

BioRegions

Regional Networks for the development
of a Sustainable Market for Bioenergy in Europe



bioregions.eu

ACTIVITIES

BioRegions aims to stimulate the development of new “bioenergy regions” around Europe by learning from the more experienced regions. This will be achieved by the following work plan:

- ✓ Identify success factors in best practice regions
- ✓ Networking activities in the target regions
- ✓ Define Action Plans for establishing five new “bioenergy regions”
- ✓ Support the implementation of the Action Plans in the target regions
- ✓ Encourage and support other regions to replicate the project activities

OBJECTIVES

BioRegions will support the creation of “bioenergy regions” in rural areas of Europe. A “bioenergy region” aims to get at least one third of its energy supply (excluding transportation) from regional and sustainable biomass sources.

Specific objectives are:

- ✓ Support the development of efficient and reliable markets for solid biomass in the five target regions.
- ✓ Stimulate investment into bioenergy projects and trading businesses of local stakeholders.
- ✓ Inspire the rural areas to follow the example of the target regions.

RESULTS

Each target region is expected to formally adopt a Regional Action Plan. This will be prepared within the project, involve all relevant stakeholders in each respective region and include a timetable with milestones. The Regional Action Plan will assist the regions to enhance their bioenergy structures so that at least one third of the regional energy supply (excluding transportation) comes from regional and sustainable biomass sources.

- ✓ The first steps of the plan will be implemented, with at least 2MW of projects in the pipeline by the end of BioRegions.
- ✓ Five (5) specific projects will have their funding options analysed and will get support to secure full funding.
- ✓ After the end of the project there will be a clear plan, political support and a critical mass of engaged local actors that will ensure the continuation of the project activities.
- ✓ Using the ELARD network that has access to more than 600 regions in Europe these actors and regions will all be encouraged and, where possible, supported to implement similar activities in their respective region(s).

PARTICIPATION

The BioRegions consortium comprises of 13 partners from 10 European countries. There are two (2) best practice regions (Germany and Sweden), five (5) target regions (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Ireland and Latvia), four (4) bioenergy experts (Germany, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece), one (1) financial expert (Greece) and one (1) dissemination expert (Belgium). The consortium will organize stakeholder workshops, best practice visits and public consultation events in each of the target regions. A networking workshop for stakeholders from the target regions will also be organized.

TARGET REGIONS



Sredna Gora , Bulgaria

The Bulgarian target region covers the territory of the Sredna Gora Mountains, with total area of 5,990 km², a length of 285 km, and a width of 50 km. The population of the region is 121,440.

The Sredna Gora Mountains are situated in the central part of Bulgaria between the Balkan Range and the Thracian Plain.

The region is environmentally clean, with well developed agro and forest activities. It is not rich in ores and minerals and far from natural gas distribution pipelines. Electricity, oil for the industrial and public sectors and coal and wood for heating in residential sector are the main fuels used. The region is rich in biomass waste, which is not used efficiently. Ihtiman is the only municipality with a biomass heating plant, a 3 MW heating plant using wood chips. Two PV solar plants (about 2 MW power) have also been established.

The total annual forest biomass potential available for energy purposes is estimated at 115,798 m³, (92 638 tons), with an energy equivalent of 230 GWh (78% of the theoretical potential).



Slavicin and Brumov-Bylnice, Czech Republic

The Czech target region is located in the south-east part of the Zlín Region (east part of the Czech Republic). Approximately 21,000 inhabitants live in the area of 206.5 km².

Woodlands cover half of the region and surrounding settlements thus the wood supply distances are short. Agricultural land is mostly composed of grassland or orchards and is a potential source of waste biomass. The wood-processing industry represents an important potential partner of this project. The local economy is quite apportioned and no sector, such as agriculture, industry, building, transport, the public sector, accounts for more than 24% of local economic activities.

From an energy point of view, the most important players are housing (mainly heating) with 56% of total energy consumption, tertiary sphere (heating of public buildings) with 30% and industry with 9%. According to the Territorial Energy conception of the Zlín region (2001), most of the consumed energy comes from natural gas (42%) electricity (37%) and solid fuels (21%). Solid fuels are a mixture of fossil fuels and wood. Fortunately the share of biomass is rising, but an effective professional biomass market has not been established yet. There is no big power plant located in the target region and most of the electricity is imported from other parts of the Czech Republic. Electricity is produced in small renewable energy plants (hydro, photovoltaic) or in natural gas fired cogeneration units for supplying district heating in Slavicin.

