



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

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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# From an information organisation to a knowledge hub

It was considered that the best way to mark AEIDL's 30th anniversary in 2018 would be to create an intellectual space for innovation within the association, rooted in the values that have been our trademark for three decades. This space for innovation took the form of the development of a new strategy plan, a process that was open to all: staff, freelancers and general assembly members. The new strategy will be finalized soon, but the real result will not be the document itself but the process of reaching a strategic consensus.

The innovative approach, which came out of the strategy process, represents a shift from "AEIDL as an organisation for information" to "AEIDL as a knowledge hub", and is a move to better integrate the association in the changing market and the ecosystem of other organisations that have similar values.

Investing in knowledge is always beneficial, whether for individuals or for organisations. As AEIDL has experienced throughout its history, having knowledge is an invaluable asset – but it is also necessary to know how to share this knowledge with others in a proper, innovative and cumulative way.

It is often said that the twenty-first century is the "knowledge century", but the robust information and networking boom, experienced by everyone, does not always help in the identification of reliable and inspiring knowledge, which is needed to bring about real learning and innovation. The feeling that we have "too much information", the uncertainty regarding the credibility of information, and the new technical potential to build collaborative knowledge platforms are the main reasons why

the 'knowledge hub' theory and practice has become widespread in the last decade.

The future AEIDL, as a knowledge hub, will be built on synergic systematisation of the relevant information, drawing from and in turn contributing to new knowledge and action for sustainable development, focusing on a local approach to linking Europe and citizens.

The AEIDL knowledge hub is to be built as an ensemble of knowledge-intensive stakeholders, including creative staff, general assembly and network members, business partners, academic experts and universities, that generates, stores, transfers, applies and transmits knowledge, with the overall objective of fostering citizen-participation-based sustainable development in Europe. AEIDL's function will be to transfer knowledge to sites where it can be applied; to generate knowledge from individuals and relevant organisations; and to transmit the knowledge acquired to others.

Through these processes, AEIDL, as a knowledge-intensive organisation, will evolve in accordance with outside trends, generating new and innovative development ideas.

The AEIDL knowledge hub, as a centre of knowledge management and sharing, will pursue AEIDL's mission, in line with the guiding principles, by fulfilling certain key roles in an integrated way: the role of service provider, of facilitator, of convener, and of matchmaker. It will offer a toolbox to support, connect and catalyse the space for citizen-led initiatives and innovation for sustainable development in Europe. At the same time, a co-created physical and digital



Photo: Márta Márczis

network will provide the necessary techniques, training, technologies, and physical and virtual space to address challenges through inputs to foster local innovation.

Building the knowledge hub means a change in AEIDL's governance and information system, in its communications, and in its business relations. Beyond the content included in the new strategy, the knowledge hub will share a set of special principles, like complementarity, which means building on what already exists, having the flexibility to adapt and respond to changing conditions, and engaging in crosscutting approaches that eliminate thematic boundaries.

**Márta Márczis,**

*President*

March 2018

# Prosperity

2017 was a year of continuity and development for AEIDL. The contracts signed in 2014 and 2015 with several Commission's Directorates-Generals (DG Fisheries, DG Employment, DG Environment and EASME agency, DG Agriculture) allowed us in 2017 to consolidate our achievements. New types of funding, such as Horizon 2020, have increased AEIDL's experience in social innovation and opened up many opportunities for development and partnership.



A considerable amount of staff time was devoted to maintaining, improving and adding content to AEIDL's website, developing it into an exemplary information tool on social, environmental, territorial and citizenship themes associated with local development in Europe.

As regards the volume of activity, this increased by 8,203 hours compared with 2016, mainly due to increased activities all-round. The total time worked in 2017 came to 62,041 hours, representing 36 full-time equivalents (FTEs). This was spread between 58 people - employees, freelancers, and partners.

The nature of the services provided to customers included our core business activities (network management, communications, publications, event management, website creation and maintenance) and focused on themes directly involving local stakeholders: employment, the environment, regional, local and rural development, etc.

Contracts with the European institutions again represented the main proportion of AEIDL activities.

AEIDL's overall revenue increase in comparison to the previous year (+38.15%), mainly as a result of more activities within the LIFE contract and quicker approvals of the activities related to the ESF Trans-

national Platform contract (DG EMPL). On the other hand, we saw a reduction of the payments of grants (not foreseen in 2017).

Overall expenditure also increased in 2017 (+13.74%) compared to 2016. Cost control and the optimisation of contract budgets allowed us to record a net profit, helping to consolidate the balance sheet.

AEIDL also financed a number of in-house projects, targeting the priority themes identified in its strategy.

Turning to staff development, part of the budget was used to provide individual training on specific topics.

Last but not least, a number of meetings bringing together all of AEIDL's active stakeholders were held, with a view to coordinating the review of our strategic plan.

**Jean Vanweydeveld,**  
Managing director



# The year in the Association and the new strategic plan

2017 was marked by the continuation and further development of our activities (despite difficulties in making progress in certain projects), as well as by the collective drafting of a new strategic plan, all of which required the active participation of AEIDL members and its whole team.



AEIDL Strategic Plan seminar, June 2017.

