

Tool 2

Organising and prioritising cooperation ideas

1 Introduction

The prioritisation of ideas for transnational cooperation projects can help in maintaining the strategic role of transnational cooperation within the LAG strategy. After collecting project ideas the next stage involves carrying out an analysis of each idea so that they can be properly assessed and compared. The projects with the highest priority will normally be the projects that will create the most benefits for your LAG's territory.

Analysis can involve completing and comparing a common set of questions for each project idea (see the example presented at Annex 1). These questions are generic, you may also include additional questions specific to the objectives of your Local Development Strategy and/or your LAG's defined cooperation strategy.

Answers to these questions can then inform the consideration of project options (individual or multiple) against some basic prioritisation and selection criteria. The example at Annex 2 uses four criteria;

- Relevance;
- Efficiency;
- Effectiveness; and
- Participative approach.

Projects can be scored against these criteria e.g. on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 point = low and 5 = high. The sum of the scores can then be used for the ranking of the project ideas. You may wish to introduce mandatory minimum or threshold scores for some criteria. It may be useful to provide examples of the types of project factors or features that score high, medium or low. You may adapt this framework to fit the objectives of your cooperation strategy.

Further important and useful points to consider when prioritising TNC project options are noted below. It is important to clarify such matters before going ahead and looking for partners:

- Set priorities and concentrate efforts on a limited number of truly strategic actions because human resources, time and financial means are inevitably limited.
- Have a clear idea of the resources (physical, financial and human) that may be allocated for cooperation. This will help the LAG make decisions about what types of projects they can afford.
- Ensure that you have enough resources to achieve both the TNC project goals and carry out your other work. Experience from some LAGs shows that the investment of effort, time and resources into TNC actions impacted on their capacity to properly carry out their everyday work of implementing their Local Development Strategy.

TNC often requires inputs from different local actors, establishing and maintaining this momentum among local partners is a critical success factor and the work involved in this should be considered as part of the analysis for each project idea. Each project idea therefore needs to have a plan for mobilising relevant actors and keeping all stakeholders informed about project progress and the inputs required from them at different times.

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2 Annex 1.: Table for analysis of project ideas

Question	Answer
To what extent will the results created by this TNC project contribute to addressing your territory's main development challenges and opportunities set out in your Local Development Strategy?	
What targets (quantitative and qualitative) does the project have?	
To what extent are these realistic and how practical are they to measure?	
Who are the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project, and to what extent are the expected results relevant to them?	
Who are the local partners involved and what can they contribute to the project?	
How realistic and comprehensive is the plan for mobilising local participation?	
What advantages are to be gained from working with a partner to address the territory's main development challenges and opportunities?	
Could we achieve similar benefits for our area from working on our own without a cooperation partner or working with an inter-regional rather than trans-national partner?	
What factors are essential to ensure the project's success?	

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Question	Answer
To what extent are any risks which may limit the success of the project identified and mitigated?	
How much funding will this project need, and what other resources (skills, equipment, time) are necessary?	
Is this project idea eligible for support under LEADER? To what extent could / can it be funded from other sources?	
How likely is it that we can obtain all the funding and other resources that we need for the project?	

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3 Annex 2.: Key criteria for analysis of cooperation project options

Relevance	Score
To what extent does the project address a real problem or need identified in the LDS?	
How well will the project complement other rural development work in the LAG territory?	
How appropriate is the timing to launch such a project?	
Efficiency	
Are the expected objectives and results achievable?	
Are the proposed resources available and sufficient to reach the objectives?	
If launched now, what is the likelihood that the project can be completed on target and on time?	
Efficacy (cost-benefit ratio)	
How reasonable is the balance between the financial resources proposed and the anticipated results?	
To what extent is the balance comparable with other LAG projects supported?	
To what extent is the added value gained for the LAG area as a result of the project sufficient to justify the additional effort and resources?	
Participative approach	
To what degree can the project rely on an active and balanced participation and commitment of the different local partners?	