European Network for Rural Development

LEADER Event 2012: Local Development Strategies and Co-operation

Workshop A on the DESIGN of stronger Local Development Strategies

Brussels, Belgium / 28 April 2012

Compiled by the ENRD Contact Point

Connecting Rural Europe

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CP	Contact Point
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
CMEF	Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ELARD	European LEADER Association for Rural Development
ENRD	European Network for Rural Development
ENRD CP	Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FARNET	European Fisheries Areas Network
FG	Focus Group (of the LEADER Sub- Committee)
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Group
LAG	Local Action Group
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale', meaning 'Links between the rural economy and development actions'
LSC	LEADER Sub-Committee
MA	Managing Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MS	Member States
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRN	National Rural Network
PA	Paying Agency
RD	Rural Development
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RDR	Rural Development Regulation

Overview

The workshop titled "Design of stronger Local Development Strategies" was one of the two parallel workshops organised in the framework of the 2012 LEADER Event held in Brussels. The objectives of this workshop were to actively engage participants in:

- Sharing of existing relevant practices for the design of stronger LDS;
- Identifying and sharing of further relevant practices for the design of stronger LDS, and
- Identifying lessons learned and key factors of designing stronger LDSs in the future.

Participatory methods were used to engage the participants (LAG managers, Managing Authorities representatives) in strategic conversations, in order to use their common knowledge and experiences in creating added value towards the objectives of the workshop.

The workshop drew information from the 1st Phase of the LEADER Sub-Committee Focus Group 4 work. The information was disseminated by a presentation on the results of the 1st Phase and also through a 'Poster session' of 12 relevant examples / cases studies collected in order to create common ground and understanding.

The participants started worked in pairs by examining the question: *"What are YOUR experiences regarding LDS preparation which would be relevant for the future 2014-2020 period? And Why?"*. By building on the examples already presented, the participants identified additional examples and new ideas, and tried to capture which are the key elements of success of these practices. Special focus was given on the strategic approach and cyclic nature of the whole process of LDS preparation-implementation. Several success factors were stressed, such as good cooperation and dialogue between MAs and LAGs (for the multi-stage LDS preparation process), the request not to limit the measures for LEADER and to allow measures "outside the menu", or the fact that the driving force behind the LDS design should not be funding, but rather the real needs and goals of the territory. Considerable advice was also offered with regard to the participative and bottom-up development of the LDS. It was stressed that it is important to do this properly, and moreover, to take into consideration the time to engage with the rural community.

The world café methodology was then used in three separate but highly interconnected rounds of discussion. During the first round the participants worked on the question *"How can LAGs better identify local needs in order to prepare a stronger LDS?"*. The participants strongly highlighted the need to look at the whole LDS implementation as a strategic process, and on how to best involve the community. A wealth of different possible tools and suggestions were introduced for bottom-up and really inclusive process, on how to raise interest of different groups; how to combine different viewpoints and how to reach out to broader community. Also, in the light of new IT developments, it was examined to what extent the IT and social media can be used and how inclusive they are.

During the second and third round of discussions the participants examined the questions: *"When preparing your future LDS (keeping in mind the possibility of using multiple funds) what do you think the opportunities and the challenges are?"* and *"How should these opportunities and challenges be addressed?"*. The participants' responses mostly focused on the opportunities for creating better and more integrated strategies. The LDS of the new programming period can better cover the needs of the rural areas, address wider topics and a broader range of stakeholders. They can also better use and

combine the available funds. For achieving these it was advised to strengthen and broaden the bottom up approach, engage more stakeholders, promote the dialogue between LAGs and MAs, apply simple and common procedures for all funds and also focus on the commonalities rather than the differences between them. Multi – funding was also recognised as an opportunity since the complementarity of funds can better respond to the local needs. To this end the focus should be on the strategy and what it aims to achieve rather than the funds. Clear instructions should be provided to the Member States. Opportunities were also identified for the LAGs as the combination of several funds will assist them to address diverse situations. Training will enable LAGs to improve their skills and competences. Another area where opportunities were identified lies in enhancing rural and urban linkages. As a possible way to exploit this opportunity was recommended by strengthening cooperation between people who do not work together e.g. managers of the social and regional funds.

