

PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2007-2013

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

SECTION A: **COUNTRY SPECIFIC DETAILS**

1. Name of the programme:

Estonian Rural Development Programme

2. Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs):

26

3. Axes covered by LAGs:

All measures of all Axes which are implemented under the RDP:

Axis 1 – 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 131, 132, 133, 141, 142

Axis 2 – 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227

Axis 3 – 311, 312, 313, 321, 322, 323, 341

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

All axes

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

EUR 924 863 847

Total budget for Leader axis:

EUR 85,759,063

Of which:

a. EU Funding: EUR 68,607,250

b. Public funding: EUR 17,151,813

c. Private funding: EUR 0

SECTION B: PROGRAMMING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS

1. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Budget for TNC projects (Total public funding: EU + public)	The total budget allocated for measure 421 is presumably EUR 5,145,544 which is 6 % of the axis 4 public funding and 0.56% of the total RDP budget. This amount includes funding both for inter-territorial and transnational cooperation; there is no pre-division of this funding between the two types of cooperation. The budget per LAG is not allocated. The maximum amount of support to a TNC project is up to EUR 200,000 (public funding).
Responsibility for the management of the Budget (MAs or LAGs)	TNC funds have not been pre-allocated to LAGs, the budget is managed by the Managing Authority.
Special budget for the preparatory technical support of TNC projects	A special budget for the preparation of TNC project has not been foreseen. It is possible to make a preparatory activities for TNC but the budget for preparatory phase comes from the budget for administrative costs (20%) and there is no other budget allocated for technical preparatory support.

2. PROGRAMMING ASPECTS

Local Development Strategies and TNC	LAGs have to specify in their Local Development Strategy (LDS) only their TNC project ideas, but are not required to name their potential project partners. It is not possible for LAGs to apply for a TNC project in case Cooperation has not been included in the LDS. However, LAGs will be given opportunity to modify their LDS from 2010, including the possibility to add TNC, if needed.
Way of selecting cooperation projects	A first project selection is made by the evaluation committee of the LAG. Once the LAGs evaluation committee has made its decision, the Paying Agency verifies the eligibility of application and sends to the Managing Authority (Estonian Ministry of Agriculture) who issues the official approval. In case of inter-territorial cooperation projects the procedure ends at the level of the Paying Agency (no obligation to pass on applications to the Managing Authority).
Main topics of TNC proposed for the 2007-2013 programming period	LAGs had to specify their project ideas in their LDS without obligation to name their potential project partners. Project ideas are mainly related to tourism, local food and traditions, youth movement, handicraft or other local products.
Cooperation with third countries	No restrictions have been established.
Maximum/minimum number of TNC projects per LAG	No restrictions have been established.

3. COMMON PROVISIONS FOR TNC PROJECT APPROVAL

Information about procedures of approval and implementation of TNC projects	The full procedures of approval and implementation of TNC projects have already been developed. Approval and implementation procedures regulated by national Leader legislation. However, specific TNC guidelines are under elaboration.
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<p>Eligibility criteria for cooperation projects</p>	<p>The (publicly available) eligibility criteria for TNC projects are identical to those for other projects. Financing may be integrated, in case the TNC project meets the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNC projects must have at least one partner from other EU MS or third countries; • It involves at least one LAG selected under the Leader Axis and is open to other local groups organised similarly to Leader; • It corresponds to at least one of three RDP Axes (since measures of all the three Axes can be implemented); • It is in accordance with measure criteria laid down in the Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005. • A Co-operation agreement must be submitted to the Paying Agency, in addition to the TNC application. • Project idea has been included in LAG's LDS. • The project has obtained approval by the LAG's evaluation committee.
<p>Selection criteria for cooperation projects</p>	<p>Selection criteria and procedures for selecting TNC projects are defined by LAGs in their LDS. Following these internal procedures (which are the same as for other projects) the selection of projects is carried out by the LAG's evaluation committee. Based on the LAG's decision, project proposals are submitted to the PA who checks if the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corresponds to at least one of three Axes; • corresponds to measure criteria laid down in the Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005; • corresponds to the LAG's implementation plan⁽¹⁾; • corresponds to eligible costs stipulated in the national Leader legislation; • the TNC idea is written in the LAG's LDS.
<p>Eligible activities of measure 421 Cooperation</p>	<p>All activities that correspond to the measure criteria laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005.</p>
<p>Typical examples of eligible costs for TNC projects</p>	<p>No specific eligible costs for TNC projects have been established. The eligibility of costs for all types of projects is defined in the national legislation. The same rules also apply to TNC projects.</p>
<p>Specific documents concerning the cooperation partners required from LAGs</p>	<p>No additional documents are needed to those mentioned in the 'Guide for the implementation of the measure Cooperation under the Leader axis of rural development programmes 2007-2013' (RD12/10/2008 rev. 3).</p>
<p>The approval process of TNC applications</p>	<p>LAG sends the applications selected by its evaluation committee to the Paying Agency who checks the eligibility of the projects. The official and final approval for project financing is issued by the Managing Authority.</p> <p>LAGs can send their applications any time; the Paying Agency accepts applications continuously and so does the Managing Authority.</p> <p>The maximum time limit for the duration of the approval process is 60 working days (this can be extended to 90 workdays, if required).</p> <p>There is no maximum delay set for approval from Member State's authorities of the TNC partners.</p>

(¹) LAGs have to present their implementation plan to the Paying Agency by the 1st November each year, in which they explain which measures and what budget is going to be opened in the following year.

List of abbreviations:

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