

Launch of the Community Led Local Development Cluster 6th June 2013

1. Background

During the 18th NRN meeting in Portugal, the Hungarian NRN launched a new thematic cluster on Community-led Local Development (CLLD). During the afternoon of the meeting time was made available for those NRNs wishing to take an active role in the CLLD cluster to develop a work plan based upon the activities they wished to lead.

Prior to the event, interested stakeholders were asked to indicate if they would like to participate as active members of the cluster (taking a leading role for one specific activity) and to provide suggestions on what topics they would like to cover through the work of the cluster, through what types of activities and during what period. Overall, some 20 different stakeholders/organisations expressed their interest in the work of the cluster, out of which 16 indicated that they would like to be active members namely:

- 6 NRNs from Hungary, Lithuania, Sweden, Portugal, Italy and Spain;
- 4 Managing Authorities from: Hungary, Slovakia Lithuania and Scotland;
- 3 LAGs from Hungary and Wales and Croatia;
- The PA of Lithuania
- ELARD and the National Food Chain Office in Hungary.



Some of the participants of the CLLD cluster meeting, Portugal, 6 June 2013

2. Work plan discussions during the 18th NRN meeting

The group first explored the activities individual members would be able to lead and the timeframes for delivering the activity. These are summarised in Table 1 and laid out in detail below (a detailed list of suggestions received prior to the event is annexed to this report).

Table 1: Proposed topics and activities during the event

Organisation	Topic	Proposed activities	Expected outputs	Proposed timing
Hungarian National Rural Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National-level cooperation of ministries CLLD Terminology 	Enhance mapping Conference	Mapping report Conference	Jul - Oct
Slovak MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLLD Terminology & guidelines ITI (Integrated Territorial Investment)_ 	Preparation of guidance	Guidance	From Jul
Lithuanian NRN Lithuanian MA Centre for the LEADER Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS approach to CLLD RDP content LDS strategy Role of PA in CLLD LAG self-assessment 	Events Surveys/ Working papers Think tanks Thematic Visits	Working Papers Events Survey reports	Ongoing
Swedish NRN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplified cost options LDS selection committees inc. selection criteria Partnership strengthening (with our without multi-fund) based on LAG consultation 	Survey Overview + discussions	Survey report	On-going
Scottish NRN	Demarcation of funds for thematic areas	P2P learning (MAs and possibly other parties from other funds)	Report on key findings	July - October
ELARD	Identifying LAG best practice in LEADER delivery	LAG survey	Promotional document	ASAP
Portuguese NRN	NRN support to LAGs + LDSs LDS criteria Multi-fund integration	MA survey Development of guidelines	Guidelines	July – October
Spanish NRN	Low TNC implementation rate	LAG Survey	MS TNC agreement	

	Topic/Title	Activity	Outputs	Timing	
WHO? HU NRN	TNC low implementation rate	Questionnaire to the LAGs on TNC projects MA, LAGs			Involvement of other members
SK MA HU MA NRN	National-level coop (ministry)	Terminology CLLD → guidelines	Mapping enhanced Conference (aut)	Conf. Mapping Rap	Jul - Oct 13 Contribution to survey
LT NRN MA PA Cubs for LID prog	Members approach to CLLD RDP content LDS strategy	Role of PA in CLLD LAG self-asses	Various WP Events Surveys thematic units	SWP Survey Event	Jul - (now 2013)
LAGs consultation → Partnership strategy work in different reality - funding - activities	SE Network Surveys on simplified cost options - mapping	Selection Committee & criteria	Survey → Overview/discussion	Survey Report	Ongoing (June 11 -) All NRNs
Scotland MA	Demarcation of funds in specific thematic areas ESAF - skills-training tourism		P2P MAs & possibly other partners from other panels	Report on key findings	Ongoing - (Aut)
ITI Strategies ELARD SK MA	Approaching LAGs - LEADER Manual Experience		Contacting LAGs for information Producing info for SF sheets	Provisional document	As soon as possible LAGs (members especially & others)
PT NRN	NRN support to LAGs/LDS	Criteria to select LDS Integrated LDS → SF contib	Gathering info from MS	Guidelines	Jul 13 - early 14 MS stakeholders

Photo of the outcomes (in process) of the CLLD cluster meeting.

