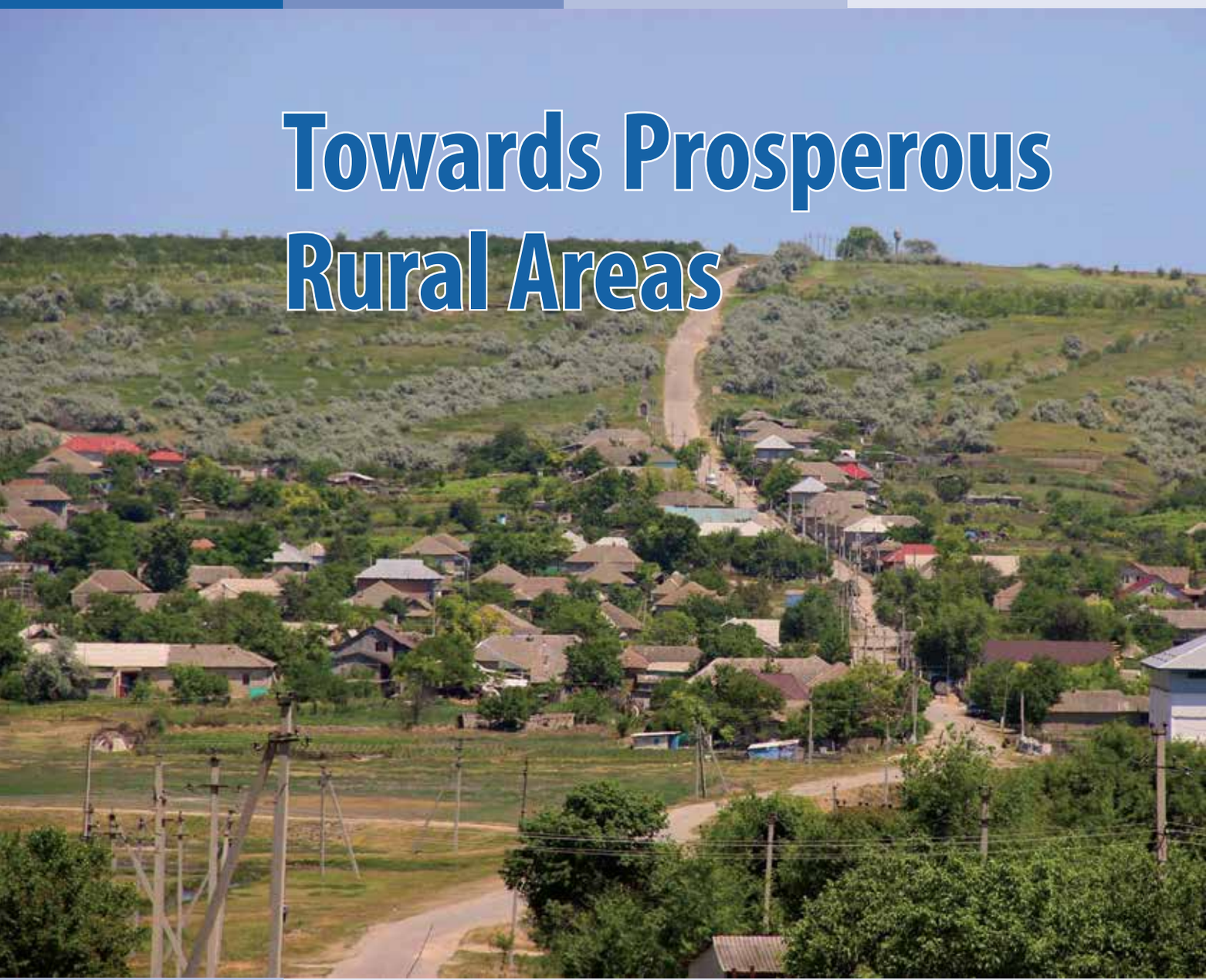
Towards Prosperous Rural Areas



Handbook on implementation of LEADER/CLLD – community-driven rural development initiatives, in the Republic of Moldova

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SARD
Support for agriculture and rural development in ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia

UNDP

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Introduction

This handbook was designed with the aim of assisting the work of those who are interested in implementing the 'Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy' (LEADER)/ community-led local development (CLLD) method and programmes to improve the living conditions in rural areas in the Republic of Moldova. The first part of the handbook consists of a methodological description and guidelines on how to mobilize local stakeholders, create plans and develop and implement LEADER/CLLD programmes and projects. It is followed by some case studies and practical tools for creative use; and by schemes, templates, session descriptions and forms. All are drawn from practice and experience of the European Union- (EU-)funded Support to Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Programme, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2016–2018. Although the handbook focuses on LEADER/CLLD implementation in the Republic of Moldova, much of the guidance is useful for development of rural areas in other countries.

What is the LEADER/CLLD initiative?

LEADER (a French acronym meaning Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy) is a European Union initiative, a method and a programme instrument that aims to support locally-driven rural development to reinvent rural areas and create local jobs. Since 2013, the LEADER method has been expanded to apply to coastal and urban areas as 'Community-Led Local Development' (CLLD). The LEADER/CLLD approach is based on the creation of an impetus for change in local communities. Everyone can do something to change his or her own life, but this process will be more efficient and sustainable if potential change-makers in any community are strengthened so that they are able to identify with the 'culture of co': cooperation, community leadership, caring for the commons and business collaboration. The key actor in LEADER/CLLD is a group of these empowered local change-makers, which emerges from among the community – the 'Local Action Group' (LAG). In LEADER/CLLD, the LAG starts to function as a local development initiator, representing local public institutions, businesses and civil society. The first LEADER programme started in EU member countries in 1991. Because of its development efficiency and popularity in rural communities, LEADER still exists, having a three-decade history in the European Union. It has been implemented in all European Union (EU) member states and many non-EU countries in thousands of local rural areas, with great social, environmental and economic success.

Why is it timely to implement LEADER/CLLD in the Republic of Moldova?

LEADER/CLLD contributes to rebalancing territorial development disparities. During the present century, global trends have resulted in rapid changes in income opportunities and lifestyles across societies. Urbanization and metropolization are occurring at a rapid pace. One of the consequences of these developments is that the prospects of villages often look depressing, especially in remote areas. Interventions by governments usually centre on regional policies, focusing on urbanization and macro-economic development. However, as examples globally show, despite strong efforts, the social-economic gap between urban and rural territories continues to grow. These trends are present in the Republic of Moldova, which therefore requires an efficient rural policy in tandem with regional policy. Moldova has started the process to launch rural development programmes, such as LEADER, to ensure a balanced transition in rural areas over the long term, to avoid deepening rural poverty and further outmigration, and to prevent human crises (related to drugs, mental health issues, etc.) in present and future rural generations. Rural societies have shown an increasing interest in implementing LEADER/CLLD in Moldova. The interest and great energy exhibited by the 23 LAG initiatives identified in 2018 shows that rural communities are ready for significant social and economic development changes in Moldova. The map on page 5 shows the 23 Moldovan LAG initiatives.

Context of LEADER/CLLD

LEADER/CLLD method and programming provides practical answers to pressing territorial development challenges. Because of quick development in agricultural technologies, fewer and fewer hands are needed and fewer and fewer villagers receive income from agriculture – globally, and in Moldova. To avoid increased rural poverty and further outmigration from rural areas there is a need to implement appropriate national rural policy. Programmes like LEADER/CLLD can help in this regard, by promoting diversification of the rural economy. However, this is only one side of the needed change.

On the other side, villagers must be prepared for the needed innovation. The lessons learned from LEADER implementation in EU and non-EU countries show that development funds will only be used in an efficient way if the target group feels it has ownership over the development process. In LEADER/CLLD programmes the 'seed' from which local innovation grows is the Local Action Group (LAG). The LAG is a committed partner organization of the development institutions. It is to mobilize local resources and other local people for new types of economic and social development in their villages, with the aim of assisting in the needed transition.

A single village on its own does not have sufficient capacity for innovation, it is a must to build territorial cooperation. The human and economic development capacity of a single village is very limited. To ensure the necessary 'power of the place', implementation of the LEADER/CLLD method requires the setting up of the long-term territorial cooperation of neighboring villages. This territorial cooperation also helps the development of communication between national/regional institutions and individual villages, through the local LEADER initiative LAG.

The LEADER initiative must be built on the partnership of public, business and civil society representatives. To bring about change and to release all available development energies and sources, local cooperation is needed. If the goal is to reinforce economic development in villages, village communities cannot be represented only by the municipal decision makers. To ensure better communication, learning processes, visions for the future, project generation and identification, and to create the necessary ownership in action, it is necessary to involve existing and potential future local businesses as equal partners in planning and implementation of local rural development programmes and projects. Local activists, civil society groups and organizations, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) invest their time and energy in countless local activities that improve the quality of life in the villages concerned. They are also key partners in local LEADER/CLLD programmes.

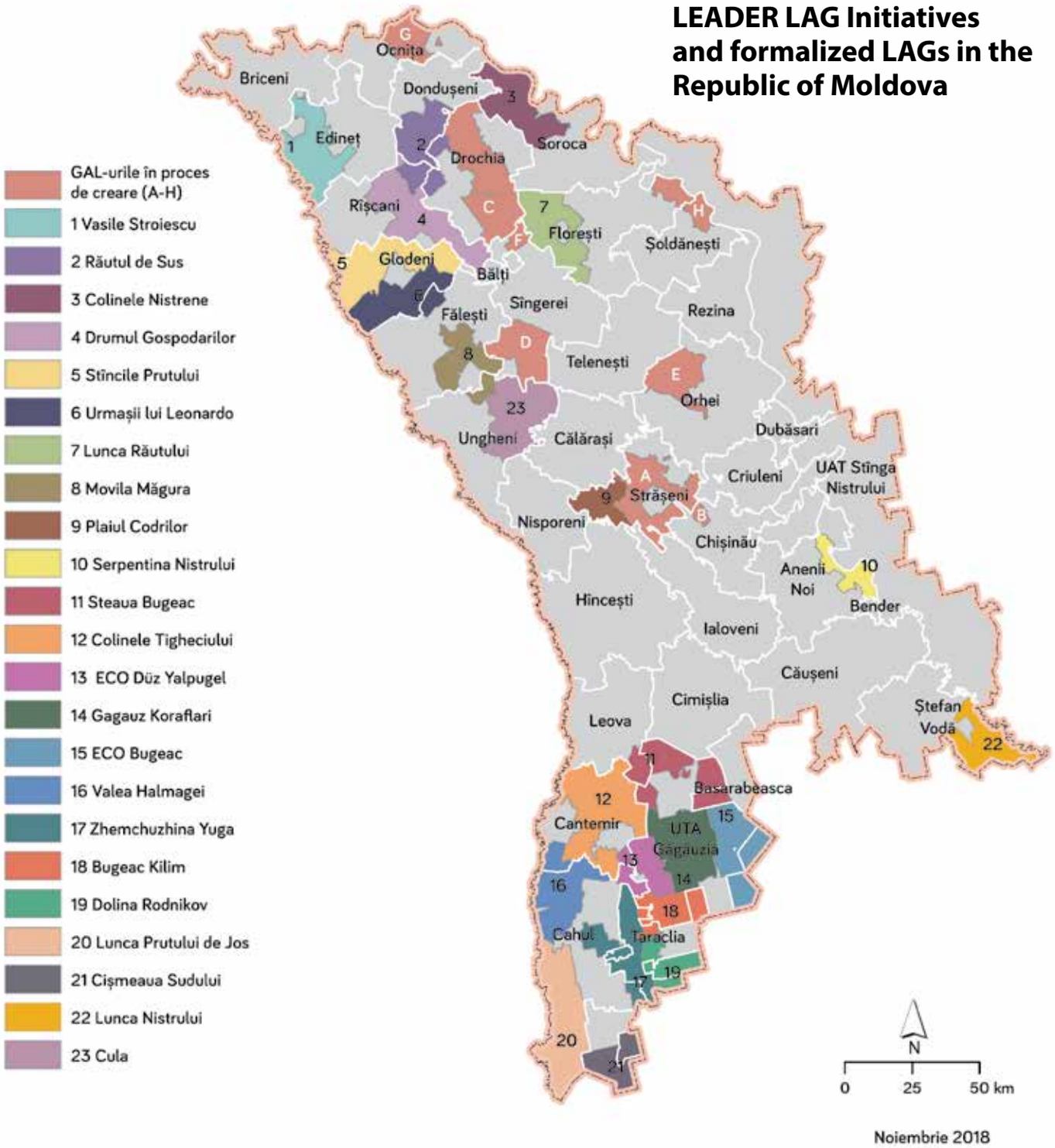
Summarizing the above thoughts, the 'message' of the LEADER/CLLD method is that to ensure the necessary transition process in villages, to create jobs, generate new rural economic activities and to improve the quality of life it is necessary to create:

- territorial cooperation between villages to be able to focus their development capacity; and
- partnership between municipal and business stakeholders, and local civil society actors, to be able to use their energy to change the economic, infrastructural and social situation of the villages concerned.

The values behind the LEADER/CLLD methodology are: to build on local resources and participation, to empower potential local 'change-makers', and to generate innovative projects. This innovation helps communities to (re)discover forgotten or less recognized local values, and thus fertilize traditions with new technologies and knowledge.

In EU countries, 5% of agricultural and rural development funds are spent on LEADER initiatives that aim to create cohesive rural areas with prospering small businesses and social services. The wide range of national LEADER programmes and the thousands of locally implemented LEADER strategies have significantly changed living conditions in villages and contributed to the decrease of the social gap between territories and the outmigration from rural areas.

LEADER LAG Initiatives and formalized LAGs in the Republic of Moldova



Resource: Solidarity Found PL in Moldova

Legal framework

for implementing LEADER/CLLD in Moldova

Creating LAGs is a crucial part of LEADER/CLLD implementation. In 2016, the SARD programme analyzed the relevant legal frameworks that would make it possible to establish LAGs in 10 EU member states and one of the pre-accession countries (Serbia), at the beginning of the implementation of LEADER/CLLD. Parallel to this, the Moldovan legislation, in the context of possible LEADER/CLLD implementation, was evaluated by a national expert. This chapter presents the summary conclusion of the evaluation, which is available on the SARD LEADER website (www.leadermoldova.eu).

The Moldovan Civil Code offers the option of cooperation between two or more than two legal and/or physical entities without the formal creation of a new legal entity, via the conclusion of a Partnership Agreement, which is regulated by the general provision of the Civil Code. Thus, the current Moldovan legislative framework allows for the formation of LAGs without the setting up of a new legal entity.