The number of AEIDL's associate members is now 29 following the recruitment of one new member and the departure of other members unable to continue. These 29 members come from 13 European countries: Belgium (8), France (5), Italy (4), Hungary (2), United Kingdom (1), Bulgaria (1), Germany (1), Spain (1), Ireland (2), Lithuania (1), Portugal (1), Serbia (1) and Sweden (1).

2017 featured a high level of participation from the directors, monitoring activities and their development. The Board of Directors met 8 times in 2017. Three of these meetings were conducted via Skype, a solution useful for resolving urgent issues and avoiding the need to travel.

Members are kept abreast of events by regular management e-mails and

by the twice-monthly AEIDL Flash sent out to all stakeholders.

The debate over how to deal with migrants in Europe continued, giving rise to much interest and participation. Local initiatives benefiting refugees are regularly featured in the AEIDL Flash and on the AEIDL website. This Migrants dossier has led to a new project/contract – EMEN – focusing on initiatives encouraging entrepreneurship among migrants (see page 8 of this Report). Both the rural network and FARNET have also dealt with this topic with the support of AEIDL experts.

Several projects approved by the 2017 General Assembly were however not carried out:

- Planning for the event to commemorate the 30th birthday of AEIDL

has made no progress due to lack of time. The text of the proposal submitted by Marta Márczis and Holger Kuhle is to be debated at the 2018 General Assembly (GA).

- The membership campaign planned at the 2016 GA was not launched in 2017. This foresaw involving countries not represented by AEIDL, as well as looking into the issue of members' ages, with a view to "rejuvenating" AEIDL in the medium to long term. This project remains open in 2018 and we need to find the time and resources to implement it.
- Similarly, the issue of creating a new category of members making up the «AEIDL network» has not been finalised. Proposals have been put forward and comments made. The work of the subcommit-

tee on this subject will continue in the context of the Strategy Group, enriching the proposals made with regard to AEIDL's governance.

The problem that the projects approved in the June 2017 GA have not been carried out is due to the effort devoted to performing and monitoring the work of the Working Group on the new strategic plan which has to define the new form of governance of AEIDL and its future orientations. This work on the new plan, the successor of the 2010-2015 strategic approach, was launched in the second half of 2016. It involves discussions aimed at adjust-

ing the previous approach, with the active participation of GA members, AEIDL staff and its freelancers. The draft was approved by the June 2017 GA. Group meetings were chaired by consultants from Kompetus (Berlin) up to the end of the year.

A Strategy Working Group, the «Core Group» (made up of directors, other GA members and team members), has now been set up. Certain members have opted to work in pairs, in order to ensure a continuous and concerted presence at working group meetings. Following several bouts of questioning, the methodological elements have

now been adjusted and adapted. A report on the work of the Core Group is to be presented at the 2018 GA.

2017 has shown that AEIDL is «alive and kicking». However, it needs to give itself more achievable targets for 2018, allowing it to better develop as an organisation and to face up to the challenges of the future, while maintaining respect for its values.

## AEIDL, “EcoTeam”

**AEIDL is committed to reducing its ecological footprint, adopting sustainable practices and promoting respect for the environment.**

In 2017 the EcoTeam became a full-fledged unit of AEIDL, thanks to active team members and the help of an eco-consultant trainee.

The renovations of the first and second floors were an opportunity to improve the ecological performance of the building: LED lighting were fitted; efficient showers for cyclists and sports enthusiasts were installed, along with economic water valves; and water fountains were connected to city water sources. Much of the old furniture was donated to the social welfare association CF2D, a school in Uccle and the ‘Bxl à Récup’ project.

Moreover, we started thinking about the energy consumption of the building and invited an energy auditor from Bruxelles Environnement to visit our offices. Several measures for improving the energy performance and comfort were agreed that will be implemented in 2018.

Based on Greenpeace's ranking, we also switched to Mega, the energy supplier with the most uncompromising renewable energy offer.

In addition, we opted for a greener office stationery supplier, Pandava.

Work was also done on the communication around the activities of the EcoTeam. Presentations were

given on the progress of the project during staff forums, newsletters were sent to team members, and new staff members were informed of the team's activities.

Furthermore, a brainstorming session provided an opportunity to gather staff member suggestions and identify those interested in participating in the EcoTeam.

A team visit to several public and private exemplary passive buildings in Brussels took place in October. We also paid a visit to the Barn, the neighbourhood's organic store, which explained its zero-waste approach and demonstrated its neighbourhood compost scheme.

Additionally, Sophie Spiliotopoulou from the ESF team organised a workshop on creating Christmas decoration from recovered material.

In 2017, AEIDL got in touch with several neighbourhood organisations that are active in sustainable development: Broebel'Air, the sustainable neighbourhood citizen association, Etterbeek en Transition, and the sustainable development department of the commune of Etterbeek.

In 2018, the EcoTeam will carry out the construction works related to energy and focus on waste reduction. It will also renew its Eco-Dynamic Company label.

