

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 of the Slovak Republic

2. Number of LAGs:

29

3. Axes covered by LAGs:

Axis 3; measures implemented in this programme: 311, 313, 321, 322

4. Axes and measures covered by TNC projects:

All measures of axis 3

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

EUR 3,464,677,931

6. Total budget for Leader axis:

EUR 114,373,589

Of which:

a) EU Funding	EUR 62,582,542
b) Public Funding	EUR 16,430,664
c) Private Funding	EUR 35,360,383

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 to measure 421 is EUR 3,726,000 (including EU and national expenditure). This funding addresses both inter-territorial and transnational cooperation, as there is no pre-division between the two types of cooperation.
Responsibility for the management of the Budget (MAs or LAGs)	The Managing Authority (MA) is responsible for the management (distribution) of the measure 421 budget. Fund allocations will be made depending on future applications actually submitted by LAGs. Independent of the number of LAGs cooperating in a project the budget ceiling per TNC project to cover the eligible costs is limited to EUR 40,000.
Special budget for the preparatory technical support of TNC projects	LAGs may spend up to 10% of the TNC project budget for expenses committed during the preparation phase of a cooperation project, i.e. up to a maximum of EUR 4,000. Four categories of expenditure are considered eligible for the purposes of project preparation: external, internal and personal costs; travel expenses. Preparation phase expenditure may be claimed for expenditure committed up to the date the cooperation agreement was signed. Preparation phase expenditure is only considered eligible from the date a LAG was selected by the MA to implement the local development strategy (LDS).

2. PROGRAMMING ASPECTS

Local Development Strategies and TNC	LAGs do not have to specify TNC project ideas in their LDS. They may apply for a cooperation project during any of the calls for proposals issued during the programming period (until 2013). Cooperation project applications have to be in line with the provisions of the LDS and the respective call for proposals.
Way of selecting cooperation projects	Calls for TNC project proposals are launched by the Managing Authority (MA). Project partners (LAG = project coordinator) submit applications to the Paying Agency (PA), which is responsible for the evaluation and selection process. The PA applies selection and eligibility criteria, which were approved by the Monitoring Committee.
Main topics of TNC proposed for the 2007 – 2013 programming period	LAGs did not have to specify their project ideas in their LDS and consequently the main themes cannot be indicated yet.
Cooperation with third countries	There are no restrictions regarding cooperation with third countries.
Maximum/minimum number of TNC projects per LAG	LAGs are entitled to implement a maximum of two cooperation projects per year and a maximum total of four cooperation projects during the 2007 – 2013 programming period.

3. COMMON PROVISIONS FOR TNC PROJECT APPROVAL

Information on procedures of approval and implementation of TNC projects

Full procedures governing the approval and implementation of cooperation projects have been developed. They are part of the administrative guide on axis 4 / Leader, which is available for download on the website of the PA: <http://www.apa.sk/index.php?navID=348>.

RDP funding is subject to the specific eligibility criteria established for measure 421. They have been published in the above mentioned administrative guide:

Eligibility criteria for cooperation projects

- The project application and TNC agreement demonstrate that the project is based on a common action, implemented within the partners' territory and resulting in real added value for the area.
- Project activities must be in line with objectives of the axis 3 measures.
- In case of investment operations,
 - » only operations implemented in the Slovak Republic may be financed;
 - » the facility shall be in use for at least five years;
 - » the project coordinator is obliged to prove that ownership of the facility will last for at least six years following the submission of the application.
 - » in case of construction objects proof of lasting ownership is required to achieve acceptance of the first payment claim;
 - » the facility shall be open to public;
 - » the administrative guide establishes restrictions concerning the circumstances in which the investment can be subject to a lien;
 - » only non-profit operations may be considered. Any entrance fee may only cover operating costs of the facility (building).
- The project partner or the coordinating LAG must demonstrate in the application, that
 - » there are no overdue obligations to the Slovak state (honorary statement, Annex 11 of administrative guide);
 - » they are not bankrupt (Annex 11 of administrative guide).
- Cooperation at EU level must include at least two LAGs operating in two different member states of the EU, of which one is approved for funding support under Art. 63 a) Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005, under axis 4/ Leader of a 2007 – 2013 RDP. Cooperation with non-EU partnerships involves one LAG approved for funding support under Art. 63 a) Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005, under axis 4 / Leader of a 2007 – 2013 RDP.
- The coordinating LAG and/or Slovak LAG coordinator provide in their application proof of the approval for funding support under Art. 63 a) Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005, under axis 4 / Leader of a 2007 – 2013 RDP (Annex 13 of administrative guide).
- Every cooperation project has to determine the coordinating LAG and/or the Slovak LAG coordinator. The Slovak LAG coordinator is held responsible vis-à-vis the Slovak PA for all tasks involving Slovak partner LAGs.
- The cooperation project must be in line with the objectives of the LDS and/or other development documents.
- Project partners have to indicate their financing source (EU or national).
- Project partners using own financial sources (without concluding contracts to obtain financial assistance) shall declare in the application their ability to provide private funding (Annex 11 of administrative guide).

Selection criteria for cooperation projects

- The application must already describe the activities (preparation, implementation, coordination), responsibilities and time schedule of the project.

<p>Eligible activities of measure 421 Cooperation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Type of activity (less prevalent activities will be given preference); 2. Population density (to motivate people from remote areas); 3. Involvement of more than two partners, of which some are not LAGs, but operate the Leader approach; 4. Innovative character of the project; 5. Partners experienced with international cooperation projects; 6. Involvement of private funding – projects also financed by the partners themselves (private co-financing of approximately 5 – 7%) will be given preference; 7. Number of already approved cooperation projects (preference will be given to those attempting a measure 421 project for the first time); 8. Preference for TNC projects, which are implemented mostly in the Slovak Republic (more than 50 % of the activities).
<p>Typical examples of eligible costs for TNC projects</p>	<p>It is possible to implement both non-investment (soft) and investment (hard) project operations under the measure 421:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint marketing of Leader groups in various regions (to promote the local and traditional products, to develop the concept of common brands for local products...); • Protection of common cultural heritage within a created partnership (local museums, historical parks, memorials...); • Capacity building: exchange of experience, transfer of rural development practice (e.g. joint publications, twinning events, common and coordinated work); • Operational and administrative activities associated with implementation of the project; • External, internal, personal costs; • Travel expenses; • Coordination of the implementation of common parts of the project; • Costs for activities related to axis 3. <p>Project coordination costs are eligible from the date of signature of the cooperation agreement. Costs for the implementation of the activities relating to axis 3 measures are eligible (Annex 6 of the administrative guide).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of costs not considered eligible: • expenditure not covered by Annex 6 of the administrative guide; • project preparation costs that were committed prior to the date the LAG was selected by the MA; • expenses covering any investment (hard) project operations implemented abroad. <p>For more details please refer to the Slovak guide: http://www.apa.sk/index.php?navID=348</p>
<p>Specific documents concerning the cooperation partners required from LAGs</p>	<p>The Slovak administrative guide regulates to a certain extent the content of the cooperation agreement. It is the central document of the partnership, providing the basis for the partners' future relationship. The cooperation agreement shall be signed by all partners and shall determine project objectives and partners' duties accordingly.</p>
<p>The approval process of TNC applications</p>	<p>Calls for TNC project proposals are launched by the MA. The coordinating Slovak LAG (or the Slovak LAG coordinator) is in charge of the administrative preparations, i.e. the completion of required application forms, the assembly of required supporting documentation and the submission of the project proposal to the PA. The PA evaluates and scores interregional and transnational cooperation project applications separately, based on above selection criteria. This also includes the eligibility checks stated above. The PA issues a preliminary approval decision for the TNC projects it has selected.</p> <p>The last call for proposals will be launched by 2013.</p> <p>The maximum delay set for approval by Member States' authorities of the other TNC project partners is six months</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