With regard to the challenges and ways to overcome them in the design of stronger LDS, many participants voiced the challenge of strengthening the bottom up approach and designing flexible, simple and concrete LDS. According to the responses collected the above require revitalizing the bottom up approach ("LEADER to come back"), selecting the funds according to the local needs (SWOT analysis) and preserving the LAG autonomy from rigid administration / controls. In addition, in order for the LDS to be adaptable to chancing conditions it was proposed that it should be design as a "framework" rather than a detailed "procedure" paper, with clear guidelines and no bureaucracy. Administration has to overcome significant challenges related to simplicity, the administrative capacity and constraints and needs for coordination. The participants suggested that addressing the administrative challenges will require strong, clear and specific framework and guidelines provided by the EC; common set of rules for all funds, for all the MS; and also one responsible local authority and one Managing Authority. Moreover, it is necessary to provide timely capacity building and training to LAGs and MAs and ensure better coordination between them. Existing partnerships (LAGs, FLAGs, and Associations (ESF) etc.) should improve their coordination under the principle "One partnership, one area". With regard to communication and animation: lobbying also constitute challenges which need to be addressed through timely and well funded communication and animation actions (information letters, common seminars, thematical engagement meetings – depending on target audience e.g. young people). Finally other challenges reported by the participants were the difficulty in getting financed by the banks and the fact that the other funds are not used to applying the LEADER approach. One solution proposed for the above final point could be a form of arrangement between banks and associations and possible guarantees at National or European level.

Agenda Item	**Welcome and introduction**
Presentation	The CP Team Leader, welcomed participants to the Workshop on the design of stronger LDS that was held in 'The Egg' venue in Brussels. The main steps of the workshop and the objectives were presented.

Agenda Item	**Presentation on the FG4 phase 1 (design of the LDS)**
Presentation	The co-chair of the LEADER Sub-Committee Focus Group 4 on Better Local Development Strategies (FG4), Ana Pires da Silva, presented the preliminary findings of the 1st Phase of the work of the focus group through a Power Point presentation. **(The presentation is available for download at the ENRD website)**

Agenda Item	**Poster Session**
Method	Twelve participants, previously nominated as 'poster hosts', presented posters and other visual representations of their relevant LDS design experiences and methodology. These were set-up around the workshop room. Each Poster Host was then invited to present his/her 'poster' in a short speech. For the majority of posters this presentation was geared to be a brief 'advertisement' of the practice itself. After the presentation of the posters, all participants were invited to 'visit' the posters they were interested in and discuss with the poster hosts. **(Annex 1: List of posters presented)**
Poster themes	Through this 'Poster session' the progress and key findings of FG4 were introduced to participants in order to create common ground and understanding. – Ana Pires da Silva, presented the findings of the 1st Phase of FG 4 work. – The DG AGRI representative, Pedro Brosei, presented a poster on the minimal requirements for LDS in the new programming period. – FARNET proposed an example of cooperation between LEADER and the fishery sector. – Poster Hosts from Hungary, Finland, Italy, France, Scotland, Ireland and the Netherlands also presented their LDS experiences related primarily to design and implementation.

Agenda Item	**Working in pairs**
	«What are YOUR experiences regarding LDS preparation which would be relevant for the future 2014-2020 period? And Why?»

Method	Using the "appreciative enquiry" method, the participants were invited to work in pairs, introduce themselves and share their own experience relevant for the future programming period. This session facilitated the identification of additional examples / new ideas, and what elements (if any) of these good practices are transferable between LAGs. Members of the ENRD CP team 'harvested' the contributions by inviting a few participants to speak up. All cards / contributions were also collected and clustered. ***(Annex 2: Examples of experiences)***

Outcomes	Main points of the floor discussion were:

