

Rural Pact



Expression of interest to join the Rural Pact Coordination Group

What is the Rural Pact?

The [Rural Pact](#) is a **framework for cooperation** among authorities and stakeholders at the European, national, regional and local level. It contributes to **achieving the shared goals of the Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas** by facilitating **interaction on rural matters between public authorities, civil society, businesses, academia and citizens.**

The Rural Pact is developed by the Rural Pact community, which was launched in December 2021. This community is composed of all stakeholders who support the shared goals proposed in the Communication on a Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas. The European Commission **acts as a facilitator.**

The key partners in developing the Rural Pact proposal and discussing it with the community have been the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social committee, and the three networks steering the European Rural Parliament (ELARD, ERCA, Prepare) and networks involved in implementation of the common agricultural policy and cohesion policy. The European Parliament adopted a resolution supporting the Rural Pact and the Presidency of the Council also contributed to the preparatory steps.

The Rural Pact has three objectives:

- **amplify rural voices** to put them higher on the policy agenda;
- **structure collaboration and mutual learning;**
- **encourage voluntary commitment** to act for rural areas.

Five main types of participants can take part in the Rural Pact:

- public authorities
- civil society organisations
- businesses
- citizens
- academic and research and innovation organisations

More details can be found in the [rural pact concept](#) endorsed at the Rural Pact conference on 16 June 2022.

What is the Rural Pact coordination group?

To steer the process, organisations involved in the preparation of the Rural Pact consider useful to create an **informal group**, representative of the participants in the pact to further develop it and steer its process. The group is established as a Commission special group steering the Rural Pact process. The lead DG is DG Agriculture and rural development, and the co-lead DG is DG Regional and urban policy.

Mandate

The mandate has a duration of **3 years**. Members can be replaced following the rules laid out in C(2016) 3301 final.

Acting as a network of institutions and organisations, the group will be responsible for:

- Exploring ways to develop the Rural Pact further for its different types of participants, by agreeing on activities to be taken by the group members or Pact participants, and themes to address.
- Engaging and encouraging their stakeholder groups or partners to become members of the Rural Pact and disseminate information about the EU rural vision and activities the Rural Pact members are taking.
- Monitoring the commitments to action of Rural Pact members at their level of governance.
- Evaluating progress towards the objectives of the Rural Pact and, ultimately, the ten shared goals of the rural vision.
- Suggesting events or tasks to be organised under the Rural Pact or subjects to be addressed in communications to the Rural Pact community by the Rural Pact support office (pending agreement of the European Commission and conformity with the support office contract).

Once created, the group will adopt rules of procedures.

Support from the European Commission

The European Commission has tasked the “Rural Pact Support Office” to:

- Collect 40 good practices per year covering the four building blocks of the Long-term vision for rural areas;
- Regularly monitor and analyse commitments for action carried out under the Rural Pact and assess contribution toward its objectives;
- Keep the Rural Pact community informed through the website, social media channels, the monthly newsletter and the annual Magazine;
- Build synergies and complementarities with all relevant EU policy networks and initiatives working on and for rural development;
- Liaise and maintain close contacts with the Rural Pact community including to identify topics and support activities of interest for the community;
- Organise webinars for capacity building and peer learning, as well as high-level policy events until end of 2025, in particular 7 policy action labs (4 physical and 3 online), 1 high-level policy forum, and 11 good practice webinars;

- Organise the Rural Pact Conference in 2024;
- Organise and animate two 1-day meetings per year of the Rural Pact coordination group (1 physical, 1 online).

The Rural Pact Coordination Group will oversee these tasks and will be able to give strategic orientations by making proposals to the European Commission. The RPSO will organise two meetings per year of the Coordination Group, including one in-person meeting and one on-line meeting. For the in-person meeting the reference location is Brussels, however, the meeting may be organised in any of the EU Member States.

Who can apply to be part of the Rural Pact coordination group?

The **Rural Pact Coordination Group** will include up to 30 representatives, together representing each category of members of the Rural Pact in proportionate ways and aiming for a **balance of types of actors** (EU institutions and bodies, public authorities, NGO representatives, business representatives and citizens' representatives), **country of origin, diversity of rural contexts** and **gender**.