There have been three important projects realized on biomass utilization in the region so far. All of them are high capacity plants for heat production utilizing sawdust and woodchips.



Trièves, France

Situated in the south of Grenoble (530,000 inhabitants) on 650 km², Trièves is composed of 29 communes which are regrouped into 3 communal communities (CC Clelles, CC Mens, CC Monestier de Clermont).

The region is involved in a European project (FEDER), which promotes ecological tourism and special needs tourism.

On the east-side of the territory, fir-tree forests occupy about 4,500 ha. The forest management regime has contributed to the development of the fir forests as well as to the plantation of European black pine and the creation of a forest infrastructure.

Started 5 years ago, one of the most important actions is the establishment of an energy-wood-sector with the construction of a woodchips service centre and three communal wood-fired district heating systems.

Among the renewable energies, wood-energy represents a very attractive perspective for the local Communities and for local development.



County Westmeath, Ireland

County Westmeath is situated in the centre or midlands of Ireland in the western part of the province of Leinster, and is also popularly known as the "lake county". The county has an area of 1,764 km² (710 sq miles) and a population of 79,403 (2006), a 10% growth from 2002.

Westmeath economic base is traditionally agriculture, but this is declining, with beef and dairy being the principle activity with some tillage and forestry. Tourism in Westmeath is primarily based around its water amenities, lakes and rivers and there is some light manufacturing industry mainly food processing and consumer products.

Land use is dominated by pasture use mainly for beef farming with some dairy farming. Energy use is predominantly oil 64%, electricity 16% and gas 12% with some peat and coal use. As such the county is over 90 % fossil fuel and import dependant, with renewable energy estimated to be less than 1%. There is no significant energy generation in the county, but there are three neighbouring peat burning electrical power stations.

An initiative is underway to develop a forestry growers 'network to supply local power stations with biomass for co-firing'.



photo by Julita Kluša, daba.dziedava.lv

Limbaži, Latvia

The Limbaži region is located at the coast of the Baltic Sea – in the north-western part of the Gulf of Riga and borders with Estonia. The population is around 35,500 inhabitants who live in the area of 2,439 km.

The main economic activities of Limbaži region are associated with agriculture, forestry and fishing industry.

The Limbaži region does not have an access to natural gas grid, therefore wood biomass is the main energy source used for heat generation in both local and district heating systems as well as in industry. The most significant amounts of wood fuel are consumed by Limbaži district heating company “Limbažu Siltums”, the fish processing company “Brīvais Vilnis” and by a number of municipality operated boiler houses.

The total installed heat capacity of the most significant heat sources is around 90 MW. Additionally there are a number of small capacity installations – individual heating systems operating on wood fuels such as fire wood, pellets or sawdust briquettes. Wood fuel is purchased from local producers; however, depending on the price, sometimes it is supplied also by surrounding regions. Almost all electricity in Limbaži region is imported using the general electricity grid.

The absence of a natural gas grid in the region has so far facilitated the extended use of wood fuel in local heat sources and district heating systems. Establishing a local bioenergy network in Limbaži region will ensure development of related infrastructure. However, sometimes especially smaller biofuel purchasers find difficult to buy good quality fuel at reasonable price. BioRegions will help to increase the availability of appropriate quality bioenergy resources and will facilitate further bioenergy development in the region.

BEST PRACTICE REGIONS

Jönköping, Sweden

Located in the south central part of Sweden, the County of Jönköping is subdivided into 13 local municipalities with a combined population of just over 333,000. With a total area of 10,475 km², the county has a population density of about 32 inhabitants/km² which is higher than the national average of 22/km².

The region has a relatively varied industry sector structure with many SME's and it is known for its entrepreneurship. Wood processing including biomass, furniture manufacturing, light engineering, metalworking, plastics and rubber are all key manufacturing/processing sectors in the region.