- LDS design:
    - It should be mandatory to have a good and inclusive consultation with broader range of stakeholders as to support the bottom-up process and to reflect the needs of the area.
    - Be aware and tackle the risk of having only the same people from the previous programme's consultation participating in the one for the next period. This might affect the way the consultation is undertaken.
    - When drawing strategies it is not appropriate to think only about funding, instead this should come after defining the real needs.
    - There is the need to include specific procedures in the strategy - on how things will be done. Being prescriptive should be avoided.
    - In the reviewing of the strategy a bottom up approach should be adopted. This should be undertaken after 2 years from the start as many things might have changed.
- There is the danger that the enthusiasm that was always part of the LEADER spirit might be lost if the rules are not simplified.
- Keep an independent role from public authorities. Otherwise there is the risk of moving to a top down system.
- How will the activities done be measured? It is very difficult to measure social capital – the building of social skills.
- LAGs related issues:
    - Where appropriate LAGs should transform themselves into development agencies in order to cater for various development streams in their territories;
    - LAGs should become more professional and use the appropriate tools to develop their strategies
    - The 20% allocation for the funding of the "administrative" operations of the LAGs is not considered enough. There is need for more flexibility in the current rules given the current ongoing financial crisis.

Agenda Item	Table discussions
	Question 1: «How can LAGs better identify local needs in order to prepare a stronger LDS?»
Method	Each participant was asked to contribute in a table discussion (world café participatory approach) and identify methods / ideas on how to better identify local needs. Some of the participants were invited to talk about the needs they identified while all of the written contributions were collected and recorded by the "harvesting team". **(Annex 3: Examples of identification of needs)**
Outcomes	Main points of the floor discussion were: - An integrated approach with a broader stakeholder intervention and streamlining the approach by focusing on other stakeholders should be developed. By the end of this process "Needs and Goals" should be identified. - Information meetings "for applicants" facilitate the identification of needs through better understanding of local actors and local needs. It should be kept in mind that there are existing statistics, policies, etc. to refer to. - It is important when engaging with stakeholders to involve people by linking them to their community. Going back to the history and experiences of that community helps to identify what needs to be preserved. - A practical methodology to assist in identifying the needs of people is the use of pictures/illustrations. Through this people can simply chose what their needs are in a more practical way. - The quality of the partnership is very important. There is a need to involve the "real" stakeholders, give responsibility to all members, build a SWOT analysis, and a shared vision to design the organization, allocation of tasks and management. - Building on efficient networking will help to identify the needs by making people ambassadors of the community. - More use of web based tools such as online surveys.
Agenda Item	**Question 2: «When preparing your future LDS (keeping in mind the possibility of using multiple funds) what do you think the opportunities and the challenges are? »** **Question 3: «How should these opportunities and challenges be addressed? »**
Method	Participants continued table discussions highlighting the main opportunities and challenges in preparing the future LDS programme. After the discussions each table was invited to present opportunities and challenges they had identified and the ways to realise / overcome them. All written contributions were collected. **(Annexes 4 and 5: lists of examples of opportunities and challenges and how they can be addressed)**
Outcomes	Main points of the floor discussion were: - Professional administrative capacity: technical assistance should be used to build the necessary capacity. - Coordination between existing partnerships in relation to the multi-funding opportunities. - Better integration and a wider strategy for the territory is required – wider stakeholder representation. - LAGs capacity to adopt an integrated approach should be ensured. Harmonization

of condition and rules for the MS.

- Management issues linked to multi-funding. Clear guidelines are required. Having one process (application) for all funds and also one MA responsible for all funds would be the simplest.

- The goals of local strategies should be integrated into the national strategies. Better representation is required on National fora. LAGs should be pro-active in the process.

- More time and more money for animation should be ensured.

- A combined and coherent approach at both funding and strategic level. Be AMBITIOUS in what it is intended to achieve. The work should start from now and not at the beginning of the next programming period in 2014.

- LAGs can evolve into local development agencies. It is needed to have very open strategies by empowering the local stakeholders to identify what they really need.

- Linking rural and urban economies is a significant opportunity. Concerns on the complex administrative and delivery system were raised and thus the need to simplify it.

- The idea of creating multiple strategy approaches was raised - a single fund or a multi-fund strategy. This would be a way to progress planning while there are still uncertainties.