**AEIDL's Environmental Statement can be viewed [here](#).**

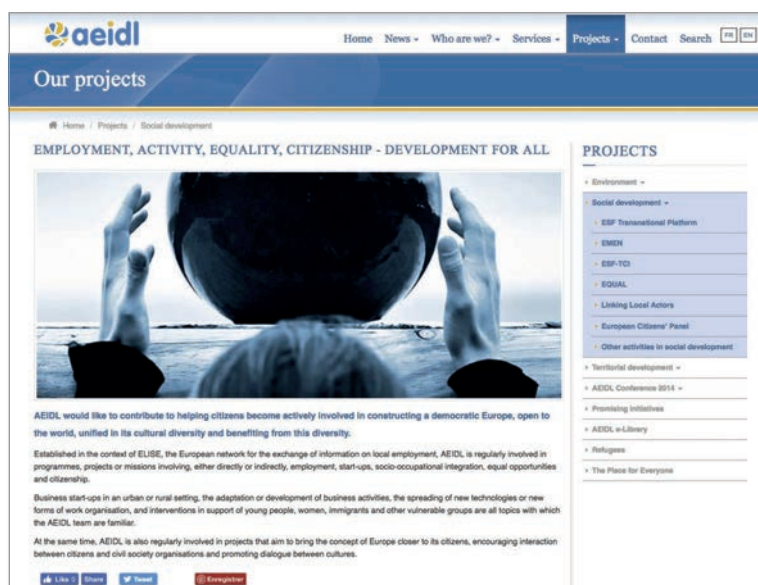


# AEIDL Flash and website

The purpose of our fortnightly electronic newsletter, AEIDL Flash, is to draw attention to our activities and the news on our website. These news items from different sources are selected for the interest they may have for local development in Europe.

The “Latest News” and “What’s New at AEIDL?” sections of the website are being fuelled every day with information from various sources (European institutions, think-tanks, foundations, Eurostat, EurActiv, OECD, media...). This information work is “activated” by the AEIDL Flash.

The AEIDL Flash is sent every two Fridays to three main “circles”: 1) General Assembly members; 2) Team; 3) AEIDL’s experts, partners, “friends” (including the 120 people or so who attended the 2014 conference).



## ADDED VALUE

The AEIDL Flash draws attention to the AEIDL's website, while promoting AEIDL's activities to members, team, and around 450 people (practitioners, experts, partners, networks...) involved in local development.

Furthermore, the newsletter creates a “sense of belonging” to AEIDL, as shown by the large number of positive reactions and article suggestions receive.

## 2017 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

- The AEIDL website attracts around 2,000 single visitors per month.
- ‘The Place for Everyone’ website, which was created to support the initiatives and build a virtual network of practitioners, NGOs, grassroots organisations and local authorities working at local level with disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, (including Roma), was linked to the AEIDL website in April 2017.
- A new section “Opinions /Contributions” was opened on the website in October 2017.
- Audience of the AEIDL Flash reached more than 1,000 subscribers in December 2017.



**Client:** AEIDL

**Duration:** ongoing

**Budget:** -

**Team:** 1 person (Jean-Luc Janot) + graphic designer's punctual intervention (Daniel Renders)

**Website:** <http://www.aeidl.eu/>



# EMEN: the European Migrant Entrepreneurship Network

Funded by the EU's COSME programme, the EMEN project focuses on sharing approaches and lessons learnt across and between public administrations, business development support and financial organisations, social enterprises, non-profit organisations, educational institutions and other public and private organisations supporting migrant entrepreneurship in cities, regions and countries throughout Europe.

## ADDED VALUE

EMEN is a concrete outcome of AEIDL's involvement in the promotion of migrant integration, and will result in:

- the better integration of migrants into the EU, by helping them to become economically self-sufficient by running their own businesses
- more numerous and more successful migrant entrepreneurs
- networking connections among migrant entrepreneurship advisers
- better representation for these migrant entrepreneurs in chambers of commerce
- online resources to help migrant entrepreneurs and their advisers.

The aim of EMEN is to develop, share and promote support schemes not only for individual migrant entrepreneurs but also for social and inclusive enterprises benefiting migrants. Ultimately the knowledge gained will be of use for those developing and promoting support schemes for migrant entrepreneurs.

The network will operate through three 'Communities of Practice', coordinated by AEIDL, each addressing a key component of a comprehensive ecosystem to support migrant entrepreneurship: Coaching & Mentoring (led by Social Impact gGmbH, Berlin), Access to finance (led by THUAS-FINE, The Hague), and Professionalisation and Diversity Management (led by UNITEE, Brussels).



**Client:** EASME, for DG GROW  
**Duration:** Oct 2017-Sep 2020 (3 years)  
**Budget:** €416,000  
**Team (AEIDL):** Toby Johnson, Patricia Martinez  
**Website:** [www.emen-project.eu](http://www.emen-project.eu)



*Good advice at the start can make all the difference to a new business.*

The network's services will be delivered through a dedicated website at [www.emen-project.eu](http://www.emen-project.eu), publications and infoline, and in the case of peer reviews, though personal dialogue, coaching and mentoring.

the partners started learning how they can best work together. The 3 Communities of Practice have started recruiting members. The first conference is to be held in Munich on 23-24 April 2018.

## 2017 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

In its first 2 months, EMEN has created a logo, set up its website, and on 7-8 December held a launch meeting consisting of a public reception followed by a private seminar at which



# ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) has contracted AEIDL to provide technical assistance to the EU-level platform for transnational cooperation in the European Social Fund (ESF).