The total energy input and usage was just over 12.2 TWh (2007) for the county. The region's own production of electricity (supplied to the grid) is very low, currently about 1 % of the electricity used in the region. This electricity comes from different renewable sources including small scale hydro and wind as well as biomass and municipal waste fired combined heat and power (CHP) plants.

Furthermore at 37 % oil products still account for the largest energy input which is chiefly attributed to the transport sector (32 %) with the remainder used in industry, agriculture and as reserve/start up fuel for heating. The use of fossil fuels (coal, heating oil, lignite, coke, natural gas) has almost entirely been phased out for space heating (commercial, industrial and domestic) being replaced mainly by biomass as shown in the examples of biomass projects. Currently only 2 of the 13 municipalities do not have district heating (DH) networks. Biomass is the dominant fuel for DH plants in the other municipalities ranging from 82% to 100% share whereas two of them, Eksjö and Jönköping, also use municipal solid waste as fuel.

The Regional Development Council (RDC) has been commissioned by the Government to write a regional development programme. Jönköping County's development programme emphasises the human aspect and the importance of the social environment for regional development.

Biomass from forestry and agriculture are two sources identified that can be further developed along with other renewables such as wind and solar.

Achental, Germany

Located in the South-Eastern part of Bavaria, the Alp valley "Achental" is situated along the river "Tiroler Ache". The region has a total surface area of 474 km² and a population of approximately 30,000 inhabitants.

Located on the fringes of the Bavarian Alps, agriculture and tourism are the main economic pillars of the region. In recent years Achental has developed a strong profile on "alternative tourism".

In 1996, the mayors of eight Achental municipalities formed "Ökomodell Achental", a regional development agency with focus on land use, nature protection, tourism and renewable energies. A main objective for the region is to successfully use the local potential for creating products and service chains with a high regional value.

The land use is dominated by rural farmland and forestry; more than 30 % of the region is nature protected. Agriculture is dominated by grassland mainly for beef and dairy farming. 75 % of the farms are very small having less than 20 hectares of agricultural land. Almost half of the region is covered with forests the majority of which is public property. Growing in mountainous topography the forests are dominated by the common spruce.

Within a radius of 50 km forest residues offer an overall potential of 942,000 m³.

Residues from landscape management offer a potential of 51,000 m³ and remains from saw mills provide 30,600 m³. Therefore, the total biomass potential is 1,023,600 m³ per year.

The current wood chip consumption is 187,167 m³ for district heating systems and decentralised boilers. Additional organic residues are garden residues, other bio-waste and animal residues, which are used in decentralised biogas plants.

The Achantal region has defined a precise set of quality criteria for the regional bio-energy projects: The bio-energy actions have to adapt well to the existing economic and cultural structures in the valley and must have high energy efficiency performance. Projects which fulfill these quality criteria are district heating networks based on wood-chips, small decentralised biogas plants and the implementation of wood gasification technologies. The region has established a regional bio-energy centre (Biomassehof Achantal) which is set-up in public- private partnership and serves as main engine and facilitator for future bio-energy development in the region.

The Alp valley Achantal strives to spread and disseminate the own successful regional development as a "bio-energy region".



BIOREGION PARTNERS



WIP – Renewable Energies, Germany, www.wip-munich.de

WIP GmbH & Planungs Co KG has been active in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors for over three decades, providing a range of technical expert and non-technical services to both industrial and public sector clients at the international level. WIP has a long record of performing outstanding activities for, and in close co-operation with, the European Commission and German national entities; namely:

- ✓ Analytical research work following an interdisciplinary approach by tackling energy issues in their economic, legal and social framework conditions;
- ✓ Formulation of strategies for achieving greater integration of renewable energy technologies;
- ✓ High-level event management for European conferences, workshops and campaigns;
- ✓ Renewable energy systems and rational use of energy projects in all 27 EU countries;
- ✓ Expert services in RE Policy Research, Energy Efficiency and rural energy infrastructure.

WIP offers project development, project management, technical supervision and realisation of projects, which involve the co-ordination of international consortia. The company provides expert service to private and public sector clients at national and international level.

WIP is member of the European Biomass, Photovoltaic and Wind Energy Associations, EUBIA, EPIA and EWEA, as well as founding member of EUREC, the European Association of Renewable Energy Research Centres.

