



Association Européenne pour l'Information  
sur le Développement Local a.s.b.l.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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# A local, social, citizen-oriented and sustainable Europe, open to the world.

AEIDL was established 22 years ago. The aim of its founding members was to promote, consolidate and give greater visibility to local initiatives that were being established in the EU Member States at the time. These "ELIs" (European Local Initiatives) were seeking to stimulate job creation, against a background of rising unemployment, industrial restructuring and rural decline, and their promoters were in need of know-how and support at European level. These local initiatives were seen as participants in the construction of a social Europe.

AEIDL contributed to a better understanding of the dynamic processes involved in these initiatives, advocating a multi-dimensional and participatory vision of change. Within the context of LEADER I and II, it also contributed to producing a sound methodology, which was then transferred to subsequent LEADER programmes, as well as to other Community initiatives such as EQUAL, URBAN and FARNET. This LEADER approach continues to be a benchmark, not just in Europe, but also in Africa, Latin America and Asia, for all those who consider territorial development as a way of opening up new perspectives for the future of our societies.

At the end of this first decade of the new century, the goalposts have moved. New challenges have emerged, linked to climate change and the environment, and to the insufficient regulation of global trade, with its associated financial, economic, social and environmental consequences. Soaring unemployment, a growing feeling of insecurity and a dangerous inner withdrawal are undermining social cohesion and threatening the European project.

More than ever, it is our conviction that local initiative, citizen involvement, solidarity between local areas, in Europe and elsewhere, and the evolution of new forms of multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance can all contribute to renewing the Europe we love – a Europe rich in diversity, open to the world, and striving for a better balance between the needs of society, the environment and the economy. The contribution of these different elements to our common prosperity, and to the transition to a more sustainable economy and a fairer and more humane society is rich in potential.

Over the last few months, the European Commission has taken stock of the contribution and value added of such local approaches or initiatives in the course of past and current programming cycles. In particular, it is considering ways of better mobilising the Structural Funds (programmes or measures devoted to local development, support for cooperation networks, encouragement for local partnerships, etc.) and it is planning to provide more support to social entrepreneurship, while also recommending a greater emphasis on *place-based* or territorial approaches in cohesion policies, and in the implementation of certain *flagship* initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

In the course of 2010, AEIDL contributed to these discussions, in particular, on sustainable development in the framework of the LIFE+ programme, in the report (compiled together with ADETEF), "*Cohesion Support for Local Development*", in the European Social Fund project, "*ESF actions to promote Local Employment Initiatives*", and – in



**Jean-Pierre Pellegrin,**  
President.

16 May 2011

cooperation with Metis – on methods of evaluating rural development programmes (RurEval). The association is also involved in the FARNET Support Unit, which recently held an important conference on the future of local development in Europe's fisheries areas (Brussels, 12 – 13 April 2011).

Internally, the association has engaged in a reflection on future strategic directions, taking account of the contextual changes and the new challenges referred to above. These directions, proposed to the 2011 Annual General meeting, constitute a collective learning process, helping AEIDL to better respond to the demands of our clients, and also – in our capacity as a social enterprise – to make our own (modest) contribution to the construction of a unified and citizen-oriented Europe, firmly based on the principles of sustainable development and social justice.

As stated by Elinor Ostrom<sup>1</sup>, the 2009 Nobel Prize winner, "*We have a lot to do to enable citizens the world over to actively participate in local public economies.*"

<sup>1</sup> Ostrom, E., "*Unlocking Public Entrepreneurship and Public Economies*", discussion document presented on the occasion of the EGDI/IRIDEM conference "*Unlocking Human Potential – Linking Informal and Formal Sector*" held in Helsinki on 17 – 18 September 2004, 2005.

# Consolidation

**In 2010, building on its achievements in 2009, AEIDL – either alone or with partners – dedicated more time than ever to delivering high-quality work and to respecting its contractual obligations towards its customers, including several Directorates-General of the European Commission.**

The nature of the services provided drew on our core skills (in managing networks, communications, publications, organising events, developing and maintaining websites) and on our thematic expertise in areas linked to employment, the environment, regional, local and rural development, etc.

