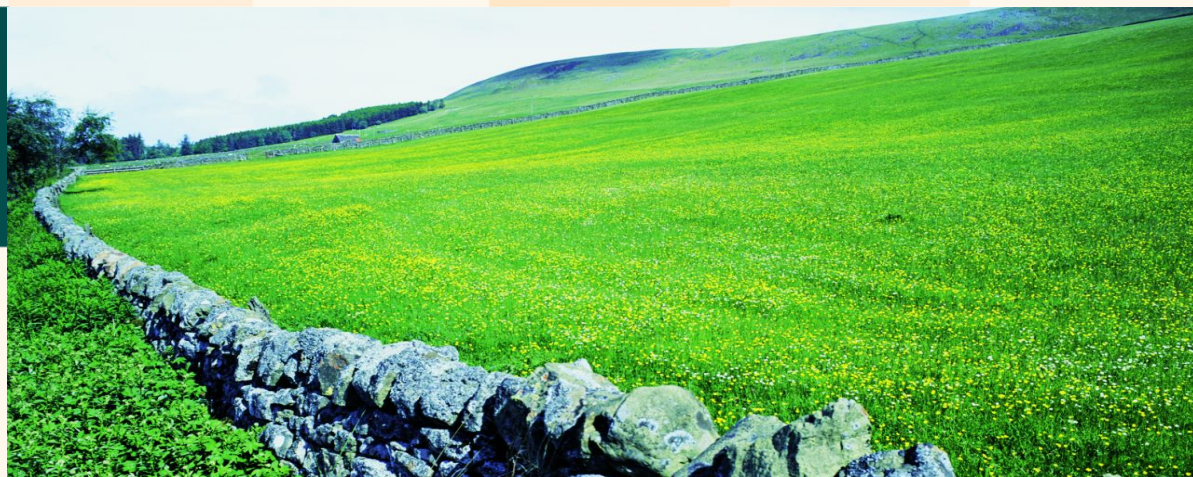




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**Leader Axis –
Implementation Axis
for Rural Development Policy 2007-2013**



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Rural Development 2007-2013

Leader Axis

Axis 1

Competi-
tiveness

Axis 2

Environment
and
Countryside

Axis 3

Economic
Divers.
+
Quality of
Life

**Simplification : Single set of programming, financing, monitoring,
auditing rules**

Single Rural Development Fund



Building blocks of the policy

- EU strategy
- National strategy
- National or regional rural development programmes
- 4 priority axes including Leader axis
- 41 measures (16 under axis 1, 13 under axis 2, 8 under axis 3, 3 under axis Leader, technical assistance)



Council Regulation relevant provisions

- Specific chapter / Section on axis 4 (Articles 61 to 65)
 - Definition of Leader approach and local action group (Art. 61 and 62)
 - Leader measures and conditions (Art. 63 to 65)
- Other chapters
 - Balance between objectives (Art.17)
 - EARDF contribution (Art.70)
 - Technical assistance: Networking (Art. 67 and 68)



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Mainstreaming of the Community Initiatives

- Applies to Leader, Urban and Equal
- Interreg not mainstreamed, is becoming the European territorial cooperation objective with specific programmes.
- Full integration of the Leader approach, principles and delivery mechanism
- Equal and Urban included as a field of action of the Mainstream Programmes
- Urban (possible delegation to towns with direct responsibility)



Definition of the Leader approach at programme level (Art 61)

- a) area-based approach *
- b) bottom-up approach*
- c) public-private partnership*
- d) integrated approach *
- e) innovation
- f) cooperation
- g) networking *

* mandatory at Local action group level as well



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Delivery system measures (Art 63)

- a) Implementing local development strategies to achieve the objective of one or more of the 3 axis
- b) Cooperation
- c) Running the local action group, acquisition of skills and animating the territory .



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Selection of local action groups (Art 62)

Minimal criteria

- **Strategy related criteria**
 - integrated local development strategy
- **Territory related criteria**
 - Coherent area and critical mass to support a viable development strategy



Selection of local action groups (Art 62)

Minimal criteria

- **Partnership related criteria**
 - Be responsible for strategy implementation
 - Representative of partners from the various locally based socio-economic sectors
 - At decision-making level representation of the economic and social actors and civil society (at least 50 % of the local partnership)
 - (e.g. Chambers of trade, agriculture, or SMEs, NGOs, rural women association)
 - Ability to define and implement a development strategy;
 - Ability to administer public funds



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Local strategy implementation ensuring experimentation on intervention

- Project supported should correspond to the objectives and of one or more of the three rural development axes :
 - improvement of competitiveness of agriculture and forestry,
 - improvement of environment and countryside
 - Economic diversification and quality of life

- it means that operation do not necessarily correspond to one of the 37 measures

- If project enters into the scope of application of one of the measures eligibility conditions of the measure apply.



Bottom up decision making process

- Individual project selected by the local action group
 - Opportunity to fund the project according to the local strategy
- Eligibility control by the managing authority (administrative supervision of compliance with the legal requirements)



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Territorial rural cooperation

- Inter-territorial cooperation
- Transnational cooperation
 - Within EU
 - With rural territories in third countries



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Territorial Cooperation procedures

- Can be integrated in local development strategy
 - Advantage : local action groups select the projects (Art.62.4)
- If not integrated in local strategy, authorization by the managing authorities
- Coordination mechanism at EU level



Balance between objectives (Art.17)

- Leader axis budget :
 - At least 5 % of total EARDF contribution in the old MS
 - At least 2,5% in the new MS.

- Projects supported under local strategy and cooperation will be recorded in the financial tables under each relevant Axis (1, 2 or 3) to calculate the EARDF contribution for each axis.



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EARDF contribution (Art.70) increased participation + 5%

- 80 % of public expenditure in regions covered by the convergence objective
- 55 % of public expenditure in other regions



Demarcation line with Axis 4 - EFF

- Possible territorial overlapping : territories proposed under both funds might be rural, coastal and correspond to a fishery area
- A single local body with two selection committees can manage both local integrated development strategies (current experience of EQUAL/Leader)
 - This allows a more integrated approach by delivering both strategies and a transfer of experience from Leader to groups under EFF axis 4
 - But with delimitation criteria between the two integrated local strategies
 - monitoring and control systems to avoid overlap
 - a separate administration of both programmes is required.
 - all applicants are required to certify in their applications all sources of public funding being sought or received.