

*The Danish Rural Development
Programme 2007-2013
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The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
http://ferv.fvm.dk/Rural_development.aspx?ID=42277*

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16.2 National rural network

Legal basis

Article 66(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698 /2005

1st indent: funding

2nd indent: specific national programmes

3rd indent: procedure for adopting implementing rules

Article 68 (1) and 68 (2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698 /2005.

Article 41 and Annex II, 16.2 of the Commission regulation (EC) No 1974/2006

Funding the national network

The Danish national rural network is funded by the technical assistance of rural development programmes. The indicative breakdown is shown in the table in chapter 16.3. The breakdown of the total allocation for the national rural network is;

- 20 percent for running costs
- 80 percent for the action plan

Deadline for establishment

Denmark will establish a national rural network, which groups the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. Denmark will prepare an action program in order to develop this national rural network. The establishment of the national rural network is in process. It will be extended step by step and will be completed by 31 December 2008 at the latest.

To facilitate the process, a national network unit was set up in the spring 2007.

Since spring 2007, priority has been given to implement the LEADER method and setting up local action groups. From 2008 the national rural network will be extended to the whole program.

The rural development network will bring people together who at the moment aren't used to work together. Therefore there is a need for a flexible approach to the extension of the network and on-going adjustment of the objectives, tools and actors. It is preferable to start slowly, to have smaller groups meet around tangible issues on which people are familiar and agree (for instance on thematic issues which concern them directly). This could progressively create a habit of working together and the desire to address more sensitive issues.)

Objectives and duties for national rural network

The Action Program includes the planning of the network management and the following activities:

- Create dialogue between central authorities, municipalities and regions concerning rural development planning in municipal and regional plans.
- Create dialogue between and consultation with central authorities, municipalities, regions, local action groups, economic, environmental and social partners and NGO's, partnership etc.
- Establishing and/or participating in thematic networks including holding of meetings, seminars and conferences in order to transfer of knowledge.
- Establishing and/or participating in coordination committees ; e.g. regional committee, ad hoc committees, thematic committees for each axis, committee for Local Action Groups and policy advisory committee.
- Facilitate at Member State level an exchange of expertise and support implementation and evaluation of the rural development policy.
- Secure and coordinate the information flow between the local, national and European level.
- Promote training programmes for key people in local action groups.
- Providing assistance for local action groups, which want to cooperate with other groups nationally and internationally (for example, holding seminars for rural development coordinators).
- European networking.

Tools to run the national rural network

To assist and facilitate the rural networking structures the following tools are in use or will be developed by the national network unit:

- web site in more languages: link between the networks active in Denmark, other actors involved, European network and in the different member states
- project database
- publications e.c.t.
- thematic events/working groups
- assistance on transnational cooperation
- starter kits (basic information, methodology, and list of experts on the theme)
- thematic meetings dedicated to cooperation (**a sufficient budget allowing also the national networks to participate in European events and meetings in other Member States will be provided for**)
- training tools for new LAG's
- support for LAG on the theme of evaluation

Actors involved in the national rural network

The network will include the relevant organisations and administrations involved in rural development amongst others

- ministries (E.g: Interior and Health, Environment and Economic and Business Affairs)
- representative(s) from the regions
- representative(s) from the municipalities
- organisations of employees and employers
- nature- and environmental organisations
- organisation of farmers and forest holders
- organisation of children and young people
- representatives for organic farming
- organisation of the protections of animals
- consumers organisations
- the nature- and wildlife organisation
- agricultural organisations
- organisations of rural development
- organisation of small islands.

Structures needed to run the network (National Network Unit)

A national network unit is established in DFFE, as an integrated part of the office for coordination in rural district matters and business development. This unit will be the secretariat for the National Rural Network to be established.

This office is responsible for coordination of rural development activities and policy formulation under the Rural Development Programme (see chapter 11 for further details on the organisation of DFFE).

The unit is in possession of the necessary human, intellectual and technical resources essential for a good functioning and efficiency of the national rural network including

- Information technologies: a good system for internet site (multi-lingual) and databases;
- Contacts with wider rural development networks, research institutes, consultative services, political partners, etc. to be able to develop a broad approach to the national rural network.
- Good knowledge of European languages, cultures, contexts and history
- Technical expertise is available in the national network unit and/or in the national rural network to complement the internal skills:
- In the national network unit human qualities are important. The most important ones are that the staff of the network unit has an accessible approach and is service orientated.

A strategic Policy Forum shall be established with the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries as chairman and with a small number of central representatives from organisations, etc. The forum will discuss the overall priorities in the programme and the direction that it should take. The forum should respond quickly to new challenges in rural areas, providing the minister with advice and inspiration. The activities related to the Policy Forum will be financed by national funds solely.

A Coordinator Forum shall be set up for the rural development coordinators and selected institutions. This forum must ensure exchange of information between local actions groups and provide input to policy development. The forum shall help implement the Leader approach and provide input from the local action groups to the Policy Forum.

The network unit shall link activities between the two forums and act as secretariat for the Monitoring Committee established for the programme. The unit shall also be responsible for a hotline telephone intended to ensure a single access point for the Public and for the local action groups to provide information and help with implementation of the programme.

Activities carried out by the national network unit in 2007

- 8 public dialogue meetings chaired by the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries as a part of preparation of the rural development program
- Consultations of the authorities, NGO's and the public of the rural development program, the rural development strategy, laws and ministerial orders.
- Public seminar, April 2007: Information and dialogue about the possibilities under axis 3 and 4.
- Seminar for actors in local action groups, September 2007: Providing assistance for setting up local action groups.
- First meeting in the Regional Committee, October 2007: Ensure coordination and exchanging of experience between regional authorities and the national network unit.
- First meeting in the scientific Committee concerning management and out-door life, October 2007.
- Attended in the Committee of renewal of small towns invited by the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- First meeting in the Committee for coordinators in local action groups, October 2007: providing basic information, starter kit and communicational training.
- 28 local information meetings, from March to October 2007: Providing information and assistance about setting up local action groups.
- 18 local general assembly, from July to November 2007: Providing information and assistance about setting up local action groups.
- 15 local meetings about local development strategies under axis 4, autumn 2007.
- Speeches at 10 conferences about rural development.
- Participant at 3 regional meetings, June 2007: Exchanging of experience amongst actors involved in rural development.
- Established web site about the rural development program

- Communicated news to the public about the rural development program.
- Prepared free home pages for each of the local action groups.
- Published publications, e.g. handbook for setting up a local action group, folder about the LEADER method and the rural development program in general.
- A telephone hotline to provide technical support to the public about the rural development program.
- General network management.

16.3 Total indicative budget for technical assistance

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Indicative budget - technical assistance - National rural network, total: Action plan and running cost 5,5 million euro (*86,1 miljonit eek*)