

## PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2007-2013

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

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

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

Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007-2013

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

3 LAGs have been selected: two for Malta and one for Gozo

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

Measures under Axis 1 and 3

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

Measures in Axis 1 (125) and 3 (313). Besides measures specifically designed for LAGs and tailor made for the rural territories, LAGs also have the opportunity to implement a selection of actions outlined in the Rural Development Plan.

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

EUR 151,461,140

##### Total budget for Axis 4

EUR 4,925,000

Of which:

a. EU Funding: EUR 3,100,000

b. Public funding: EUR 775,000

c. Private funding: EUR 1,050,000

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

### 1. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Budget for TNC projects (Total public funding: EU + public)	The sum of €165,000 is allocated to Measure 421 under the Rural Development Plan for Malta 2007- 2013. Given that this is the first time that the Leader initiative will be implemented in the local context, it is up to the LAGs to decide how much of their budget they want to allocate to cooperation projects. It is advisable that cooperation projects under this Measure are limited to the possibility of one small to medium sized project for each LAG. This would allow LAG members to build the necessary competence, skills and experience in order to manage and administer projects of this nature.
Responsibility for the management of the Budget (MAs or LAGs)	LAGs have a certain budget for cooperation which will be administered by the Managing Authority.
Special budget for the preparatory technical support of TNC projects	This is a pre-development support measure aimed to facilitate the search for and contacting of partners by providing the technical support required in preparation for the project. Expenses incurred can relate to meetings with potential partners (e.g. travel costs, accommodation and fees for experts and interpreters) or costs associated with the development of the project (e.g. project feasibility study, consultations on specific issues, translation costs and expenses incurred for additional staff.

### 2. PROGRAMMING ASPECTS

Local Development Strategies and TNC	The Local Development Strategy and the Business Plan shall outline the LAG's interests and the key priority areas intended for intervention. The co-operation methodology must be integrated in the LAG's business plan at the outset of the programme. It is always possible for LAGs to apply for a TNC project, even if it has not been included in the LDS.
Way of selecting cooperation projects	<p>The selection and approval of projects must be carried out following the same procedure as for other projects i.e. through the project evaluation committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In case the cooperation project implements measures specifically designed for the LAG: LAGs are responsible for the selection of the project by setting up a Decision Body. The LAG will issue and publicise calls. Applications will then be filtered by the Decision Committee, on the basis of basic eligibility criteria. The Decision Committee has the final responsibility of endorsing projects that will be receiving funding. The Decision Committee seeks the guidance of the related thematic working group led by experts, to evaluate and select the beneficiaries.</li> <li>• In case of pilot projects, submitted as a one-off initiative for funding through Leader, and not fitting into measures implemented by the LAG, the same procedure will apply, whereby the Decision Committee seeks the guidance of the related thematic working group led by experts, to assess whether or to what extent the projects proposed fit the objectives set in the LAGs strategy. However, the decision as to whether to approve a project or not, rests with the Decision Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Projects selected by the LAG must be then submitted to the Paying Agency (PA) for the final approval and the selection is carried out by the Project Selection Committee (PSC) appointed by the PA.</p>

<p>Main topics of TNC proposed for the 2007-2013 programming period</p>	<p>The main elements identified in the LDS's are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation - training, marketing, capital investments;</li> <li>• Sustainability - diversification, adoption of sustainable practices;</li> <li>• Economic viability - added value, promotion of services and products, distinctiveness;</li> <li>• Linkages - establish, create, consolidate and expand on cross cutting themes;</li> <li>• Strengthening the identity of the region.</li> </ul>
<p>Cooperation with third countries</p>	<p>Transnational cooperation with an area in a third country concerns at least one area selected under Leader axis. Where an area selected under Leader axis engages in cooperation with an area in a country outside the Community, organised according to the Leader approach, the expenditure involved relating to the Leader area becomes eligible (share of the coordination and joint project assumed on the basis of the cooperation agreement by the Leader area, e.g. participation by the Leader local action group in partnership meetings; local application in its area of the joint project). In other words, expenditure "relating to" the Leader area does not mean necessarily "in the area".</p> <p>Expenditure in the area in the non-member country and not related to the Leader area is not eligible. The definition of the non-Community area participating in cooperation should be consistent with the Leader approach (see definition in paragraph IV.1).</p>
<p>Maximum/minimum number of TNC projects per LAG</p>	<p>One project per LAG.</p>