The goal of such transnational cooperation is to improve the quality of employment and inclusion policies and to deliver effective reforms. This relies on the sharing of information and good practice, and working together towards common solutions by bringing together administrations, social partners and non-governmental organisations. For project promoters, input from foreign partners may enable them to approach challenges in novel ways, to solve problems more efficiently, and to avoid pitfalls during processes of change. For public administrations, transnational cooperation provides a structure in which to pursue mutual learning.

To support this, AEIDL has established an EU-level platform to facilitate the exchange of experience, the making of transnational partnerships, capacity building and networking, and the dissemination of outcomes.

More specifically, AEIDL's technical support concerns:

- Animating and supporting nine thematic networks, respectively on employment, inclusion, youth employment, learning and skills, social economy, governance and public administration, simplification, partnership and migrants;
- Creating and managing a website which includes a database to enable ESF project promoters to find partners abroad;
- Publishing technical dossiers and good practices;
- Organising an annual event.

## 2017 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

In 2017 the nine Thematic Networks have continued their work, and have produced a number of publications: including various case studies, dossiers on calls for proposals and service integration, and papers on indicators of inclusion, systems thinking and strategic management.

Further cross-network dossiers on coproduction and social innovation are in preparation. The network on Simplification (of ESF procedures) continues to be the most popular, with 25 countries in membership.

The platform has been awarded an additional contract to produce and pilot three packages of materials to help Member States to address long-term unemployment. This work will be carried out in partnership with ESF Vlaanderen (Belgium), the leader of the Employment Thematic Network.

A video is to be released of the Migrants network study visit to the Ruhrgebiet (Germany) in November.

Work on gender mainstreaming has started, again in the Employment network.

A very successful conference entitled Practice – Inspiration – Future was held in June. It attracted 230 people from 25 countries, and 93% of them said that it had met their expectations. An innovative feature of the event was the use of IT tools to improve interaction among participants: Visuality.be drew cartoons in real time summarising the proceed-



*Andriana Sukova-Tosheva, Director for Investment at the European Commission's DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, opens the ESF Transnational Platform annual conference in June 2017.*

ings of each workshop, and sli.do enabled those present to pose questions and answer polls using their smartphones.

The Impact Task Force has prepared the ground for the 2018 round of co-ordinated calls for proposals, which will be published early in 2018. Around six Member States are expected to take part.

## ADDED VALUE

**AEIDL has been involved in the ESF since 2001; from 2001 until 2008 it provided technical assistance to the entrepreneurship pillar of the EQUAL programme and from 2009 until 2013 it supported 17 thematic learning networks among ESF Managing Authorities.**

**Client:** European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)  
**Duration:** 2015-2019  
**Budget:** €2.3m p.a.  
**Team (AEIDL):** 13 FTE  
**Website:** <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality>

# LIFE at the service of the environment and climate

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

## ADDED VALUE

This contract strengthens AEIDL's position and reputation, combining its know-how in communications and European environmental and climate policy. It has also allowed AEIDL to establish and maintain contact with numerous experts throughout Europe in a wide range of fields linked with environment, climate, nature and biodiversity 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.



Photo: LIFE13 BIO/FR/000075/Millischer

*The LIFE programme helps save petrels from extinction on Réunion Island, in the Indian Ocean.*

The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value.

LIFE began in 1992 and to date there have been four complete phases of the programme (LIFE I: 1992-1995, LIFE II: 1996-1999, LIFE III: 2000-2006 and LIFE+: 2007-2013) for which AEIDL has been awarded communication contracts. During this period, LIFE has co-financed some 4 500 projects, contributing approximately €3.4 billion euros to the protection of the environment and climate.

The European Commission (DG Environment and DG Climate Action) manages the LIFE programme. The Commission has delegated the implementation of many components of the LIFE programme to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). External selection, monitoring and communication teams provide assistance to the Commission and EASME.

In October 2014, the European Commission signed a framework contract with NEEMO EEIG, which includes AEIDL, for services related to monitoring and communications for the new LIFE programme (2014-2020).

In the context of this partnership, AEIDL's task is to provide technical

support and assistance to European-level communication activities.

As the Communications Team of LIFE, AEIDL is responsible for the following tasks on a permanent basis:

- LIFE website maintenance, updating and development
  - Updating the LIFE website (<http://ec.europa.eu/life>) on a daily basis
  - Feeding new content into the LIFE Video Player (<http://lifeideos.eu/videos/>)
  - Managing LIFE's Facebook ([facebook.com/LIFE.programme](https://www.facebook.com/LIFE.programme)) and Twitter ([twitter.com/LIFE\\_Programme](https://twitter.com/LIFE_Programme)) accounts
- Summaries of completed projects (some 150 a year)

- Collections of new projects
  - 3 collections (1 per thematic area) covering a total of more than 150 new projects selected each year
- The LIFEnews newsletter (10 issues a year)
- Thematic brochures (2 a year)
- Brochures on the best LIFE projects (2 a year) and organising the Best Project Award ceremony
- Thematic diffusion and dissemination of the results of LIFE projects to stakeholders and decision-makers
- “Country overviews” (summaries of the LIFE situation in each EU Member State)
  - We update the country overviews of the 28 Member States, integrating each year’s selection of projects. Each overview is translated into the respective country’s language(s).
- LIFE promotional material
- Multimedia databases (photos, videos, documents, publications, etc.)
- PR assistance for LIFE projects
- Review of PR activities and communication strategy

## 2017 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The main highlight for 2017 was that this year marked the 25th anniversary of the LIFE programme. We organised a Green Awards ceremony during Green Week with the participation of Commissioner Vella. The ceremony was a success with sketches and videos showing the main achievements of the programme.