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ENVIROS, Czech Republic, www.enviros.cz/english

ENVIROS, s. r. o., is a leading consulting company providing assistance mainly in the field of energy efficiency, renewable energy, environmental and business consultancy in the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Central and Eastern Europe, but also other parts of the world. The majority stakeholder of ENVIROS, s. r. o. is the international Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) consulting group, one of the leading environmental service companies with a staff of about 6,500 worldwide.

The key activities of ENVIROS, s.r.o. cover mainly the following areas:

- ✓ Development of energy and environmental strategies, policy, legislation, support programmes and action plans for international institutions, government, regional and local authorities;
- ✓ Energy and Environmental audits in industry, commerce, public and housing sector – Czech Republic and abroad;
- ✓ Project development and evaluation - Energy Efficiency and renewable energy project development and evaluation, submission for financing (EU and national funds) – mostly public buildings and industry
- ✓ Technical-financial appraisal of (renewable) energy and environmental projects (feasibility studies), technical and environmental due-diligence;
- ✓ Market analyses (ESCO - EPC potential, renewable energy, gas market studies), promotional activities and training in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

ENVIROS, s.r.o. has been co-operating with a wide range of clients and partners from international and multi-country institutions, including the United Nations, European Commission, OECD, EBRD and the World Bank, and run many projects within the EC Programmes (Intelligent Energy Europe, 6th / 7th Framework Programme etc). National clients include state institutions like the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Regional Development, State Environmental Fund, State Energy Inspectorate, and regional bodies.

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VTT - Technical Research Centre of Finland, Finland, www.vtt.fi

Established in 1944 VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland is the biggest multi-technological applied research organisation in Northern Europe. A main goal of bioenergy research at VTT is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to the production of electricity by creating preconditions for increased use of biomass fuels for different purposes and size classes.

Another goal is to develop new technologies and new solutions to produce low-emission transportation fuels based on biomaterials and bio-based products replacing fossil fuels. In these research fields, the aim is to emphasize the significance of Finnish bioenergy expertise on the international market and to strengthen the production and competitiveness of bioenergy on a global scale.

Key research areas in the bioenergy field include:

- ✓ biomass fuel and biomaterial production, handling and treatment technologies;
- ✓ low-emission combustion and gasification solutions for the production of biomass fuels for heat and electricity production and for transportation;
- ✓ increasing the variety of fuels used in heat and power plants;
- ✓ modelling industrial flows and combustion;
- ✓ biotechnical processing plant concepts for the production of new refined biofuels and fuel cells and hydrogen technology.

VTT employees 140 researchers at bioenergy field and has versatile research facilities for laboratory, bench and pilot scale research facilities for biomass fuel production, handling and treatment technologies, fluidised bed combustion, grate combustion, small-scale combustion, gasification and pyrolysis.

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BAT- Bioenergy Centre Achental, Germany, www.biomassehof-achental.de

Bioenergy Centre Achental operates in the form of a public – private partnership: The Bioenergy Centre is owned by the municipalities of the region and by private SMEs, biomass providers and green investors of the region. The Bioenergy Centre provides the region with high quality regional biofuels, namely wood chips, briquettes, pellets. The Bioenergy Centre is the main driving force for the development of a bioenergy region in the valley.

The Biomassehof Achental has found particular attention and support on regional and national level. The valley was selected as Best Practice for bioenergy region development by the German government. Biomassehof Achental has developed highly innovative production, organisation and marketing schemes which will be disseminated to the project partners and on European level.

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LTC, Sweden, www.ltc.se

LTC, Länsteknikcentrum AB (LTC) was established in 1987 as a regional development company owned by individual undertakings, business organizations, the public sector and universities. The aim of LTC is to support the development process of business and industry in the region and supply competencies in new networks.

LTC's role in the regional development process is to facilitate the development of the business community and market-driven clusters. Research and innovation are core areas as is the promotion of cooperation between regional companies and other European regions. LTC has a strong network of qualified resources from organizations and institutes and fosters the cooperation between the business community, institutes of research and technology and the Science Park system.

LTC has an extensive knowledge of the region's companies and networks, as well as long experience working with international projects, both EU-funded and others. LTC is also partner in the EU network – Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and within EEN LTC has specialised itself to work with the renewable energy and environmental sectors.