The general provisions of the Moldovan Civil Code, with respect to the conclusion of civil law agreements, are sufficiently wide to allow LAG stakeholders identified by EU Regulation 1303/2013 to conclude a Partnership Agreement specifying the purposes, conditions of participation, duration of the agreement, and activities to be carried out.

Such a scenario would involve the transferal of administrative and financial matters, particularly regarding the managing function, to one of the NGO/civil society organization (CSO) members of the partnership, which would hold legal personality within the given LAG. This would be the so-called 'accountable body', in international terminology. It is important to underline that the legal framework for establishing LAGs in Moldova is the same as existed in Lithuania and Hungary in the first years of the national LEADER programme implementations there.

With respect to the Moldovan legislative framework described above:

a) Based on the present Moldovan Civil Code, it is possible to create LAGs to implement LEADER/CLLD programmes in Moldova. Members of LAG initiatives are allowed to sign Partnership Agreements. In this form of public–private partnership, at least one of the mayors (a member of the LAG) should be elected to represent the relevant local authorities in the board of the partnership. In SARD cases, the elected mayor would have the function of the LAG Chairman. The SARD decision to have an elected mayor as the LAG president comes from long-term experience of LAGs in other countries (e.g. Portugal and Sweden). Experience shows that where the LAG president comes from the civil society or business sector the result is very weak involvement of the public sector in LAG leadership, which makes it more difficult for LAGs to be well-informed and to be involved, and to be able to exert influence, in public decisions and policymaking on local/rural/territorial development.

b) An accountable body with legal personality is elected among the members of each LAG to manage all financial and administrative matters, including signing contracts with donors. The accountable body in SARD cases is a local CSO or NGO (or a branch office of regional NGOs, can be involved only in one LAG as accountable body.

c) All rules of operation of the LAG must be prescribed in the Partnership Agreement signed by all parties, and later approved by the constitutive bodies of the LAG, which are created on the basis of the Partnership Agreement. In addition to the rules defined in the Partnership Agreement, and in harmony with the Partnership Agreement, the LAG-approved Mode of Operation should contain the practical rules for the daily functioning of the LAG.

d) The Agreement and the subsequent documents approved by the LAG bodies should fulfill the requirements of the EU Regulation 1303/2013, including the rules of procedures on the selection of projects, the approval of the local development plans, the voting requirements (quorum, distribution of voting rights, secret vote etc.), casting of votes by the public and private partners etc. Seethe Partnership Agreement and Mode of Operation models in Annex 4 and Annex 5. Both are created in relevant to the Moldovan legislation opportunities.

In addition to the above legal framework, which has been used by the SARD programme, and which should be used by any Moldovan LEADER initiatives and programming, with immediate effect, the process of modifying the legal framework can be implemented in parallel, to make it possible

to establish LAGs as public associations in the future, with membership by public bodies. After amending the civil law, LAG members can also decide on recalling their accountable body and establishing their common, registered legal body in a future national LEADER/CLLD programming phase, as has happened in other countries (e.g. in Hungary between 2005 and 2008).

Values behind the LEADER approach

The values behind the LEADER approach are rebuilding local resources and participation; empowering potential local 'change-makers'; and generating community-driven local development processes. These handbook is based on the adaptation of the European LEADER principles to the situation Moldova, which also incorporates the community coaching approach.

The original European LEADER approach is based on seven specific principles, which must all be present simultaneously in order to ensure the method is applied correctly. These seven characteristics define LEADER as a methodology and distinguish it from other funding programmes.

Community coaching is an additional, eighth, principle that makes LEADER/CLLD tools more appropriate for inclusive place-based development in countries and rural areas, where self-confidence and self-organization of the local community is lacking. Community coaching is designed to mobilize and empower communities. (For more details, see the next section.)

The Moldovan adaptation of the EU LEADER/CLLD principles also considers the specific culture and legal framework of the country, and the targeted local areas.

These special implementation approaches, community coaching and the paramount consideration of the cultural aspects are intended to contribute to avoiding the risk of using LEADER/CLLD as a simple technical programme measure in Moldova.

Definition of the LEADER/CLLD LAG

The LAG is a formalized partnership of municipal, business and civil society representatives of the cooperating villages. An LAG territory must cover continuous territories of neighboring rural municipalities with at least 10 000–100 000 inhabitants in total. In EU member countries, both villages and small rural towns (with a maximum of 10,000 inhabitants) are eligible to establish LAGs.

LAG members are responsible for the governance in local rural development. LAGs decide on the territorial delineation of their activities, establish formal partnerships, prepare and agree on development strategies of the territory covered by the LAG activities, and identify and implement local development actions and projects.

The LAG office, which is established by the LAG partnership, works as a small local development agency; it functions as an intermediary to bring development information close to villagers (e.g. possible business opportunities, available funds, etc.), and it is the contact point for national/regional state institutions or private investors to communicate with the villages or get information about development opportunities in the given territory.

Methodology

LEADER principles

Area-based. An area-based approach implies a focus on a small, homogenous, socially cohesive territory, often characterized by common traditions, a shared local identity, and a sense of belonging or common needs and expectations. A LEADER area must have clearly defined geographical borders, which do not necessarily coincide with administrative districts, but rather with practical, cultural or functional boundaries. Having such an area as a reference facilitates the recognition of local strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities, endogenous potential and the identification of major bottlenecks for sustainable development.

As defined in the LAG strategy, LAG Gagauz Koraflari unites the communities of Baurci, Besalma, Chirsova, Ferapontievca, Gaidar and Tomai (31,452 inhabitants). The LAG identified the advantages of the delineated LAG territory: one of them is that the villages are close to regional routes, which positively influences the development of local business. At the same time, a favorable climate, fertile soil and a water source from local lakes are important for agricultural development. A common purpose of territorial cooperation is to reinforce local cultures. Each of the communities concerned has a strong cultural mix: Ukrainian, Bulgarian and/or Gagauzian. See the LAG map on page 10.

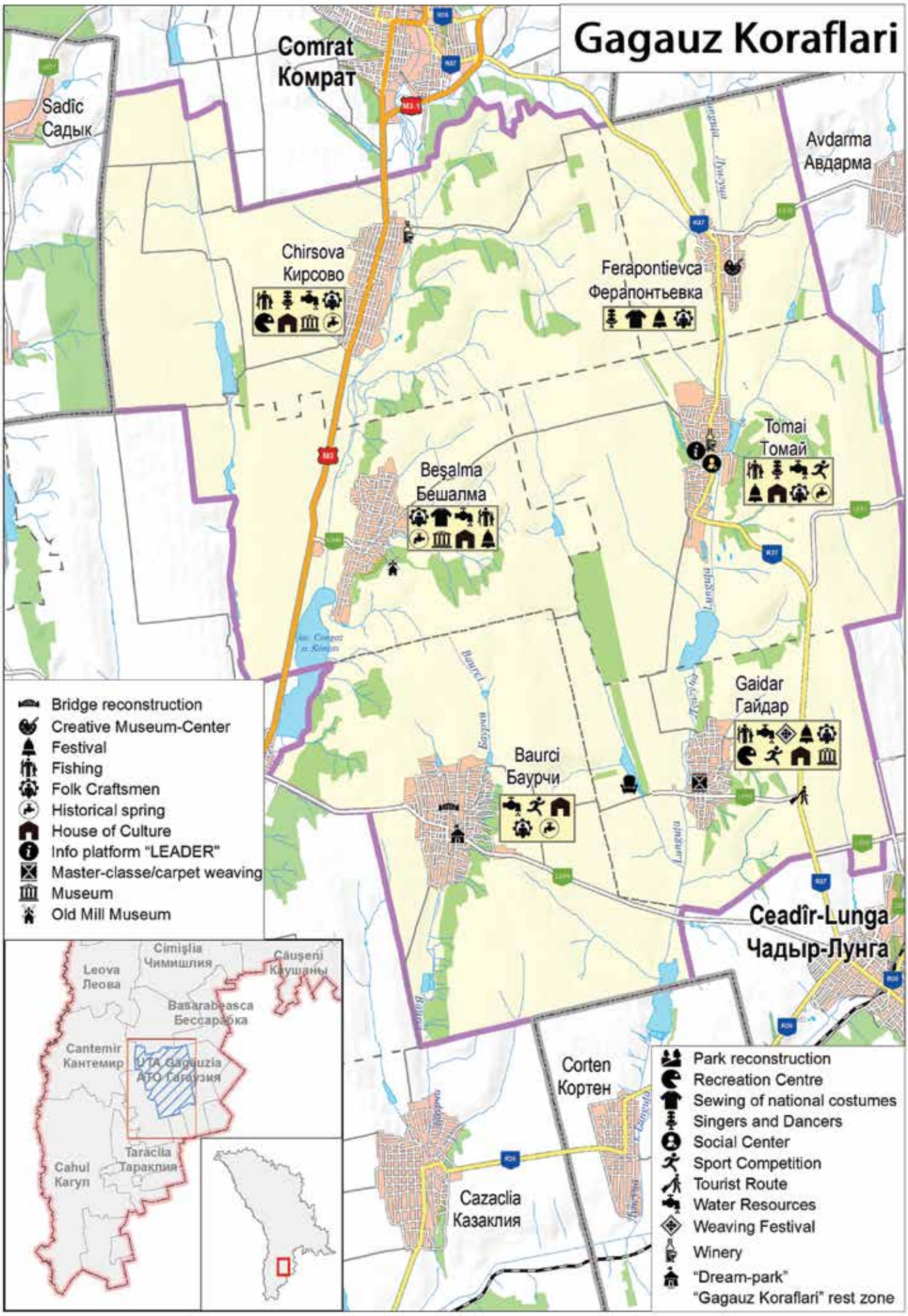
Local partnership. The Local Action Group, which brings together public and private partners, shall be well balanced representative of the existing local interest groups, drawn from the different socio-economic sectors in the area. Its legal form will vary from country to country, but partnerships often have a non-profit status. At the decision-making level, private partners and associations must make up at least 50% plus one person of the local partnership.

In some countries LAGs are not-for profit limited liability companies, created by their members (municipalities, businesses and civil society organizations). In other countries, the form of the LAG organization is a public association. In a third group of countries, the LAG is represented legally by one of the legal members of the LAG partnership. This third version is the form in which the Moldovan pilot LAGs has been setup.

Bottom-up. The bottom-up approach means that local stakeholders participate in decision making about the strategic planning, and in the selection of the priorities to be pursued in their local area. The involvement of local actors includes the population at large, economic and social interest groups, and representatives of public and private institutions. LEADER operates on the basis that local people are best placed to oversee the development of their territory. LEADER can be seen as a tool of participatory democracy, which supplements electoral parliamentary democracy.

It should be underlined that communication with the local society and efforts of community coaches is crucial to ensure: (1) local actors are connected to each other; (2) the local strategy process is participatory; (3) LAG members are committed to sharing information with others in their villages; and (4) they feel ownership in relation to the LEADER programme. In the SARD programme, the local mobilization campaign took more than half a year. Further details are provided in the section on “Implementation steps” and in the section on community coaching.

Local management. The management, including financial management, of LEADER programmes is entrusted to the LAGs. The benefits of this local management arise primarily due to its proximity. It allows the LAG to develop a keen knowledge



"Talking map" prepared by Gagauz Koraflari LAG

of the project promoters, and of the area's economic and social characteristics. Proximity improves information flows and streamlines and simplifies procedures for project promoters. Local management makes it possible, more so than centralized management, to foster the emergence of projects that are adapted to local needs and potential, which do not always fit within traditional institutional frameworks.

In February 2018, "Eco Bugeac" LAG opened its office in Joltai village district. The event was attended by representatives of the LEADER Programme Coordination Committee, formed under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE), representatives of the SARD programme, regional public authorities, and members of "Eco Bugeac" and the other LAGs. As with each SARD-supported LAG, the office venue and its maintenance costs are provided by the local authorities, in the form of a self-contribution. LAG managers and daily office costs are covered from 20% of the financial support provided for implementation of the first-year implementation of the LAG strategy by SARD. In the case of the eight SARD pilot LAGs, two or three LAG managers are part of the team, selected by the LAG Council and appointed by the accountable body of the given LAG. Managers are employed part-time or full-time, based on a decision of the given LAG.

Multi-sectoral integration. LEADER is not a sectoral development programme; the LAG strategy must have a multi-sectoral rationale, integrating several sectors of activity. The actions and projects contained in local strategies should be linked and coordinated as a coherent whole. The LAG is a melting pot of – sometimes very – different actors, and this diversity often creates ideal conditions for innovation. The LAG must, however, be able to bring the different interests and interest groups together in a constructive manner.

The Executive Summary of the Bugeac Kilim LAG Strategy, see the see on page 9-10,, shows the integrated way of thinking that the LAG has acquired, through the strategy-making process. Bugeac Kilim's strategic goals avoid sectoral boundaries by harmonizing different strategy directions, with the aim of answering the complex development challenges of their territory. Additionally, LAG Bugeac Kilim has built synergy between the LAG Strategic Action Plan to and other key development documents relevant in the region.

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Networking and cooperation. The LAG is a network itself, but it should also look around and cooperate with other development organizations, at local, regional, national and international levels. Networking is a means of transferring good practice, of disseminating innovation and building on the lessons learned from local development. Networking forges links between people, projects and rural areas, and can help overcome the isolation faced by some rural regions. It can help stimulate cooperation projects by connecting LEADER groups around shared interests. Cooperation goes further than networking: it involves a LAG undertaking a joint project with the urban centre of the region, another LEADER group, or with a group taking a similar approach, in another region – or even another country. Cooperation with other regions is often the best source of innovation for LAGs. New perspectives can often lead to new opportunities.

SARD has supported networking activities of the Moldovan LAG initiatives at the regional, national and European level. LAGs in Moldova are very interested in networking, getting to know each other and learning from each other, in getting experiences from other countries and in cooperating in projects. The first local cooperation projects have been implemented; one of them, the milk collection point project of LAG Chismeaua Sudului, is introduced in this handbook later.

Innovation. The innovative character of LEADER/CLLD can be seen as a way to promote the development of new solutions for organizing local/rural societies. This innovation is to (re)discover local resources by the community and fertilize them with new knowledge and technologies. It involves fostering change-making to reinvent local prosperity. Extending the local impetus for change, rethinking community actions by forming new partnerships and adding new value to local products and services all ensures that the local community responds more effectively than was previously possible to old and new development opportunities and constraints.* It is not an exaggeration to say that the adoption and application of the LEADER approach is a significant innovation in Moldovan rural communities. The method brings new local development opportunities into the light and brings together new partners. This is an important basis for further innovation.

