

## **PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2007-2013**

### ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE OF TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION (TNC) UNDER LEADER AXIS

#### SECTION A: **COUNTRY SPECIFIC DETAILS**

##### 1. Name of the programme:

Flemish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

##### 2. Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs):

10

##### 3. Axes covered by LAGs:

The Leader axis is implemented through axis 3 measures, with a focus on the quality of life and diversification:

Axis 3 - Measures, 313, 321, 322, 323, 331

##### 4. Axes covered by Transnational Cooperation (TNC) projects:

Axis 3 - Measures, 313, 321, 322, 323, 331

##### 5. Total RDP budget for all the four axes (including EU+ public+ private expenditure):

EUR 2,145,171,092

##### Total budget for Leader axis:

EUR 53,073,931

Of which:

a. EU Funding: EUR 11,227,336

b. Public funding: EUR 26,197,117

c. Private funding: EUR 15,649,478

## SECTION B: PROGRAMMING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS

### 1. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Budget for TNC projects (Total public funding: EU+ public)	<p>The total budget allocated for measure 421 is EUR 1,250,000 (the total budget including private funding is 1,315,798). This is 3.03% of the axis 4 budget and 0.18 % of the total RDP budget.</p> <p>Each LAG has a fixed budget of EUR 125,000 for cooperation. Public support is up to 95% of project cost. If a LAG does not spend its cooperation budget towards the end of the programming period, the balance may be transferred to other LAGs participating in cooperation.</p>
Responsibility for the management of the Budget (MAs or LAGs)	It is the Managing Authority who is responsible for the management of the TNC budget.
Special budget for the preparatory technical support of TNC projects	A special budget for the preparation phase of TNC project has been foreseen. For each TNC project there a maximum of EUR 5,000 may be spent for the preparation phase. Following approval of the TNC project, preparatory costs are covered as project costs. As LAGs may depend on different timing and procedures applied to their partners, preparatory costs incurred may also be covered if the TNC project fails for such external reasons.

### 2. PROGRAMMING ASPECTS

Local Development Strategies and TNC	Although LAGs are not required to include TNC in their Local Development Strategy (LDS), each of them has mentioned it without specifying concrete projects ideas or cooperation partners. It is a requirement that each TNC project fits with one of the measures listed in the LDS.
Way of selecting cooperation projects	<p>The first selection of project proposals is the responsibility of the LAG, ensuring that proposals comply with the LDS. The selection criteria and their relative importance differ from LAG to LAG.</p> <p>Based on the LAG's first selection the cooperation project proposals will be jointly reviewed and finally selected by the Management Authority, assisted by representatives of the provincial management committees. The Flemish Minister is responsible for the final project approval.</p> <p>The first call for cooperation projects will be launched by the Managing Authority one year after the selection of LAGs. Thereafter, calls for projects could be launched, as long as budget for TNC is available. The last selection round will hence take place by 31 December 2013.</p>
Main topics of TNC proposed for the 2007-2013 programming period	LAGs did not have to specify their project ideas in their LDS and consequently the main themes proposed cannot be indicated.
Cooperation with third countries	There are no restrictions regarding cooperation with third countries, except partners from outside the EU have to be organised in accordance with the Leader approach.
Maximum/minimum number of TNC projects per LAG	A LAG is not required to implement cooperation projects. Its TNC budget may be transferred to another LAG's cooperation activity should it decide not implement any cooperation project.

## 3. COMMON PROVISIONS FOR TNC PROJECT APPROVAL

Information about procedures of approval and implementation of TNC projects	The procedure has been in force since the approval of the TNC manual on 21 April 2009. The manual has been sent to the LAG coordinators and they are responsible for the distribution of TNC information in their action area.
Eligibility criteria for cooperation projects	<p>Only those TNC projects will be approved, which are based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TNC must consist in sharing of know-how and/or human and financial resources available in each of the areas in question;</li> <li>• TNC must fit in with the direction the LAG has clearly indicated in its LDS and complete a number of objectives of it;</li> <li>• TNC should include the implementation of joint action with concrete results. Exchanging experience is possible as well, on the condition that this leads to tangible results;</li> <li>• TNC should result in added value for all partners involved (economies of scale, exchange of experience, know-how, etc);</li> <li>• TNC project includes Leader areas of at least two different countries, but can also cover Leader I, Leader II and Leader + selected areas and other rural areas organised in accordance with the Leader approach;</li> <li>• Public support amounts to up to 95 % of the project costs per TNC project.</li> </ul>
Selection criteria for cooperation projects	The selection criteria differ from LAG to LAG, because they are related to their LDS. Each LAG shall review the proposals for compliance with its strategy.
Eligible activities of measure 421 Cooperation	<p>Eligibility for financing is conditioned to the common action being in line with the provisions of the LDS and the manual issued by the Managing Authority. A summary explicitly listing eligible activities does not exist.</p> <p>Current examples of project proposals at approval stage include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a project focusing on the exchange of regional products;</li> <li>• a project targeting the improvement of youth accommodation.</li> </ul>
Typical examples of eligible costs for TNC projects	<p>The eligible costs are identical with those of the normal procedure. An explicit list of overhead costs was created in order to define all cost that can be granted public funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building: rent building/office/meeting heating, illumination, electricity, water, gas</li> <li>• Office: phone bill, internet bill, stamps, transaction costs, office necessities, ink, paper / copies, maintenance offices, check-up computer + printer</li> <li>• Representation: travel and journey costs, transfer compensation</li> <li>• Support: specific social obligations, accounting, juridical advice</li> <li>• Assurance: civil accountability, fire, work injuries</li> </ul>
Specific documents concerning the cooperation partners required from LAGs	<p>The application dossier must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the project proposal,</li> <li>• the cooperation agreement, and</li> <li>• the financial distribution amongst partners.</li> </ul> <p>• In case a LAG chooses to work with operators or project promoters within the local action area, the application has to contain an approval letter from the LAG.</p> <p>The Managing Authority of Flanders has provided a ready to use Cooperation Agreement that shall be used by the Flemish LAGs. Each LAG is responsible for the preparation and layout of the Cooperation Agreement.</p>

## The approval process of TNC applications

During the first phase the LAG selects the project proposals. Proposals preliminary selected by the LAG are sent to two committees (the responsible province and the Flemish administration) for advisory and final approval. The Flemish Minister is responsible for the final approval of the selected projects. LAGs can send their applications for approval at any time.

A LAG will receive a (positive or negative) response within four months receipt of the application's submission to the Managing Authority via postal services.

If the application is accepted, the Managing Authority will send a provisional authorisation, so that the promoter may start the project. The European Commission will be informed to conceive the full authorisation.

In Flanders no maximum delay has been set for the approval to be issued by the Member States' authorities of the TNC partners.

## List of abbreviations:

- EU: European Union
- LAG: Local Action Group
- LDS: Local Development Strategy
- MA: Managing Authority
- MS: Member State
- PA: Paying Authority
- TNC: Transnational Cooperation
- RDP: Rural Development Programme