19 videos were produced for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony.

Furthermore, a separate LIFE 25 years website was produced where projects could upload and communicate their events celebrating the occasion all over the EU. A total of 285 events were organised by the projects.



Since the beginning of 2017, some of the main publications of LIFEnews have covered the following themes:

- LIFE’s contribution to tackling climate change in urban areas
- LIFE platform meeting dedicated to Integrated Projects (LIFE IPs)
- Better environmental governance through LIFE’s impact on jobs and growth
- Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the LIFE programme
- LIFE platform meeting dedicated to ecosystem services and how to incorporate them into decision-making
- EU Invasive Alien Species and the LIFE projects which have already taken action to address the problem

Furthermore, the look and feel of LIFEnews has changed given that we are now working with a content management system. The LIFEnews is no longer thematic but highlights the most important articles published during the month with extra highlights.

The following thematic brochures were published or are being prepared:

- LIFE and circular economy
- LIFE greening jobs and growth
- LIFE and Coastal Habitats

The team made the LIFE project results visible in around 40 events across the EU.

Also in view of the 25 years celebration, an itinerant photo exhibition was organised throughout the year. The first one was organised in Brussels, in the Berlaymont, during the establishment of the Natura 2000 day (21 May 2017) in presence of Commissioner Vella.

28 country factsheets were updated, which provides an overview of the LIFE programme in the different Member States.

Three videos to showcase the added value of LIFE Integrated Projects were produced.



**Client:** European Commission (DG Environment, DG Climate action & EASME)

**Duration:** 2014-2018

**Budget:** €2 400 000 (2013-2014) - €6 400 000 (2015-2018).

**Team:** 20 persons (14 FTEs)

**Website:** <http://ec.europa.eu/life>, <http://www.aeidl.eu/en/projects/environment/life.html>, [www.neemo.eu](http://www.neemo.eu).



# FARNET: sustainable development in fisheries areas

Within the framework of DevNet GEIE, 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 different 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 has become a key feature of European fisheries policy.



Photo: Hiiumaa FLAG

The port of Orjaku on Hiiumaa island (Estonia).

The FARNET Support Unit (FSU) is the technical assistance team contracted by the European Commission to assist in the implementation of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). It works closely with DG MARE, the Member State managing authorities (MAs), the national fisheries networks and with the FARNET Local Action Groups (FLAGs) and others involved in the implementation of CLLD, building a

“learning network” that connects the growing knowledge and experience in CLLD from across Europe. It consists of a permanent team of 12 people, based in Brussels, assisted by 18 regional experts.

The FARNET Support Unit (FSU) is responsible for the following activities:

- Build knowledge and capacity in Community-Led Local development
- Identify and disseminate successful responses to key challenges for coastal, fisheries and aquaculture areas across Europe
- Ensure the flow of information among stakeholders involved in Community-Led Local Development
- Support cooperation between FLAGs and with other local development partnerships throughout Europe and beyond.



# Development of Europe's

- How we do it:
  - Expert advice and assistance to FLAGs and administrations
  - Events: capacity-building events, transnational seminars, conferences, adhoc expert groups
  - Cooperation with other local development networks
  - Identification of CLLD Good Practices
  - Publications: regular electronic FARNET Flash, a yearly FARNET Magazine, thematic and methodological guides and other technical reports
  - The FARNET website and social media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and the FARNET YouTube Channel.
- The development of a Communication Strategy.
- The development of support itineraries for Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy and Romania.
- The co-organisation of capacity-building events for FLAGs and MAs in Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Lithuania and Romania.
- The organisation and facilitation of two Managing Authorities meetings.
- The organisation and facilitation of two transnational seminars:
  - "Social inclusion for vibrant fisheries communities", in Jurmala, Estonia, on 21-23 March 2017
  - "Integrating aquaculture within local communities" in Weiden, Germany, on 20-22 November 2017

## 2017 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Activities focused on:

- An analysis of the needs of the FARNET stakeholders for the programming period 2014-2020.
- Seven issues per year of the FARNET Flash
- The publication of FARNET Magazine n° 14 in DE, EN, ES, FR and IT and 15 in DE, EL, EN, ES and FR.
- The publication of two FARNET Guides:



- Guide #12: "Boosting business along the fisheries value chain" in DE, EL, EN, ES, FR, IT and PL.
- Guide #13: "Social inclusion for vibrant fishing communities" in DE, EL, EN, ES, FR, HR and PL.
- The publication of a series of project examples.

'The Phantastic Carp Way' in the Tirschenreuth FLAG area (Bavaria, Germany).



Photo: Jean-Luc Janot



**Client:** European Commission (DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries)

**Duration:** 2015-2020

**Budget:** €1 890 000

**Team (AEIDL):** 6 FTE

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

# Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD)

The Directorate-General for Agriculture of the European Commission (DG AGRI) has contracted the RURANET EEIG, made up of four partner organisations including AEIDL, to manage the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) during the 2014-2020 period.

## ADDED VALUE

After LEADER (1992-2001) and the Helpdesk of the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development (2008-2013), this contract allows AEIDL to continue to be a key actor in the field of rural development.