Community coaching in LEADER/CLLD implementation

Community coaching to ignite the spirit of change

The impulse to contribute to the 'common good' or develop social capital is being lost in many local communities globally, for a variety of different historical, economic and social reasons. Community coaching is a development tool that counters this dynamic by encouraging communities and their members to achieve their full potential and build social capital by working together. It is recognized that without active local communities, we lose the energy, knowledge and ideas of those who are targeted by development programmes, running the risk of producing unworkable solutions that people cannot identify with. This can lead to a lack of appropriate development communication and cause further isolation, instead of inclusion and support.

The SARD example

1. Community coaches came to the targeted south Moldovan rural communities without being invited or announced. They are experts, being familiar with the targeted local development challenges, but were external to the given communities. Their external view helped to ensure a kind of neutral approach and objectivity in their work. They began coaching in a passive social environment, where the challenge was to find the local change-makers – those who would be the first to try 'something new'. They spent a year working with the target communities, organizing actions and common works at least once a month.
2. Through meetings and common actions, coaches worked to enable community self-organization and reorganization, and fostered new partnerships between local development stakeholders. As result of their work, an empowered change-maker group emerged from among the originally passive community. At a crucial point, this group became a local initiator group – a LAG – and started to function with its own responsibility.
3. Importantly, the impetus for change was not related to quickly available financial resources. The community coach helped local communities to recognize that funding for development was not the only thing they needed: they also needed to identify the unused local development resources and people's learning about how to change. Moderated by the coach, people have now organized themselves, informed and invited others, and have set down and started to think about their local development strategy. Change has been born.

* EU LEADER programmes in English and French,at: http://www.aeidl.eu/en/news/what-s-new-at-aeidl/3332-25-years-of-leader-back-to-the-future.html

4. The one-year community coaching process required limited financial resources. This participatory process is not about large investment in infrastructure, but rather investment in people's self-confidence, attitudes and thinking. (This nature of the method should be taken into consideration when planning programme budgets.) The benefit is empowered local partnership, which creates development opportunities for those who are usually not winners of the competitive macro-economic processes: rural small and medium-sized enterprises, youth and woman entrepreneurs, social institutions with business interests, community initiatives, and educational and public institutions aiming to improve the local life conditions.
5. Who are the coaches? – Development professionals who: are very good in communication; are motivated personalities with the ability to motivate others; have leadership skills and democratic attitudes; are flexible and have longer-term experience working with village communities; and have overall knowledge of strategic planning, project generation, local business, and environmental and social development.

Implementation of the LEADER principles

The LAG Bugeac Kilim case

"The Bugeac Kilim Local Action Group was created based on implementation of the European LEADER approach …. As a Local Action Group we cover the territory of five communities: the commune of Svetlii (including Svetlii and Alexeevca), the commune Cealic (including Cealic, Cortenul Nou and Samurza), and the villages of Corten, Balabanu and Cazaclia. Our territory is characterized by numerous common features, such as the beautiful steppe landscape, which is part of the SouthMoldovan hill plain. It is crossed by wide valleys, the slopes being cut by numerous ravines. The LAG is bordered by the Linguta river in the east and by the Ialpugel river in the west.

Our relevant local activities started during the SARD LEADER awareness-raising campaign implemented by UNDP in targeted regions in the second half of 2016. The result was the creation of the first small working group across villages, and the delineation of our LEADER territory in December 2016. Following the bottom-up, territorial and partnership LEADER principles, with contribution of the SARD LEADER Local Expert Team (coaching, mentorship and guidelines have been provided), we formalized our LAG in September 2017, while statements on membership were signed by all members of our LAG in November 2017. We have 26 members (nine men and 17 women), including: 48% public administrative bodies and public institutions, 28% civil society, and 24% new and existing businesses.

To accord with the LEADER principles of integrated development, our LAG has prepared this five-year Strategic Action Plan, including economic, social, cultural and environmental actions, and the first two-year Implementation Plan. During the strategy-making procedure we participated in nine workshops, with participation of 26 LAG members and other local stakeholders on average, and we collected information about 80 local development action ideas and project ideas. With the aim of overcoming local challenges we have created our common mission statement, vision and

strategic objectives, and in harmony with them, we have prioritized the collected project ideas and prepared the first two-year Implementation Plan. Some of our members have participated in LEADER study tours to Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Lithuania, and Italy, and shared the lessons learned with us, generating new development ideas in our localities.

On 15 November 2017, our 26 LAG members signed the formal LAG Partnership Agreement, celebrating the start of a new phase: the implementation of the plans that we have prepared. During this one-year work, we have decided to act together to foster the improvement of the local living conditions, the territorial cohesion of our LAG area, and tourist attractiveness for sustainable and inclusive local economic growth. We want to promote socially oriented small local businesses and to utilize our unique local educational, scientific and entrepreneurial resources for business cooperation, and to motivate local citizens not to migrate, and to encourage them to come home

Within the process of elaboration of the Strategic Action Plan we have identified the following mid-term key strategic goals for our LAG territory:

– sustainable economic development
– better living standards in the LAG
– modernization and marketing of research and development results and culture

We believe that the Strategic Action Plan, with its three identified strategic goals, will deliver a sustainable programme over the next five years, to provide an increase in economic activity within the LAG territory. We really hope that by achieving these goals we will make the territory of our LAG a prosperous area in the South of Moldova – a centre for integrated innovative and economic development of rural areas, with highly developed infrastructure and jobs, and a high cultural and educational level.

Compliance of our Strategic Action Plan with the key development policy documents

Our Strategic Action Plan contributes to the achievement of rural and regional development goals in line with the objectives set out in national, regional and local strategies. The strategic goals of the document directly complement the priorities of: theMoldova-2020 Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy (in particular, the priorities for food sector modernization, sustainable management of natural resources and improvement of living standards in rural areas); the Small and Medium Business Development Strategy for 2012–2020 (towards supporting the development of small and medium businesses and human capital in the regions);as well as Tourism 2020 Development Strategy. The Strategic Action Plan is in line with the regional (ATU Gagauzia and South Development region) strategic frameworks that govern local development planning processes; this is primarily the regional development strategies for the two regions, sectoral regional programmes on tourism development, business support infrastructure, road infrastructure and public services (water supply, household solid waste management), as well as the local development strategies of all the localities covered by the LAG territory."

From: Bugeac Kilim SAP, Executive Summary, 2017

Guideline

LEADER/CLLD local implementation roadmap

To summarize what needs to be implemented, this is the LEADER/CLLD participatory local development 'recipe':

- Create the programme framework for implementation of LEADER/CLLD. (In Moldova national NGOs have worked on piloting LEADER/CLLD as facilitator organizations and it is planned by the national government to setup a national LEADER/CLLD programme. This is their responsibility.)
- Set up local development processes in target territories, with the contributions of national or regional facilitator organizations (e.g. the national LEADER network; an NGO consortium; or relevant national institutions).
- Create local partnerships, with assistance provided by community coaches.
- Assist the local process to define the chosen area.
- Assist the participatory development and approval of the LAG local rural development strategies and the generation/collection of local project ideas.
- Put in place local managing bodies.
- Approve two-year local Implementation Plans and the budget for financing.
- Let local actors make decisions on local projects and work on the implementation of the LAG strategy for the time of the programme period.

Main steps to implement a national LEADER/CLLD programme

Step 1 – Set up the national LEADER/CLLD programme documentation and team. The national programme document should set out the legal framework; the programme implementation strategy; the two-year Implementation Plan, including a clear timeframe; the budget; and institutional and human resource needs. The programming process should be participatory, involving the Moldovan LEADER Coordination Committee, established in 2017, and as many other representatives of stakeholders of the implementation as possible at each milestone of the creation and approval of the programme contents and documents. Before the implementation starts, it is important to implement training of trainers, with the participation of representatives of the potential facilitator organizations, experts and institutional staff members who will be involved in the programme implementation. The training should aim to create a common understanding of the LEADER/CLLD method and the national programme in detail; it should create a common language of the national implementers and build a cross-sector team. The programming process, the well-designed programme framework and the relevant human capacity are all needed to ensure an inclusive/participatory local implementation process and the sustainability of the results.

Expected output: prepared and approved programming documents and a trained national stakeholder and implementation team. As result of the participatory method, all relevant stakeholders will have a clear understanding of the programme contents and ownership will be created.

Step 2 – Implement local awareness-raising campaign. The local mobilization campaign should include a programme opening conference at national level and in each relevant region, and plenty of workshops and discussions, with the participation of different stakeholder groups. The aim should be to introduce the programme and to mobilize potential local partners. Information on the LEADER approach, the approved national programme document, and the criteria for establishing LAGs should be disseminated through the conferences and other meetings, and via a media campaign, including local media in the targeted regions.

The main output will be that the local stakeholders are informed and mobilized –those whose cooperation and interest forms the 'seed' of the potential LAG initiative will be identified. The awareness campaign at a regional level should also include the opportunity for local stakeholders to create preliminary territorial partnerships. For example, in the SARD programme, during the awareness-raising campaign, interested municipalities signed a preliminary agreement in the name of their villages on the delineation of their territorial partnerships (i.e. which village would form part of which LAG).

Step 3 – Supporting the setting up of formalized LEADER LAGs. Coaching, mentorship, and rural development expertise should be provided on the creation of the LEADER/CLLD local

partnerships. With facilitation of the community coaches, a voluntary LAG Working Group should be created territorially in each LAG initiative to identify common needs and goals, to mobilize more local stakeholders to join the LAG initiative and to make clear delineation of the LAG territory. The LAG Working Group members should represent the three stakeholder groups (local public bodies, local businesses and the local civil society and the communities of the LAG territory).

This step includes an important moment: signature of the LAG Territorial Partnership Agreement, and its official approval. (In SARD, this was approved by the SARD Board.) The result of this is the signed Partnership Agreement and the formally approved LAG (territory and members).

The criteria that the candidate LAG must meet are set out in the following two boxes.

Evaluation criteria for approval of the LEADER/CLLD local partnerships

This textbox is based on the EU LEADER criteria for formalization of the LEADER LAGs, adapted to the situation of the pilots in Moldova. It includes two parts: (1) criteria for the partnership formalization; (2) list of the necessary documents for submission of the LAG application.

Criteria for LEADER partnership formalization:

- One municipality cannot be part of more than one LAG and the territory of the LAG shall be cohesive.
- At least three municipalities can establish an LAG and the number of inhabitants covered by the municipalities shall be a minimum 10,000.
- Urban areas cannot be part of the LAG, but it is recommended to LAGs to cooperate on strategic issues with urban centres in their territory.
- The expected proportion of different stakeholders as members in the LAG is: 33.3% public organizations, 33.3% businesses, 33.3% civil society representatives.
- Proportion of different stakeholders on LAG board: at least 50% of the members + 1 person representing business and civil society sector, and 50% of the members -1 person representing local administration.
- It is important to identify the common cultural and/or economic and/or historical and/or environmental, etc. background behind the established territorial partnership as a backbone of the necessary territorial cohesion.
- It is important to give attractive names to the LAGs; these should be linked to their identity.
- Documentation submitted by the LAG on the formalized partnership must include the minutes of official decisions of each member on their interest in being a member of the LAG. This means that the local council of the municipalities, general assembly of the local NGO-s, business boards, etc., who are members of the given LAG, shall make a formal decision regarding their interest in LAG membership before the deadline for submission of the partnership documentation. Further information about the deadline and needed documents is provided below. LAG members must be local organizations/individuals. National, regional or international NGOs which have a local branch office or member organization in rural areas cannot be members of more than one LAG.

Documents that need to be submitted for approval of the LAG partnership

- Brief description of the given territorial partnership, its cohesion and the reason for being interested in working together: two to three pages.
- Brief introduction of each member of the formalized LAG partnership.
- Minutes of decision of the legal decision-making body of each member organization to join the given LAG partnership and the name, function and contact of the elected representative of the given member, who will have voting power in the LAG.
- LAG territories will be delineated by a decision of the relevant local councils. Local councils shall decide on joining a given LAG, and the mayors have to sign the LAG partnership document. The territory of those municipalities will be the territory of an LAG partnership; the municipalities' mayors will sign the given LAG partnership document, based on the decision of the given local councils. Minutes of relevant decisions of the local councils must be submitted.
- Individuals can become members by signing a letter of interest and the LAG partnership document. A signed letter of interest must be submitted.
- Non-registered organizations without legal body (e.g. youth club, women's club, sports club, etc.) can be members: their representatives must sign a letter of interest to nominate their representative, who will have voting power in the LAG, and will sign the LAG partnership document. Minutes of the decision-making meeting and the signed letter of interest must be submitted.

Step 4 – Generate local innovation by example. Living examples create clearer understanding. In any LEADER/CLLD programme an appropriate budget should be created to finance the participation of the Moldovan LAG initiatives in EU LAG cooperation projects.

Within the framework of the SARD programme, a training trip was organized to Italy, Romania, Bulgaria and Portugal, to study local rural development planning, projects and LAG organization, with the aim of adapting the lessons learned in the target territory in the future. All SARD LAG initiatives elected their representative to attend each training trip and prepared leaflets to introduce their LAG. After each study trip, the LAG representatives who had participated in them prepared a detailed report on the study tour, including recommendations for the potential adaptation of the lessons learned at the local level. These reports were introduced and discussed at the LAG Working Group meetings.

Step 5 – Agreeing on needs, five-year strategy, and two-year implementation plan. This step contains technical assistance that shall be provided within the programme frame to each LAG initiative on the participatory strategic planning process at the local level, and the creation of:

- the five-year participatory **Strategic Action Plan by each LAG**
- the two-year **Implementation (Action) Plan**
- a **project folder** of each LAG, containing a minimum of 50 identified or generated local project fiches, collected by the LAG.

Submission of the LAG local Strategic Action Plan (SAP) and two-year Implementation Plan, and its approval, is the second key criteria for financing LAG activities. The approval means that the LAG has completed the process and prepared the plans needed to start to work on implementation of the participatory strategy at the local level.

