financing of a national rural network which groups all organisations and administrations involved in rural development. The establishment and operation of the network shall contribute to successful information actions on the objectives and measures of the rural development policy and other development policies at the national as well as EU level. Good awareness shall enhance the efficient implementation of the measures, the networking of development players, experience exchange and cooperation.

The network shall work in two ways, which shall provide feedback information on the approach and implementation of the rural policy set and enable more efficient evaluation and analysis.

### **2.2. Organisation and structure of the rural network**

The rural network shall group governmental, non-governmental and private organisations and administrations involved in rural development.

The national rural network shall operate within the framework of the MAFF. The implementation of individual tasks of the network shall be assigned to contractors based on calls for tender to different competent organisations and individuals.

The supervision over the operation and implementation of the tasks shall be carried out by the MAFF. The rural network also supports the tasks of technical assistance, mainly as regards the information action for the public and data gathering for evaluation.

### **2.3. Aim of the rural network**

Grouping into the national rural network means exchange of accomplishments, experience and know-how between all players, rural areas, administrations and organisations involved in the rural development within the EU.

Networking is a way of transferring good practices, spreading innovations and building on the know-how gained from the local rural development; it creates new bonds between people, projects and rural areas and thus overcomes the isolation which some rural regions face; it helps promoting partnership projects and thus enables the networking of groups at the local and national level.

The network operation is mainly aimed at promoting, informing and animating partners at the international, national and local level for enhanced and efficient implementation of the measures, at grouping the rural operators, experience exchange and cooperation.

### **2.4. General provisions on rural network management**

The MAFF manages the rural network and supervises its operation and implementation of the tasks.

### **3. RURAL NETWORK OPERATION**

#### **3.1. Legal basis for rural network operation**

Legal basis for the establishment and operation of the rural network represent:

- Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD);
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006 of 15 December 2006 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD);
- National Strategy Plan of Rural Development for the Republic of Slovenia 2007-2013;
- Rural Development Programme for the Republic of Slovenia 2007-2013.

These documents bind Slovenia to draw up an action plan on the rural network.

#### **3.2. Rules of the rural network operation**

Basic rules:

- The MAFF establishes and runs the rural network.
- The organisation and the manner of the network operation shall comply with the guidance for the implementation of technical assistance to be prepared by the MAFF.

## **4. TARGETS AND TARGET GROUPS OF THE RURAL NETWORK**

The rural network operation must be as efficient as possible and target oriented. Therefore the objectives of the network were clearly defined as well as for the organisations for which the network operation is intended.

### **4.1. Main objectives of the rural network:**

The objectives of the rural network establishment and operation are:

1. Providing information on rural development at the national and international level;
2. Information on the rural development policy activities;
3. Promotion of inter-territorial cooperation, networking and good practices exchange;
4. Provision of feedback information on the implementation performance of the national development policies in different areas at the national level;
5. Increasing the transparency of the measures and the realisation of the rural development policy set;

### **4.2. National rural network activities:**

For achieving the objectives set the following activities shall be performed under the national rural network:

- a) Information actions for rural population and other organisations and administrations in rural areas on the rural development policies measures (periodicals, promotional materials, homepage, seminars, meeting, forum, contact points, etc.).
- b) Promoting the cooperation of rural development operators at the cross-regional and international level (established and accessible base of rural organisations and administrations, meetings and seminars as well as good practices visitations), including training, information and support activities to cooperation projects between local action groups, including the application of existing instructions, data bases and tools of the European Commission for the measure of LAG cooperation.
- c) Data gathering and delivery on the development of rural areas and the implementation of the rural policies measures.

### **4.3. Organisation and management bodies involved in rural development**

The national rural network groups all organisations and management bodies involved in rural development.

In conducting its tasks the rural network shall cooperate with the following organisations at the European, national and local level:

a) European level:

- European Rural Development Network;
- rural networks of other Member States.

b) National level:

- ministries;
- Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia;
- Community of Slovene Municipalities;- Association of Slovene Municipalities;
- Rural Development Network;
- Regional development agencies (12);
- Association of Slovenian Farm Women;
- Association of Slovenian Rural Youth;

c) Local level:

- municipalities (210);
- administrative units (58);
- local action groups;
- companies;
- associations;
- rural development cores;
- natural persons.

