



Added Value of Networking Case Study
Community Led Local Development
Learning Cluster –
Hungarian NRN and ENRD Working in
Collaboration

Hungary

March 2014

Funded by the



ENRD *Connecting Rural Europe*

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>

AVN Case Study: Community Led Local Development Learning Cluster – Hungarian NRN and ENRD Working in Collaboration

Executive summary

Many rural stakeholders had expressed an interest in discussing over Community Led Local Development (CLLD) and multi-funding opportunities. This encouraged the Hungarian National Rural Network (HNRN) to work with the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) to explore how the CLLD approach could be successfully used in the next programming period. The CLLD thematic cluster was then launched. Cluster members met to exchange experience and speak about CLLD related issues and activities they believed the Cluster should undertake. These meetings aimed at concentrating and economising the efforts of networks, producing practically-focused tools and guidance and influencing CLLD at European and national policy-making levels.

A conference was delivered and two working groups established. These enabled stakeholders to work together, identify existing challenges and explore solutions which would enable the successful implementation of CLLD in the Member States represented in the Cluster. A wide range of rural stakeholders including NRNs, LAGs, Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and other EU institutions such as ELARD were involved in and benefited from the work. Having such a large and diverse group of stakeholders involved enabled much Member State sharing of experience and cross learning.

Methodology

This case study has been developed with the support of the Hungarian national Network Support Unit (NSU), the ENRD and Internet based sources of information.

Background

Based on feedback that ENRD received from a wide range of stakeholders (including NRNs, LAGs and Managing Authorities), CLLD and multi-funding opportunities have been two of the most relevant themes of common interest for rural stakeholders. This encouraged the Hungarian NRN to cooperate with ENRD to explore how the CLLD approach could be successfully used in the next programming period. The CLLD thematic cluster was launched during the 18th NRN meeting in Portugal (6th June 2013). In order to make the best use of the session devoted to the launch of the thematic cluster, interested networks were asked to send initial suggestions for key issues/proposed activities to be covered by the thematic cluster.

The activities proposed by the cluster's members were grouped under the following areas:

- Mapping exercise,
- Terminology study, development of common procedures/guidelines,
- Conferences, workshops, events,
- Research, working papers,
- Virtual think tanks, speed virtual meetings,
- P2P learning,

- Collecting and sharing of best practice,
- Identifying methodologies and tools for the evaluation of CLLD, and
- Thematic visits to other Paying Agencies.

Participants of networking

The work of the Cluster is coordinated by the Hungarian NRN and has benefited from the contribution of the ENRD. There were a large number of other networks and RDP stakeholders involved in the cluster networking. These included:

- National Rural Networks from Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden,
- Managing Authorities from England, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia,
- Paying Agency from Lithuania,
- Stakeholders such as ELARD and FARNET,
- A number of LAGs and rural organisations from Hungary, and
- LAGs from Wales and Sweden.

Objectives

Articles 28 to 31 of the proposed Draft Regulation for programming period 2014-2020 on the Common Provisions for the ERDF, ESF, the Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and the EMFF set out the details of the future CLLD. The new draft provisions are based on the LEADER approach and concern all funds covered by the Common Strategic Framework.

CLLD is expected to mobilise and involve local communities and organisations to contribute to achieving the Europe 2020 Strategy goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, fostering territorial cohesion and reaching specific policy objectives. In the 2014-2020 programming period, the more explicit support, in the form of a joint legal framework and harmonised rules for the five CSF Funds, will increase consistency and encourage the creation of multi-funded local community-led strategies.

The CLLD cluster had multiple objectives, among others it aimed to:

- enhance *cooperation and exchange of experience* among the main interested networks;
- help to *concentrate and economise* the efforts of networks (and avoid duplication of work) in understanding the possible forms and operation of CLLD (e.g. carry out joint surveys; rather than addressing NRNs through a range of surveys)
- produce *practically-focused tools* and guidance that can help NRNs and other key stakeholders in the CLLD implementation; and
- influence the way (e.g. through policy working papers) the CLLD is advanced at *European and national policy-making levels*.