Contracts with the European institutions once again represented most of AEIDL's activities (98.8% of revenue), with services to territorial authorities and networks only accounted for 1.2% of total revenue, down from 7% in 2009.

Overall, revenue increased significantly on the previous year, as did the planned budget (+33% and +28% respectively), which is largely attributed to the good management of current contracts. Expenditure increased at a slower rate than revenue, up 24% over 2009 and up 5.5% compared to the budget.

Controlling costs, together with optimising the budgets available to contractors, has allowed AEIDL to record a healthy profit, consolidating its financial position and greatly improving its balance sheet.

In line with the 2010 budget, investments focused on renewing our communications infrastructure (a new switchboard, new computers and communication software), thereby improving our working environment. With regard to staff training, the focus here was on computer-based document management.

Looking at the volume of work done, we have seen a rise of 1 783 hours compared to 2009, an increase of 5.8%. This is well below the increase in business volume, which bodes well for productivity and improved profitability. In 2010, employees and free-lancers worked a total of 32 087 hours, representing 18 full-time equivalents (FTEs). This was distributed between 35 people – employees, free-lancers, and partners.



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Finally, specific resources were devoted to the launch of a broad-based strategic planning process, which will ensure that AEIDL continues to be aligned with European and global changes in the years to come.

**Jean Vanweydeveld,**  
*Managing Director.*

# LIFE+: for a better environment



© LIFE 98 F 5250 - Dominique Haloux

## ADDED VALUE

This contract strengthens AEIDL's position and reputation, combining its know-how in communications and European environmental policy.

It has also allowed AEIDL to establish and maintain contact with numerous experts throughout Europe in a wide range of fields linked with environmental protection.

The experience gained through LIFE demonstrates AEIDL's ability to produce high-quality information in a specialist area.

This can be exploited in other fields linked to the environment, such as climate change, renewable energy, and more generally, sustainable development.

## Informing, promoting, making known, publicising – since 2001 AEIDL has been the “Communications Team” for this major European environment programme.

LIFE, the EU's financial instrument to support environment and nature conservation projects, was launched by the European Commission in 1992. Since then, there have been several phases of the programme (LIFE, LIFE II, LIFE III, LIFE+) for which AEIDL has been awarded communication contracts. The current phase of the programme, LIFE+ is a continuation of the previous LIFE III programme, with some changes to reflect the restructuring the European financial instruments for the 2007-2013 period.

LIFE+ brings together budget lines previously dispersed within DG Environment (LIFE, support for European environmental NGOs, networks of sustainable cities, Forest Focus, etc.). It covers three main strands or components: “Nature and Biodiversity”, “Environment Policy and Governance” and “Information and Communication”.

The LIFE+ programme has a budget of EUR 2 143 409 000 for the 2007-2013 period. 78% of this budget is allocated for supporting projects. Of this, half is earmarked for “Nature and Biodiversity” and 15% for transnational projects.

In the context of the LIFE+ communications contract, AEIDL's task is to provide technical support and assistance to European-level communication activities for end-of-programme LIFE III projects and projects belonging to the new LIFE+ programme. This contract began in January 2009 and runs for four years.



## 2010 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS



### LIFE website maintenance, updating and development

The LIFE website is updated daily (<http://ec.europa.eu/life>).

The main developments in 2010 were:

- > The launch of LIFE in the social media.
  - AEIDL set up, implemented and organised LIFE's Facebook presence. The programme's official page can be found at the following address: [www.facebook.com/LIFE.programme](http://www.facebook.com/LIFE.programme)
  - LIFE is now also available on Twitter. Find and follow all the programme's "tweets" on [http://twitter.com/LIFE\\_Programme](http://twitter.com/LIFE_Programme)
- > A general revamp of the website's graphics and layout.

### Summaries of completed projects

In the course of 2010, AEIDL published 130 project summaries.

### Compilations of new projects

Three compilations of new projects were published, and uploaded to the website, covering projects selected in 2009.

