

Operation of Rural Network Unit in Estonia

Ave Bremse
Rural Economy Research Centre,
Rural and Fisheries Networks Department
Rural Network Bureau

The First Leader SubCommittee
of the European Network for Rural Development
Brussels, 26.11.2008



Establishment of the Rural Network Unit by the Rural Economy Research Centre - timetable

- January 2007 – preparatory activities
- May 2007 – starts activities as support structure for Leader local action groups
- April 2008 – Rural and Fisheries Networks Department:
 - Rural Network Bureau
 - Fisheries Network Bureau
- Rural Economy Research Centre is an authority under the administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, performing the duties laid down in the Statutes established by the Minister of Agriculture

Management and coordination of Rural Network

- For the management and coordination of network activities:
 - Network Unit (Rural and Fisheries Networks Department of the Rural Economy Research Centre, Rural Network Bureau), ensuring the implementation of Rural Network administration and action plan
 - Network Cooperation Chamber - representatives are selected according to the objectives of the axes 1, 2 and 3. Membership of the Rural Network Cooperation Chamber is open for involvement of important rural actors
- **Working groups:**
 - Leader working group, involving representatives of all Estonian action groups (24 + 2 action groups)
 - other working groups

Rural Network action plan and functions

- Rural Network action plan:
 - collection, aggregation and dissemination of best practice and innovative approaches, incl. on the implementation of Leader method;
 - organisation of events for rural development
 - support to cooperation initiatives
 - support activities as Leader information centre
 - administration of an operating website environment of network functions
- **Keywords of Estonian Rural Network are the following:**
 - step by step development
 - flexibility, to accept new ideas
 - consideration of bottom-up initiative
 - development in time
 - cooperation

Summary of Leader+ period 2006-2008



- Estonian NDP measure 3.6 “Development of local initiative – LEADER-type measure”. Two schemes of implementation - objective 1 and 2
- In August 2006, 24 non-profit associations, meeting the requirements for a LAG, applied for the support for a local action group
- All the submitted applications were granted: 21+3
- 94% of Estonian rural area was covered by LAGs
- By 30.6.2008, all the 24 LAGs submitted to the ARIB new or complemented strategies of their area

Axis IV – LEADER (2007-2013)

**Leader - budget – in Estonia, 10% of the RDP
Budget – 1,4 billion EEK**

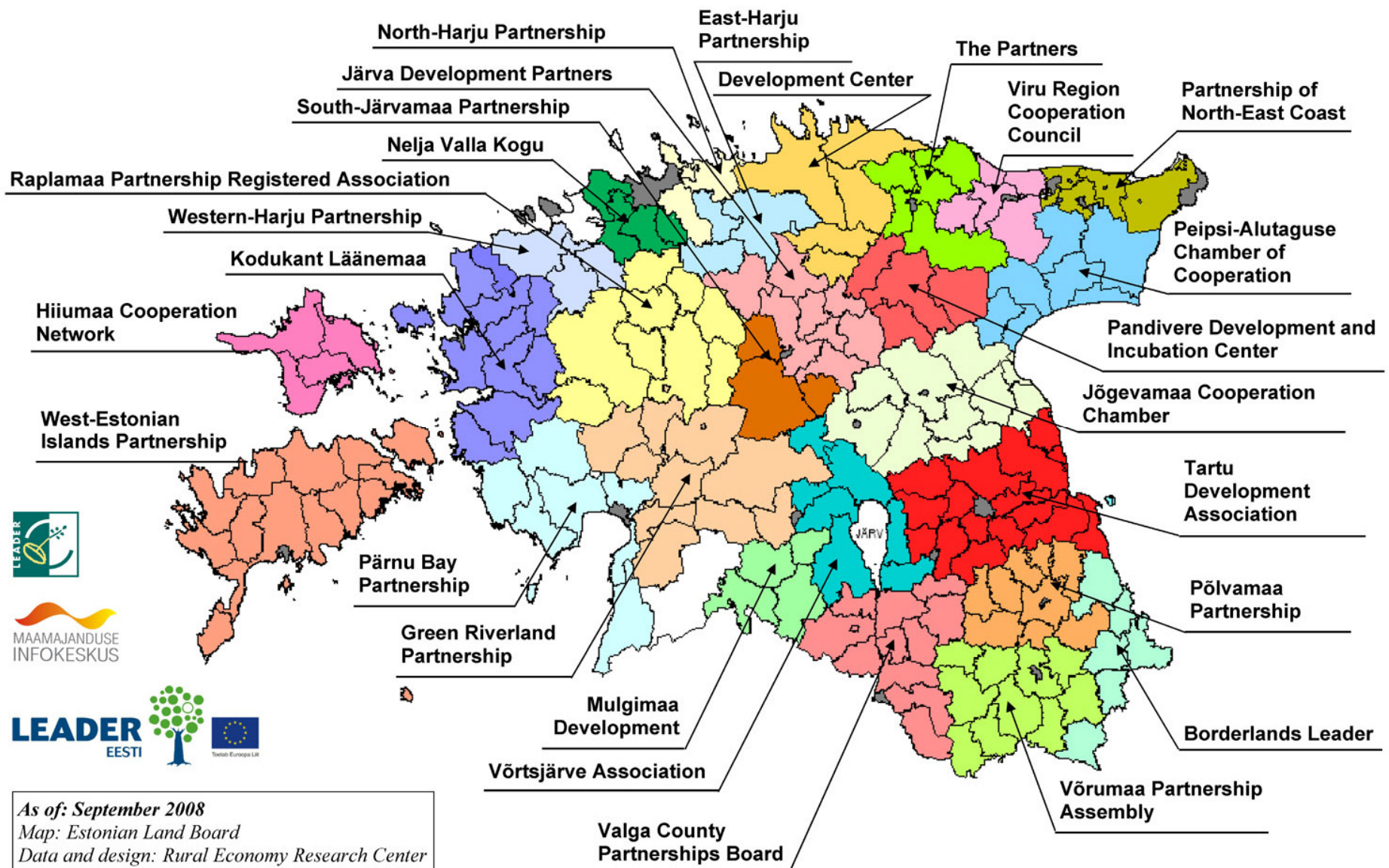
- On 15 August 2008, the receipt of applications ended. Applications were submitted by **26** non-profit **associations**, meeting the requirements for a local action group (LAG)
- It was possible to apply for the following:
 - Support for the **development of the strategy** was applied for by- **2**
 - Support for the **implementation of the strategy** was applied for by- **24**
- **98% of Estonian rural area** has been covered by LAGs. Only 8 local government units have not joined, they can only accede to the already existing LAG's.