#### **4.4. Organisations involved in rural development within individual axes**

*Axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector and Axis 2: Improving the environment and the rural areas:*

- faculties, higher education institutions and other education institutions in the field of agriculture, forestry and food and similar activities;
- farmers' associations;
- Association of Slovenian Farm Women at the national and associations at the local level;
- Association of Slovenian Rural Youth the national and associations at the local level;
- associations of agricultural products producers;
- Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (CAFS) at the national level;
- CAFS - Agricultural and forestry institutes at the local level;
- Association of forest owners;
- forest institutes;
- Forestry institute;
- Agriculture institute;
- economic interest associations;
- organisations and institutions related to the arrangement of agricultural areas;
- organisations and institutions involved in the environmental and natural heritage protection;
- other institutions involved in rural development;
- natural persons.

*Axis 3: improving the quality of life in rural areas and promoting the diversification of the rural economy*

- Municipalities Association of Slovenia ;
- Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia;
- Chamber of Craft of Slovenia;
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia;
- Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (CAFS)- Association of tourist farms of Slovenia;
- Tourist information centres;
- Cultural heritage protection institutes;
- Regional development agencies;
- Natural persons.

*Axis 4: LEADER – building local development initiatives*

- regional development agencies;
- local action groups;
- Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (CAFS) at the national level;
- CAFS - Agricultural advisory services at the local level;
- natural persons.

#### **National institutions involved in rural development**

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food;
- Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning;- Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs;
- Ministry of Economy;
- Ministry of Health;
- Agency of Agricultural Markets and Rural Development;
- Public Agency for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investment.

## **5. DEMARCATION OF THE TASKS UNDER RURAL NETWORK AND OTHER TASKS UNDER TECHNICAL ASSISTNCE**

The national rural network shall operate within the framework of the technical assistance. Therefore the tasks to be performed by the rural network must be demarcated from other tasks carried out under the technical assistance.

The rural network tasks within the framework of the technical assistance tasks shall be:

- capacity building for the implementation of promotion programmes and training of the local population for participation in drawing up local strategies;
- information and training actions for the local population;
- establishment of a system for gathering of good practice examples;
- help in finding potential partners on projects;

Within the framework of the technical assistance the following activities are envisaged:

- support to carrying out of the tasks in the implementation of the RDP 2007-2013;
- studies to improve and estimate the progress of the implementation of the RDP 2007-2013;
- analyses for drawing up calls for tender;
- evaluation of the implementation of the RDP 2007-2013;
- establishment, development, upgrading and maintenance of a computer system for monitoring and evaluation;
- information actions for the public (design of an overall graphical image, homepage, promotion material)
- organisation and realisation of workshops and seminars.



## **6. INFORMING THE PUBLIC**

One of the most important tasks of the rural network are information actions.

Information on the objectives and measures of the rural development policy and other development policies of the state Slovenia as well as the EU shall enhance successful implementation of the measures, networking of the development operators, experience exchange and cooperation.

The network shall provide for the coordination of the information flow between the local, national and European level.

The network shall work in two ways, which shall provide for feedback information on the approach and the implementation of the rural development policy set and enable more efficient evaluation and analysis.

Within the framework of information actions for the public the rural network shall prepare:

- promotional leaflet about the rural network;
- homepage (in Slovene and English language; presented shall be the activities and updated events within the framework of the rural network, data base of potential partners for cooperation in joint projects, data base of good practices);
- articles in the publications intended for target public and organisations involved in rural development;
- various events, meetings and seminars.

## 7. FINANCING OF THE RURAL NETWORK ACTIVITIES

The financial resources for the rural development operation shall be provided under the measure Technical assistance. For the network operation at least 10 percent of the technical assistance resources are intended, thereof maximum 20 percent for management.

*Table 1: Public resources for financing of the rural network establishment and activities (EUR – entire period)*

<b>Type of costs for the national rural network</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>EAFRD contribution</b>
a) for rural network establishment and operation	20% of 10% of resources for technical assistance = <b>120,035.56</b>	20% of 10% of resources for technical assistance = <b>90,026.68</b>
b) for performance of activities under the rural network action plan; including evaluation	80% of 10% of resources for technical assistance = <b>480,142.24</b>	80% of 10% of resources for technical assistance = <b>360,106.72</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>600,177.80</b>	<b>450,133.40</b>

*Table 2: Allocation of financial resources for financing of the rural network establishment and activities by years (EUR)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Financing (total)</b>	<b>Purpose a)</b>	<b>Purpose b)</b>
2007	55,739.69	17,147.94	38,591.75
2008	95,739.69	17,147.94	78,591.75
2009	100,739.69	17,147.94	83,591.75
2010	100,739.69	17,147.94	83,591.75
2011	95,739.69	17,147.94	78,591.75
2012	85,739.69	17,147.94	68,591.75
2013	65,739.69	17,147.94	48,591.75

## **8. TIME SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

### **8.1. Procedure and time schedule for rural network establishment**

The rural network is to be established by the end of 2008 at the latest through a public appeal to all potential partners which would be prepared to cooperate in the network.

