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 England (RDPE) 2007-2013

2.   Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs):

64

3.   Axes covered by LAGs:

Measures under Axis 1 to 3

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

Measures under axis 1 and 3:
Axis 1 - 111, 114, 115, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125
Axis 3 - 311, 312, 313, 321, 322, 323, 331, 341

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

EUR 5,912,819,399

Total budget for Leader axis:

EUR 294,401,040

Of which:

a.   EU Funding: EUR 161,506,801

b.   Public funding: EUR 53,745,823

c.   Private funding: EUR 79,148,416

Axis 4 expenditure is split between axis 1 and 3 in the proportions set out as follows:

For axis 1:

EU funding: EUR   11,065,683

Public funding: EUR 8,351,523

For axis 3:

EU funding: EUR 147,445,799

Public funding: EUR 42,399,511

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 EUR 10,614,470. This is 4.93% of the axis 4 public funding and 0.204% of the total public RDP budget. This amount includes funding both for inter-territorial and transnational cooperation. All LAGs were encouraged to allocate some funding to measure 421 when preparing their Local Development Strategies (LDS); however, given a lack of clarity as to the amounts in either financial terms or percentages the budget each LAG has allocated to measure 421 varies. The allocations range from GBP 0 up to around GBP 180,000.
Responsibility for the management of the Budget (MAs or LAGs)	Those LAGs having pre-allocated a budget for TNC, manage it themselves.
Special budget for the preparatory technical support of TNC projects	No specific budget has been put in place for the preparation of TNC projects.

2. PROGRAMMING ASPECTS

Local Development Strategies and TNC	Although LAGs were encouraged to include co-operation as an integral part of their LDS, it was too early for LAGs to determine at that stage what they might co-operate on. Clarity only started to emerge once LAGs were firmly up and running. In general, it is not possible for LAGs to apply for additional TNC project funding if it has not been included in the LDS. However, they can re-allocate budget to measure 421 if they have, for example, identified a project which they wish to undertake and another LAG has expressed interest in undertaking that project jointly with them as a Cooperation project. The LAG would need to show how the project relates to the priority themes within the LDS before it is approved, as part of the standard appraisal process, and the case with recommendations would then come to the responsible Regional Development Agency.
Way of selecting cooperation projects	The procedures by which LAGs select their projects are defined in the LDS. The selection and approval decisions regarding Cooperation projects are taken at LAG level, following the same process as for other projects. This means that LAGs are responsible for selecting and funding projects, which best meet the priorities of their area and support the delivery of their LDS. The Managing Authority (MA) ensures that processes defined by the LAGs are in place, on which the Programme Monitoring Committee has been consulted. These ensure all projects financed by LAGs meet the minimum general eligibility criteria as set out in the EC regulations, in compliance with the EU public procurement legislation.
Main topics of TNC proposed for the 2007-2013 programming period	Each LAG has its own priorities and themes on which they want to use measure 421 funding, so there is variation across the country. Key themes being identified for Co-operation include culture and heritage related activity and environmental awareness activity, both often linked to tourism.
Cooperation with third countries	There are no restrictions defined regarding Cooperation with third countries. Funding is normally made available for LAGs to undertake TNC projects with another Leader group, or with a group taking a similar approach, in another region, Member State, or even a third country.
Maximum/minimum number of TNC projects per LAG	-

3. COMMON PROVISIONS FOR TNC PROJECT APPROVAL

Information about procedures of approval and implementation of TNC projects	The approval of TNC projects follows the same procedure as applied for other Leader axis projects. Where Cooperation activities were not included in a LDS, proposals will need to be considered by the relevant Regional Development Agency.
Eligibility criteria for cooperation projects	LAGs must consider the following in determining the eligibility of a project: Cooperation shall involve at least one LAG selected under the Leader axis. The TNC project shall be implemented under the responsibility of a coordinator LAG. The actions financed shall be consistent with the LDS. TNC projects also have to be consistent with the Rural Development Programme for England.

Selection criteria for cooperation projects	The selection and approval of co-operation projects must follow the same process as for other projects. Selection criteria and procedures for local and for TNC projects are defined in each LAG's development strategy. Based on these, the selection of projects is carried out by the board of the LAG.
Eligible activities of measure 421 Cooperation	Cooperation shall include the implementation of a joint action.
Typical examples of eligible costs for TNC projects	No specific eligible costs for TNC projects have been established. The common cost categories apply, which are defined in the general programme rules. Only expenditure for the joint action, for running any common structures and for preparatory technical support is considered eliigible. Expenditure on animation may be eligible in all the areas concerned by the TNC project
Specific documents concerning the cooperation partners re-quired from LAGs	No documents other than 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) are required.
The approval process of TNC ap-plications	The selection and approval of TNC projects must follow the same process as for other projects: It is expected that in most cases Cooperation will be integrated into local develop-ment strategies. In this case LAGs approve cooperation projects. However, where Cooperation activities arise later in the programme and which were not included in a local development strategy, proposals will need to be considered by the relevant Regional Development Agency. The approval of TNC projects should take no longer than approval relating to the nor-mal ratification process. A LAG or persons from within a LEADER area would identify the activity in question. A normal application and appraisal would then follow and would then be approved in line with normal approval practices. There is no maximum delay set for approval to be issued by Member States' authori-ties 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