### Thematic publications

Five thematic brochures were published in 2010:

- > *"LIFE among the olives: best practice in improving environmental performance in the olive oil sector"*
- > *"Water for life – LIFE for water"*
- > *"LIFE and local authorities"*
- > *"LIFE improving the conservation status of species and habitats"*
- > *"LIFE building up Europe's green infrastructure"*

### Thematic diffusion and dissemination of the results of LIFE projects to stakeholders and decision-makers

In 2010, LIFE was the subject of a number of information stands (for example at Green Week 2010 and at the conference "LIFE Nature and Bio-

diversity – Preparing the Future") and of several presentations in the context of international conferences.

The AEIDL team also initiated collaborations with over a dozen European networks at various events. AEIDL also prepared – on a monthly basis – lists of LIFE projects linked to specific topics (water, soil, air, energy, biodiversity, etc.) for publication on the LIFE website.

### Brochures on the best LIFE projects

In September 2010, AEIDL produced two e-brochures, one on a selection of best LIFE-Environment projects for 2009, and a similar one for LIFE-Nature. Two pocket-sized brochures presenting the top five projects ("best of the best") selected from the above projects for each category were also produced.



**“Country overviews”  
(summaries of LIFE in each  
Member State)**

Country overviews for all 27 EU countries were compiled or updated and posted on the LIFE website in the course of 2010.

**LIFE+ promotional material**

In 2010, AEIDL designed several promotional products (videos, etc.) for LIFE.

**Multimedia database**

This contains photos, videos and scientific publications relating to LIFE projects, which will be included in a future online library.

Updating the LIFE image bank: in the course of 2010, 1 500 additional photos were registered and referenced, bringing the total number of photos to 21 500.

Compressing the best DVDs on LIFE projects ([www.lifevideos.eu/videos](http://www.lifevideos.eu/videos)): in 2010, more than 40 new multilingual videos were uploaded.

Collecting scientific publications (best practices, guides, etc.): In 2010, AEIDL uploaded almost 200 new multilingual publications (brochures, posters, collections of experiences, etc.) onto the Butler interface.

**PR assistance  
for LIFE projects**

At the request of LIFE project beneficiaries, AEIDL provided PR advice and support.

**Review of PR activities**

AEIDL is assisting the LIFE Units within DG Environment in working out a LIFE PR strategy. AEIDL is also responsible for compiling statistical data on how often the LIFE website is visited, providing a quarterly analysis.

**LIFE+ presentations**

In 2010, AEIDL took part in several kick-off meetings for new LIFE+ projects. In May 2010, AEIDL worked together with the Astrale consortium in preparing and organising the conference “LIFE Nature and Biodiversity – Preparing the Future”, which was held in Brussels on 31 May and 1 June. AEIDL also compiled a video which was shown at the conference and is available online at: [http://lifevideos.eu/videos/?id=life\\_nature\\_%20achievements.flv](http://lifevideos.eu/videos/?id=life_nature_%20achievements.flv).



**Client:** European Commission (DG Environment)  
**Duration:** 2009-2013  
**Budget:** 4 000 000 €  
**Team:** 16 persons (10 FTEs)  
**Websites:** <http://ec.europa.eu/life>, <http://life.aeidl.eu>, <http://www.aeidl.eu/en/projects/environment/life.html>

# European Social Fund: transnational cooperation and

**Starting officially in 2009, the ESF-TCI contract really became operational in 2010.**

## ADDED VALUE

**The ESF-TCI project is helping AEIDL to expand and deepen its expertise in the field of employment and social inclusion, with a particular focus on people in difficulty. It also enables AEIDL to expand its network of experts, who can be called upon to reply to calls for tender in these fields and to boost AEIDL's experience in managing networks.**

AEIDL has the task of supporting the European Commission in three main areas: conducting a thematic analysis of priority problem areas; monitoring of 13 transnational (between Member States) cooperation networks; and supporting the ESF working groups on transnational cooperation and innovation.

### **Thematic analysis: Local Employment Initiatives**

This analysis concerned the Local Employment Initiatives of the European Social Fund (ESF) implemented in 14 Member States – AT, CY, CZ, DK, DE, GR, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, PT, SE, UK between 2000 and 2010.

The kick-off meeting for the thematic analysis took place at the beginning of September 2010. A working document served as the basis for discussions at a workshop for exchanging experiences on 25-26 November 2010.