- Cover more "needs" of the area by using other funds. A challenge is to organize a more participatory approach. Go to the people – face to face is more effective.

- Flexible, simple and concrete strategies that can adapt to changing circumstances for the next 7 years is what is required. Trust more the local actors.

- More tools and resources are needed to deliver the strategy. Challenges of management, reporting and costs need to be addressed. Actions must be efficient and effective.

- Adopt a result oriented approach. Be enthusiastic in the way local needs are approached.

- A motto was supported: "LEADER II come back!"

- Administration is different and difficult currently. There is a need to develop one single approach. Simplification needs to become a reality.

- Encouraging rural entrepreneurship. Ensure there is access to funding. National and/or local arrangements need to be made to guarantee access to funding.

- Clear guidelines to the regulation are required to inform LAGs what funds can be used for what and when.

Agenda Item	**Closing of the workshop**
	The Host of the workshop, warmly thanked the participants for their active and valuable contributions. The minutes and posters of the workshop will be made available at the ENRD website.

ANNEX 1

List of posters presented

	Name	Country / Organisation	Poster Contents/title	Posters' URL
1	Ana Pires da silva	FG4 Co-Chair / NRN Portugal	Focus Group 4 on better Local Development Strategies (LDS)	Focus Group 4 on better Local Development Strategies (LDS) poster
2	Pedro Brosei	DG AGRI	Minimal requirements of LDS strategy in the future programming period	Minimal requirements of LDS strategy 2014-2020 poster by DG AGRI
3	Paul Soto	FARNET	Improving the coordination of EU Funds LAG-FLAG cooperation	Improving the coordination of EU Funds LAG-FLAG cooperation poster
4	Géza Gelencsér	Hungary	How will climate change and poverty come together in one LDS?	How will climate change and poverty come together in one LDS? poster
5	Sanna Sihvola	Finland	Multi-step LAG Selection Procedure	Multi-step LAG Selection Procedure poster
6	Sanna Sihvola	Finland	LAGs' legal structure and unbiased decision making	LAGs' legal structure and unbiased decision making poster
7	Raffaella di Napoli	Italy	Use of participatory methodologies for LDS quality design	Use of participatory methodologies for LDS quality design poster
8	Hanane Allali Puz	France	Decentralisation of LAG selection Procedure	n/a
9	Lorna Elliot	Scotland	LAG Application and Continuous Monitoring Scheme	LAG Application and Continuous Monitoring Scheme poster
10	Marjo Lehtimäki	Finland	Inter-LAG evaluation process	Inter-LAG evaluation process poster
11	Ross Curley	Ireland	The Multi-fund platform / approach in action	The Multi-fund platform / approach in action poster
12	Jan Beekman	Netherlands	Multi-fund strategy examples	Multi-fund strategy examples poster

ANNEX 2

Examples of relevant experiences

Strategy preparation MA/RDP level & Guidance / Support

RDPs should NOT limit the measures for LEADER:
–   Avoid imposed ex-ante choice (in the RDP) of measures and actions

LDS preparation should be considered as multi-stage (iterative) process:
–   Interactive process
–   Dialogue between MA-LAGs, feedback from the MA and evaluators/academics
–   Review strategies: update the strategy if needed, divide into shorter time periods

Clearer and practical guidance:
–   also on the types of activity that cannot be supported (by MA)
–   MA should develop guidance together with LAG managers

Support for multi-fund approach:
–   New cooperation with different organizations
–   Good practices, tips how to proceed, training

MA to ensure consistency between LDS and eligible actions, to avoid frustration of potential LAGs (if they have prepared global strategy but RDP allows only partial funding)

Better funding coordination between different local development areas

Criteria for assessment:
–   Should include with a sufficient weight the process of consultation and quality of PPP (representation, balance)
–   National MA criteria for assessment of LDS should be clear during the LDS preparation

Procedures & Flexibility

Make procedures more simple, more flexibility in LAGs programming

LAG managers should spend less time for administrative matters and with auditors, and more time for animation and in-the-field work

Allow flexibility to change the LDS
–   the LDS should be open to changes during the 7 year period.
–   Flexibility for new ideas (to be innovative and creative): Increase number of inhabitants in preparing LDS
–   E.g. to better respond to the economic crisis (increase of co-financing rate?)

