

Focus Group 3 (FG3)

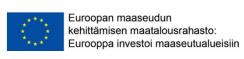
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURE "COOPERATION" IN LEADER

Progress Report











FG3: Objective & Setup

Objective: reminder

- Gather relevant solutions for Cooperation implementation issues
- Operate an active cell to continue the discussions initiated by the Leader subcommittee
- Keep participation open throughout operation to ensure max. representation: LAGs, MAs, PAs & NRNs

Member State involvement: improved

Now 20 Member States (=5 more MS)
 participating; new inputs from 5 experienced MS
 in current work period



FG3: Cooperation Issues

Four main issues discussed: reminder

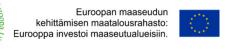
- 1. Different <u>timing</u> in decision-making and different <u>administrative rules</u>
- Different expectations towards beneficiaries in different programmes: <u>definition of common</u> <u>action/cost</u>
- 3. <u>Information needs</u> of different partners involved in implementation
- 4. What are the <u>key areas</u> in which cooperation projects are most needed?



(a) FG3 issue 1:

Preparatory meetings between potential partners are useful to develop projects successfully supporting the territorial strategy - not all EU MS foresee this technical support, which serve to agree on project objectives, common actions & division of tasks

- Explore possibility to support preparatory meetings by other means to cover travel and negotiation costs
- In the future, include preparatory technical support in the programme document



(b) FG3 issue 2:

Member States apply different criteria to define 'common actions':

 <u>Collect & publicize</u> national definitions & typical examples of common action to reduce uncertainty



(c) FG3 issue 2:

'<u>Common costs'</u> examined by different authorities involve the risk of contradictory decisions:

- <u>Provide info</u> about eligible and/or not eligible costs (TNC administrative procedure fiches)
- In the future, aim for unrestricted support to common action (in particular, avoid <u>territorial</u> <u>restrictions</u> being applied to common costs)



(d) FG3 issue 4:

Key areas in which cooperation projects are needed:

- Establish neither thematic eligibility restrictions nor fixed ideas for Cooperation projects in programme documents or local development strategies
- Consider the contribution to the <u>implementation</u> of the objectives of the local development <u>strategy</u> as sufficient



(a) FG3 issue 1: Differences in the maximum level of funding:

- Preferably no fixed levels of funding to maintain flexibility
- Instead, <u>communicate relevant examples</u> of eligible costs to illustrate how funding requirements are coped with



(b) FG3 issue 1:

Differences in project application documentation requirements:

- Provide basic documentation requirements (examples) through the Guide on the measure 'Cooperation'
- In the future, consider letters of intent or a provisional agreement sufficient for project application



(c) FG3 issue 3:

Absence of information about different rules, timing of project-calls, approval of projects:

- <u>Provide comparable information</u> via TNC administrative procedure fiches
 - Selection procedure details.
 - Financial framework: min/max financing available
 - Typical examples of eligible common costs
 - Typical examples of common actions



(d) FG3 issue 4:

Key areas in which cooperation projects are needed:

- <u>Collect & disseminate</u> more project examples to inspire & activate the Cooperation process, as and when these become available.
- At the current stage the most common themes on the cooperation offers database of the Contact Point may provide trend information



(I) Cooperation stakeholder mini-survey

Rationale:

Cooperation bottlenecks root in limited experience

Objective:

Improve the availability of relevant information, progressing 3 previous FG3 suggestions:

- Collect national definitions of common action
- Provide info about eligible common costs
- Collect key area examples to inspire & activate the Cooperation process



(I) Cooperation stakeholder mini-survey

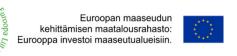
(a) Definition of the Common Action

- Survey responses suggested three types of common action: process-; result-; expendituretype oriented definitions
- During FG3 meeting: participants shared their views, trying to identify existing, non-ambigious interpretations
- Possible next step: elaboration of a flexible common actions typology, considered for inclusion in the TNC Guide, in order to support joint understanding



(I) Cooperation stakeholder mini-survey

- (b) Categories of eligible Common Costs
- Survey responses led to a list of costs frequently considered eligible
- During FG3 meeting: knowledge exchange and practical case review
- Possible next step: preparation of a non-binding EU-wide list of (empirically) 'non-disputed' common cost items and several 'case briefs' by LAG practitioners considered for inclusion in the TNC Guide.
- → A first 'case brief' will follow after this presentation



(I) Cooperation stakeholder mini-survey

(c) Key Areas for Cooperation

- A survey respondent suggested a cluster typology: genuine cross-border/transnational themes; non-area-specific themes; area-specific themes and target group-oriented themes
- During FG3 meeting: review of themes by cluster
- Possible next step: consideration whether and how TNC cluster and themes may support inexperienced rural actors (TNC Guide?)



FG3 progress report: (II) TNC information tools

- (a) TNC administrative procedure fiches
- Comparable information (format previously reviewed by FG3, together with LAGs) is now available on the EN RD website for 16 RDPs
- Information included relates to FG3 suggestions on: common action/cost definitions; available financing, application documents required, selection & approval process
- Next step: NRNs since 29/10/2010 in the process of providing content information for TNC fiches to EN RD Contact Point for remaining RDPs



FG3 progress report: (II) TNC information tools

(b) TNC project-call periodicities

 Previously suggested by FG3 for project preparation and application support purposes (where applicable).

(c) EU-wide contact list of TNC task managers

- Previously suggested by FG3 for general coordination purposes among MAs, PAs, NRN support units, Officers in charge of SFC project approval notification
- NRNs since 29/10/2010 in the process of providing the information to EN RD Contact Point for all RDPs



FG3 progress report: (III) Other bottlenecks

Other Cooperation issues raised at the FG3 meeting requiring the dissemination of information about solutions

- Cooperation is picking up. Therefore new bottlenecks will certainly arise.
- FG3 sees it is useful to continue its "threelateral" work in order to provide a "helping hand" gathering information and possible solutions to stakeholders.
- In addition there could be benefit by FG3
 providing advisory input to simplify cooperation
 in the next programming period.