This work underlined the importance of the ESF's territorial policy, often complemented by other European instruments such as LEADER in rural areas and URBAN in urban neighbourhoods. EQUAL, Article 6 of the ESF, and Article 10 of the ERDF have also provided support for this type of local initiative. These interventions enable a vertical integration of state policies in the fields of social inclusion, employment, training, the fight against poverty, and economic development.



They are characterised by their local dimension, the participatory (local partnerships) and integrated (taking account of internal and external conditions in managing change) approach, and social innovation.

The study also highlighted the low cost of local employment schemes, with their low State funding requirement and potential to achieve economies of scale through management and implementation procedures. However, the costs associated with administrative activities offset this and the final recommendations basically highlighted the need to simplify procedures.

### **Thematic analysis: Support for micro-enterprises and self-employment**

AEIDL also contributed to the work of the ESF in supporting micro-enterprises and the self-employed in 12 Member States: BE, CZ, DE, ES, LT, FR, HU, IT, NL, PL, RO and UK. A SWOT analysis of the schemes provided for in the relevant Operational Programmes resulted in a summary of requirements in this area and a questionnaire for Member States. A particular emphasis was placed on the link between entrepreneurship and social inclusion. Using this as a basis, a first workshop was held in May, in which the various options open to Member States were discussed.



# innovative action

The results of this workshop, together with the replies to the questionnaire, led to a draft “Reference model of integrated business support services for disadvantaged people”. This reference model is based on the experiences of beneficiaries and offers a series of recommendations to the protagonists of ESF intervention. Concrete examples serve to illustrate the model’s different components: legal aspects, funding options, services, and how to set up such schemes.

A second workshop was held in July, where this model was discussed and finalised. This workshop underlined the need for adequate funding, as well as the importance of cohesion between the various measures and stakeholders.

## Monitoring 13 transnational networks

These learning networks are each managed by a lead Member State. AEIDL’s role is to carry out the monitoring, reporting on what is being done, and drawing the Commission’s attention to points of interest, both for the other networks and for the ESF as a whole. Ten networks were selected in 2009, with three new ones being added in 2010.

TOPICS	COUNTRY (the lead country in bold)
Entrepreneurship and inclusion	<b>BE</b> nI – BEfr – CZ – ES – LT
The social economy	BE nI – CZ – FI – IT – <b>PL</b> – SE – UK
Empowerment and inclusion	BE nI – ES – GR – PL – PT – <b>UK</b>
Youth employment	BE nI – <b>CY</b> – DE – EL – IT – LT – SE
Migrants and ethnic minorities	BE nI – <b>DE</b> – EE – ES – SE – UK
(Ex-) prisoners and ex-delinquents	BE nI – <b>DE</b> – GR – IT – NL – RO – SI
Partnership	BE nI – <b>DE</b> – GR – HU – IE – PL – PT – RO
Transnationality	<b>CZ</b> – DE – ES – FR – GR – PL – SE – SI – UK
Public administration reform	BG – GR – LT – <b>PL</b> – RO
Results-based management	<b>BE</b> nI – BEfr – GR – LT – NL
Gender mainstreaming	AT – BE nI – BEfr – DE – ES – FR – IT – PT – <b>SE</b>
Age	BE nI – BEfr – DE – EE – ES – FR – IT – <b>NL</b> – PL – UK
Asylum seekers	<b>BE</b> nI – <b>DE</b> – <b>ES</b> – <b>FI</b> – <b>GR</b> – <b>IT</b> – <b>SE</b>

On 28-29 June 2010, the ten initial networks took part in a workshop on the seven common methodologies compiled by AEIDL on the basis of 15 case studies:

1. Network planning, monitoring and evaluation
2. Network development and consolidation
3. Standardisation within the ESF’s Operational Programmes
4. Measuring impact and effectiveness
5. Quality of result presentation
6. Best practices in communication
7. Peer reviews

## Working groups of the ESF Committee

AEIDL hosted the January 2010 meeting of the ESF Contact Points for all transnational issues.