Notes to the strategic planning process

- Criteria for starting the participatory planning process include the voluntary creation of the LAG Strategic Working Group.
- The participatory planning process takes time –at least six months! Developing the LEADER strategy is not a task for consultants, it must be the result of the common work of the LAG members, to ensure their ownership.
- Local people are not development experts; it is important to use simple language and methods to make the process equally clear for each stakeholder.
- At least 10working meetings of the LAG Strategic Working Group are needed to prepare the strategy documents, as follows: (1) Preparing the LAG assessment is a kind of warming up process from the point of view of the group work. (2) Work on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involves identifying local values and development starting points. (3) Creating the LAG mission and vision is crucial; it is usually a long discussion, and this is the moment to build a common language and understanding of the working group members. (4) The name of the LAG is another topic requiring deep and key discussions. Most LAG initiatives cannot decide this on one meeting. (5) Identifying strategic objectives and priorities coming out of prior meetings is usually an easy topic. (6) A crossing point: LAGs collect project ideas from the beginning of the strategy process. These ideas shall be harmonized with the strategic objectives to identify the development priorities and their time-order and measures. See the brief description of the process in Annex 10. (7) A time-consuming and difficult piece of work is the creation of the LAG budget. (8) In designing the two-year Implementation Plan, including budget, concrete measures have to be decided. (9) Discussing the monitoring and communication plan. (10) A final look at the results. Prior to this last strategy meeting, the local development expert prepares and shares the draft strategy documentation with the Strategy Working Group members. After this last meeting the final draft must be shared with all LAG members for comments and contributions.
- If the method is clear and the moderators (coaches/experts) work well, participatory planning will be a fruitful and enjoyable, creative process. However, local stakeholders and voluntary strategic group members are not expected to prepare the necessary final strategy document; it is needed to employ a local development expert with specific skills, who shall (1) be the mentor of the given strategic working group; (2) conclude and document results of each working meeting and (3) prepare professional draft strategy documentation.
- It is needed to involve two experts/facilitators on each working meeting; one works as moderator, the other is the rapporteur. In many LAG initiatives working group members are interested to work as rapporteurs on the meetings.

In accordance with the LEADER principles of integrated and participatory development, SARD LAGs have designed their SAPs, which include economic, social, cultural and environmental actions. To prepare the LAG strategy and create the partnership, 10–12 working meetings were organized by each LAG in 2017. On the basis of the number of hours normally spent, and the number of participants, each LAG working group has invested around 1,000 working hours on discussing, learning, and planning local development process. This happened voluntarily. During the planning process, 500 local actions and projects were identified by the eight LAGs, with about six million EUR planned budget for a five-year period. After signing the Partnership Agreements in November 2017, each LAG Council, which is the assembly of the members, approved the LAG participatory strategy documents and submitted them for approval.

Step 6 – Supporting the setting up of the LAG management, and the translation of the strategy into the implementation process. Prior to Step 6, LAGs will have accomplished two important milestones. (1) They will have signed the LAG territorial Partnership Agreement and its contents will have been officially approved. (2) They will have submitted the LAG local SAP and two-year Implementation Plan, including budgets; both will have been approved. The result will be the signed LAG contract containing activities, timeframe, and budget available for the LAG activities in the given programming period. This also includes the self-contribution needs. The approved budget contains the management costs, usually a maximum 20% of the whole budget. The rest of the approved fund is for local projects, which will be paid by the payment agency directly to the project owner, as a contribution to project implementation submitted to and approved by the LAG.

Establishing the LAG Management Team represents an important moment in the institutionalization of the LAG: it represents the establishment of a local development agency, the LAG office, covering the given LAG territory with its activities. Its unique value is to be close to the people.

Step 7 – Funding and supporting the implementing and monitoring of LAG rural development projects. This step is when project implementation aims to realize the LAG strategic objectives. LAGs' strategies are implemented through locally selected and implemented projects, the contents of which promote the strategic goals, priorities, and measures of the LAG strategy. The tool that is used to select projects is the LAG-announced local calls for proposals, the contents of which are based on the measures included in the strategy and the two-year Implementation Plan. On the basis of the approved local strategy, Implementation Plan and budget, LAGs announce their local call for proposals, addressing local partners, including private persons, local business, civil society, and public organizations. LAGs evaluate the submitted local project proposals and select the local projects for implementation. In European LEADER programmes, the required self-contribution of businesses is a minimum of 50% of the project budget; CSOs and public institutions are requested to contribute with 0–30%, depending on the project. LAG management plays a key role in project administration, in preparation of the project selection, in providing technical assistance to implementation and in monitoring of the project implementation results.

Step 8 – Networking and scaling up of results. The relevant task for facilitator organizations and the managing agency is to create the necessary conditions, including financial conditions, for: (1) to setting up LAGs' horizontal and vertical networking; (2) supporting the creation and functioning of the national LEADER network in Moldova; (3) Linking the Moldovan LEADER network to international rural networks (ELARD, ENRD, PREPARE, Black Sea Initiative, European Rural Parliament, etc.).

In SARD there were three national conferences organized with the aim of supporting LAG networking, through international travelling trainings, Moldovan LAGs have made the first steps to link themselves to other national and some international LEADER networks. SARD supported exchange visits between LAGs and the national LEADER network in Moldova.

Summary of crucial timeframes

The SARD case

I. Supporting LAGs in setting up a local working group to prepare five-year LAG Strategic Action Plan (SAP), and Implementation Plan for the first two years (months 3–9).

II. Support the submission and approval of the LAG SAPs and two-year Implementation Plans (months 9–10).

III. Supporting LAGs in establishing their management (months 11–12). Management is financed from month13 onwards.

IV. Local project identification starts in month 1 (collection of project ideas). The first local call for projects is announced in month 14.

V. Decision on locally financed projects (months 15–20).

VI. Local implementation of the locally selected pilot local projects; reporting (month 16 onwards).

VII. Local mobilization campaign (months1–5); selection of community coaches and local experts; coachesgo tolocal communities (month 2).

VIII. Supporting LAGs in creation of the formal LAG Partnerships (months 1–6).

IX. Supporting LAGs in delineation of the LAG territories (month 1); a formal agreement signed by mayors on the delineation (in month 3).

X. Supporting LAGs in submission and approval of the LAG formalization proposal (months 6–8).

Case studies

SARD LEADER implementation history in a nutshell

2016

Local implementation of the SARD LEADER initiative started with an awareness-raising campaign aimed at mobilizing local partners in targeted regions. The result was the creation of eight local rural development partnerships, covering the greater part of the rural areas of ATU Gagauzia, Taraclia and villages in neighboring districts. Following the bottom-up, territorial and partnership principles, the eight local initiatives formalized their LAGs, which were the first flagships in Moldova. The eight LAG territories cover 44 rural communities. Activities of each LAG cover a bottom-up selected group of rural municipalities with populations of between 11,000 and 34,500. The number of LAG members is about 30 on average, with a balance across each type of stakeholder group, being represented by around 30% each. See the introduction to the SARD LAGs at the www.leadermoldova.eu website.

2017

To accord with the principle of integrated development, SARD LAGs designed their SAPs, including economic, social, cultural and environmental actions and projects. Each LAG generated and/or identified 80–150 local project owners and projects. The prepared SAPs are for five years, including the Implementation Plan for the first two years. In accordance with the LEADER 'bottom-up' and 'integrated development' principles, LAG SAPs were designed by the local stakeholders and include economic, social, cultural and environmental actions. The eight Partnership Agreements were signed by all founding members and the planning process was finalized in November 2017.

2018

LAG management teams and LAG offices were set up in each SARD LAG. At the beginning of the year, local project design, submission and implementation started, financed by the EU through SARD and other channels.

In 2018 about 110 local LEADER projects have been carried out in ATU Gagauzia, Taraclia and in neighboring communities within the framework of the SARD LEADER/CLLD initiative. Some of the projects which the eight SARD LAGs have decided to implement include: a regional festival of local carpets, an enterprise for producing condiments and medical plants, cultivation of strawberries in greenhouses, construction of a rural market, equipping of some playgrounds, the establishment of a touristic boarding house with national characteristics, health remedies involving bees and opening local restaurants.

The 110 local projects promote economic, social and environmental development and were selected under a locally announced grants competition. To implement them, every LAG benefits from EU assistance through SARD in the amount of about USD 35,000. SARD's requirement was that LAGs contribute an additional 20% to this budget, in cash or in kind, but most LAGs decided to provide more self-contribution to the project budgets, aiming to increase the number of projects they can finance from the given fund. Individuals, municipalities, local public institutions, enterprises, and NGOs of the given LAG territory are eligible for non-reimbursable financing of up to USD 4,000.

The LAG calls for projects were based on development measures included in the LAG's yearly plan to implement the LAG strategy. Administration of the local applications is the responsibility of the LAG offices. Project selection was made by LAGs (selection committees) composed of representatives of mayoralties, local businesses, and civil society. The selected projects have been approved by SARD.

LAG project examples

how the innovative approach and a small amount of funding can create real change

A milk collection point

"Thanks to SARD LEADER we have learned the value of cooperation and started to cooperate in our businesses," says Mr. Sergiu Sargheliu, a young and ambitious businessman – a real change-maker –from Cișmichioi, located in Chismeaua Sudului LAG.

Sergiu describes his project, which was selected by his LAG for financing using the SARD funding, as follows: "There is no milk collection point in the territory of our LAG, but we need it. My company, AGRO-SARIGUL SRL, works in cheese production and thus we constantly need fresh milk. On the other side, milk producers in the LAG territory also need this collection point to ensure the quality of the milk that they want to sell. As milk is a perishable product, it requires primary cooling, as well as appropriate conditions for storing finished products." To solve the problem, Sergiu's project involves purchasing refrigeration equipment and putting in place a milk collection point to be used by milk producers from three LAG villages: Cișmichioi, Etuilia and Alexandru Ion Cuza.

The Chismeaua Suduliu LAG Council agreed at the council meeting to finance the milk collection point project. The implementation of this project will help Sergiu's own business but will also help to stimulate the interest of local farmers in continuing dairy activities, because of the opportunity to sell quality milk. SARD contributes with 80% of the necessary funding, while AGRO-SARIGUL SRL invests a further 20% into the project.

Sergiu concludes: "So, we began to take the responsibility for providing and supporting the further development of cheese production in the villages of our LAG. It is our plan to increase the volume and variety of locally produced organic dairy products in the future."

LAG network of vegetable producers in Congaz

Piotr Radcov is an informal leader amongst his peers. As soon as he comes up with a new idea, others copy it. Since he built his greenhouse, one of the few in Congaz, he has struggled with various improvised heating solutions to keep it warm during the cold season. Until this year he could not afford to buy a special boiler. Now he has one, thanks to the SARD LEADER grant of 50,000 Moldovan leu (MDL).

Piotr is proud of his experience and has encouraged other local entrepreneurs to submit applications to their LAG and invest in new equipment. "Instead of applying for a second fund to my business, I convinced another vegetable producer in our village to apply. It will help my business, if we can develop our products and market together with some other local vegetable producers." Piotr Radcov received European support as an active member of the Local Action Group 'ECO Düz Ialpugel', to which the Congaz region belongs, along with other five neighboring communities.

Local market in Musaitu village and the 'Pearl of the South'

Every Thursday, people of Musaitu village in Taraclia district, populated mostly by Bulgarians, have a new meeting point, right in the heart of their small community – the recently inaugurated agricultural market. Alexandru Tatu is a senior citizen and a regular trader at the local market. He notes that villagers use to socialize only on Memorial Day, at the cemetery, once a year. Since the market was built, they socialize weekly at the market: "I make brooms and weave baskets from osier cans and sell them. I can see now people coming with more confidence, as the new setup encourages buyers to stay longer and purchase more". Alexandru's neighbor at the market sells milk, cheese and cream and seems content: "The

European Union has finally arrived at our home," she says.

The mayor of Musaitu admits that they would not have managed to build and arrange the local market without the EU's support through SARD LEADER. She thinks that the greatest value of the programme has been to bring people closer under one umbrella, the Local Action Group. Musaitu joined efforts with other 19 neighboring rural communities to form the Zhemchuzhina Yuga LAG (translated as the 'Pearl of the South'). "Our LAG is so diverse and concentrated, as we cover many ethnicities within just 14,000 inhabitants," notes Ruslan Liteanschi, one of the leaders of the LAG. The LAG members visited all of the LAG communities and discussed with people from all walks of life. Regardless of the language spoken, they realized that they share the same burdens and concerns and they could team up to find a common solution. "In this thick folder we have gathered 140 dreams, translated into project ideas of all kinds, from infrastructure to culture," says Ruslan Liteanschi.

During discussions, people agreed that all roads lead to Musaitu, as it is in the centre of the LAG. So, everybody agreed that one of the first projects to be implemented would the local market. Each LAG project, including the Musaitu market, benefited from co-financing from the SARD programme, in the amount of approx. 24,000 EUR. MDL 104,500 was allocated for the construction and arrangement of the local market. The funds were used for the procurement of building materials, the works being carried out by villagers on a voluntary basis. The next step will be to organize market days also on week-ends. The municipality has other ambitious plans: to arrange parking places, to install garbage containers and to extend the water pipe to the market site.

The journey of Pearl of the South LAG is just beginning, as mentioned by the local leader, Ruslan Liteanschi:

"We were helped to make the first steps, and soon we will be ready to run our first marathon. We realized that only together are we strong enough to improve our livelihoods and enjoy a better life. We used to be only neighbors, now we are friends with the other members of the LAG. We consult and help each other."