### **8.2. Framework time plan of rural network activities 2007 – 2013**

#### **a) Envisaged activities for rural network establishment**

- in 2007: public appeal to potential partners on the establishment of the national rural network and the possibility of participation;
- by end of 2008 at the latest: establishment of the national rural network;
- promotion of the rural network: homepage, design and publication of the rural network leaflet and distribution.

#### **b) Activities in 2007 - 2013**

- annual meeting with the representatives of the organisations involved in the rural network and briefing on the network operation and activities and briefing on their expectations, wishes, etc.;
- annual presentation of accomplished activities under the RDP 2007-2013;
- annual participation on major public events;
- annual promotion of calls for tender and measures under the RDP 2007-2013;
- annual workshop on the presentation of good practices under developmental programmes of rural areas;
- drawing up of annual report on the rural network operation;
- information actions during the preparation of calls for tender for RDP measures;
- ongoing updating of the homepage.

Other activities in accordance with the proposals and needs of the operators involved in the rural network.

## **9. MONITORING OF THE RURAL NETWORK OPERATION AND REPORTING**

### **9.1. Method of activities registration and preparation of reports**

A computerised data base shall register all activities and indicators for monitoring of rural network operation performance. The analysis of the data shall be used in the preparation of the annual reports and in planning of new activities.

The realisation of the action plan shall be monitored by computerised data base analyses, which shall provide overview of the number of individual activities and by presented contents.

The network operation performance and the public response shall be monitored by the following indicators:

#### Quantitative:

- number of published publications (leaflets, brochures, etc.);
- number of homepage visits;
- number of seminars and average number of participants (see Annex 1);
- number of workshops and average number of participants (see Annex 1);
- number of inquires (visits, calls, e-mails – see Annex 3);
- performance of search tools for cooperation projects.

#### Qualitative

- evaluation of event organisation, quality of prepared information, advisory and animation (see Annex 9.2);
- public response to promotion materials made (evaluation of the quality of the information printed materials and the homepage – see Annex 2).

At every event (workshop, seminar, training) organised by the national rural network the presence of all participants shall be checked (see Annex 1).

To evaluate the quality of event performance the organisers shall use an evaluation questionnaire to be filled out by the participants. The filled out questionnaires are analysed right away.

The questionnaire analyses are stored for the preparation of reports drawn up after the event and included into the annual report of the rural network.

As long as the computerised data base is not established the activities and the public response shall be recorded manually on pre-prepared unique data sheets which shall be later entered in the computerised data base.



## Annex 2: Questionnaire on performed activity or event

With the intention to prepare the most suitable training and information system and provide quality and on time information this questionnaire was prepared to evaluate our work. We would appreciate your help by filling out the questionnaire. We thank you for your cooperation.

1. Please evaluate the training 1 to 5:  
(1 – very bad, 2 – bad, 3 – satisfactory, 4 – good, 5 – very good)

Comprehensibility of the contents:                    1    2    3    4    5

Applicability of prepared material:                    1    2    3    4    5

Answers the participants' questions:                    1    2    3    4    5

Atmosphere in the training:                    1    2    3    4    5

Organisation of the training:                    1    2    3    4    5

Evaluation of the lecturers:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1    2    3    4    5

\_\_\_\_\_ 1    2    3    4    5

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\_\_\_\_\_ 1    2    3    4    5

\_\_\_\_\_ 1    2    3    4    5

\_\_\_\_\_ 1    2    3    4    5

Overall evaluation:                    1    2    3    4    5

2. What did you like particularly about the workshop or seminar?

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What about the workshop or seminar would you improve?

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3. Evaluate the quality of the publications prepared for you:  
(1 – very bad, 2 – bad, 3 – satisfactory, 4 – good, 5 – very good)

Applicability of the information: 1 2 3 4 5

Design: 1 2 3 4 5

4. Which additional information would you like to receive?

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5. Other remarks, compliments and suggestions to improve the training:

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**Annex 3: Activities evaluation sheet**

<b>Date of activity</b>		<b>Location of activity</b>	
<b>Activity title</b>			
<b>Organiser</b>			
<b>Activity type</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workshop <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seminar <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lecture, round table <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (write in the “Activity purpose”)		<b>Activity purpose</b>	
<b>Persons participating in the organisation of events</b>	<b>Representatives of the organiser</b>		<b>Lecturers and external experts</b>
<b>Target public</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Participants</b>	