Throughout the year, AEIDL was also responsible for analysing and updating information provided by Member States on transnationality and innovation within the ESF. Summaries were presented at the April/May and October meetings of the ad hoc groups on these issues.



**Client:** European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs)  
**Duration:** 2009-2013  
**Budget (2010):** 837 000 €  
**Team:** 9 persons + a network of thematic experts

## EVALUATING THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS ASPECTS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

**A consortium led by the Public Policy and Management Institute (Vilnius, Lithuania) was formed to reply to this call for tender from the European Commission’s DG Employment and Social Affairs. AEIDL was a member of the consortium.**



In 2009, the consortium’s tender to evaluate the social inclusion aspects of the Open Method of Coordination (Social OMC) was accepted by the European Commission’s DG Employment.

In May 2010, AEIDL held a workshop bringing together the members of the Social Protection Committee from the 27 Member States, universities and NGOs, to validate the methodological framework for this evaluation. The report has now been finalised and sent to the participants

As a result, several case studies (France, Spain and Portugal) were entrusted to AEIDL. AEIDL is also responsible for evaluating the links between the Social OMC and other European policies (growth and employment, education-youth, health, etc.).

This project strengthens AEIDL’s expertise in the area of evaluating social policies, cross-fertilising the work already done by the association in the area of ESF transnational cooperation. The evaluation approach includes a “bottom-up” dimension, allowing the role played by local initiatives in public policies to be examined. This project also enables AEIDL to expand its network of experts and potential collaborators. The Hungarian partner, TARKI, is one of Europe’s leading statistical agencies for social indicators (Eurostat think-tank).

# FARNET: local development in Europe's fisheries areas

Within the framework of the EEIG DevNet, established in partnership with Grupo Alba (Spain), AEIDL is participating in the support unit for FARNET, the European Fisheries Areas Network.



## ADDED VALUE

FARNET represents an opportunity for AEIDL to apply its experience in rural development (gained in the context of LEADER) in a new context, as well as to exploit its expertise in communications relating to European programmes. It also ensures that AEIDL is associated with an initiative which is set to become one of the key features of European fishery policy in the future.



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Renewed in May 2010, this contract covers technical support to the European Commission in coordinating the implementation of Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). Axis 4 promotes the territorial development of fisheries areas, and in particular those areas hit by the EU policy of reducing fishing quotas.

The aim of the FARNET Support Unit is to provide support in setting up Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), which are strategic partnerships that lead the development of local projects in areas such as exploiting fishery products, or diversification into the fields of tourism, education and culture. The ultimate goal is to have some 270 FLAGs operating across the EU.

## 2010 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

### Methodological assistance

The FARNET Support Unit initially targeted the managing authorities of the countries most concerned – BG, RO, PL, LV, UK -, helping them to set up procedures for selecting FLAGS, and helping the latter to develop their strategies.

Three meetings, in February, April and September, were held, bringing together the management authorities of the 21 Member States affected by Axis 4 of the EFF and the different geographical departments of DG MARE, to clarify various implementation issues: tools for FLAG selection, development support for FLAGS, links to LEADER projects and financial aspects.

Among the most commonly used tools for supporting existing or potential FLAGS is the FAQ section of the FARNET website, with its 39 answers. Translated into all European languages, they cover nine main fields: an overview of Axis 4, budgets, selection, partnerships, strategies, finance and administration, coordination, cooperation with other programmes and other EFF axes, and eligibility.



### Communication

Published in 4 languages (EN, FR, DE, ES), the **FARNET Magazine** is published twice per year (in April and October), and the FARNET newsletter is published every two months.

Translated into 11 languages (EN, FR, DE, ES, IT, PT, EL, PL, RO, BG, DK), the first **FARNET Methodological Guide** covers the setting-up of FLAGS. Published in English, the second Guide focuses on cooperation between FLAGS.

The **FARNET website**, [www.farnet.eu](http://www.farnet.eu), completes FARNET's suite of information products. In 2010, in addition to regular updates to the thematic, news, events, tools and publications sections, the website was also enhanced by individual reports on FLAGS as and when they were approved.