Annexes

Table of annexes in relevant to the implementation milestones

Milestones		Page number	Relevant annex
STEPS 3 and 4 Supporting LAGs in setting up of formalized LEADER LAGs and generating innovation by example	ACT 4 Preparing relevant database (partner map and territorial data)	29	Annex 1 – SARD LEADER village-level assessment template
	ACT 5 Setting up the necessary external facilitation system (facilitator's Implementation Plan and team)	32	Annex 2 – Facilitator organization's Implementation Plan for the local implementation team (coaches and local development strategy experts)
	ACT 6 Local team's fact-finding missions and reports	38	Annex 3 – Fact-finding mission guideline
	ACT 10 Supporting the local initiator group in LAG formalization and submission of the documentation for approval	40	Annex 4 – LAG Partnership Agreement template
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STEP 5 Agreeing on needs, five-year strategy, and two-year Implementation Plan	ACT 11 Setting up conditions for LAG planning (guidelines, training, working groups, etc.)	47	Annex 6 – LAG Strategic Action Plan and the two-year Implementation Plan outline
	ACT 12 Supporting LAGs in generation, identification, and collection of local development project ideas	50	Annex 7 – LAG project fiche template
	ACT 13 Supporting LAGs in preparing participatory-based territorial assessment	52	Annex 8 – LAG territorial assessment and SWOT module
	ACT 14 Supporting LAGs in defining LAGs' mission, vision, name, and strategic directions	58	Annex 9 – LAG mission, vision, and strategic objectives– examples (SARD LEADER)
	ACT 15 Supporting LAGs in defining LAG priorities and measures	64	Annex 10 – Guidelines for specific objective and priority selection of the LAGs
	ACT 17 Supporting LAGs in submission of SAP and two-year Implementation Plan for approval	65 and 71	Annex 11 – Call for proposals for LAG strategy submission and Annex 12 – Evaluation template
STEP 6 Supporting the setting up of the LAG management, and the translation of the strategy into the implementation process	ACT 19 Supporting LAGs in identifying projects (in collecting project ideas, in announcement of local calls, in selection and approval of the selected projects)	73 and 78	13 – LAG local call for proposal template and 14 –LAG local project evaluation template
STEP 7 Funding, implementing, and monitoring rural development projects	ACT 20 Supporting LAGs in implementation of local rural development projects after approval	80	15 – LAG project description template
	ACT 21 Assisting the monitoring and evaluation procedure of the LAG activities; monitoring of the LAG activities	81 and 83	16 – LAG project report template 17 – LAG management report template
Gantt diagram for setting up LEADER implementation at the local level		84	SARD LEADER case

Annex 1

Village-level assessment template for LEADER/CLLD

ANALYTICAL FIELDS	INDICATORS	TYPE	COMMENTS
AREA AND POPULATION			
– Geographical characteristics/ topographical profile – Development opportunities implied by geographical position – Distance to main development centers (cities, municipalities)	# of territorial administrative units	Core	Overall advantages based on geographical and topographical characteristics
	Geographical position	Core	
	Surface, km2/ha	Optional	
	Total surface as % of of total surface of country	Core	
	Density, inhabitants/km^2	Core	
	Distance to main development centres, km		
– General demographic trends and characteristics – Structure of population by gender and age – Ethnic composition – Migration trends	Population, thousands	Core	The area's resident population and its profile Relevant differences Trends
	Population by age, %	Core	
	Population by gender/sex, %	Core	
	Natural population growth	Optional	
	Demographic dividend (sarcinademografica/ coeficientulimbatrinirii)	Optional	
	Population by level of education,%	Optional	
	Ethnic structure/composition, thousands/%	Core	
	Migration trends (internal/external), thousands/%	Core	
– Education	Number of schools –primary and secondary	Optional	
	Pupils and students by level of education, number	Core	
	Teaching staff – number by level of education	Core	
	Lifelong learning (# of trainings and trained population)	Optional	
– Health	Physicians, number	Core	
	Total healthcare staff, number	Optional	

ANALYTICAL FIELDS	INDICATORS	TYPE	COMMENTS
ENVIRONMENT AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT			
– Climate – Main natural resources – Territorial development – Environmental/ basic infrastructure	Climate	Core	Are the facilities and basic infrastructure in line with the local economy's needs?
	Mineral resources, landscape, agricultural areas, quality of soil etc.	Core	
	Type of micro-region (remote, agriculture vs industrial, touristic etc.)	Optional	
	Land structure, ha: *Surface of the locality* *Area of agricultural land* *Area of roads* *Forest* *Water* Etc.	Core	
	Protected areas, % of total area	Core	
	Population connected to public water supply, %	Core	
	Population connected to public sewerage system, %	Core	
	Population covered by organized waste collection and disposal, %	Core	
– Energy and energy efficiency	Households supplied with natural gas, %	Core	
	Biomass heating system	Optional	
HUMAN RESOURCES ANDECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
– Structure of active population – Qualification profile	Economically active population, number	Optional	The number and distribution of jobs in the area
	Employment rate 15–64, by gender	Core	
	Unemployment rate	Core	
	Employees per economic sector	Core	
	Employed population by level of education	Core	
	Unemployed population by level of education	Core	
– Public budget	Total revenues, total value	Proxy	
	Share of local revenues, %	Proxy	

ANALYTICAL FIELDS	INDICATORS	TYPE	COMMENTS
HUMAN RESOURCES ANDECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
– Structure of enterprises	Structure of enterprises by sector, # and %	Core	Opportunities for logistics and services. Market accessibility. Business environment. Tourism potential in the LAG. Opportunities for the development of the rural areas
	Structure of enterprises by size	Core	
– Agriculture	Agricultural area, % of total area	Core	
	Utilized agricultural area by type (areas with different crops), %	Core	
	The structure of farms/enterprises by size, number and %	Core	
	Animals population (livestock number)	Core	
– Road network	The length of the road networks, national/ local, km	Core	
	Share of roads in good condition, %	Core	
	The length of railway network, km	Core	
– Communication infrastructure	Telephone subscribers, number	Optional	
	Mobile phone subscribers	Optional	
	Internet access of households	Core	
– Tourism	Accommodation capacity (beds) by type of accommodation	Core	
	Nature resorts, cultural, sport and leisure facilities, special tourist offers (e.g. rural-tourism)	Optional	
– Service infrastructure (public transport)	Frequency of public transport	Core	
	Average number of passengers	Optional	
SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
– Community capacity building	Partnership, networking, learning activities etc.		

Annex 2

Implementation guidelines for the facilitator organization and the local implementation team

The SARD case of local facilitation activities

This document sets out the implementation stages, the process, and a list of tasks and deliverables which have been responsibilities of the facilitator organization working with potential local LAG initiatives. It provides guidelines for NGOs or the relevant governmental bodies to make implementation of the LEADER approach possible in the Republic of Moldova. The example comes from the implementation of the SARD LEADER initiative.

Stage 1 – Community mobilization

Task 1. Team formation, train the coaches seminar, assessments of coaches

Within this task:

- Implement a three-day training of trainers programme for potential local implementation team members and other stakeholders with the UNDP/SARD European expert for rural development.
- Establish and consolidate the SARD LEADER local implementation team (two local development experts, five coaches).

Deliverables:

- SARD LEADER local implementation team's potential members are trained and tested at three-day' train-the-trainers' seminar conducted by UNDP / SARD LEADER international consultant. The training is followed by an assessment of the potential coaches and development experts and the selection of the team members.
- Consolidated SARD LEADER local implementation team (two local development experts, four full-time coach positions) is formed and endorsed by SARD.

Timing in SARD Programme: January–February 2017

Task 2. LAGs' further mobilisation – fact finding missions of the local team members, building new local partnerships and strengthening LAG initiatives

Criteria for implementation of the task:

- Each LAG is facilitated by one community coach.
- **Each local development expert** takes care of **four LAGs.**
- Detailed workplan for the coaches and experts for certain steps is developed during regular (every one to two months) **local implementation team meetings** with UNDP / SARD LEADER international consultant.

– Mobilization: the local implementation team shall increase the interest shown by and the participation of the local communities in the LEADER process to ensure the **ownership of the LEADER initiative at the local level.**

Within this task:

– **Coaches and local experts visit the potential LAG areas** – verification and sensitizing field visits.
– Adjust – if necessary –LAGs' **membership structure** and boundaries.
– Organize **8 x 1 SARD LEADER local working meeting** with identified local actors to inform them about the process as well as to identify local partners.
– Establish and consolidate **a network of LAG contact persons.**

Deliverables:

– **Fact finding missions** of the coaches and experts in all the localities conducted, reports prepared.
– 8 x 1 **SARD LEADER local working meetings** with the identified local actors organized.
– The **network of LEADER contact points** in target area consolidated.
– **Map of local partners** further developed.

Timing in SARD Programme: February–April 2017.

The aim of the fact finding missions is the sensitization of the communities as well as integration of the team members into the territory and the target communities.

Following the missions, the coaches organize **SARD LEADER local working meetings** (one in each LAG).

The aim of the meetings is to introduce the coaches and experts and to work on formalization of the local partnerships, which includes: (i) introducing the local implementation team and the participants; (ii) discussion of working group's expectations; (iii) information session about planned activities – within framework of SARD LEADER implementation at the local level; (iv) presentation of SARD LEADER partnership criteria; (v) identification of the potential new local partners.

During the meetings the **LEADER contact points** must be confirmed, to ensure the proper communication between the coaches and local experts, and the local stakeholders.

Task 3. Setting up conditions for LAG planning and preparing territorial assessment

Within this task:

– Organise 8 x 3 working meetings – at least –in each LAG territory:
– **On territorial values and development resources** – One meeting in each LAG for representatives of each locality.
– The session covers the following topics: (i) map of local resources; (ii) collection of project ideas. Sessions must be held by coaches. Set of consultation meetings – if necessary – in the localities will be organized. Coaches are involved in the process of developing maps of local resources – working group meetings, as well as partners map.
– **On sustainable local development** challenges and opportunities – one meeting in each LAG for representatives of each locality.
– The session must be held by local development experts. At the meeting the map of local actors as well as the map of local resources will be presented for the whole LAG territory – as result of the previous meeting. During the session SWOT analysis must be developed.
– **Create permanent local working groups for the planning process**: Local public authority, local business and civil society representatives. One meeting in each LAG for representatives of each locality.
– **Prepare final territorial assessment with expert contribution**.

Deliverables:

- Local resources identified by community involvement
- Participatory SWOT analysis prepared
- Drivers of LAGs' development identified and involved in the process
- Local working groups created
- LAGs' territorial assessments prepared

Timing in SARD Programme: April–July 2017.

Task 4. Defining LAGs' mission, vision and name, as well as strategic directions; collecting project ideas

Within this task:

Organize 8 x 2working meetings – at least – in each LAG territory:

- **On mission, vision and LAG name** – One working group meeting at each LAG for representatives of each locality.
- The idea of the session is to develop the name of the LAG and the origin of the LAG name, as well as to present the map of local resources and needs developed based on the reports provided by the localities.
- **On collecting project ideas** – One open day at each locality and one mystery tour day at each LAG, to meet with local stakeholders.
- **On preparing the LAG introductory document.**

Deliverables:

- Set of working sessions on mission, vision and LAG name with local stakeholders implemented.
- Drivers of LAGs' development identified and supported: involved in the process of programming the facilitation process (round-table discussions).
- Local stakeholders (LPAs, local business representatives, civil society members) mapped and involved.
- LAGs' identity consolidated – including: mission, vision, name and symbol.
- Project ideas collected.
- Introductory document for all LAGs prepared.

Timing in SARD Programme: May–August 2017.

STAGE 2 – MAKING THE LAGS FUNCTIONAL

Task 5. LAG formalization

Within this task:

- **Assist** in the process of formalization of LAGs.

Deliverables:

- Necessary documentation for LAGs' formalization developed and approved by SARD.

Timing in SARD Programme: Till August 2017.

This task has to be done in line with guidance provided by SARD.

In each LAG territory **an information session** describing the process of LAG formalization is organized. The sessions are organized in cooperation with LAG drivers.

Task 6. Defining LAG priorities and measures

Within this task:

- Organise 8 x 1 **open discussions** – if necessary more than one– within each LAG to identify development priorities in synergy with the assessment and the collected project ideas.
- Organise 8 x 1 **round-table discussions for LAG representatives** to share and introduce the process of elaboration of the SAP.

Deliverables:

- Feasibility and sustainability of different development directions and potential impact and beneficiaries in each LAG identified.
- Priorities for local rural development identified by each LAG.

Timing in SARD Programme: July–mid-October 2017.

During the sessions the participants elaborate the list of **strategic objectives**, **measures** and **development actions**, which will be presented to local stakeholders in all the communities.

It is necessary to organize two to three informational meetings in each LAG. The scope of the informational sessions is to discuss with all LAG stakeholders the priorities for the local rural development.

Task 7. Defining and approval of SAP – including two-year Implementation Plan

Within this task:

- Provide support to development of the LAGs' **SAPs**, including project portfolio (at least 50 per LAG).
- Provide support for defining **LAGs two-year Implementation Plan**.
- Assist in the process of **approval of the SAPs and Implementation Plans**.

Deliverables:

- 8 x LAG SAPs developed.
- 8 x LAG Implementation Plans developed.
- Elaborated strategic documents approved by SARD and LAGs.

Timing in SARD Programme:

- July–November 2017;
- Approval of the LAG SAPs by end of November 2017.

The SAPs must be verified and approved by SARD and developed based on the methodology provided by SARD. The SAPs must cover the following topics: (i) **LAG context description**: LAG (the members) and the way LAG was created; local values; and characteristics of the LAG area, including: description of the territory, population, different local actors and groups important for local development, LAG territory, culture, tradition; (ii) **socio-economic analysis**, including: **local resources and needs** regarding

environment, economy, local society, physical and social infrastructure and the territorial organization capacity; (iii) description of the values (geographical, historical, agricultural, cultural, economic, environmental, etc. similarities of the joint villages) behind the **LAG's territorial cohesion**; (iv) **SWOT** analysis of LAG; (v) **vision** and **principles**; (vi)**mission, objectives**, **measures** and development **actions**; (vii) **Implementation Plan** for two years; (viii) **communication plan;** (ix) **project portfolio** (at least 50 fishes for projects).

Task 8. Supporting LAGs in identifying projects

Within this task:

- Organize **3 x8 x one-day trainings for each LAG on project writing**.
- Identify, help the design of and support at least three **project proposals** for each LAG.

Deliverables:

- Set of trainings for LAGs on project design and implementation.
- Set of projects (three to four projects per LAG, depending on the size) submitted to SARD for further financing.

Timing in SARD Programme:

- September–November 2017.
- And till September 2018 within Task 10: Facilitate development of additional projects and provide support to the implementation.

Comment: *The workshops must be organized in cooperation with LAG management for all the LAG members. The participants learn about the methodology of project generation and writing, and about issues related to the project management. The participants learn and exercise: (i) project design, (ii) project cycle management; and (iii) developing project contents; as well as (iv) the project budget. The training is followed by the information session on potential funding sources*.

STAGE 3 – ASSISTANCE IN IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Task 9. Setting up and assistance for LAGs management and implementation of the SARD-financed projects

Within this task:

- Assist in setting up LAG **managing body.**
- Facilitate the work of the LAG managers and assist in **project implementation** and reporting provided.
- **Coaching provided to LAGs operational** activities.

Deliverables:

- Eight LAG management teams setup.

– Eight functional LAGs.
– Assistance to the LAGs' project implementation provided.

Timing in SARD Programme: December 2017–September 2018.