Implementation of Leader projects by LAGs

- The strategy of a Leader LAG includes the main trends of the development strategy of the area and is created within 2007-2013. The strategy can be amended in 2010
- By Leader-axis, the measures of axes 1, 2 and 3 may be implemented
- Each year LAGs submit an implementation plan - by 1 November of the preceding year - presenting LAG's measures and the budget to be opened next year
- International co-operation projects are part of the LAG strategy and budget

Leader map - 2008

LEADER ACTION GROUPS IN ESTONIA



Network and Leader Activities 2007-2008

Main target for 2007-2008 activities –

- Assist LAG-s as smoothly as possible from old period to the new period

Seminars:

1. “How to build up Leader strategy” – seminars in regions
2. “What is Leader” – seminars for potential Leader-areas
3. “Rules for bookkeeping in Leader” infoday with Paying Agency
4. “Contracts and Law” – seminar with lawyer
5. “How to build up regional Leader-measure” – infoseminars in regions

Support activities

- To visit LAG-s infoday's, seminar's, meeting's, training's, etc - to perform presentations or explain about Leader principles, EU Leader best practice, current Leader situation in Estonia, new period, etc.
- Consultations by telephone
- Represent Leader info in local fair's – Farmers Days, Farmers Fair

Co-operation with Ministry of Agriculture and Paying Agency

1. Co-operation between NNU personell with managing authorities to work out new legislation for Leader.
2. Infodays and meetings between managing authorities and LAG representatives to prepare and improve Leader legislation.
3. Infoseminar with Leader strategies evaluation experts and LAG representatives 31.10.2008

Spread of information about rural life

Internet Website www.maainfo.ee - information about:

- Leader events around Estonia.
- Rural events around Estonia
- Ministry of Agriculture and Paying Agency
- Seminars
- International events
- Information about EU countries NDP and Leader
- Important regulations or links

Handbooks, handouts and other training materials

- Estonian NNU composed a handbook “**Developing Local Initiative – Leader- approach – The Handbook for Building Up Strategy for Leader Territory**” – May 2007
- Photos from NNU events

International co-operation

- To support international cooperation:
- Partnership search assistance
- 2007 November – I international conference in Pärnu LEADER – “**Leader - An Organization or A Project**” – co-operation with two LAG-s.
- Study tour to Denmark – 6.-8.11.2008
- To organise LAG-s participation in conferences and seminars with Estonian Leader information (Portugal, Finland, Latvia, Germany, Italy)
- **II Nordic-Baltic National Network Units meeting** in Järeda, Estonia - from 24. to 26. September 2008 (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden)

The First Estonian LAG's Summer-seminar Vanaõue, Estonia, 3.- 4. July 2008

- Participated – 170 guests from Estonian LAG-s.
- Foreign guests from Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden.
- Three Discussion Panels Of The Summer Seminar - "Leader – innovation or an old bright idea?"
 1. "Innovation or good forgotten old – what would make life better for people in the country!"
 2. "Innovation or good forgotten old – what would I buy, travelling in the country?"
 3. "Innovation or good forgotten old – where would I stop my car, travelling in the country?"

Other activities:

- Estonian Leader calendar 2009.
- Foreign guests market – partnership search possibility
- Team games

Media

- teleproject "SUMMER MORNING" in cooperation with the Estonian Public Broadcasting – 45 video clips about rural life and initiative between 30.06-08.08.2008. (Content of the clips was proposed by LAG-s.)
- Articles about Leader and Network Unit in different nationwide, regional, rural organisations or LAG newspapers, magazines, handbooks, etc.
- Interviews in Radio and TV



- Krista Kõiv
kk@maainfo.ee
- Ave Bremse
ave@maainfo.ee
- Meeri Klooren
meeri@maainfo.ee
- Ester Valdvee
ester@maainfo.ee
- Erik Lööper
erik@maainfo.ee

Rural Economy Research Centre
Department of rural and fisheries network
Rural network bureau

THANKS! 😊

The Estonian Rural Economy Research Centre

Department of rural and fisheries network

Jäneda, Tapa vald

73602 Lääne-Virumaa, ESTONIA

Tel +372 3849734

www.maainfo.ee