The purpose of the ENRD is to increase the involvement of all stakeholders (in particular in agriculture, forestry and rural development) in the implementation of the EU rural development policy; to improve the quality of rural development programmes; and to play a role in informing the broader public on the benefits of rural development policy.

RURANET is an equal partnership of four organisations with complementary skills and expertise: AEIDL, Grupo Alba, IEEP (Institute for European Environmental Policy) and the Rural Development Company.

A permanent team of 20 full-time equivalents work for the ENRD Contact Point, the first activities of which began in July 2014.

The ENRD Contact Point is in charge of three major tasks:

- Knowledge development
- Knowledge sharing
- Exchange and cooperation

## 2017 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Operational objectives of the rural networks are implemented through the use of a wide range of tools and activity types. The ENRD Contact Point organises its work – and the use of these tools – through a series of capacity building and thematic priorities supported by cross cutting activities.

### PRIORITY 1 - Support to more effective and simpler programme implementation

#### Workshops

- “Increasing farm income and resilience through imaginative and targeted RDP programming”, 29/03/2017

#### Products

Newsletters, FAQs, factsheets, articles in the ENRD Magazine, Good Practices

### PRIORITY 2 - Strengthening National Rural Networks and National Support Units

#### National Rural Networks Meetings

- 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, Azores, Portugal, 15-17/03/2017
- 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, Finland, 27-29/06/2017
- 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, Cyprus, 15/11/2017

#### Workshops

- ‘Generational renewal’, 25/01/2017
- National Rural Networks going local, 31/05/2017

#### Outputs from other activities

- Approximately ~50 Member State (MS) missions conducted
- MS needs and opportunities summary report
- National Rural Networks ‘toolkit’ updated

### PRIORITY 3 - Support to simpler and more effective rolling out of Community-led Local Development (CLLD) and LEADER

#### LEADER / CLLD Sub-group meetings

- 4<sup>th</sup> sub-group meeting, 21/02/2017

#### Workshops

- ‘Extending LEADER Innovation’, 22/02/2017
- ‘Improving LEADER Implementation through Practitioner-led Work’, 01/06/2017
- ‘LEADER Innovation’, 30/11/2017

#### Outputs from other activities

- LEADER/CLLD ‘toolkit’ updated
- MS cooperation fiches updated
- LAG database and associated cooperation partner search tool enhanced

### PRIORITY 4 - Smart and competitive rural areas

#### Thematic Group: ‘Smart and competitive rural businesses’

- 2 meetings, 23-24/01/2017 (NL) and 18-19/05/2017 (FI)
- Final Report, on July 2017

Hiking in the Vosges (Lorraine, France).



Photo: Christine Lelieu

# e European Network for Rural

## Thematic Group: 'Smart Villages'

- 2 meetings, 26/10/2017 and 07/12/2017

## Workshops

- 4 WS held in the framework of the Lisbon Agri-Innovation Summit, 11-12/10/2017 (further info: [here](#))

## EU Rural Review

- Significant contribution to issue 24, "Re-imagining Rural Business Opportunities", July 2017

## EAFRD Projects Brochure

- Significant contribution to the Project's brochure 'Supporting Rural Business', June 2017

## ENRD Seminar

- Smart and sustainable rural businesses', 30/03/2017

## Products

Dedicated web-content; case studies and factsheets

## PRIORITY 5 - Promoting the transition to a green economy in rural areas

### Thematic Group: 'Promoting a resource efficient rural economy'

- 2 meetings, 07/03/2017 (virtual meeting) and 03-05/05/2017 (IT)
- Final Report, July 2017

### Thematic Group: 'Sustainable management of water and soils' (Year 4 TG)

- 2 meetings, 24/10/2017 and 15/12/2017

## Workshop

- 'Natura 2000', 28/09/2017

## EU Rural Review

- Significant contribution to issue 25, (expected by April 2018)

## EAFRD Projects Brochure

- Project's brochure on 'Green economy', March 2017

## ENRD Seminar

- 'Resource efficiency in rural areas', 13/06/2017

## Products

Dedicated web-content, Good Practices, case studies and factsheets

## PRIORITY 6 - Responding to demographic change and promoting social inclusion in rural areas

## Workshops

- 'Social hubs in rural Europe', 09/02/2017
- 'Social Inclusion: Attractive and Inclusive Rural Areas', 16/11/2017

## Products

Dedicated web-content, Good Practices, case studies and factsheets

## PRIORITY 7 - Rural Development Programmes (RDP) analysis and good practices

### RDP analysis

- Summary analysis of amendments of RDPs

### Good practices examples

- 100, by December 2017

## EAFRD Projects Brochure

- EAFRD Projects Brochure 'Transition to Greener Rural Economies' (March 2017)
- EAFRD Projects Brochure 'Supporting Rural Business' (June 2017)

## PRIORITY 8 - Communications

## ENRD Website

- Fully up to date ENRD Website content including FAQs
- Enhanced website functionalities as required and feasible within the overall EC IT environment

## Social media

- Continuing outreach through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube channels

## Monthly ENRD newsletter (in three languages: EN, DE, FR)

- 12 editions

## ENRD Magazine 'Rural Connections' (in six languages: EN, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL)

- Spring 2017 Issue, by May 2017
- Autumn 2017 Issue, December 2017

## PRIORITY 9 - Support to Rural Networks Governance meetings

- 7<sup>th</sup> Steering Group, 17/05/2017
- 8<sup>th</sup> Steering Group, 23/10/2017
- 4<sup>th</sup> Assembly, 14/12/2017.



