



European conference

**Let's work together:
Territorial cooperation for
the provision of public goods
in the context of the reformed CAP**

**20 – 21 December 2013
La Bergerie, Villarceaux, France**

Background information

Introduction

In de CAP Reform proposals there is much attention for cooperation by groups of farmers and other land users and for new forms of collaborative and/or collective approaches for a wide range of policy objectives. This can be considered as an important shift in policy as until now the main focus has been on the individual farmer/land user.

As the negotiations and legal processes on the CAP Reform are drawing to a close, the time has come to discuss the practical implementation of these approaches and their potential contribution to achieving European policy objectives in a more effective and efficient way.

These new forms of cooperation, diverse as they are in development, size, type of organisation, stakeholders involved, issues addressed, etc., can be regarded as new forms of (in most cases) private governance to address and achieve public goals. Often they have their origins in local bottom up approaches, involving multiple stakeholders and leading to new institutional arrangements.

However, a clear analytical framework and operational definition is still lacking. There is also a lack of knowledge among farmers and other land users across Europe on how these forms of cooperation should be set up, what the overall added value of these new forms of cooperation could be, both to achieve policy objectives and for the actors concerned. What are the critical success factors and how can best value for money be achieved?

In a number of countries experiments and pilot projects have been set up to obtain the first practical experiences. What can be learned from these frontrunners? How can this information be shared and put to good use on a European level? What role can the public sector at local, national and European level play to facilitate these new forms of cooperation? How can researchers and other experts contribute?

Definition and scope

In the current debate relating to the CAP Reform these new forms of cooperation are being narrowed down to territorial farmers' groups engaged in the implementation of agri-environmental measures. This prioritisation can, to a certain extent, be justified by the fact that these groups represent the most potential for innovation to come to more sustainable (i.e. agro-ecological) forms of agriculture and sustainable management of public goods and natural resources.

Although in the draft CAP Regulation the Commission itself maintains a much wider approach, including public – private partnerships (i.e. LEADER Local Action Groups, EIP Operational Groups), multi stakeholder forms of cooperation, food supply chain cooperation, mutual funds for risk management, etc., the Groupe de Bruges feels that there is good reason to take cooperation in relationship to the provision of public goods as a starting point and focus for this conference. We use the term public goods, rather than agri-environmental measures¹, as it offers the opportunity to include more topics, such as water management, renewable energy production and the preservation of (agricultural) landscapes.

¹ As defined in article 29 of the new Rural Development Regulation

Ambition and objectives

The Groupe de Bruges has taken the initiative, in collaboration with the French Ministry of Agriculture and the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, to organise a series of two meetings on the concept of cooperation for the provision of public goods in the context of the new CAP. The first of these two meetings will be held in December in France, the second one in the Spring of 2014 in The Netherlands.

The ambition and objectives for these meetings are:

- To establish an analytical framework and operational definition of forms of cooperation for the provision of public goods in connection to European policy objectives
- To create a database of examples from practice from around Europe on different types of cooperation
- To form a European network of these forms of cooperation
- To collect and exchange knowledge and best practices (among others by organising study trips) and to set an agenda for (further) debate, exchange and research
- To discuss with these forms of cooperation and other relevant stakeholders (policy makers, researchers, NGO's, sectorial organisations) possible recommendations to improve policy concerning the creation, operation and support for these forms of cooperation.

NOTE: with the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs we have already reached agreement to organise a follow up meeting in the Netherlands in the Spring of 2014. In this second meeting field visits to examples of new forms of cooperation for the provision of public goods will be central to the programme

Support

The conference in Villarceaux and the follow up meeting in the Spring of 2014 are organised with financial support from and in close collaboration with the French Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Forests and the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs.



Ministerie van Economische Zaken