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EAZK - Energy agency of the Zlín region, Czech Republic, www.eazk.cz

Energy agency of the Zlín region, o.p.s. offers:

Non-profit services:

- ✓ Energetic consultancy leading to increasing of the energy efficiency and self sufficiency
- ✓ Dissemination and good practice promotion
- ✓ Analytic and conceptual work
- ✓ Initiation and preparation of energy focused project
- ✓ Support to establishment of the energy management in municipal and regional authorities
- ✓ International cooperation on preparation and promotion of energy consultancy and projects

Additional activities:

- ✓ Activities of business, financial, organizational and economical advisors.
- ✓ Organization of training courses, seminars and other educational meetings incl. lecturers activities.
- ✓ Organization of exhibitions, fair trades, shows, selling campaigns etc.
- ✓ Activities of technical consultants in sphere of energetic.

The agency's services are focused on projects intended to realize by the region, towns, villages, SMEs and natural persons as well.

The agency was established in 2006. It is as legal entity generally a beneficial organization whose founder and 100% owner of the Energy Agency of the Zlín Region is the Zlín region.

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AUA- Agricultural University of Athens, Greece, www.aua.gr

The Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) is the third oldest university in Greece. Since 1920, it has been making valuable contributions to Greek and European agricultural and economic development, by conducting basic and applied research in the agricultural sciences, and by producing high quality graduates as well as cutting edge scientific knowledge.

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AUA also acts as valued advisor to the Greek State and other national organizations, as well as to the European Commission and other European and UN Agencies on agricultural issues, and conducts a wide array of innovative rural development projects. AUA contributions address a wide range of issues related to food safety and environmental protection significantly affecting the daily lives of Greek and European citizens: food quality and safety, water resource conservation, biological farming, alternative energy sources, biotechnological applications in agriculture.

A specific Renewable Energy Group (REG) of the Department of Natural Resources & Agricultural Engineering was originally developed in order to provide solutions for covering rural energy needs using alternative energy sources. It is active in the field of Renewable Energy Technologies for more than 20 years and has participated in many national and European projects.

The activities of the Group are spread in all fields of renewable energies with particular emphasis to:

- ✓ Biomass for energy.
- ✓ Biofuels production and use.
- ✓ Rural Electrification.
- ✓ Solar (thermal and electric) and hybrid systems applications.
- ✓ Desalination technologies with renewable energy technologies.

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Capital Connect Consultants, Greece, www.capitalconnect.gr/index1.htm

Capital Connect Venture Partners is a Private Equity Fund investing in innovative Greek Small Medium Enterprises in sectors of the new economy and companies whose competitive advantage arises from innovation.

Capital Connect Consultants provide specialized consulting services to private and public companies. It is the consulting arm of Capital Connect Venture Partners, which is the first Greek Closed End Fund that has been established with the participation of the New Economy Development Fund (www.taneo.gr). With a capital of €24 million, Capital Connect makes investments in innovative Greek Small Medium Enterprises

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WestCD - Westmeath Community Development limited, Ireland, www.westcd.ie

Westmeath Community Development Ltd was formed in 1993 under the LEADER II programme in order to carry out a programme of rural development throughout County Westmeath. In 1996 it also became the Area Based Partnership for the County and as such qualified to deliver Local Development Social Inclusion programmes.

The company now administers a range of programmes including LDSIP (Local Development Social Inclusion Programme), LEADER + and the NRDP (National Rural Development Programme).

Examples of projects it supports include after schools clubs, business start up training, community employment schemes, employment training, jobs clubs, mothers and women's groups, open door programme for marginalised, a volunteering centre, horticultural training and the rural social scheme.

In 2007 WCD Ltd initiated a study into renewable energy resources in the County and commissioned a follow up study on strategies on its own role in supporting renewable energy, which has recently been completed. It has an active energy committee / working group and is involved in promoting the establishment of a forest growers network to seek opportunities to supply forest biomass to local electricity power plants.

