

LU – DE – FR

Transnational
cooperation

Location

Moselle valley

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local
development

Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 30 000
LAG Mosel 5 000
LAG Moselfranke 5 000
LAG Miselerland 5 000
LAG Merzig-Wadern 6 510
LAG Ouest du PNRL 4 245
LAG Terres de Lorraine 4 245

Project duration

2017 – 2018

Project promoter

Terroir Moselle EWIV - GEIE

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Website

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The 'Terroir Moselle wine and architecture route' is a 'preparatory' cooperation project gathering six LEADER areas, five wine growing areas from four regions and three countries.

Summary

The Moselle valley is one of the most renowned wine-producing regions in Europe. The sector covers more than 10 000 hectares of vineyards and some 4 000 wine-producing enterprises. The valley is divided between three different countries, nevertheless the winegrowers are still confronted with similar challenges.



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Six LEADER areas from the French, Luxembourg and German Mosel Valley engaged in a project to prepare the next steps of their cooperation. Through this preparatory project, they examined the feasibility of a wider cross-border project. This project brought together residents and visitors linking European cultural heritage to viticulture and helped to preserve and market the wine architectonic cultural heritage of the area.

Results

Submission of a co-designed cooperation proposal to the relevant funding authorities, in compliance with a joint agreement signed by all parties involved and validated by the programming committees of the six LEADER areas.

This cooperation proposal includes (i) the initial commitment of all interested parties, (ii) a pre-selection of built heritage and locations as an initial sketch of the wine and architecture route, (iii) the planned activities for developing and promoting this project, (iv) its time line and (v) a provisional budget.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The rather strict legal frameworks that regulate the wine and tourism sectors and their delivery mechanisms in each of the four regions vary considerably and this added another layer of organisational complexity.
- ❑ The role of the part-time project officer was crucial in order to ensure the fluidity of actions and manage the complex operational delivery of this transnational strategy.

Project partners

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Context

The Moselle valley is one of the most renowned wine-producing regions in Europe. Its rural landscapes have been shaped by more than two thousand years of viticulture and, still today, the Moselle winegrowers promote the values of authenticity and tradition through their work. The sector covers more than 10 000 hectares of vineyards and some 4 000 wine-producing enterprises. The valley is divided between different countries, nevertheless the winegrowers are still confronted with similar challenges including climate change, complex eco-management techniques used on the steep slopes, high production costs, changing consumption habits and remoteness of new market opportunities (such as Asia).

Since 2008, a group of professionals from the regional wine institutions decided to work on a joint promotion of the Moselle valley, beyond its administrative and linguistic borders. The first cooperation project was implemented between 4 LAGs: Terres de Lorraine (FR), Miselerland (LU), Moselfranken (DE) and Mosel (DE). This pilot activity gave way to a more ambitious cooperation project, which lasted three years (2010-2013). This project resulted the creation of a common logo, shared equipment for attending professional fairs with a collective stand representing the whole area, a mobile exhibition advertising the various wine growing regions and several promotional tools (flyers, posters, table mats) displaying the geological map of the Moselle valley. In addition, thematic workshops were organised that allowed the winegrowers from the three countries to share experiences on topics such as transport, export, taxation, etc. In 2013, the European Economic Interest Group (EEIG) 'Terroir Moselle' was created with 15 members¹ and a joint secretariat which is located in the LAG Miselerland's office, hiring a part-time project officer.

The next step is to link up this rural cooperation project with the strategy of the 'Greater Region' and its urban network of four cities (Luxembourg, Metz, Saarbrücken and Trier)³, in order to combine wine promotion with the (re)discovery of built heritage. The area has amazing architectural and cultural heritage dating from all periods, starting from the Celtic and Roman times to the Middle Ages and the twentieth century. Several sites are recognised as UNESCO heritage.

Objectives

The aim of this project covering six LEADER areas from the French, Luxembourg and German Mosel Valley is to engage into a preparatory phase of cooperation in order to examine the feasibility of a wider cross-border project. This project brought together residents and visitors linking European cultural heritage to viticulture and helped to preserve and market the wine architectural cultural heritage of the area.

Activities

One of the challenges identified was the difficulty of marketing the Terroir Moselle as a European destination of built heritage. This was due to the fact that several tourism offers already existed and these ranged from the romantic tour of medieval castles, to visits at Roman and Celtic remains. However, the fierce competition between local operators blurred the communication between the relevant actors in the sector. As a result it was not easy to convey the right messages to consumers.