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

**Duration:** 2014-2020

**Budget:** € 3 000 000

**Team (AEIDL):** 2,5 FTEs

**Website:** <http://www.enrd.eu>



# Social Innovation

**Funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, and managed by a consortium of 12 leading organisations in the field of social innovation throughout Europe<sup>1</sup>, the Social Innovation Community (SIC) aims to engage, strengthen and connect existing social innovation networks, including public sector innovators, digital social innovators, social economy actors and more.**

1 The SIC consortium includes: AEIDL, [SIX](#) (Social Innovation eXchange, UK), [YF](#) (the Young Foundation, UK), [Nesta](#) (Innovation Foundation, UK), [TUDO](#) (Dortmund University, Germany), [UNIBO](#) (University of Bologna, Italy), [SIL](#) (Social Innovation Lab, Croatia), [DRIFT](#) (Dutch Research Institute for Transitions), [SINNERGIJAK UPV/EHU](#) (Social Innovation Research Centre, University of the Basque Country, Spain), [ZSI](#) (Centre for Social Innovation, Austria), [REVES](#) (European Network for Cities and Regions for the Social Economy) and the [Danish Technological Institute](#).

## ADDED VALUE

**This three-year contract reinforces the links AEIDL has built up in recent years with some of Europe's leading organisations in the field of social innovation. It is also an opportunity to develop AEIDL's expertise in social innovation and the social economy, to reinforce our identity as a key player in these fields, and to create connections and synergies with other projects, programmes and colleagues from AEIDL.**

Launched in February 2016, SIC is coordinated by AEIDL, which is responsible for the financial and administrative aspects of the project.

At its heart are eleven networks, with three new networks dedicated to: cities and regional development; the collaborative and sharing economy; community-led innovation; corporate social innovation; digital social innovation; intermediaries; public sector innovators; the social economy; local SI for climate change; SI funding; and SI Academia.

These networks are supported for a three-year period through dedicated work packages, focusing on: engagement and dissemination; research; experimentation; learning; and policy.

In 2017, an external review from the EC concluded that “the project has delivered exceptional results with significant immediate or potential impact”, and “has achieved most of its objectives and milestones for the period, with relatively minor deviations”.

## 2017 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

- **Participation and contribution to several high-level conferences and events**
  - The “**Learning for change**” final event of the TRANSIT EU project in Rotterdam in September 2017.
  - The “**Social Innovation – Research and Policy of the Future: towards a comprehensive innovation policy**” final event of

*Social Innovation Community Summer School 2017 (Bologna, Italy).*



Photo: SIC



# Community (SIC)

the SI-DRIVE project in October 2017 (250 participants).

- The EU Commission conference “**Opening up to an era of Social Innovation**”, in Lisbon, November 2017: SIC being in charge of designing and running the ‘harvesting’ for this high-profile EC run conference and now developing an EU survey in view of co-producing a European Declaration for Social Innovation to be presented at the EC during the second quarter of 2018.
- **Developing knowledge & research about Social Innovation**
  - The **Social Innovation Landscape** report drawing the contours of the research landscape, refers to main actors, important publications and events, and shows the potential of social innovation as a transdisciplinary field of action.
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> **Hot Topic Workshop** organised in 2017, and soon followed by four others in 2018.
  - 3 **Transformative Research Sessions** were organised on the following topics: (1) Relation between and impact of new economy initiatives on dominant institutions; (2) The role of policy-makers and the social economy in redesigning and innovating the management of common goods in the digital era; (3) Youth, employment and precarious work.
  - The development and launch of the SIC **Research Portal**, the place for exchanging emerging hot research topics and questions, remarkable theories and innovative research methods.
- **Upskilling and training**
  - **SIC Learning Relay**, an experimental set up combining a face-to-face thematic workshop, with
- an online learning relay in which participants will activate each other’s knowledge and networks to crowdsource input for each other’s challenges.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> SIC Summer School** (Turin)
  - Theme: the role of regions as possible ecosystems for social innovation.
- A new **Learning Repository**, the one stop shop for innovation tools and resources throughout Europe, an online, open resource available for innovators, researchers and policy makers to improve their skills in design for Social Innovation.
- The delivery of **ten Policy Master Classes**, involving six partners and in total, 355 participants in workshops held in seven countries across Europe.
- **Experimenting**
  - Five host centres in Italy, Norway, Croatia and Estonia were assisted by SIC support partners during the experimentation process. The co-creation events were followed by an innovation development process to refine and strengthen the solutions co-created and make them viable to test and implement. The innovation development process was based upon the accelerator methodologies.
- **Policy**
  - The **Policy Portal** on the SIC website, designed to create and collate a series of useful case studies, resources and tools that enable policymakers to better support and make use of social innovation to create policy impact.
  - The delivery of seven **Participatory Policy Ideas Generation workshops**, with 183 participants in workshops held in six locations across Europe.
- 2 editions of the ‘**Annual State of the Union**’ reports: the 1st one dedicated to on the impact of SI in achieving policy objectives, and the second researching and mapping how EU employment policy is driving social innovation throughout Europe.
- **Impact assessment** is an ongoing work to which the whole consortium participates in order to get the added value of the SIC project.
- A **co-created sustainability strategy** has been developed by the entire consortium from the very beginning of the project. It is open and flexible enough to make good use of upcoming issues, challenges and opportunities for social Innovation and related subjects.
- And the leading role that SIC has taken in launching public consultations to co-create a European declaration on Social Innovation is paving the future of the whole SI community, beyond the Horizon 2020 project lifetime.