More specifically, the group will be composed of:

1. **12 representatives nominated by European institutions and bodies:** the European Parliament (COMAGRI and COMREGI), the trio of presidencies of the Council of the European Union (Sweden, Spain, and Belgium for the first semester 2023, evolving each semester), each to be represented by two representatives from different relevant policy areas, to be designated by national authorities, the Committee of the Regions (NAT and COTER) and the European Economic and Social committee (NAT and ECO) (assimilated to Type D and E members).
2. **3 elected representatives from the networks steering the European Rural Parliament** (assimilated to Type C members).
3. **15 elected representatives from European organisations** active in fields of relevance to the Rural Pact and/or representing civil society and/or various business sectors and/or types of rural areas and **representatives of research, academia, or innovation organisations** or networks active in rural research and innovation (assimilated to Type B members).

Applicants referred to under point 3 should be individuals representing organisations that:

- Have committed to the shared goals of the rural vision by joining the [Rural Pact community](#).
- Have committed to take tangible actions in the Rural Pact through the [commitment canvas](#).
- Represent one (or more) of the types of participants in the Rural Pact.
- Are active/working on one or more of the themes addressed in the rural vision.
- For European organisations are active in preferably 10 EU Member States or more.

To enable the Commission to assemble a group representing the diversity described under “composition”, each organisation applying should propose **at least two applications from individuals from two different genders and nationalities, maximum one of which will be retained**. The finally appointed group should have no less than 40% of male or female representation and have a composition that genuinely represents rural interests. The Commission will also take into account the importance to involve young people.

What do you commit to if you are selected to be part of the group?

By applying for **membership in the Rural Pact Coordination Group**, applicants commit to:

- Be available for two meetings per year, in English, one virtual and one in-person.
- Represent more than their individual views: consult their constituency or membership or network on the activities of the Rural Pact in advance of the meetings to make sure they bring rural voices to the meeting.
- Communicate elements of interest for the Rural Pact Community to the Rural Pact support office, such as news, projects or calls for tenders.
- Pro-actively participate in the actions that the group will decide to take and communicate about the activities of the Rural Pact.
- Engage their community and mobilise their audience.
- Be a voice of the Rural Pact and a contact point in their country and/or field of activity for people who would seek to join the Pact, in coordination with the Rural pact support office.

Why joining? What are the benefits of membership?

The Rural pact coordination group members will:

- Play a key role in steering the Rural Pact by making proposals to the European Commission on the annual work programme of the Rural Pact support office.
- Be regularly informed and consulted about policy developments regarding rural areas to provide their views on how rural voices can be raised to impact these developments.
- Be invited to all Rural Pact events organised by the Rural Pact support office.
- Have privileged access to Rural Pact communication channels and to the Rural Pact collaborative platform to spread information about the activities of their networks of interest to the Rural Pact community.

How to apply?

To apply, each organisation should fill-in the on-line EU Survey available here by **26 May 2023** end of the day, describing the characteristics of i) the organisation; and ii) the two individuals proposed for membership of the Rural Pact coordination group, maximum one of whom will be retained.

How will members be selected?

The members will be appointed by the European Commission, who may seek advice from the other EU institutions and bodies invited to designate representatives.

Applications complying with elements referred to under point “composition” will be ranked taking into account:

- Relevance of the organisation to the work of the Rural pact (number of members, countries covered, themes addressed)
- Relevance and novelty of the commitments made to the Rural Pact
- Motivations and capacity to influence the Rural pact process

Then the European Commission will compose the group with highest ranked applications seeking to achieve the required balance and diversity of representatives.

When will results be known?

Applicants will be notified that they are selected or not selected to take part in the first rural pact coordination group by 2 June 2023 at the latest. Selected members will then be able to book their travel, for which they will be reimbursed (assimilated type B and C Members). The first meeting of the Rural Pact Coordination Group is planned to take place in Brussels on **21 June 2023**.