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EAP - Energy Agency of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, www.eap-save.eu

EAP is a member of the European Federation of Regional Energy and Environment Agencies (FEDARENE), and is a founder of the Association of Bulgarian Energy Agencies in Bulgaria (ABEA). EAP is a member of European Network of Energy Research (ENER). EAP is well-recognized at the EU level as a local partner identifying and developing new energy projects, as well as promoting energy efficiency and clean energies, bringing attention to energy consumption issues, and providing practical ways for individuals, communities and businesses to improve their energy management.

The main priorities of the agency are: energy efficiency and applications of renewable energy in buildings and SMEs, the development of sustainable energy communities, mobility management, and energy/environmental education. EAP has developed and managed more than 20 RES and EE projects together with national and international partners.

EAP is an expert organization promoting the efficient and sustainable use of energy and renewable energy. Its services are utilized by the public administration, business communities, and consumers. It carries out feasibility studies, energy analysis, energy projects identification, development, and management.

The experts within EAP are experienced in applying integrated approaches, and analysis and solutions that encourage local authorities and communities to develop and implement sustainable strategies, plans and projects. The experts' professional expertise covers deep energy, economic and financial analysis, policy advice, project management, writing and promotion.

The work of EAP is based on a quality management system and a code of ethics that has been signed by the staff, management board and associated experts.

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S A T



Le Trièves

SAT – Regional planning syndicate of Trieves, France, www.alpes-trieves.com

The regional planning syndicate of Trieves, SAT, is a confederation of land-use planning. It is a public entity of inter-municipal cooperation (EPCI) created in 1981. Its main missions are:

- ✓ to define the main stream of development in the region.
- ✓ to harmonize and to coordinate the development projects of the territory and to implement them to the political obligations.
- ✓ to animate the territorial charter which is based on the natural resources, environmental politics, transports, architecture, patrimony.
- ✓ to work out, to follow and to review the regional development plan.
- ✓ to realise and to manage the actions and services

The organisation has adopted a local AGENDA 21 and has defined its new sustainable territory project in June 2006 which provides the development of RES, the reduction of pollution and resources and promotes an ecological habitat in the region.

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EKODOMA, Latvia, www.ekodoma.lv

Ekodoma, Ltd is an independent engineering company, with more than 10 years' experience in the field of efficiency and renewable energies. The company was founded in year 1991 by two professors of Riga Technical University, Institute of Energy Systems and Environment: Dr.Hab.Sc.Ing. Dagnija Blumberga and Dr.Hab.Sc.Ing. Ivars Veidenbergs. The Ekodoma team consists of specialists and experts working with energy and environment audits, business plans, expertise, methodologies and follow-up activities. In the past, Ekodoma has undertaken a large number of successful local and international projects on energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy policy – including several projects with the European Commission. Ekodoma provides project development activities, project management instruments and the overall technical supervision of projects with focus on the assessment of social impacts, energy efficiency & renewable energy issues and interfaces to other relevant environmental fields. Ekodoma is putting strong emphasis on the economic, social, legal and administrative framework of strategies for energy policies.

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ELARD aisbl - European Leader Association for Rural Development,
Belgium, www.elard.eu/

The European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD) is an international non-profit making association that was established in 1999 by the National LEADER Networks of different EU Member States. The initial founder members are listed below:

- ✓ French Network for Rural Development
- ✓ Greek Network for Rural Development
- ✓ Irish Network for Rural Development
- ✓ Italian Network for Rural Development
- ✓ Spanish Network for Rural Development.

In the 2000-2006 programming period about 950 rural areas across the 15 Member States operated the LEADER+ Community Initiative, thus opening up access to a vast network of information and other resources. Around half of those European LAGs are already members of ELARD by means of their national or regional networks and through them a vast number of public, private and voluntary local partners and stakeholders are involved in active rural development at community level. Today ELARD represents more than 450 Local Action Groups (LAGs) that manage the LEADER+ Community Initiative and/or National Programmes for Rural Development, as well as other programmes or initiatives not related directly with rural development (i.e. INTERREG, EQUAL, URBAN, etc.).

ELARD aims to support rural and regional development under LEADER philosophy, to promote experience sharing through its members and partners, and to promote networking and cooperation through transnational projects. Furthermore, after the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements, ELARD has been making efforts to provide the newly established rural networks in the new member states with valuable information and support.

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BioRegions Duration:
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