

United Kingdom- Northern Ireland

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 Northern Ireland

2. Number of Local Action Groups (LAGs):

7

3. Axes covered by LAGs:

Axes 3 & 4

4. Axes and measures covered by TNC projects:

TNC projects applicable to all Measures of Axis 3

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

EUR 807,528,797

6. Total budget for Leader axis:

EUR 184,465,000

Of which:

a. EU Funding: EUR 79.44 million

b. Public funding: EUR 51.19 million

c. Private funding: EUR 53.84 million

SECTION B: PROGRAMMING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS

1. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Budget for TNC projects (Total public funding: EU + public)	A total budget of approximately 5,000,000 GBP has been allocated towards TNC. Funding for projects is subject to a maximum grant of 250,000 GBP per application (up to 75% of total project cost). 50% of the budget has been allocated for TNC with the Republic of Ireland.
Responsibility for the management of the Budget (MAs or LAGs)	A TNC budget has been allocated to each LAG as part of the approval process for the LDS. Each LAG is responsible for the administration of its own budget. All applications for TNC must be assessed by the LAG and then submitted to the MA for approval.
Special budget for the preparatory technical support of TNC projects	<i>While there is no special budget for preparatory technical support this can be facilitated out of the main TNC budget. It is possible to obtain up to 5,000 GBP per LAG towards technical preparatory support for a project (up to 100% of eligible costs). This is available by means of an initial application, which is assessed by the LAG and which then requires the approval of the MA.</i>

2. PROGRAMMING ASPECTS

Local Development Strategies and TNC	Co-operation is included within the LDS of LAGs but this includes little detail, often only indicating the general project types that a LAG may wish to undertake.
Way of selecting cooperation projects	For a project to be eligible for internal assessment by the LAG it must be included in the LAG strategy. If it is not, the application must be submitted to the relevant MA Department for assessment. In all cases subsequent MA approval is required.
Main topics of TNC proposed for the 2007-2013 programming period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the initial proposals of LAGs within their LDS and subsequent workshop discussions the key areas identified for potential co-operation projects include; • Tourism (including cultural/heritage, activity and water-based tourism); • Local marketing/branding of food products; • Village Renewal; • Renewable Energy.
Cooperation with third countries	No restrictions have been indicated, however such projects must involve at least one area selected under the Leader axis and only the expenditure relating to the Leader area (can include meeting & transport costs in the third country) is eligible for support.
Maximum/minimum number of TNC projects per LAG	It is hoped that each LAG will participate in at least one TNC project.

3. COMMON PROVISIONS FOR TNC PROJECT APPROVAL	
Information about procedures of approval and implementation of TNC projects	The procedures for the assessment and implementation of TNC projects have been developed within the overall Operating Rules for axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, they are available via the weblink http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-dard-grants-and-funding/publications-grants-and-funding-axis-3-operating-rules.htm
Eligibility criteria for cooperation projects	<p>Co-operation projects are subject to the standard eligibility rules for axis 3 projects.</p> <p>It is a mandatory requirement that co-operation projects should be in the form of 'joint implementation of a project' rather than solely attendance at seminars, meetings or exchange visits.</p> <p>The additional criteria for co-operation projects also apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant must be a Local Action Group; • Other partners must be groups that follow the Leader approach (a LAG or other public-private partnership); • It must involve the implementation of a joint action that is of mutual benefit.
Selection criteria for cooperation projects	<p>The project can include either soft actions or productive actions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable LAGs groups to boost their local activities, resolve problems or add value to local resources; • Achieve the critical mass necessary for a specific project to be viable, or encourage complementarity.
Eligible activities of measure 421 Cooperation	The content of the joint action may cover a whole range of activities eligible under axis 3, implemented under the Leader method, and might also be focused on capacity building, transfer of experience on local development and twinning arrangements, leading to the adoption of common methods or to the elaboration of joint or coordinated development work.
Typical examples of eligible costs for TNC projects	Eligible costs for TNC projects are in line with the guidance for Axis 3 projects. The above mentioned activities hence may involve expenditure for e.g. common publications and training seminars.
Specific documents concerning the cooperation partners required from LAGs	<p>Each application must include a completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard application form • Signed Cooperation Agreement
The approval process of TNC applications	<p>Each application for a co-operation project must be submitted to and assessed by the LAG in line with the axis 3 assessment procedures. For those projects who are recommended for funding they must then be submitted for approval by the axis 3 Manager in the MA.</p> <p>Where an offer of funding is made, this offer shall be valid for a period of 9 months in order to allow for partnership funding to be secured.</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