



Focus Group 3 (FG3)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURE "COOPERATION" IN LEADER

Progress Report



LEADER
EESTI



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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



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FG3: Cooperation Issues

Four main issues discussed: reminder

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



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Previous findings & suggestions:

(I) Cooperation & local development

(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*



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Previous findings & suggestions:

(I) Cooperation & local development

(b) FG3 issue 2:

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

- *Collect & publicize national definitions & typical examples of common action to reduce uncertainty*



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Previous findings & suggestions:

(I) Cooperation & local development

(c) *FG3 issue 2:*

'Common costs' examined by different authorities involve the risk of contradictory decisions:

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



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Previous findings & suggestions:

(I) Cooperation & local development

(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 implementation of the objectives of the local development strategy as sufficient*



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Previous findings & suggestions:

(II) LAG capacity & know-how requirements

(a) FG3 issue 1:

Differences in the maximum level of funding:

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



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Previous findings & suggestions:

(II) LAG capacity & know-how requirements

(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*



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Previous findings & suggestions:

(II) LAG capacity & know-how requirements

(c) FG3 issue 3:

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

- *Provide comparable information 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*



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Previous findings & suggestions:

(II) LAG capacity & know-how requirements

(d) FG3 issue 4:

Key areas in which cooperation projects are needed:

- *Collect & disseminate 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*



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FG3 progress report:

(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*



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FG3 progress report:

(I) Cooperation stakeholder mini-survey

(a) Definition of the Common Action

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



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FG3 progress report:

(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*



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FG3 progress report:

(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?)



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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



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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



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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 "three-lateral" 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.



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