Strategy cycle, LAG level

Strategic planning needs to be a separate project (and get funding as such)

Prioritize on few qualitative objectives for the strategy, be concrete for reaching a goal

The purpose of LDS should not be based on funding (or developed just as combination of measures), but to define your goals/targets, and be based on analysis of the territory/needs/capacities/assets.

Have broad aims to allow innovation – not prescriptive but enabling

End dependency path thinking, renew strategies

Keep independent role of the LAG.
–   Danger when consultants are hired to write LDS to then be used to start a LAG

One territory – one LDS (single area strategy)
- Very important is that LDS must be the same for LAG/region/villages – they have to consult each other

Limit evaluation system, not all goals are measurable in money or jobs

Self evaluation: consider "new economics foundation" to provide well being toolkit for projects to self-evaluate – could be relevant for the whole EU programme

Transformation of LAGs into development agency

Bottom-up approach / Involvement of stakeholders / Regional coherence

Bottom-up approach important, with LEADER expertise

Combine top-down and bottom-up LEADER approach to achieve efficiency in money and time
- Find right balance between bottom-up/top-down ideally?

Allow enough time to develop the LDS (stakeholder processes need time!)
- Start early!

Allow maximum broad stakeholder involvement:
- Involve as many people as possible in the preparation of LDS (gather ideas, needs, opinions), find experts to help you
- Participation all the way (impact, implementation phase, integration of projects)– written strategy is very important
- Early use of participative tools (get the community involved in the process)

Tips for improving stakeholders involvement in the development of the LDS:
- Make it mandatory to spend proportion of the support/start-up funding on stakeholder activity
- Stakeholder map of who is involved
- Create a wider stakeholder network
- Make participative tools more professional – GOPP, mapping, problem tree

Regional coherence:
- Workshop with local actors – ideas on project proposals, indicators for evaluating the implementation of LDS
- Discussion/cooperation with neighboring LAGs for joint actions in preparation of LDS, for better influence on the region and wider understanding
- Involve FLAGs in regional discussions

Other suggestions

More focus groups to discuss about positive and negative aspects in strategy and its implementation

Suggestions for the European Commission to consider:
- Advances for non-material operations should be allowed
- EC should be an example of innovative thinking. EC staff should visit more rural areas to see the reality

To allow more flexibility, to have EU common rules on administration for all EU funds in all MS

ANNEX 3

Examples of identification of needs

Think strategic; Set framework(s); Develop a vision; Build upon continuity

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LDS can be designed to support existing national/local policies: identify them.

Think strategic:
- Keep the strategy simple, remember who is the target group and what is possible
- Have an integrated vision instead of single topic
- Identify the priorities of the strategy
- Think outside the box to be innovative

Development is a process:
- Work process oriented! Have a plan and change it
- Identify constantly local needs as part of this process (throughout the strategy implementation)
- Use ongoing projects to get feedback for new strategy and suggestions for improvement
- Set a "framework" of crite ria (developed locally) where people can develop ideas within themes and financial constraints

Think also about "legitimacy" for decisions, setting targets

Think how to manage the process:

Have a good process leader who can gather relevant information

Strategy writers should be known to locals and "go local"

Use existing resources:
- Use local knowledge of LAG board members
- Make citizens ambassadors of the LEADER approach
- The LAG is the real expert (not external experts) – let LAG operators do study visits and learn from other territories.

Conduct studies and review

Look at existing information:
- Local area statistics – what are the trends/needs of the LAG area?
- Use municipality documents

Objective analysis of the needs before the participatory process

Impact analysis of past work and evaluation of last programme: do you need to stop doing some things?