### Events

In 2010, the FARNET Support Unit held two major transnational workshops, each attracting over 150 participants and bringing together FLAGS, managing authorities and the European Commission. At the March event in Gijón (E), discussions revolved around territorial development challenges and FLAG strategies. At the November meeting in Almere (NL), the focus was on adding value to local fishery products. These events also provided an opportunity for participants to meet and to explore the potential for exchanges, study visits, and transnational cooperation projects.



**Client:** European Commission,  
DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

**Duration:** 2009-2015

**Budget (2010):** 1 830 000 €

**Team (AEIDL):** 5 persons

[www.farnet.eu](http://www.farnet.eu)



# Helpdesk of the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development

Through the EEIG RurEval, AEIDL is responsible for the dissemination of good practices and the acquisition of skills in evaluating rural development programmes.



## ADDED VALUE

This contract has allowed AEIDL to extend its network of experts in the field of evaluation. RurEval is the first EEIG that AEIDL set up with a European partner. This has allowed AEIDL to develop management tools transferable to other EEIGs (which was already the case with the DevNet EEIG for FARNET).

In January 2008, the European Commission's DG Agriculture commissioned the European Economic Interest Group (EEIG) RurEval, a consortium involving AEIDL and the Austrian company Metis (formerly ÖIR-Managementdienste GmbH), to assist it in setting up and managing the helpdesk of the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development.

This network of experts acts as a central point of contact (helpdesk) for all information relating to the evaluation of rural development programmes. It

also promotes best practices and the acquisition of skills in evaluating these programmes.

The "Evaluation Helpdesk" provides support and advice on evaluation methods and tools. It also supports the European Commission and the Member States in their activities relating to *ad hoc* evaluation. The Helpdesk consists of a permanent team in Brussels, supported by some 20 specialists located throughout the 27 Member States, all with extensive experience in evaluating rural devel-

opment measures and programmes. Thematic working groups have also been set up to examine and improve know-how on key subject areas, such as organic farming, impacts on the environment and employment, evaluation of the LEADER approach, etc.



## 2010 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

- > Publication of a working document on the evaluation of the impacts of rural development in the context of multiple intervening factors;
- > Publication of a working paper on “Capturing impacts of Leader and of measures to improve Quality of Life in rural areas”;
- > Publication of an explanatory memo targeting evaluators responsible for the mid-term evaluation;
- > Publication of a working paper on “The Evaluation of National Rural Network Programmes”;
- > Completion of the final version of the English website (<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/>);
- > Review and updating of the section on best practices;
- > Continued expansion of the pool of thematic experts;
- > Launch of a glossary;
- > Development of an FAQ forum;
- > Responding to technical questions submitted by Member States (ongoing activity);
- > Assessment of needs in the Member States via the setting up of focus groups, round-tables and workshops;



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- > Updating the SWOT analysis based on the results of the needs assessment and other research;
- > Missions to Poland, Estonia, Slovenia, Greece and Malta;
- > Hosting evaluators (from Sweden and Lithuania);
- > Participation in numerous workshops and conferences;
- > Training of regional experts in running focus groups;
- > Meeting of the Select Committee of Experts on the Annual Work Programme and on the evaluation tool for the European Commission’s desk officers;
- > Participation in a task force organised by the European Commission on the future of the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF), in the context of the upcoming programming period;
- > Development of a tool to help the European Commission’s desk officers in assessing mid-term evaluation reports submitted by the Member States;
- > Establishment of an e-library containing the main documents used in evaluating rural development programmes, as well as summaries of other key publications;
- > Continued development of a mailing list (1 358 contacts by January 2011);
- > Maintenance of the English version of the website and the development of the French and German versions;
- > Compilation, translation and dissemination, with email alerts, of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> issues of the newsletter, in three languages;
- > Management of the Helpdesk, with its permanent (central team) and non-permanent (regional experts) team;
- > Collaboration with the European Commission’s Committee of Evaluation Experts (presentations and discussions).



European Evaluation Network  
for Rural Development

**Client:** European Commission, (DG Agriculture)

**Duration:** 2008-2013

**Budget:** 3,6 M€ (900 000 € x 4 years)

**AEIDL team:** 6 persons (4 FTEs)

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/>

# RUR@CT:

## 31 regional good practices in rural development currently being transferred

The objective of the RUR@CT network is to transfer successful regional initiatives in rural development throughout Europe. AEIDL and its partners were responsible for identifying and presenting these good practices. At the end of the contract, in September 2010, the transfer of 31 good practices between regions was already underway.