The wine producing sector was also facing significant challenges. For example, in the case of France, any winegrower who would like to have a designation of origin label, would need first to comply with the operational rules laid down by the Defence and Management Organisation (in French: Organisme de Défense et de Gestion – ODG⁴). Such organisations fall under the EU Wine Common Market Organisation (CMO) and EU wine legislation⁵.

The tourism sector had to confront significant constraints as well. Making sure that the regional specificities comply with the European legislation added another layer of complexity in designing a cross-border marketing strategy.

All of these elements made it necessary have this preparatory phase before engaging into full cooperation. Building upon a cooperation project implemented during the 2007-2013 programming period, which involved four LEADER areas (see above), this preparatory phase involved two additional LAGs: 'Merzig-Wadern' (Saarland – Germany) and 'Ouest du Parc Naturel Régional de Lorraine' (Lorraine – France).

¹ The list of members is available online: <http://terroirmoselle.eu/fr/#/fr/qui-sommes-nous/-p>

² Formerly known as SAAR-LOR-LUX, the Greater region became a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2010 – See: www.tourismus-grossregion.eu/fr/Curiosites/La-Grande-Region

³ These 4 cities formed a grouping called Quattropole, with a joint secretariat in Luxembourg – see www.granderegion.net/Institutions/Autres-acteurs/Maison-de-la-Grande-Region/QuattroPole

⁴ Formerly known as wine unions.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/wine/legislation_en

A budget of EUR 30 000 was granted through the LEADER measure. Each LAG applied for EUR 5 000⁶ for coordination, expert fees, travel and subsistence expenses for attending meetings, etc.

The participating LAGs over the nine-month period that the project lasted, carried out the following activities:

- Examined the feasibility of the project (preliminary market analysis, identification of target groups);
- Conducted benchmarking against similar projects in other wine regions, including a study visit and the hosting of a visiting delegation implementing a similar project. The South Tyrol region was identified as a potential benchmark area;
- Set up an expert committee with regional specialists on built heritage, providing a pre-selection of locations;
- Launched cross-border working groups for preliminary tasks (i.e. defined common selection criteria for designing the route and its built heritage: architectural qualities, accessibility, opening times, etc.);
- Drafted the budget of the cooperation project and secured its match funding by meeting potential partners (public and private).

Main Results

The result of this preparatory phase was the submission of a co-designed cooperation proposal to the relevant funding authorities, in compliance with a joint agreement signed by all parties involved and validated by the programming committees of the six LEADER areas.

This cooperation proposal includes (i) the initial commitment of all interested parties, (ii) a pre-selection of built heritage and locations as an initial sketch of the wine and architecture route, (iii) the planned activities for developing and promoting this project, (iv) its time line and (v) a provisional budget, including match funding.



The Terroir Moselle stand at professional fairs

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Key lessons

This cross border cooperation project was ambitious in its scope and objectives. First and foremost, it genuinely supported the bottom-up construction of a European reality, combining the promotion of wine with the region's built heritage.

The particular feature of this project is the diversity of its partners: elected representatives and community officers from the LAG's staff, winegrowers, representatives from tourism office boards, built heritage experts, regional authorities' staff, etc.

The role of the part time project officer hired by the EEIG was thus crucial in order to ensure the fluidity of actions and manage the complex operational delivery of this transnational strategy.

However, distinct administrative rules laid out by each Managing Authority add organisational complexity for the projects promoters. For instance, the French MA requires that the legal seat of the final beneficiary is located in the region, preventing the EEIG (based in Luxembourg) from being eligible to the French LEADER grant. In Germany, Rheinland Pfalz and Saarland MAs do not require the same administrative evidence with application forms. As a consequence of this, two EEIG members - the Defence and Management Organisations of the two wine areas located in Lorraine – applied for the grant and in Saarland, the project promoter is a private tourism operator (Saarschliengenland Touristik gmbH).

⁶ Except for 3 LAGs that get match funding: Merzig-Wadern (20%), Ouest du Parc Naturel Régional de Lorraine (10%) and Pays Terres de Lorraine (10%).

Additional sources of information

<http://terroirmoselle.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/flyerterroirmoselle.pdf>