Conduct SWOT analysis
- SWOT to be followed by a shared vision formally approved by the partnership
- Find more accessible presentation possibilities (e.g. use pictures to illustrate the issues, display in libraries so people can drop in any time)

Use local surveys and focus groups

Work in thematic groups and bring them to partnership

Involve the community: Bottom-up and participative, Meetings / Gatherings

Apply the bottom-up principle:
- Identify the stakeholders that the LDS should target, Who is missing? Bring them into the process
- Be transparent in your work and go public

Reach out: widen scope and ask the whole community (not only the "usual suspects").
- Seek different groups instead of asking them to come to your meetings

Think how to get people interested/involved in the LDS process
- Participative approach needs local people
- Be clearer on the problems and issues an area faces and what money is available
- Gather in activities and organizations where people are already mobilized
- Identify local leaders and use them to bring the message and collect ideas
- Go in public places where people are, e.g. market
- Show good project examples for new LEADER areas (to inspire them)
- Workshops in each village, young people can make a film with local people to show needs
- Use informal meetings at a café, a dinner with others
- Adopt a „peer support" role of existing LAGs to help them identify their local needs
- Also possibly a greater role for NRN to support this.

Lots of face-to-face meetings:
- Both thematic and geographical
- With actors organized in associations or groups, with beneficiaries
- Public meetings in municipality, workshops with inhabitants and NGOs to compare LDS with public strategies

Combine different viewpoints:
- Political, technical and civil society from inside the area; professionals experts from outside
- Try to mix different wishes of different levels (LAG/Village/Local authority/Regional authority)

New involvement methods? E-tools and Social Media

Use also other tools (social media) than public meetings – for example Facebook and twitter
- Needs to be used wisely! Think how not to exclude older people and areas with poor IT

Online questionnaires/forums (more young people involved)

Sample processed / List of tools

Ranking + linking the needs to priorities (integrated)

Adopt a scoring system to rank local priorities – based on a general view of participants

Scenarios

Participative mapping

Questionnaire to stakeholders

Interviews by type of stakeholders

GOPP (problem tree)

Open gatherings

Thematic groups

Meetings with local stakeholders together with info about LEADER, + synthesis of meeting results

Mapping exercise of resources and needs

Questionnaires to inhabitants and communities

What should others be doing? Cooperation with other actors in the area?

Focus group meetings with diverse representation

Less money – better targeting what is most important?

Village meetings

Public consultations

Involvement of political interest

Further suggestions

A toolkit from the Commission on how to conduct the open meetings when making the LDS

Allow us to use current funds to develop future strategies

National MA starting to persuade regional/LAGs to start consultation process: start the process for local consultation over next 6 months

ANNEX 4

Examples of opportunities and how they can be realised in the design of stronger LDS

Opportunities	Possible ways forward
More integrated strategies	
One stronger strategy	The focus should be on the commonalities between the funds and where their combination-effects multiply. This is where LEADER could be stronger and differ from other programmes
Larger strategic projects in communities; multi-sectorial / holistic approach	LEADER approach: Clear overview of requirements with all stakeholders =LDS should be supported by the Local Authorities
	Simple application process plus assessment / audit across the funds
More integral approach for the region (develop the area)	Combination of top-down and bottom –up approach
	One accounting system
Best use and combination of funds	New network (LAG) involving other 'topics' (social – ESF; entrepreneurship – EARDF)
Better and integrated strategies	More and diverse stakeholders should be involved, but not growing in numbers – the local scale should be maintained
Better and wider strategy for the territory	The LAGs / companies memberships should be changed and made more representative of the territory
To integrate the goals of LDS of (all) LAGs in the National and regional strategies	The building of the national and regional strategies should be done with the participation of a representative from all LAGs
Ministries more proactive	Meetings between LAGs representatives and ministries
Design a strategy which includes more opportunities and which creates new fields of experiment	The strategy should be complete by including all the local needs without regarding the funds which can (or can't) be used
Encourage entrepreneurship *Active local business development*	The programmes should support small businesses (already exists) and also support new enterprises and self-employment
Stimulating bottom up process for all stakeholders to work together especially in times of uncertainty	Bottom up process should be applied; More communication
Other stakeholders from rural areas apart from farmers to be involved	National meetings for information should be organized
Multi-funding	