RUR@CT is a network of some 30 European regions (63 when the partner regions that have not signed the charter are included) with a shared interest in transferring regional good practice in rural development. The Limousin region (France), as the lead partner in the network, awarded the contract to set up and provide input for the RUR@CT resource centre to the partnership consisting of RCT (France), XPS (France) and AEIDL.



### ADDED VALUE

Combining the development of knowledge in territorial development and multi-lingual publications, RUR@CT has enabled AEIDL to maintain good visibility and to gain a reputation as being active "on the ground" in supporting rural development in European.

In one of its flagship thematic areas, AEIDL was not just a subcontractor working for the European Commission, but a key Brussels-based partner for well recognised French contractors as well as for some 20 European regions.

The identification of good practices required AEIDL to set up a horizontal monitoring system (actions and rural projects across all European policies), while at the same time leveraging the synergies with other programmes managed by AEIDL (LEADER, LIFE, EQUAL, URBACT, etc.).

The contract was implemented in three phases, covering the period between April 2008 and September 2010. AEIDL was commissioned to:

- > compile tools (questionnaire, thesaurus, factsheet templates, etc.) for use in gathering and processing the good practices;
- > identify and present regional good practices in rural development;
- > draft about a hundred presentations of these good practices, using three

different types of factsheet (the first outlining the project, the second the terms under which it can be transferred, and the third the result of any transfer);

- > deliver a final version of some 200 factsheets in French and English;
- > initiate or participate in PR activities promoting the RUR@CT network.

## 2010 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

AEIDL's RUR@CT mission ended in September 2010. At that time, the network's database contained 126 case studies and 31 transfers of good practices between European regions were already underway.




**Client:** Région Limousin  
**Duration:** 2008-2010  
**Budget:** 117 352 €  
**AEIDL team:** 1 person  
<http://www.ruract.eu/>

# Missions, studies and assignments in the area of local development

2010 saw AEIDL continuing its work in this area. Outlined below is a brief summary.

## “LOCAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORIES ON COHESION POLICY”



Small budget and big ambition: DG REGIO wanted to streamline its local development intervention and support mechanisms.

- > In 2009, AEIDL teamed up with ADETEF (*Association pour le Développement des Échanges en Technologies Économiques et Financières*, France) to jointly tender for this contract. The role of AEIDL focused primarily on desk research (“grey literature” and seminal texts), and on identifying and compiling eight case studies.
- > Two “Local Development Laboratories” took place in early 2010, bringing together some 30 specialists from across the European Union.
- > The subject is complex and covers several schools of thought (environmental, social, economic). Local development initiatives are sometimes defined as integrated strategies, mobilising a large number of local stakeholders and based on certain key principles, such as partnership. This definition focusing on the resources mobilised is correct but incomplete, as it does not sufficiently taking into account the

concrete objectives of the strategy (immediate results), which are crucial for the local partners, especially in terms of socio-economic results and the improvement of living conditions. It further neglects the “development” aspect of the strategy, i.e. its long-term objectives and the targeted structural evolution (long-term results).

- > The added value of local development resides more in its long-term (or even very long-term) results than in its immediate quantitative and qualitative results.

The final report contains concrete recommendations. Firstly, that a coordination platform devoted to local development be set up within the European Commission, in the form of an inter-departmental group. This platform would be responsible for integrating the local dimension into the “Europe 2020” strategy and creating awareness of this approach. Its initial task would be to explain the potential contribution of local development to the implementation of the “Europe 2020” strategy, as well as promoting awareness among local and regional authorities of the local development method,

via a working document presenting a common intervention framework.

Secondly, between now and 2013, all opportunities to assist local development networks within the framework of the territorial cooperation objective should be seized, with a view to creating a forum for disseminating best practices and giving greater visibility to integrated “bottom-up” strategies originating at local level.



