

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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G:\B28\DT4\2\Recommendation letter – focus groups
2009

**Subject: Organisation of Focus Groups in Member States to identify needs
 in the field of evaluation of Rural Development Programmes**

The European Commission has commissioned the **European Economic Interest Group (EEIG) RurEval, Chaussée St-Pierre 260, B-1040 Bruxelles**, to conduct an assessment of needs regarding available tools and methods, and capacities for the evaluation of Rural Development Programmes.

This activity is being carried out under a contract between the EEIG RurEval and the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Commission.

The main objective of this contract is to run an Evaluation Helpdesk (which was set up in 2008) in order to assist the European Commission in establishing the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development (Evaluation Expert Network). The role of the Helpdesk is to provide expertise and facilitate cooperation at EU level in all matters related to the evaluation of the Rural Development Programmes 2007-2013.

The activities of the Evaluation Expert Network and its Helpdesk are agreed annually with the European Commission in the context of a work programme. As part of the 2009 work programme, an update of the assessment of needs at Member State level is planned, the aim of which is to identify the specific range of needs related to the implementation of the mid-term evaluations of the Rural Development Programmes in 2010. This assessment of needs involves the organisation of Focus Groups in the Member States.

Given the importance the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development attaches to this activity, I would be grateful if all private and institutional contacts would offer their collaboration and provide the Evaluation Helpdesk and their national experts with the information needed.

If you wish to have further information on this activity, please contact Dorota NADOLNA (e-mail: dorota.nadolna@ec.europa.eu) in the Evaluation Unit of DG AGRI.

Leo MAIER
Acting Director