Task 10. Facilitate non-SARD projects development and provide support to the implementation

Within this task:

– Help to submit projects for sources of financing other than SARD.
– Offer help in implementation process.

Deliverables:

– Additional project proposals submitted for sources of financing other than SARD – minimum of three projects per each LAG.

Timing in SARD Programme: December 2017–September 2018.

Task 11. Regular and final report

Within this task the local implementation team members do the following:

– Participate in regular working meetings (each month) of the SARD leader local implementation team facilitated by UNDP / SARD LEADER international consultant.
– Provide SARD/UNDP with regular reports – based on schedule of working meetings – on the previous activities implemented before the working meeting, as well as detailed workplan for the next period of implementation (up to three months).
– Develop final report.

Deliverables:

– Regular reports and workplans.
– Review of the workplan in each month; report on the methodological changes if it is needed in every third month.
– Final report prepared.

Annex 3

Guidelines (for community coaches) for preparing the fact-finding mission (FFM) reports

1. Name of the coach:

2. Number of SARD LEADER pre-LAGs where you implemented the FFM:

3. Names of villages you visited:

4. How long you spent in each village, on average:

5. Timeframe of the FFM implementation (when and how many days in total you spent with the FFMs) in the given LAG territory:

6. What is your general impression* about the LAG territory in relation to:

   – Local economic potential
   – Local human capacity
   – Local environment
   – Local infrastructure
   – Local organizational, institutional capacity

   Give examples from the villages, e.g., the natural beauty of the forest in x village offers a valuable development potential, etc. (In total, a maximum of 5,000 characters.)

7. What are the characteristics, and what are the values or specialties of these villages?

   (Max. 500 characters)

8. What is the common ground for territorial cooperation of the given villages?

   (Max. 500 characters)

9. Who did you meet and have at least a 10-minute discussion with? (Do not give names, but rather position and/or stakeholder category – like mayor, three local authority representatives, five farmers, etc.)

10. Please summarize the content of the most interesting discussions:

    (Max. 1,000 characters)

* Please do not go into statistic data, just give a general overview, and a description of the situation of the territory.

11. Did you introduce LEADER to any local person?

– If yes, how many persons?

– If yes, what was their reaction?

(Max. 500 characters)

12. Please ***imagine*** what the three main local development directions of the territory could be, based on the FFM:

(Max. 1000 characters)

13. What are the available local resources for the realization of these development directions?

(Max. 1,000 characters)

14. What are the main challenges to being able to develop these villages?

(Max. 500 characters)

15. Did you identify any potential future partner during your FFM (besides those who have already been included the SARD Partner Map)? If yes, who are they? (Do not give names, but rather position and/or stakeholder category –like two interested farmers in x village, a women's club in z village, etc.)

16. Did you identify potential future project owners during your FFM? If yes, who are they and what kind of project ideas do they have? (Do not give names, but rather position and/or stakeholder category – like a farmer wants to establish a zoo on his farm in x village; two interested women want to establish special Gagauzian food manufacture in z village, etc.)

(Max. 1,000 characters)

17. Have you filled the SARD LEADER partner map with new names and data? If yes, how many new potential partners did you find village by village during you FFM?

18. Please evaluate your feeling regarding being able to work with the SARD LEADER's aims in the given villages (zero means no chance, 10 means that it is 100% sure):

19. Please attach the most interesting photos you took during the FFM. Please describe here the photos you attached.

20. Did you find any interesting, specific information, document, link, etc. related to the given villages, territory? Please share it with us here.

Annex 4

Template for LAG Territorial Partnership Agreement

(WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF THE SARD LEADER IMPLEMENTATION)

LAG TERRITORIAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

On the creation of Local Action Group (LAG)

_____ (name)

concluded at _____ (date, place)

The present Partnership Agreement is concluded among the following **members**:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The signatories of this Statement, representing civil society, local public administration authorities and business representatives, named above, share similar missions and wish to cooperate in areas of mutual concern to enhance the effectiveness of development efforts and to improve local inhabitants' quality of life by implementation of the European Union (EU) LEADER approach at the territorial level, with initial facilitation provided by the Support to Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) programme.

The purpose of this Agreement is to establish the territorial framework for cooperation between the Parties in areas of common interest – in particular, the socio-economic development of the delineated rural territory.

The signatories declare that the territorial partnership has been established meeting the **criteria of the LEADER partnership formalization, provided by the SARD Programme.**

The signatories have agreed that the local LEADER area established by the parties cuts across local authority boundaries between the following administrative-territorial units: ….

municipality names with the corresponding localities included in their administrative territory.

Purpose

The purpose of this Partnership Agreement between civil society, business and local public-sector representatives is to formalize the creation of LAG _____ (name).

Duration

This Partnership Agreement is concluded for an indefinite period of time.

Objective

The main objective of LAG _____ (name) is to contribute to the local economic and social development in the settlements which are part of the LAG _____ (name) using the methods and tools available under the current and future local development support programmes offered by the SARD Programme, the Moldovan Government, the EU and other development partners.

Mission

The mission of LAG _____ (name) is to use all legal means possible to attain high standards of life for the citizens living in the territory of the LAG, by promoting entrepreneurship; increasing the visibility of the settlements within the LAG; valuing local traditions, customs and geographical attractiveness; and increasing social inclusion and involvement (to be further completed in each particular case).

Function

The LAG _____ (name) will promote its mission via the participatory development, approval and implementation of the local rural development plan, acting for the territory and society of the LAG, and will take actions to bring about its implementation that provide equal opportunities to all members of the local society to take part and benefit from it.

Partnership Council

Within 60 days (or other period) from the conclusion of this Partnership Agreement, the members of LAG _____ (name) will convene the first session of the Partnership Council.

The Partnership Council shall have the following functions:

a) Approves the detailed rules of procedures of the LAG, the Board, the Selection Committee and the Audit Council;

b) Elects from among the members of the LAG, for a mandate of two years, the members of the:

   a. LAG Board

   b. Selection Committee

   c. Audit Council

c) Selects among the members of the LAG an accountable body responsible for the administrative and financial relations of the LAG with the managing and financing institutions; and

d) Approves the LAG's Strategic Action Plan, the membership fees and the financing strategy of the LAG.

LAG Board

The Board of the LAG comprises six to nine persons, elected by and representing the three different sectors from which the LAG members come. All three stakeholder groups of the LAG members, the civil society, business and local public-sector representatives elect two or three Board members representing their sector in the LAG Board. The Chairperson of the Board is one of the mayors, who is elected by and represents the relevant local authorities. The groups of elected representatives of the relevant villages include at least one representative of the local public institutions.

Selection Committee

The Selection Committee has at least 50%+1 vote represented by the civil society and business representatives, and the rest represent the local public sector from the LAG. The LAG Chairman is a member of the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee comprises five to nine persons.

The Selection Committee is responsible for the selection of the project proposals, which may be financed by the public resources available for rural development or for other related purposes.

After each call for proposals, managed by the accountable body, the Selection Committee assesses and selects the project proposals from local partners to implement the scope and objectives of the local development plan. The selection and evaluation criteria are set at the stage of publication of the calls for proposals.

The members of the Selection Committee, which represent the parties who have submitted applications, as result of the calls for proposals, do not participate in the decision-making process. The Selection Committee can decide on each application only if at least 50% of cast votes originate from the civil society and business representatives.

The decisions taken by the Selection Committee are signed by the Chairman of the Selection Committee. Minutes of each Selection Committee session is taken and signed by the Chairman and the secretary of the meeting.

Audit Council

The activities of LAG _____ (name) are monitored by the Audit Council, which comprises not less than three and not more than five members.

The Audit Council exercises control over how the accountable body and the Selection Council have used the resources of the LAG.

The audit of the use of funds takes place at least once a year, in accordance with the detailed rules of procedure approved by the Partnership Council.

The accountable body

The accountable body is appointed by the Partnership Council to manage the administrative and financial relations of the LAG with the managing and financial authorities for a mandate of three years, which is renewable.

The accountable body has the following main competences:

a) Keeps the secretariat of the Partnership Council, Selection Committee and Audit Council.

b) Keeps records of the calls for proposals and the selection results.

c) Promotes the selected projects for financing, including presentation to the managing and financing authority of necessary justifications with respect to their selection.

d) Maintains close contact with the managing and financing authorities.

e) Provides information on other open applications from other financing sources to the members of the LAG.

f) Receives applications from new members of the LAG.

g) Involves experts at the request of the Partnership Council, Selection Committee or Audit Council during the enforcement of their respective duties.

h) Carries out other tasks related to the promotion of the LAG agenda, including the implementation of the local development plan.

Amendments to the Partnership Agreement

Any amendments can be made to the Partnership Agreement as an annex to the present one, signed by all members of the Partnership Agreement, including the members of the LAG who have joined the LAG at a later stage.

No amendments to the present Partnership Agreement can be made to eliminate the main objective and purpose of the creation of the LAG, with respect to the decision-making rule of at least 50% representation of civil society and private business representatives and of at most 50% representation of local public authorities in the working bodies of the LAG (the Partnership Council and Selection Committee), and no amendments can be made to the requirement of the exclusion of conflicts of interest in the selection of projects by the Selection Committee.

The terms and conditions of the present expression of will, which is constituted in the present Statement, are known and accepted by all partners.

Place and date of the signature

On behalf of …. 1-2-3-4

Name

.....

Signature

Annex 5

LAGs' Mode of Operation template

1 (Name of the given Local Action Group (LAG) **undertakes to follow the partnership rules included in the LAG Partnership Agreement document.**

2 This Mode of Operation is the supplementary annex of the signed LAG (Name of the LAG) **Partnership Agreement document.**

3 Operational rules of the LAG Council

The LAG Council is the main decision-making body of the LAG. The LAG Council strives for consensus in its decision making. If no consensus is reached, the LAG Council decides by simple majority.

3.1 In accordance with the relevant paragraph of the Partnership Agreement, the LAG Council is responsible for approval of the prepared Strategic Action Plan at the beginning of each planning cycle (five to seven years) of the LAG and after any modification of the LAG plans. The LAG strategy includes, at least, the following:

- mission statement, vision, strategic objectives and priorities of the LAG;
- identified measures and project ideas in relation to the development priorities;
- the indicative financial plan; and
- relevant Implementation Plans of the LAG (one-year or two-year plans, different action plans, etc.)

3.2 The LAG Council approves the strategy-related workplans, including the management plan and budget, and narrative and financial reports of the LAG. The reports shall be prepared by the management team every half year.

3.3 Additionally, the LAG Council approves the following documents at the beginning of each programming cycle and after any modification of the plans:

3.3.1 LAG management plan

This plan contains the following elements (as a minimum):

- name of the Accountable Body of the LAG;
- location, address and contacts of the LAG office;
- organigram of the LAG;
- number of staff and TORs of the staff members; and
- estimated budget of the LAG management, potential financial and in-kind resources, yearly budget plan.

3.3.2 Communication plan

This plan containsthe following elements (as a minimum):

- plan of the internal communication between different LAG bodies and LAG members;
- plan for communication with local stakeholders;
- plan for communication with national and regional institutions; and
- communication with potential and emerging donors.

3.3.3 Monitoring and evalution plan

This plan containsthe following elements (as a minimum):

- purpose of the plan;
- time frame of the management cycles;
- indicators;
- roles andresponsibilities;
- data flow; and
- data management.

3.4 The LAG Council has the responsibility forensuringthe implementation of the Strategic Action Plan. In detail, the LAG Council:

- approves the prepared calls for project proposals and the project financing, and determines whether the project proposals are eligible for funding from funds available for the LAG;
- is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Strategic Action Plan and Implementation Plans, and delivery of outcomes as assessed against adopted key performance indicators;
- supports the LAG Board and accountable body in ensuring appropriate administrative and technical conditions to effective operations of the LAG;
- undertakes regular reviews of governance and technical arrangements for delivery of the Strategic Action Plan;
- ensures that recruitment and appointments to the LAG areundertaken in a transparent manner; and
- establishes special LAG working groups, if it is necessary to support effective and efficient delivery of the Strategic Action Plan and Implementation Plans.

3.5 The LAG Council decides on membership fees every year within framework of the approval procedure for yearly workplans. The membership fee can be provided by LAG members in cash or in kind. It is necessary to make a detailed decision on the rate and measurability of the in-kind membership fees. It is possible to decide that the membership fee is zero for all, or for some special LAG members. The decision on the yearly membership fee shall be included in the minutes of the first LAG Council meeting of the year.

3.6 The LAG Council meets at least four times a year. Up to this minimum number of yearly meetings the LAG Council's decision is to meet another .... times in each year. Extraordinary LAG Council Meetings might be initiated by the LAG Board and the LAG Audit Council, in any necessary time.

4. Operational rules of the LAG Board

- The Board is the executive body of the LAG between LAG Council meetings.
- The LAG Board meets at least six times a year.
- The LAG Board establishes appropriate communication mechanisms to ensure that LAG decisions are clearly communicated to the accountable body.
- The Board acts to enable the accountable body to comply with its obligations set out in agreements and contracts with relevant partners (LAG members, other local stakeholders, donors, etc.)
- The LAG Board considers the development of regional, national and international partnerships and collaborative activities that can bring real benefit to local development within the territory of the LAG.
- The LAG Board ensures that the LAG is building and maintaining appropriate relationships and communications with other key stakeholders in rural development

5. Operational rules of the Selection Committee

5.1 The LAG Council elects the Selection Committee for two years, with the participation of five members.

5.2 The Selection Committee of the LAG meets at least two times in relation to each call for proposal published by the LAG:

- The first is a preparatory meeting with the participation of the LAG managers, to prepare the contents of the call for proposal for approval by the LAG Council.
- The task of the second Selection Committee meeting is selection of the submitted project proposals for funding.

5.3 The Selection Committee shall prepare detailed minutes about each meeting, shall inform the accountable body about the managerial and financial implications of the selection procedure and shall prepare a report on the selection procedure and results to the Board and the LAG Council. The meeting minutes on the project selection shall serve as the basis for the final decision of the LAG Council on the selected projects.

6. Operational rules of the Audit Council

The LAG Audit Council:

- shall cooperate with the Selection Committee and the accountable body of the LAG, with the aim of obtaining and analyzing all information needed for the internal audit of the LAG and preparing the internal auditing report of the given year;
- shall prepare the yearly internal auditing report and introduce it to the LAG Council;
- shall prepare extraordinary internal auditing reports, if financial transparency is questioned by one or more members of the LAG Council.

Meeting minutes shall be shared with the LAG Board and the accountable body.