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## TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN FOUR NON-EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES: USA, CHINA, SOUTH KOREA AND BRAZIL.

The aims of this study commissioned by the French Inter-ministry Delegation on Regional and Territorial Development (DATAR) was:

- > To support DATAR and its partners in gaining a better insight into the territorial development and competitiveness policies and practices of 4 non-EU countries, analysing priorities, organisational approaches, and the main instruments for implementing these policies;
- > To identify the priority given to territorial development in these countries' policies and to understand how they link the aims with the issues at stake (cohesion and the reduction of disparities, environmental issues and sustainable development), and with the instruments contributing to the pursuit of the territorial cohesion;

- > To identify the practices, organisational approaches and innovative management aspects, and the success and performance factors likely to inspire or encourage pilot schemes or transfers of experience;
- > To propose the establishment of a network of national correspondents for monitoring and updating knowledge on these policies, and for pursuing or preparing cooperation projects (including bilateral) with these countries.

Work on the contract ran in parallel with a similar study looking at four EU countries, awarded to a different research agency.

The core tasks consisted of compiling a case study of each country, outlining the general intervention framework, and addressing issues of attractiveness and competitiveness, sustaina-

ble development, as well as metropolitan issues. The findings identify the innovative tools and examine which elements are transferable to a French context.

The work was handed over at a seminar organised in the framework of the "Prospective Territoires 2040" cycle, held in May 2010 in Paris.

The China case study has now been published<sup>2</sup> in the French Documentation Centre.



<sup>2</sup> <http://territoires.gouv.fr/pratiques-damenagement-du-territoire-en-chine>

## EX-POST EVALUATION OF LEADER+



DG Agriculture awarded the contract for the ex-post evaluation of LEADER+ (2000-2006) to Metis GmbH, in a consortium with AEIDL and the CEU (Közép-európai Egyetem/Central European University).

The objectives of this ex-post evaluation were to provide an overview of resource utilisation, on the effectiveness and efficiency of the interventions, and on the impact in eight thematic areas, covered by 24 evaluation questions. The work was based on existing programme evaluations and their updates.

For the field survey, four methodological tools were used: a survey of 10% of the Local Action Groups (LAGs); a survey of the managing authorities; interviews with national networks; and 10 case studies.

The overall impact of the LEADER+ programmes on the economic, social and environmental capital of the EU's rural areas covers a wide range of products and services, and remains one of the main factors of LEADER's success.

LEADER+ achieved some very positive results in the area of local governance, strengthening the territorialised forms of rural development as well as the participation of local stakeholders. The link between the LEADER approach and the strengthening of local social capital is clearly established and documented, as is the increase in networking around certain topics or activities. Linking up people and their activities is the quintessence of the LEADER approach.

## PROMOTION OF THE “STRADA DEL BAROLO” IN BELGIUM



At the request of the Consorzio di tutela Barolo Barbaresco Alba Langhe e Rero, a Piedmont winegrowers' association, AEIDL organised a major event in Brussels to promote the regional wines and specialties (cheese, pâtés, salami, honey, etc.) of the “Strada del Barolo”. Some 200 specialists from the food and catering sector took part

in the event, which took place on 22 November 2010 in Autoworld, the famous automobile museum in Brussels. In addition to organising the logistics, AEIDL was also responsible for compiling and disseminating the promotional material for the event.



# AEIDL in 2010

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## AEIDL PROFILE

**Name:** Association Européenne pour l'Information sur le Développement Local (AEIDL) / European Association for Information on Local Development

**Legal status:** association sans but lucratif (asbl)/not-for-profit organisation.

**Founded:** 1988

**Purpose:** To contribute to a Europe based on solidarity and citizen involvement, founded on sustainable development and equal opportunities, by offering a wide range of services to local development and civil society stakeholders, as well as various institutions, including the European Commission.

**Services:** Managing networks and technical assistance; evaluation and advice; information, communications and publishing; training.

**Fields of activity:** Territorial development (local, regional, rural, urban); the environment and sustainable development; employment and social development; citizenship.

**Partner institutions:** European institutions; local, regional, national and European authorities, decision-makers and “developers”; development agencies; citizen groups; professional organisations; non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

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