

This is the final report on the  
**Equality Impact Assessment of the  
Rural Development Programme  
2007-2013**

Easy read version - June 2009



Department of  
**Agriculture and  
Rural Development**

[www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Talmhaíochta agus  
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Fairms an  
Kintra Fordèrin**



**rural**  
Development  
Programme



'The European Agricultural Fund  
for Rural Development: Europe  
investing in rural areas'.

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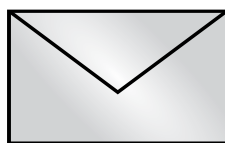
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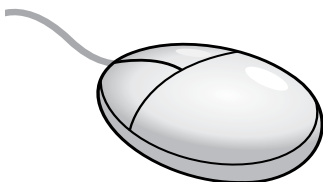
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We are the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

## **What do we do?**

Here are some of the things we do

- We look after farming, forests and fishing in Northern Ireland
- We look after the health and welfare of animals, fish and plants
- We look after rural development
- We help to look after farmers, their families and all other people who live in the countryside
- We provide research, expert advice, and education
- We look after some parts of public health in how food is made

## **About the Rural Development Programme**

- The Programme has about £540 million for rural areas between 2007-13
- Farmers, their families and all other people in rural areas can apply for this money
- It will support advice, help, and good ideas to create jobs
- It will improve farms and the farming industry, and keep the countryside clean and healthy
- It will improve rural communities and services
- Local Action Groups in rural areas will help the Department in some of this work

## **The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development looks after the Rural Development Programme**

- The Department must make sure that all the money and benefits of the Rural Development Programme are spread fairly among the many different groups of people who live or work in rural areas
- To help us find out the best way to do this, we carried out an equality impact assessment of the Rural Development Programme

## **What is an equality impact assessment?**

- This is a way of making sure that different groups of people are all being treated fairly
- Treating people fairly is called equality
- We want to make sure that the Rural Development Programme treats different groups of people fairly
- We asked lots of people like you for their opinion
- People gave us their suggestions on how we could make sure that the Rural Development Programme treats different groups of people fairly
- In this report, we have organized all the suggestions into seven categories
- We have written what we will do about the suggestions for each category

## **Category 1 - Equality**

This category is about how we can make sure that the Rural Development Programme treats different groups of people fairly.

### **People told us:**

- All of the Rural Development Programme needs to be checked to make sure it treats different groups of people fairly
- There should be an independent person or group keeping an eye on the Programme to make sure that it treats different groups of people fairly

### **We replied:**

- We have checked all the different parts of the Rural Development Programme to make sure it treats different groups of people fairly
- There is an independent group of people who will keep an eye on the Programme and tell us if they think different people are being treated unfairly, or if there are other problems
- This group is made up of farmers, people who are interested in looking after animals and the countryside, people who live in the countryside, people from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and more

## **Category 2 – Local Action Group members**

This category is all about who should be a part of Local Action Groups.

Local Action Groups are groups of people who will help to make decisions on how Rural Development Programme money is spent in their area.

### **People told us:**

- There should be lots of different types of people on Local Action Groups
- This means that there should be a mix of men, women, old and young people, people with disabilities, people with children and without children, and more

### **We replied:**

- We have checked the membership of all the Local Action Groups and are happy that there are lots of different types of people taking part
- We are pleased that there are a lot of women taking part in Local Action Groups

### **Category 3 – How Local Action Groups Work**

This category is all about how Local Action Groups should do their job of helping to decide how to spend Rural Development Programme money in their area.

#### **People told us:**

- Local Action Groups should ask as many people as possible in their area what they think before deciding how to spend Rural Development Programme money
- We should make sure that Local Action Groups have enough money to do their job properly

#### **We replied:**

- We asked all Local Action Groups to tell us about how they asked people in their area how to spend Rural Development Programme money
- We are happy that they tried really hard to ask as many people as possible how to spend the money
- Some Local Action Groups put adverts in a newspaper to ask people to come to a meeting and tell them what they thought
- Some Local Action Groups asked people to write down what they thought and send it into them



- Some Local Action Groups called people on the telephone and talked to them about what they should do
- We have given Local Action Groups money that they can use to help them do their job properly
- They can use this money to pay for things like travel, or advertising, and more

## **Category 4 – Training**

This category is all about making sure that all the people who work on the Rural Development Programme get good quality training to help them do their job well.

### **People told us:**

- It's very important that people who take part in Local Action Groups get good training
- There should be lots of different training courses to give people all the different skills they will need

### **We replied:**

- A group called the Rural Network for Northern Ireland will organise training for people working on the Rural Development Programme
- The training will be free
- The training will cover lots of different subjects
- For example, some training will show people how to decide if a project should get money or not. Other training will teach people how to keep good records of how money has been spent

## **Category 5 – Making Things Simpler**

This category is all about things that we could do to make it easier to get money from the Rural Development Programme.

### **People told us:**

- Application forms for the Programme should be shorter and easier to complete
- Information about the Programme should be written in clear language that is easy to understand

### **We replied:**

- We have made application forms for the Programme as short and easy to complete as possible
- We write all our documents, leaflets and other information about the Programme in plain language that is easy to understand

## **Category 6 - Communications**

This category is all about how we should tell people about the Rural Development Programme

### **People told us:**

- The Rural Development Programme should be advertised widely so that lots of people hear about it
- The Rural Development Programme should be advertised to everyone who lives and works in the countryside - not just farmers

### **We replied:**

- We are advertising the Rural Development Programme on television, in newspapers and on the internet so that lots of people will hear about it
- We are going out to events like agricultural shows so we can talk to people about the Rural Development Programme
- We have produced an information pack so that people can read about the Rural Development Programme
- We have made a website, [www.rdpni.info](http://www.rdpni.info), that people can visit to learn more

## **Category 7 – Further Research**

This category is all about what we could do to better understand the issues that affect different groups of people who live and work in the countryside

### **People told us:**

- The Department should study what factors prevent different groups of people from getting money from the Rural Development Programme
- The Department should do more to improve their knowledge of different groups of people who live and work in the countryside generally

### **We replied:**

- Queen's University in Belfast are helping us to write a plan on how we can improve our knowledge of the issues that affect different groups of people who live and work in the countryside
- We will gather information on the people and projects that receive Rural Development Programme money
- This will show us if any particular groups of people aren't getting money, then we can do something about it

## **Conclusion**

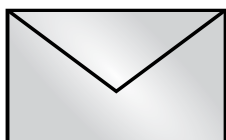
- We would like to say thank you to everyone who gave us their suggestions on how we could make the Rural Development Programme fairer
- We have listened to what people told us and made changes to the Programme as a result
- Overall, the Rural Development Programme treats different groups of people fairly
- We will check the Rural Development Programme again in 2010 to see if there are any more changes we can make to make the Rural Development Programme fairer
- Until then, we will continue to keep an eye on the Programme and deal with any issues as they happen

## How to contact us

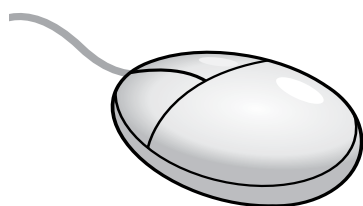
- Contact us to find out more about this report
- Contact us to tell us what you think



**Phone** 028 9052 4347 and talk to Karen Beggs



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