The process and main activities

As coordinator of the CLLD Cluster, the HNRN's biggest achievement has been to organise the conference entitled '**CLLD – The message unheard**' held on **22nd July 2013**. The purpose of the conference was to bring together key rural development stakeholders (including Managing Authorities responsible for the management of Structural Funds in each member state), to promote the added-value of the CLLD approach and to discuss the main concerns with regard to CLLD programming and implementation. In preparation for the conference and in order to best address the needs of participants we asked active cluster members to prepare a short (1-2 pages) report on the state-of-play of CLLD planning in their Member States, key organisations involved in planning, main concerns and barriers and possible ways of addressing these (observer cluster-members were also welcome to submit their contributions). The main purpose of these short reports was to better understand what the main concerns/dilemmas were with regard to CLLD implementation. One possible way to find out more about key issues was to address some stakeholders in other Managing Authorities with a short set of questions which could also help to make contacts and identify potential participants for the event. Five suggested working groups were organised in the afternoon session based on the CLLD reports received from various Member State representatives (indicating key challenges within their countries/regions). The five working groups focused on:

1. CLLD in Partnership Agreements;
2. The added value of CLLD in addressing different types of local problems and different types of territories,
3. Overcoming CLLD administrative burden,
4. Administrative structures for CLLD management,
5. The role of LAGs with regard to raising awareness about the CLLD approach.

The purpose of the discussion groups was to discuss challenges and possible solutions with regard to the proposed topics, and to produce a report and summary with suggested practical outcomes and actions.

The **2nd Cluster Meeting was held on 27th November 2013**, in Dijon, France. The main purpose of this meeting was to further develop a detailed Action Plan for the working groups around the main themes of interest to cluster members. An indicative list of possible topics to be covered was put together based on initial interests expressed by members. The meeting aimed to finalise the set-up of these groups, identify cluster members who were taking the lead on the work of individual working groups, and start to develop the action plan (including planned activities, methods, responsibilities about interested members and planned outputs). Since the cluster involves a wide range of stakeholders, there was a possibility to exchange on various aspects of future CLLD implementation from a range of stakeholder perspectives. The outcomes of the meeting were the establishment of new working groups outlined below:

Working Group 1: CLLD Exchange Platform, with the aim of creating a platform (particularly for MAs and PAs) to exchange information and ideas on the practical details of planning and implementing the CLLD approach in a way which conforms to the new regulations. The Group planned to set up an

exchange forum in early January and asked members to send topics of interest that they would like to discuss with colleagues that could be posted to the discussion forum.

Working Group 2: Demonstrating the added value of the CLLD approach, with the aim of producing a document that explains and clearly demonstrates the added value of the LEADER approach to relevant stakeholders (including policy-makers). The Group planned to collect ideas and project examples able to demonstrate the added value of LEADER and CLLD approach. In order to do so a template was created and circulated between CLLD Cluster members.

Resources

The resources used were predominantly focused on delivering the conference. These came to approximately €7,700 and included interpretation tools and three interpreters, food and refreshments for delegates and travel and accommodation for the guest speakers.

As well as these financial resources in the region of 315 'man' hours were also utilised. This involved inviting the speakers, communicating with them to agree the contents, themes of the event and their presentations, and with the active Cluster members.

The 'added value' of networking

Delivering this activity in Partnership with ENRD provided much additional support. This included identifying relevant speakers for the event, providing contacts for potential stakeholders and supporting the development of the working papers. The whole cluster and all its activities were developed to enable the work of all Member States to have 'value added' by working with peers when developing new policy regulations. The exchanges of good practice, discussions on issues and challenges which have arisen and the work delivered together to better understand CLLD were all possible due to networking.

What supports networking?

A wide range of rural stakeholders including NRNs, LAGs, Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and other EU institutions such as ELARD were involved in and benefited from the work. Having such a large and diverse group of stakeholders involved improved Member State and organizations' sharing of experience and cross learning. Through the conferences, the workshops and working groups a Cluster members involved gained access to updated information.

Future challenges

The main challenge for the Cluster is ensuring that the conclusion of the discussions reach the decision makers influencing the implementation of CLLD. In order to tackle this challenge during the second Cluster meeting the participants launched the above mentioned working group no.2 which aims to raise awareness amongst policy and decision makers on LEADER and CLLD approach.