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# Flash News

## Leader+ Observatory

### focus



#### Slovenia

The Leader+ programme was not implemented when the country acceded to the EU in 2004. Nevertheless Slovenia has extensive experience in the development and implementation of the Leader-type bottom up approach to rural development. The Integrated Rural Development and Village Renewal Programme which was started in 1991, was based on the active participation of local people. Around 300 projects were implemented by the end of the programme in 2003. In 1996, a rural development programme, based on the Leader-type model both continued and upgraded this programme.

One of the eligibility criteria has been that at least three municipalities join together to prepare a common rural development program. This integrated rural development strategy was based on a bottom up approach and the active participation of different local actors, and its organisation takes place at the local level. So far 31 local partnerships have been formed covering most of Slovenia. These groups form a good base to implement the Leader axis in the new programming period. Local expectations are high, and there is a desire to start the Leader type measures as soon as possible. Although Leader+ funding is not available, other funds, both national and European (such as Interreg), are being used to carry out development projects.

Possibilities to participate in trans-national co-operation projects are however limited due to the difficulty in getting financial support for such activities. The Slovenian rural development network acts as an official network of local partnerships. It carries out various support activities: organising events; informing members about rural development issues; participating in international activities etc. However a lack of resources means that its members often work on a voluntary basis. For more information, please contact [Zlata Ploštajner](#) of the Slovenian Rural Development Network.



#### Leader+ Magazine 6 is now online

The latest issue of the Leader+ Magazine is now ready and downloadable in pdf-format on the leader+ website. It is currently available in English only, but versions in all other languages will be available shortly. The special focus in magazine 6 is on the future of Leader, featuring an in-depth article by the Professor and Chairman of the International Rural Network, John Bryden entitled "From Leader I to Leader+ and beyond to the Leader axis". If you have not already subscribed to the magazine you can do so [from our website](#).



#### Leader+ funded project in north Devon

The "Reel Indi" cinema has been set up by young people in north Devon (in south west England) with the aid of a Leader+ grant. The project gives access to alternative films and provides an opportunity to discuss the issues that they portray. The founder Henry Allison, 20, described it as "the people's alternative to corporate media, a youth-run community cinema supporting independent and local films." The cinema has invited all aspiring film makers to get in contact with "North Devon Active Youth" if they have any films they would like shown. Local artists, who would like to lend artwork, including photography, are also invited to use the venue to exhibit their work: [northdevonactiveyouth@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:northdevonactiveyouth@hotmail.co.uk).



#### Romania's national strategic plan for rural development 2007-2013

The Romanian Minister for Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development, Dan Motreanu, has announced that the national plan for rural development 2007-2013 should be finalised by the end of February this year. The implementation of this plan will be financed by both the EAFRD and through the Romanian national budget. The plan foresees four major priorities: increasing competitiveness in the agriculture and forests sectors (45% of funds); improving the natural environment in rural areas (25% of funds); improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversifying rural economy (30% of funds); and developing public/private partnerships organised as Local Action Groups under the Leader axis (2.5% of funds).

*For more information please click on the headlines*

FLASH NEWS

## links

[Leader+ website](#)

[Leader+ Magazine](#)

[New Rural Development Regulation 2007-2013](#)



For more information please click on the headlines

### **Commissioner Fischer-Boel urges rural development funds to meet objectives of the Lisbon strategy**

According to the OECD, rural areas represent more than 90% of EU territory and more than half of its population. These diverse areas include some regions and areas that need special attention to avoid falling behind in meeting the goals of the Lisbon strategy. Challenges for many rural areas include lower income levels compared to most urban areas, a decrease in population, and relatively high levels of unemployment. Non-agricultural sectors in rural areas need to create new jobs and possibilities, especially for young people and for women. A major objective in the new programming period is therefore to improve and diversify the rural economy. Commissioner Mariann Fisher Boel called on Member States to make full use of their new Rural Development programmes for the period 2007-2013.

### **Food Quality Certification: adding value to farm produce**

5 – 6 February, 2007

Brussels, Belgium

This conference on food quality certification schemes is being organised by the European Commission's Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development and will provide a better understanding of the potential for certification in the EU. In recent years European agriculture has placed a greater emphasis on quality and specialisation. This shift is due to many different factors; increased competition leading to lower prices; growing public concerns over food quality; and animal welfare etc. Consequently many quality certification schemes have evolved. This conference, which is by invitation only, will examine how food quality schemes work, their operation in the internal market, and the implications for global trade.

### **Financing local and regional sustainable energy solutions**

1 February, 2007

Brussels, Belgium

This seminar, which is organised within the framework of the first EU sustainable energy week, will focus on those financial instruments available to local authorities in order to realise sustainable energy projects. These financial instruments are offered both by the public sector, on EU and national levels, and by the private sector. The seminar, which is organised by the Committee of the Regions, in cooperation with FEDARENE (European Federation of Regional Energy and Environment Agencies), is for public and private sector stakeholders, and will include case studies of successful regional financing models. For more information, please contact [Dominique Bourges](#).



### **COOPERATION CORNER**

#### **Partner search tool**

Finding partners for cooperation on Leader+ projects concerns many LAGs. If you have specific information about a cooperation event or project, you can send us details. Remember also to use the partner search tool, which you can find on both European and national Leader+ sites.

The two new members of the EU, Romania and Bulgaria, are already participating in several trans-national cooperation projects.

Since July 2004, there have been ads for projects looking for partners in Romania and Bulgaria, three different projects are looking for partners in Romania and one is searching for a Bulgarian partner. Furthermore, a local group in Romania has expressed their wish to be partners in a cooperation project. These projects cover a wide range of initiatives: connecting rural areas to new information technology; sustainable development including the creation of organic farms and promotion of local products; and the re-introduction and cultivation of local plants and flowers.

The most recent ads include a LAG in France which is looking for partners for a project that aims at developing rural territories crossed by the West-East European motorway (E70). Another French LAG is looking for partners for a project that aims to educate local population and in particular children from age 7 to 12 on local products.

These projects are looking for partners. You could be one of them! Learn more about those proposals by consulting the partner search tool via the above-mentioned link.



#### **"Flash News" contributions**

Don't forget "Flash News" is your news too! Help us to keep you informed by telling us about what you are doing in rural development in your area. Please send to [flashnews@leaderplus.org](mailto:flashnews@leaderplus.org).

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