

Measuring rural vibrancy

Demographic change is 1 of 4 major issues facing the EU. In rural areas the downturn in agriculture/ forestry as the predominant economic driver, migration to urban areas & limited contributions from lifestyle immigrants, have led to fragmented society, ageing populations, reduced employment prospects & community wellbeing and loss of rural vibrancy, thus diminishing their contribution to a competitive Europe. Existing governance structures increasingly struggle to meet rural needs as the capacity for the public sector to invest in services & infrastructure is reduced by diminishing local tax receipts & the current economic climate.

Partners propose a new approach to address these issues by bringing together diverse business types & community groups to form alliances, enabling them to be their own agents for change through more participatory governance & local actions. This new approach, supported by academia & partners' combined specialist skills, will combine the best of enterprise principles & community values to improve the competitiveness, sustainability, inclusivity & vibrancy of their areas, supported by a joint method to measure rural vibrancy. New relationships will be created between the public sector & rural communities to safeguard & enhance rural resources & services, supported by innovative financial engineering.

Jointly developed & trialled transferable models will be shared with other EU regions, contributing to the EU 2020 agenda.

New roles in rural governance for enhanced & modern services

Partners

12 partners from North West Europe:

- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (UK)
- University of Wales, Trinity Saint David (UK)
- Boerenbondvereniging voor Projecten vzw (BE)
- Vlaamse Landmaatschappij (VLM) (BE)
- Stichting Streekhuis Het Groene Woud en De Meerij (NL)
- Stichting Streekhuis Kempenland (NL)
- Gemeente Lochem (NL)
- Philipps Universität, Marburg (DE)
- South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd. (IE)
- Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo (IE)
- Maison de l'Emploi, du Développement, de la Formation et de l'Insertion du Pays de Redon-Bretagne Sud (MEDEFI) (FR)
- Laval Mayenne Technopole (FR)



Rural Alliances

Enterprise & Community Alliances for rural vibrancy

This project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg IVB North West Europe Programme to promote strong and prosperous communities in N W Europe.



This innovative project will:

- Form a new type of alliance (Enterprise-Community-Alliance) between enterprises and local communities, mobilising rural residents of all ages, backgrounds & residential status. They will work together to help their communities to adapt to the changing demography in modern rural society.
- Harness the best qualities of enterprise principles, combined with community values, to construct these new alliances, empowering people living in rural areas to be their own agents for change & contribute to better social inclusion & increased competitiveness.
- Create new relationships between the public sector & rural communities to work together to safeguard & enhance rural resources & services, including innovative finance methods.
- Create a Rural Vibrancy Measuring Index, to help people assess their community and identify actions to undertake.

“People helping each other to adapt to demographic change in rural areas and to improve the vibrancy of their communities”

Enterprise Principles

Opportunistic
Inventive
Innovative
Job creators
Networkers
Problem solvers
Can do attitude
Self interest
Adaptive
Build bridges
Future focused
Profit driven
Action based
Attract investment
Quick response to change
Results orientated
Anticipate needs
Experimental
Risk takers
Net providers

Alliances

catalyst for change

- Using business and community networks and “grapevines”
- Providing win-win opportunities to gain value from each other
- Innovators combined with pride in the community
- “We” philosophy
- Businesses investing in the community and the community investing in local business
- Business opportunities that also give societal and environmental dividends



Community Values

Motivated by quality of life
Family & friend networks
Share
Security
Safety
Co-operation mutual
Common aims
Sense of belonging
Local pride
Bringing different
People together
Pride in local area/people
Conscience
Culture
Traditions
Leading personalities
Net consumers

“Local business investing in the community, and community investing in local business”