Complementarity of funds can better respond to the local strategy	Putting the focus on the local strategy, not on the funds while preparing the strategy
Multiple funding	Prepare different strategies, one for multi-funding and one for single funding
More tools and resources to deliver a development strategy with a multi-fund approach	Clear instructions and structures that all member states should apply

LAGs

LAGs can better concentrate on local issues and problems if they have several funds as areas differ from one to another	By taking into account all areas with their specific issues (centres, sea, lakes, etc.) while writing the LDS
With enough training LAGs get the chance to improve their skills and thus competences	Cooperation and training horizontally on different organisational level (e.g. NRNs)
Becoming a 'Local Development Agency' that is also a link to the European decision level	With a very open strategy, giving and empowering the villages to identify their own needs

Enhancing rural and urban linkages

Use LEADER method in other funds to design LDS for rural and urban areas	People who do not usually work together should learn to cooperate (e.g. managers of the social and regional funds). The process on how to work together should be organized
Multiple funding will enable actions in all parts of LAGs area and the artificial, structural boundaries between urban – rural will vanish	LAGs don't need to take out any districts of their operational area any more, just to define in a map the boundaries they work within
Linking urban and rural	No borders, same rules

ANNEX 5

Examples of challenges and how they can be solved in the design of stronger LDS

Challenges	Possible ways forward
Challenges in developing the LDS	
Emphasis on the bottom up approach	"LEADER to come back!" acting again as European initiative instead of an operational programme through ENRD, LAGs etc.
	The regional strategy writers go into the villages to public places ("strategy mobile")
	Selection of funds according to the local needs (SWOT analysis) and preserve LAG autonomy from rigid administration / controls
	Local communities to understand the need to change strategy for the future rather than re-active to projects coming in
	Promote innovative strategies
Flexible, simple and concrete LDS	LDS should be a "framework" rather than a detailed "procedure" paper
	Creation of two different strategies: one for multiple funding and one for single funding. The ones that deal with the other funds to be positive for LEADER and LAGs
	Clear guidelines that make simplicity possible
	The LAGs needs must be central to funding programmes so that the LDS is innovative and supportive and bureaucracy is avoided
	Clear regulation(s) specifying which fund can be used in rural areas and which in urban areas
	LDS should focus in rural issues
Administration challenges	
Simplicity	Strong, clear and specific framework and guidelines provided by the EC
	Common set of rules for all funds, for all MS
	One call and one simple application form for all EU funds
	One responsible local authority and one Managing Authority
	One management process even if different reporting is needed
Administrative capacity and constraints	Timely capacity building and training / development for LAGs and MAs

	More time and more money for animation
	Systems in place at the beginning
	Advice & best practices needed
	Pilot approach by using current rules / programmes
	Use TA funds for training and capacity building for LAGs
	Transition funding for the LAGs funded only until 2013, as to maintain expertise and experience
	LAGs need to start working early because if the selection process takes too long, there will be a negative impact on the motivation of the people
Coordination	Coordinated actions by national authorities / Ministries
	Better coordination of existing partnerships (LAGs, FLAGs, Associations (ESF) etc.) under the principle "One partnership, one area"

Communication and animation challenges

Communication of multi-fund approach to the LAGs / stakeholders	Focus on capacity building & MA information letters, common seminars etc.
	Give enough time and funds for communication and animation
	Have enough information, early enough
	Thematical engagement meetings – depending on target audience e.g. young people
	Provide to managers access to the relevant knowledge on other funds and in advance for the preparation of LDS
Lobbying	Lobbying at a national and EU level, making sure the needs of the LAG are understood thus ensuring enough support from local and national authorities for the multi-fund approach
	Lobbying and knowledge building is also required as to restrain political pressures to partnerships

Other Challenges

Financing from banks (short term) is a problem for new enterprises *The increased uncertainty of rules of funding stifles innovation and results adversity to risk*	A proposed solution could be a form of arrangement between banks and associations. Guarantee at National or European level
The other funds are not used in implementing the LEADER method	10% of each fund should be used via the LEADER method and the National Governments should be obliged to include this in the policy