7. Operational rules of the accountable body

LAG and its accountable body seek to support community-led local development and through that development activity contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Action Plan.

The accountable body has delegated responsibility to sign contracts and other legal documents in the name of the LAG, based on a relevant decision of the LAG Council. All legal documents signed by the accountable body's legal representative, shall be countersigned by the LAG president.

The Accountable Body shall:

- Establish separate office venue for the LAG, ensure the administrative function of the LAG, archive all relevant files, and keep LAG documents separately from other documents of the organization.
- Open a separate bank account for the LAG activities.
- Employ two half-time LAG managers, on behalf of the LAG, based on terms of reference approved by the LAG Council. Those staff shall work for and report to the LAG. The accountable body shall not make any changes to the provision of staffing, administrative support and other services to the LAG without the LAG's agreement.
- Work in close relation to LAG's bodies.
- Monitor the income and expenditures of the LAG and set operational budgets for the LAG.
- Provide advice to the LAG Council and Board in respect of any disputes arising from the LAG's decision on any funded applications.
- Ensure that appropriate and effective control arrangements and operating procedures are in place to meet any regulatory and technical requirements of the LAG's activities.
- Implement the financial plan of the LAG, manage payments of expenses and support accounting and grant disbursements.
- Verify applicants' eligibility for funding and provide advice for applications for funding as it considers appropriate prior to the LAG decision.

The accountable body shall cover its relevant activities from a maximum 20% of the LAG budget.

It does not restrict the accountable body to apply to the LAG for funding in its own project.

8. Review

The performance of the accountable body and the LAG managers shall be reviewed annually by the LAG Council, which shall communicate any matters arising to the accountable body through the LAG Board. The accountable body shall review and respond to any such matters within 30 working days.

Annex 6

LAG Strategic Action Plan and two-year Implementation Plan outline

1 – Executive summary – Recommended to be written at the end of the strategic process.

Containing:

- Name of and introduction to the LAG.
- Pinpointed mission and vision of the LAG aim to bring about sustainable rural development at the local level.
- LAG territorial data in a nutshell.
- The 'talking map' – the map of the LAG territory including local development values identified by the LAG members. See examples on page 10, 59, 61 and 63.

2 – Analysis and summary of the current challenges and values facing the society of the LAG (See the templates on this process in Annex 8)

2.1 Results of the LAG's self-assessment (based on minutes)

This is group work. Take at least three to four hours to analyse the local resources

- Environmental resources
- Economic resources
- Human resources
- Development process as valuable resources for future development

Communities are usually focused on problems during these discussions. It is a learning process for them to open a new perspective and to identify the value of their territories.

2.2 Territorial assessment (by experts, approved by the LAG members).

2.3 Findings of the analysis – SWOT (common work of the experts and LAG members)

Strengths (to preserve)	Weaknesses (to eliminate)
Opportunities (to achieve)	Threats (risks to avoid)

2.4 Identification of the territorial development values and needs by experts, discussed and approved by the LAG.

3 – LEADER/CLLD principles and their implementation in the local Strategic Action Plan:

- Keep complexity – the synergic approach
- Participation
- Partnership
- Territorial approach
- Bottom-up approach
- Communication and networking
- Process oriented development

4 – The Strategic Plan

4.1 Mission

4.2 Vision

4.3 Strategic goals providing the basis for the future development interventions

4.4 Specific objectives

4.5 Rural development priorities (five years)

Specific objectives for sustainable future and improved quality of life in the territory of the LAG	Priorities

5 – Projects

5.1 Folder containing project concept notes

5.2 Project prioritization procedure and results

6 - The First Implementation Plan (2 years)

6.1 Rural development priorities of the LAG in the first Implementation Plan

Specific objectives for sustainable future and improved quality of life in the territory of the LAG (from the strategy)	Priorities in the first action period

6.2 Flagship projects – to be implemented in the first action period

Project title	Project aim, overall objectives

6.3 Two-year Implementation Plan (Gantt) for the first action period

7 – Indicative financial plan (two years plus three years)

8 – Decision-making and management plan (five years)

9 – Communication plan (two years plus three years)

10 – Monitoring and evaluation plan (five years)

11 – Data sources and vocabulary

12 – Outline of the document

13 – It is important to attach to the strategy document the brief introduction of the LAG villages. *See description in Annex 8 under No.2.*

Annex 7

LAG project fiche template

Project title

Values and resources (situation assessment)

Please describe the reason/problem/necessity which means the planned project implementation is necessary. Description should not exceed 250 characters.

Introduction of the applicant organization (s) or persons who are applying (Who will be the project owner)

Please insert in the box below a description of the applicant organization, highlighting the relevant activities and experiences of the applicant organization regarding the main goal of the project. The introduction should not exceed 200 characters.

What can we see ahead? (project aim)

Describe the general purpose of the planned project. Description should not exceed 200 characters.

What? (project goals)

Briefly describe the project goals. Description should not exceed 150 characters.

How to get there? (project activities)

Provide a brief description of project activities in structured bullet points and keywords.

Where? (target area)

Please describe the target area, where the project will be implemented. Provide a brief description of social/ natural and/or built environment. Description should not exceed 250 characters.

With whom? (target group)

Please describe the name and/or population where the project would be implemented, highlighting the target group's role, the number of participants involved in the implementation process. Description should not exceed 200 characters.

From what? (budget)

Prepare a figured budget form (budget tabulation) and collect all expected expenditures in order to enable you to prepare a realistic project budget(s).

Collect all the expected sources (in-kind contribution, self-contribution, grants, etc) and the planned expenditures as well.

When? (timing)

Prepare a project workplan, including all the planned activities in each lines of the tabulation (see Point 3) and indicate the length of time by month (period) during which the activity will be implemented (see GANTT diagram example enclosed).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact person	
Organization, position	
Tel.; e-mail	

Annex 8

Guide to the participatory territorial assessment and SWOT analyses for preparation of the LEADER strategy

This document includes six tables to be completed when carrying out the LAG participatory territorial assessment. It includes village-level and LAG territory-level data collection elements. The elements of the work build on each other.

(1) Village-level assessment template. It is the task of municipal or LAG expert(s) to fill this.

(2) Village introductory questionnaire. It is the task of the LAG members coming from the different villages to complete this. The result of their work is introduced in the working group meeting, and the village descriptions are included as annexes of the LAG strategy.

(3) Community needs assessment template. It is the task of the LAG Strategy Working Group to fill this, separately from the formal village-level assessment.

(4) Outline of the SARD LEADER LAG assessment. This document will summarize the results and main findings coming out from point 1, 2 and 3.

(5) LAG-level SWOT analyses guide. This is for participatory use

(6) The basic LEADER principles, for participatory adaptation to the LAG territory's situation.

Results should be harmonized in the LAG strategic documents.

1. SARD LEADER village-level assessment template

ANALYTICAL FIELDS	INDICATORS	TYPE	COMMENTS
AREA AND POPULATION			
– Geographical characteristics/ topographical profile – Development opportunities implied by geographical position – Distance to main development centers (cities, municipalities)	# of territorial administrative units	Core	Overall advantages based on geographical and topographical characteristics
	Geographical position	Core	
	Surface, km2/ha	Optional	
	Total surface as % of of total surface of country	Core	
	Density, inhabitants/km^2	Core	
	Distance to main development centres, km		

ANALYTICAL FIELDS	INDICATORS	TYPE	COMMENTS
AREA AND POPULATION			
– General demographic trends and characteristics – Structure of population by gender and age – Ethnic composition – Migration trends	Population, thousands	Core	The area's resident population and its profile Relevant differences Trends
	Population by age, %	Core	
	Population by gender/sex, %	Core	
	Natural population growth	Optional	
	Demographic dividend (sarcinademografica/ coeficientulimbatrinirii)	Optional	
	Population by level of education, %	Optional	
	Ethnic structure/composition, thousands/%	Core	
	Migration trends (internal/external), thousands/%	Core	
– Education	Number of schools –primary and secondary	Optional	
	Pupils and students by level of education, number	Core	
	Teaching staff – number by level of education	Core	
	Lifelong learning (# of trainings and trained population)	Optional	
– Health	Physicians, number	Core	
	Total healthcare staff, number	Optional	
ENVIRONMENT AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT			
– Climate – Main natural resources – Territorial development – Environmental/ basic infrastructure	Climate	Core	Are the facilities and basic infrastructure in line with the local economy's needs?
	Mineral resources, landscape, agricultural areas, quality of soil etc.	Core	
	Type of micro-region (remote, agriculture vs industrial, touristic etc.)	Optional	
	Land structure, ha: *Surface of the locality* *Area of agricultural land* *Area of roads* *Forest* *Water* Etc.	Core	
	Protected areas, % of total area	Core	
	Population connected to public water supply, %	Core	
	Population connected to public sewerage system, %	Core	
	Population covered by organized waste collection and disposal, %	Core	
– Energy and energy efficiency	Households supplied with natural gas, %	Core	
	Biomass heating system	Optional	

ANALYTICAL FIELDS	INDICATORS	TYPE	COMMENTS
HUMAN RESOURCES ANDECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
– Structure of active population – Qualification profile	Economically active population, number	Optional	The number and distribution of jobs in the area
	Employment rate 15–64, by gender	Core	
	Unemployment rate	Core	
	Employees per economic sector	Core	
	Employed population by level of education	Core	
	Unemployed population by level of education	Core	
– Public budget	Total revenues, total value	Proxy	
	Share of local revenues, %	Proxy	
– Structure of enterprises	Structure of enterprises by sector, # and %	Core	Opportunities for logistics and services. Market accessibility. Business environment. Tourism potential in the LAG. Opportunities for the development of the rural areas
	Structure of enterprises by size	Core	
– Agriculture	Agricultural area, % of total area	Core	
	Utilized agricultural area by type (areas with different crops), %	Core	
	The structure of farms/enterprises by size, number and %	Core	
	Animals population (livestock number)	Core	
– Road network	The length of the road networks, national/ local, km	Core	
	Share of roads in good condition, %	Core	
	The length of railway network, km	Core	
– Communication infrastructure	Telephone subscribers, number	Optional	
	Mobile phone subscribers	Optional	
	Internet access of households	Core	
– Tourism	Accommodation capacity (beds) by type of accommodation	Core	
	Nature resorts, cultural, sport and leisure facilities, special tourist offers (e.g. rural-tourism)	Optional	
– Service infrastructure (public transport)	Frequency of public transport	Core	
	Average number of passengers	Optional	
SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
– Community capacity building	Partnership, networking, learning activities etc.		

2. Village/community introduction questionnaire

Preparing the village introduction is a task for the group of the LAG members of the given village. The prepared document should be no longer than a maximum of two pages per village. The village description shall include:

- The name and history of the given village and an introduction to the community, economy, environment and culture of the village in a nutshell.
- An introduction to the most important values and problems of the village (as seen by the relevant LAG members).
- An introduction to the most important development directions, opportunities of the village (as seen by the relevant LAG members).

3. Community needs assessment template

(7) Community needs assessment template. It is the task of the LAG Strategy Working Group to fill this, separately from the formal village-level assessment.

Area of interventions	What are the main problems, difficulties?	Who is affected by these issues?	What are the needs/ demands of the local commu-nity?	What are the barriers to meeting these needs/ demands?	Who is in charge?	What are the proposed solutions?
Local economy						
Physical infrastructure						
Local nature and environment						
Social services and healthcare						
Education						

4. Outline of the LAG-level assessment

Analytical fields to the data analyses in frame of preparation of the LAG Strategic Action Plan. It is drafted by the local development expert and finalized with inputs from the Strategy Working Group.

ANALYTICAL FIELDS	INDICATORS/KEY TOPICS
AREA AND POPULATION	
Geographical characteristic/topographic profile Climate Development opportunities implied by geographical position Distance to main development centers (cities, municipalities)	Overall advantages based on geographical and topographical characteristics
General demographic trends and characteristics Structure of population by gender and age Ethnic composition Migration trends	The area's resident population and its profile
HUMAN RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Structure of active population Structure of labor market Unemployment rate Qualification profile	The number and distribution of jobs in the area
Infrastructure (road network, agri-industrial infrastructure, communication infrastructure etc.)	Opportunities for logistics and services. Market accessibility
Sectoral performance (typology of business, products and production structures, size of the farms etc.)	Business environment
Surface and structure of agricultural land	
Tourism infrastructure (nature resorts, cultural facilities, major sports etc.,)	Tourist potential in the LAG. Opportunities for the development of rural areas
Service infrastructure (public transport)	Accessibility
ENVIRONMENT	
Main natural resources	Are the facilities and basic infrastructure relevant to the economic needs?
Territorial development	
Environmental infrastructure	
SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Population/health/culture/social services	Quality of life in the region and availability of schools, kindergartens, healthcare, social services
Innovation	
Partnership	

5. SWOT analysis with participatory method

This template is to prepare SWOT analyses by the LAG Strategic Working Group.

<table>
<tr><th>Form of work and timeframe</th><th>Outputs</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Group work (about 60 minutes) to summarize the results of the assessment process</td><td>Discussed summary results of the LAG's self-assessment (based on minutes)
Environmental challenges and resources
– Economic challenges and resources
– Human development risks and human resources
– Development process as valuable resources for future development</td></tr>
<tr><td>Territorial assessment (drafted by experts; discussed and approved by the LAG members)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expert presentation
(15 minutes)</td><td>Local development expert introduces the contents, logic, output, method, and process of the SWOT analysis in very simple language, with examples</td></tr>
<tr><td>Individual work
(about 30 minutes)</td><td>Based on conclusions of the previous exercise, individual work for drafting SWOT analysis of the given LAG area. Keywords only! Ask participants to be very concrete, and do not write general things!</td></tr>
<tr><td>Group members' presentations
(30 minutes)</td><td>Presentations on the individual work; summary on flipchart by the expert</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summary findings of the SWOT analysis (common work of the experts and LAG members)</td><td><table><tr><td>Strengths (to preserve)</td><td>Weaknesses (to eliminate)</td></tr><tr><td>Opportunities
(to achieve)</td><td>Threats (risks to avoid)</td></tr></table></td></tr>
</table>

6. Adaptation of the LEADER principles to the LAG Strategic Action Plan

After finalizing the territorial assessment and preparing the LAG level SWOT analysis, the LAG Strategy Working Groups are requested to apply the (LEADER/CLLD) principles set out to their situation and to identify them in relation to their own local findings. It is a moderated discussion, collecting keywords on flipchart; summary conclusions.