The issues to be addressed by various stakeholders were as follows:

1. Hungarian NRN:

- Develop and enhance the mapping survey, expanding it to include additional stakeholders.
- Define the key terminology to develop shared understanding across MSs.

The **Mapping Report** will be developed during July with distribution during August. A **CLLD conference** will be delivered in Hungary during October.

2. Lithuanian NRN:

Review the Partnership Agreements and CLLD vision for individual MSs by:

- Sharing views on the content for Local Development Strategies and the selection process.
- Exploring the requirements for transnational projects.
- Utilise LAG self-assessment to capture the benefits of the approach and identify what could be improved to support CLLD planning.

The 'Centre for the Leader Programme' also wants to join the CLLD Thematic Cluster.

This activity could be delivered through **working papers, events, think tanks, thematic visits and surveys**.

3. Swedish NSU:

- Explore how other MSs are using or have considered using a simplified cost option – flat rate.
- Explore how other MSs are establishing their selection committees and developing their criteria.

A **survey** has been disseminated to identify where flat rate cost options are being used. An **overview and general discussion** will detail the selection committee and criteria used.

Swedish LAGs were also asked if they were interested in the new Thematic Cluster. Identifying processes and methods for strengthening the LAG partnerships was suggested, with a LAG Manager available who could be paid to progress this work in the autumn.

4. Scottish NRN:

- Explore demarcation between the funds and how to tackle thematic issues such as food & drink and tourism.

Peer to peer learning will take place from July to late September, to deliver a **report** which summarises the discussions and findings in October.

5. ELARD:

- Gather the experience of LAGs delivering the LEADER approach, particularly those who have used multi-fund options, to increase understanding of the benefits of CLLD with the departments who manage the structural funds.

Survey LAGs and produce a **promotional document** as soon as possible.

6. Portuguese NRN:

- Identify the support NRNs can provide to LAGs.
- Explore the criteria being used by MSs to select Local Development Strategies.
- Explore how the use of integrated funds for Local Development Strategies can be developed.

Survey all MSs to produce **guidelines** on criteria and fund integration, and **events** to take place between July and February.

7. Spanish NRN:

- Identify the obstacles to LAGs endeavouring to develop transnational projects to highlight issues such as the differing requirements of MSs.

Develop an **agreement** between MSs to streamline and develop shared processes to the approval of cooperation projects.

8. Slovakian NRN:

- Identify options for delivering ITI and CLLD together.

Survey all MSs to explore the proposed options.

These suggestions were then laid out in a draft work plan as the basis of the activity of the cluster.

Summary of key issues

- Informing key stakeholders (especially other ministries) about the **added value of CLLD**, including the identification of CLLD best practice.
- Focusing on **specific thematic areas** (including renewable energy and short supply chains) especially understanding how CLLD can contribute to these; and how they can potentially be funded through different funding sources (multi-funding & demarcation between funds).
- Need to develop a **common terminology**, understanding of key terms.
- Requirements towards **LAGs and Local Development Strategies**; the role of LAGs in future CLLD.
- Preparing for the **selection of LAGs** and the **monitoring & evaluation** of LAGs and their LDS (including self-evaluation).
- **Controlling and assisting CLLD approaches** and the role of PAs in the process.
- **Transnational cooperation** supported by the harmonisation of eligibility roles.

3. Conclusions from the 'work plan' discussion

The group identified a number of actions they felt were needed to progress the draft work plan.

- Develop the **work plan, integrate topics** where possible and build in other groups who want to participate.
- The cluster members must **work together** to combine activities such as surveys.
- Any surveys should be focused, targeted and short to ensure a good response rate.
- The detail needs to be added to **avoid duplication** of previous work that has already been delivered.
- The work needs to be carefully focused to avoid 're-hashing' of previous activity and to **deliver within the autumn timeframe**.
- Outputs should be focused on **persuading the MAs** (especially that of other funds) of the value of CLLD.
- The timeframe for the Hungarian conference might be too late, however would be a useful vehicle to bring together different Ministries, DGAGRI and DGREGIO.
- The **first draft of the Partnership Agreements will be produced in the summer** so stakeholders need to be brought together sooner to brainstorm the issues and exchange ideas.
- HNRN can coordinate the Thematic Cluster however the members of the Cluster are responsible for delivering and resourcing the activities. This may be the deciding factor over the actions which are delivered.