### 3. COMMON PROVISIONS FOR TNC PROJECT APPROVAL

<p>Information about procedures of approval and implementation of TNC projects</p>	<p><b>Step 1:</b> A local action group (LAG) which intends to take part in a cooperation project will submit an application for approval (if the LAG selects the project) or selection to its competent authority. The competent authority can give its provisional approval to the LAG on condition that the other partners will obtain in the next 6 to 9 months approval by the competent authorities in other Member States.</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> The Programme competent authority (Managing Authority/ Paying Agency) shall notify the Commission the approval of any transnational cooperation project (joint action) using the information exchange TNC project form. It should designate a transnational cooperation correspondent</p> <p><b>Step 3:</b> The Commission having received the notification will inform other competent authorities concerned. Where the Commission receives authorisations from other competent authority on the same project, it will update the information exchange TNC form and notify all relevant competent authorities</p> <p>This step does not apply to a transnational cooperation project involving only one Member State and one area in a third country.</p>
<p>Eligibility criteria for cooperation projects</p>	<p>LAGs must consider the following in determining the eligibility of a project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant must be a recognised LAG;</li> <li>• Cooperation taking place with Leader Group of another territory;</li> <li>• One LAG coordinating the project;</li> <li>• Project is in line with the objectives of the National Rural Development Programme;</li> <li>• Cooperation must include the implementation of a joint project supported by a common structure <sup>(1)</sup> ;</li> <li>• Partners must be legally constituted structures recognised by the MS concerned;</li> <li>• If cooperation spreads outside Leader, rural areas involved must be organised according to the Leader approach.</li> </ul>

<sup>(1)</sup> The running of a common structure is seen as the most integrated form of cooperation. A shared new structure must be a body using a legal form recognised in the Member State(s) concerned. The partners must also be legally-constituted structures recognised by the MS concerned. Where cooperation spreads outside Leader actors, the Group involved must be modelled on a Leader basis (Source: RDP for Malta, p. 287).

<p>Selection criteria for cooperation projects</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordination project carried out with a Leader group from a Member State with a diverse background to the local rural scenario</li> <li>2. Project integrates more than one project activity and type of action</li> <li>3. Project is well linked to the Local Development Strategy of the LAG</li> <li>4. Project will lead to innovation in products and /or services</li> <li>5. Project will lead to the development of a common trans-national strategy for the promotion of rural tourism</li> <li>6. Project will lead to the development of rural tourism and / or the development of tourist attractions in rural areas</li> <li>7. Project will result in the creation of full-time and/ or part-time employment.</li> </ol>
<p>Eligible activities of measure 421 Cooperation</p>	<p>Actions eligible for funding cover the preparatory activity, co-ordination and animation, however, cooperation must also include the implementation of a joint project.</p>
<p>Typical examples of eligible costs for TNC projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Capacity building exercise/s</li> <li>• Organisation of events and events planning</li> <li>• Support for innovation in products / services in rural areas</li> <li>• Adoption of common methodological and working methods</li> <li>• Communication and networking</li> <li>• Marketing activities</li> <li>• Job creation and sustaining of existing jobs</li> <li>• Generation of additional and alternative incomes in rural areas.</li> </ul>
<p>Specific documents concerning the cooperation partners required from LAGs</p>	<p>Letter of intent from cooperating organisation / s. This should be a common document in legal form recognised in one of the participant countries and signed by all parties (Including the coordinating Local Action Group). The document should set out clearly the project goals, the initiatives that will be implemented to attain them, the role of each partner in carrying out the project together with the financial participation of each one in the project. The cooperation agreement will set out all components of the whole budget for the joint measure.</p>
<p>The approval process of TNC applications</p>	<p>The LAG presents an application with the necessary supporting documentation to the Paying Agency within the defined period according to the call for proposals. The Project Selection Board appointed by the PA has the responsibility to effect the administrative checks on project validity and eligibility and contracts are then signed with the beneficiaries.</p> <p>It is not possible for LAGs to send applications for approval any time to the Managing Authority. The call for proposals shall be periodically in order to streamline the selection process. However, at the latest contracts for cooperation projects must be drawn and signed by the 31st December 2013, and associated projects have to be concluded by the end of 2015.</p> <p>There is no maximum time limit set yet for the duration of the application/approval process. Timeframes will be defined in the call for proposals.</p> <p>There is no maximum delay set for approval from Member States' authorities of the TNC partners.</p>

### 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