All relevant information is available on the **SIC platform**.

Registration to the **Newsletter** is available on the website, and SIC developments can be followed on **Facebook** and on **Twitter**.

**Client:** European Commission (DG Research & Innovation and European Research Executive Agency, Horizon 2020 programme)  
**Duration:** 02/2016-02/2019 (36 months)  
**Budget:** EUR 2,991,906.25 (AEIDL: EUR 140 311.25)  
**Team (AEIDL):** 2 persons (Armelle Ledan Prade and Patricia Martinez Saez)  
**Website:** <https://www.siceurope.eu/>

# Social Innovation for Resilient Communities

## SIRClE and the Evoneers' Journey

**Over the period 2014-2017, the Erasmus+ funded SIRClE project (Social Innovation for Resilient Communities) promoted the use of adult education to address one of the most pressing needs of our time, namely how to initiate and support effective grassroots responses to climate and social change with the capacity to make a sustainable living in a challenging economic environment.**

### ADDED VALUE

**This project has allowed AEIDL to focus on the specific role of social entrepreneurs as innovators in local development, as well as being an opportunity to further broaden AEIDL's training and facilitation offer and hands-on experience of working and collaborating with local change makers.**

The SIRClE project came to a close in August 2017 after three years of intensive collaboration, creation of new tools and delivery of trainings to over 200 entrepreneurs across Europe.

The project brought together a diverse range of organisations from Austria (Plenum), Belgium (AEIDL and Still Consulting), Portugal (FFCUL), Romania (Asociatia Romania in Transizie), Spain (Altekio), and the UK (Findhorn Foundation and Global Ecovillage Network UK) to implement the planned activities.

AEIDL's main role was to contribute through its local development expertise to creating the curriculum, the online tools, as well as making connections and engaging NGOs and social enterprise networks and individuals in Belgium in two pilot training seminars. AEIDL also organised the final conference of the project in Brussels, in cooperation with the EU institutions.

### 2017 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The partners in the project developed a comprehensive 'learning journey' curriculum for social entrepreneurs to engage in when planning, creating, developing and implementing their projects.

The **Evoneers' Journey** (a contraction of 'Evolutionary Pioneers') is



*SIRClE seminar (Brussels, October 2017).*

Photo: SIRClE

the name of the curriculum, which is composed of nine stepping stones and supporting patterns, providing references to key tools, learning models and methodologies that can support social entrepreneurs in both their being and their actions.

The curriculum was updated and finalised in 2017 following the trainings that took place and the expertise gained from the hands-on experience of delivering the content.

The project website was completed by AEIDL with all the final documentation and will be maintained for 5 years after the project closure.

The pilot trainings were launched in all countries during 2016. In Belgium the trainings attracted 35 participants, many coming with new project ideas and some with existing projects they wanted to develop or broaden. Overall 220 participants attended the trainings across Europe.

# ent Communities:

The trainings in Belgium brought together a wide range of projects by social entrepreneurs wishing to make a difference in their environment. Examples include setting up urban hubs for debate on sustainability, creating a service within the Belgian public administration to support social entrepreneurship initiatives, working with migrants and refugees to improve sustainability of living conditions in refugee camps, creating online tools to spread information on transition initiatives, creating spaces for self-development activities in the Brussels area, reconvertng unused religious buildings into social and cultural spaces, starting up a sustainable textile and clothes production, and many more.

French participants also attended, looking at how to revitalise villages in remote rural areas and empowering older generations as well as sharing and disseminating know-how on organic bread production, both locally and world-wide.

In 2017, all SIRCle partners came together to take stock of their national training experiences and share learning and best practices. This allowed to fine-tune the curriculum and also to discuss future perspectives and possibilities for the trainings beyond the funding period.

AEIDL was also responsible for the organisation of the closing conference of the project, which was organised in partnership with the Economic and Social Committee and attracted over 50 participants including the SIRCle partners, representatives from the European Parliament, from civil society, social enterprises and participants from the training events.



The nine stepping stones of the Evoneers' Journey.

The Evoneers' Journey trainings have received enthusiastic feedback from participants. AEIDL is now looking at possibilities of offering similar trainings in the future in Belgium. AEIDL' SIRCle staff are promoting the Journey at public events such as fairs and in taster workshops, and were hired to deliver a one-day workshop to participants of a Transition training programme by the Belgian association Terre et Conscience.

AEIDL is developing a strategy for how to pursue activities based on this curriculum in the future.



**Client:** AEIDL  
**Duration:** 2014-2017

**Budget:** €446 000 (AEIDL: €50 575)  
**Team (AEIDL):** 3 persons concerned  
**Website:** <http://www.sircle-project.eu/>

# AEIDL in 2017



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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:** asbl (non-profit organization).

**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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