The above key themes can clearly be divided into two main categories:

- **Immediate needs with regard to programming:** Discussions in each member state on CLLD & multi-funding, as well as the Partnership Agreements are currently taking place, and the cluster's work should contribute to this

process as far as possible. Targeted actions are needed to inform relevant stakeholders about added value of CLLD, especially those working with other funds. Any concerns, doubts, potential barriers around CLLD need to be identified to best address these issues.

- **Needs to support future CLLD implementation:** This process includes the selection of LAGs (criteria) and the development of LDS; the implementation of CLLD in specific thematic areas; as well as the monitoring, control and evaluation of LAGs.

4. Suggested follow-up actions

It is suggested that the cluster focuses its efforts during the first months of its activity on the **'immediate needs'** identified during the discussion. More specifically, the first set of activities of the cluster will focus on:

- **Identifying the most important barriers, fears and concerns** of key stakeholders to implement multi-funded CLLD. For this purpose, it is suggested that a simple 'survey' is carried out in each cluster-member-state; based on interviews with ministry officials responsible for the management of future Structural Funds (if needed). The starting point for this survey is the main challenges identified by the 'CLLD mapping report' (June 2013).
- **Targeted information (on the basis of needs assessment) to key stakeholders on the added-value of CLLD:** such actions should focus on presenting the added-value of the CLLD approach in addressing key problems that cut across policy areas, especially through selected examples from LEADER. Some focus on thematic areas; the possible complementarity of funds in these thematic areas (such as social inclusion & skills training; short-supply chains; renewable energy, etc.) should also be highlighted.
- **Overcoming other specific barriers** through developing simple information material & guidance supported by good practice examples on how the CLLD approach can be best delivered, with particular focus on administrative issues; shared-management, allocation of responsibilities and control.
- **Creating a forum for exchange on the above issues** among key stakeholders, especially European Commission officials from all DGs, national ministries, national rural networks, LAGs and other interested stakeholders.

4.1 Identifying the most important barriers in the way of CLLD

It is suggested that a short report (1 to 2 pages) are prepared by each cluster member (namely, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, Sweden, Scotland, Portugal, Spain and Italy) summarising the current state of play and main issues/barriers, as well as potential ways of addressing these. The main purpose of this report is to better understand what the key issues are that hamper the commitment of national and regional governments towards multi-funded CLLD. This exercise will be facilitated by a common questionnaire that can be used in case of interviews with key national stakeholders (especially in ministries that manage the Structural Funds). The interview questions are indicative, it

may well be that cluster members already know the answers based on their experience and involvement in the negotiations (i.e. there is no need for interviews in each member state).

4.2 Targeted information

It is suggested that targeted information and guidance will be prepared for relevant stakeholders (especially policy-makers involved in specific policies supported by the Structural Funds). The purpose of these material will be to demonstrate the added-value of the CLLD approach in specific thematic areas; and how different funds can potentially contribute (complement each other) to local, regional and national development through the CLLD-approach.

It is suggested that one cluster member (with a specific interest in the field) is responsible for each thematic area. Titles may include:

- CLLD & social inclusion
- CLLD for boosting employment
- CLLD & economic development (including tourism; short supply chains, etc.)
- CLLD in maritime areas
- Etc.

4.3 Overcoming specific barriers

This activity will be focused on providing guidance on 'how to overcome some administrative barriers' in the context of planning for CLLD. The purpose will be to collect and share good practice examples from Member States on good management practices (including examples from the current programming period).

4.4 Creating a forum for exchange

The purpose of this activity is to create a platform for exchange of ideas and information among cluster members and interested parties at an early stage, in order to avoid duplication of work and contribute to the exchange of ideas.

During the first phase of the cluster's operation (July – December 2013) an number of key activities are envisaged in this regard. It is proposed that **a CLLD event will be organised by HNRN on the 22 July 2013 entitled 'CLLD – The message unheard'** with the aim to bring together policy-makers and other key stakeholders from a range of policy fields, especially from European, national and regional levels. The conference is expected to contribute to the development of CLLD in Member States in two main ways:

- Through demonstrating how the CLLD approach can address specific problems and challenges relevant to policy fields supported by different funds (especially social, employment and economic development);
- Through generating discussions about various administrative challenges associated with the future implementation on CLLD.

At the same time (in preparation for the conference), the cluster will also focus on the collection and exchange of relevant documents and creation of a CLLD library (in order to avoid duplicating work already carried out elsewhere).