LEADER/CLLD principles to be adapted:

- Participation
- Integrated approach
- Partnership
- Territorial approach
- Bottom-up approach
- Networking and cooperation
- Innovation
- Process-oriented development

Annex 9

LAG mission, vision, strategic goal and "talking map" examples, developed by LAG members (SARD)

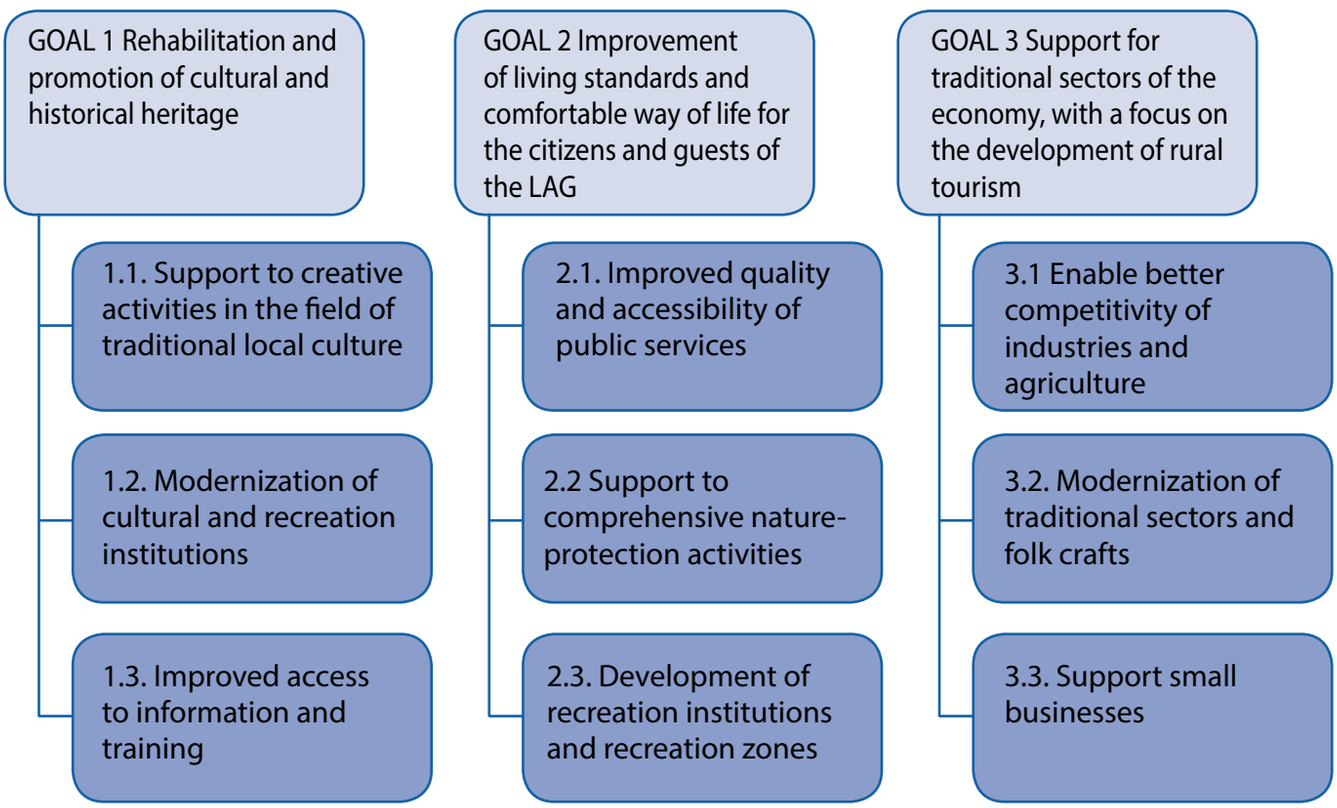
LAG ECO Bugeac

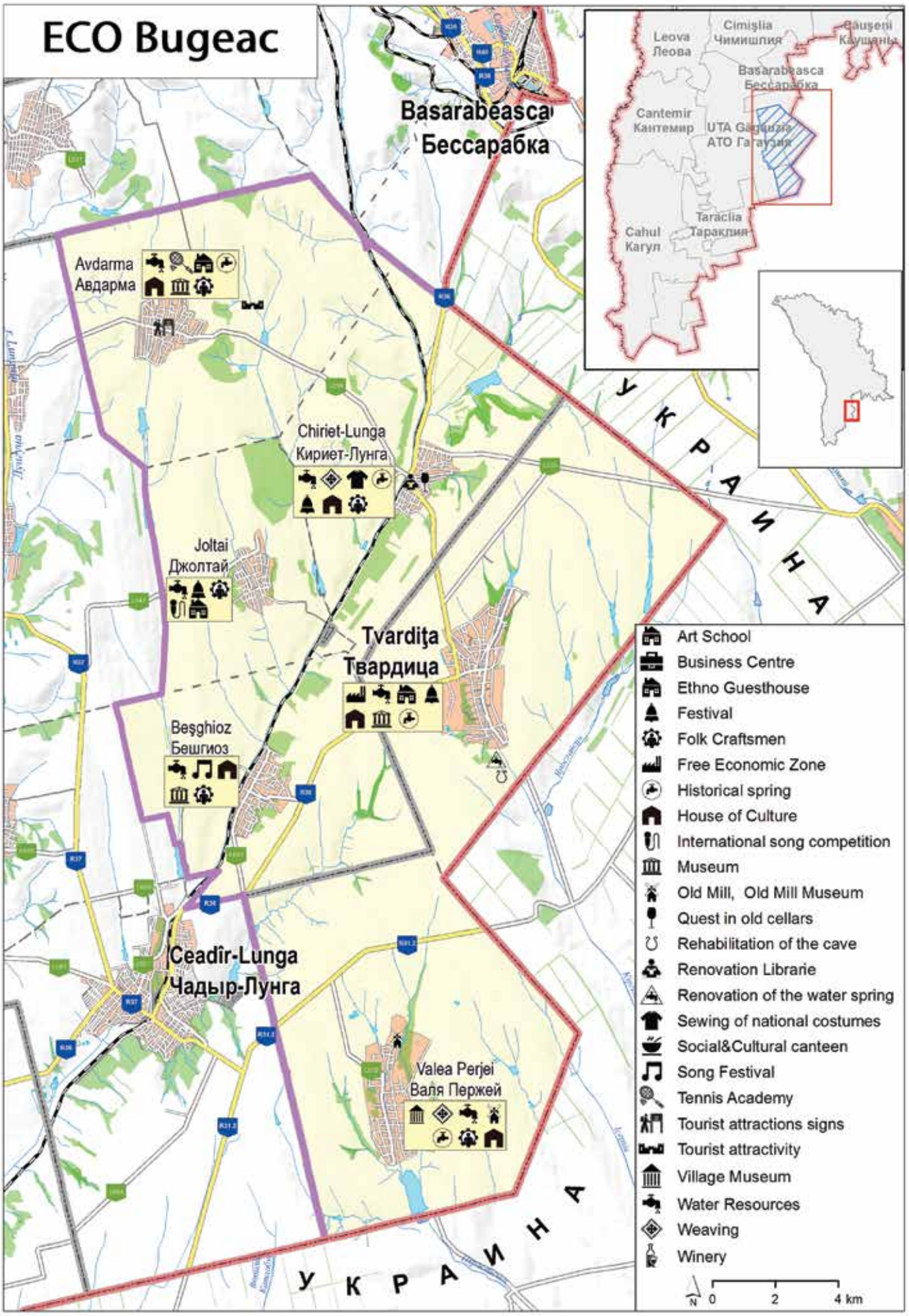
The communities of Avdarma, Chiriet-Lunga, Joltai, Besghioz, Tvardita and Valea Perjei, located in the Bugeac steppe geographical area, work together in this LAG (22,369 inhabitants). All localities in the LAG territory have a strong multi-ethnic and multicultural tradition. Every village has a local museum and craftsmen representing distinct cultures: Bulgarian, Moldovan and Gagauzian. Avdarma is the historical and ecological heart of the Bugeac steppe, famous for its surrounding nature, old steppe springs and its different activities and initiatives, including a parachuting cup, a school robotics club and a local Media Centre. Tvardita, a small town, has great economic potential that can be used for local development, including a free economy zone. This historical and ecological potential provides a common basis for territorial cooperation. The strategic mission of ECO Bugeac LAG is social and economic development by ensuring modern comfortable and safe living conditions while actively promoting organic agricultural production. The common vision is to develop the South Moldovan tourist centre through links between ECO Bugeac localities, aiming to promote rural and sports tourism and focusing on the development of ecological production in small farms.

Mission statement. "We, as members of Gagauz Koraflari LAG, are committed to contributing to better living conditions for local citizens through the reinvention of traditional economic activities and developing the rural tourism services, based on our multi-ethnic cultural values, wine culture and the traditional local cuisine."

Vision. "We see our LAG ECO Bugeac as a tourist centre in the south of Moldova, with high living standards and decent service."

Strategic objectives. The following **strategic goals** have been identified through a participatory process:





"Talking map" prepared by LAG ECO Bugeac

Cișmeaua Sudului LAG

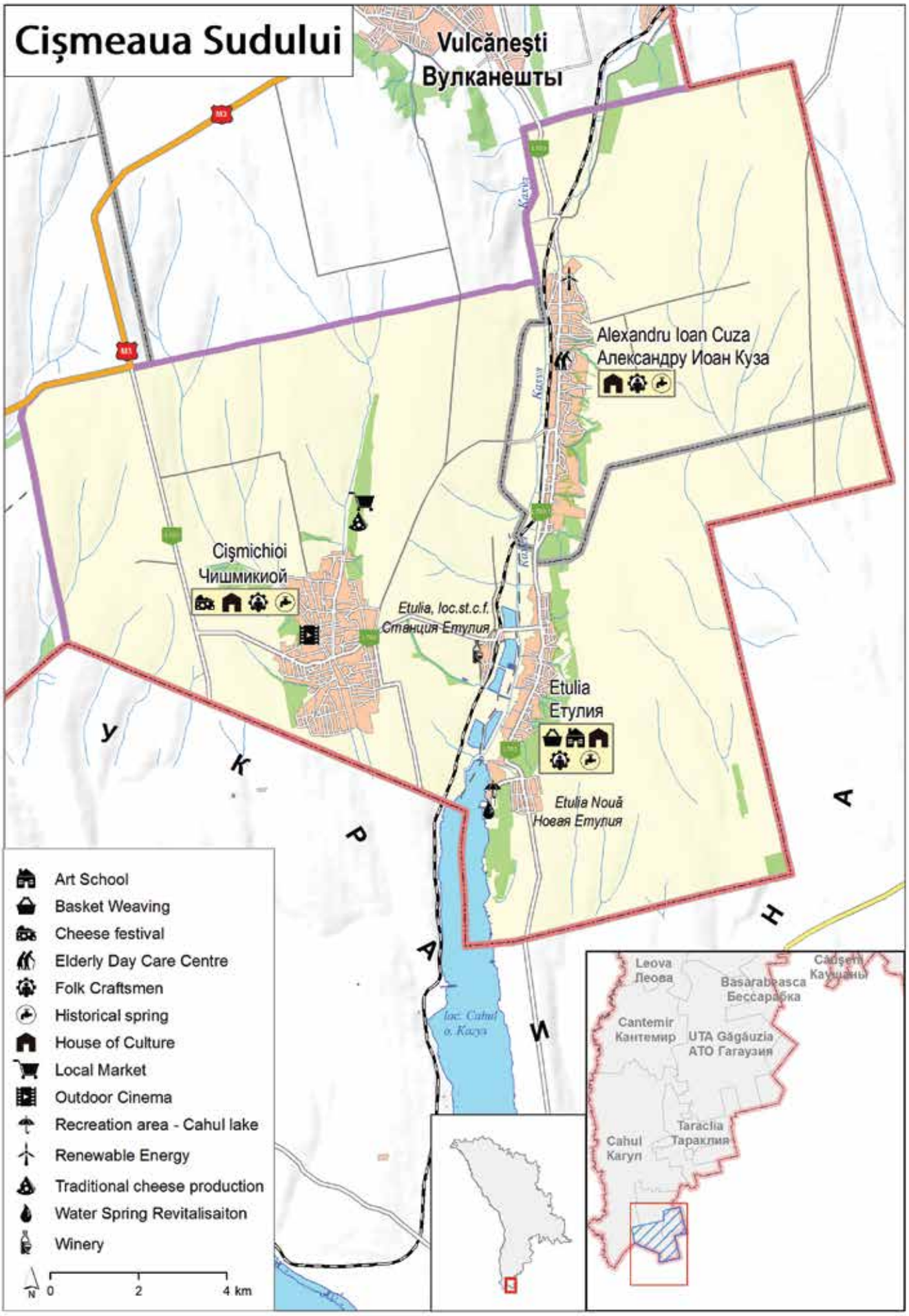
Introduction. "As a Local Action Group, we cover the territory of three communities: Cișmichioi village, Etulia commune (in ATU Gagauzia) and Alexandru Ioan Cuza village (in Cahul district), with a total population of about 10,600 citizens. Our territory is characterized by numerous common features (such as the beautiful steppe landscape around Cahul lake, economic activities with a strong influence of sheep farming and vineyards, a common local road infrastructure, a boundary with Ukraine), as well as by its ethnic and cultural diversity (particularly, Gagauzians, Moldovans/Romanians)."

Mission statement. "We, as members of LAG "Cișmeaua Sudului" are committed to increasing living conditions of the local citizens, the territorial cohesion of our LAG area and tourist attractiveness for sustainable and inclusive local economic growth."

Vision. By2022 the "Cișmeaua Sudului" LAG will be known for its diversity of agro-industrial products, attractive tourist places and high-quality social services.

Strategic objectives. The following **strategic goals** have been identified through a participatory process:

- Goal 1. Sustainable development of local economy
  - 1.1 Modernization of agrifood affairs and services
  - 1.2 Promotion of tourist attractiveness and local identity
- Goal 2. Improvement of living standards in rural area
  - 2.1 Development of rest, recreation and sports infrastructure
  - 2.1 Extension and modernization of infrastructure and public utilities
- Goal 3. Promotion of social innovations and civil participation
  - 3.1 Development of sustainable social services
  - 3.2 Promotion of cultural heritage
  - 3.3 Support to youth activities



"Talking map" prepared by Chismeaua Sudului LAG

Zhemchuzhina Yuga LAG

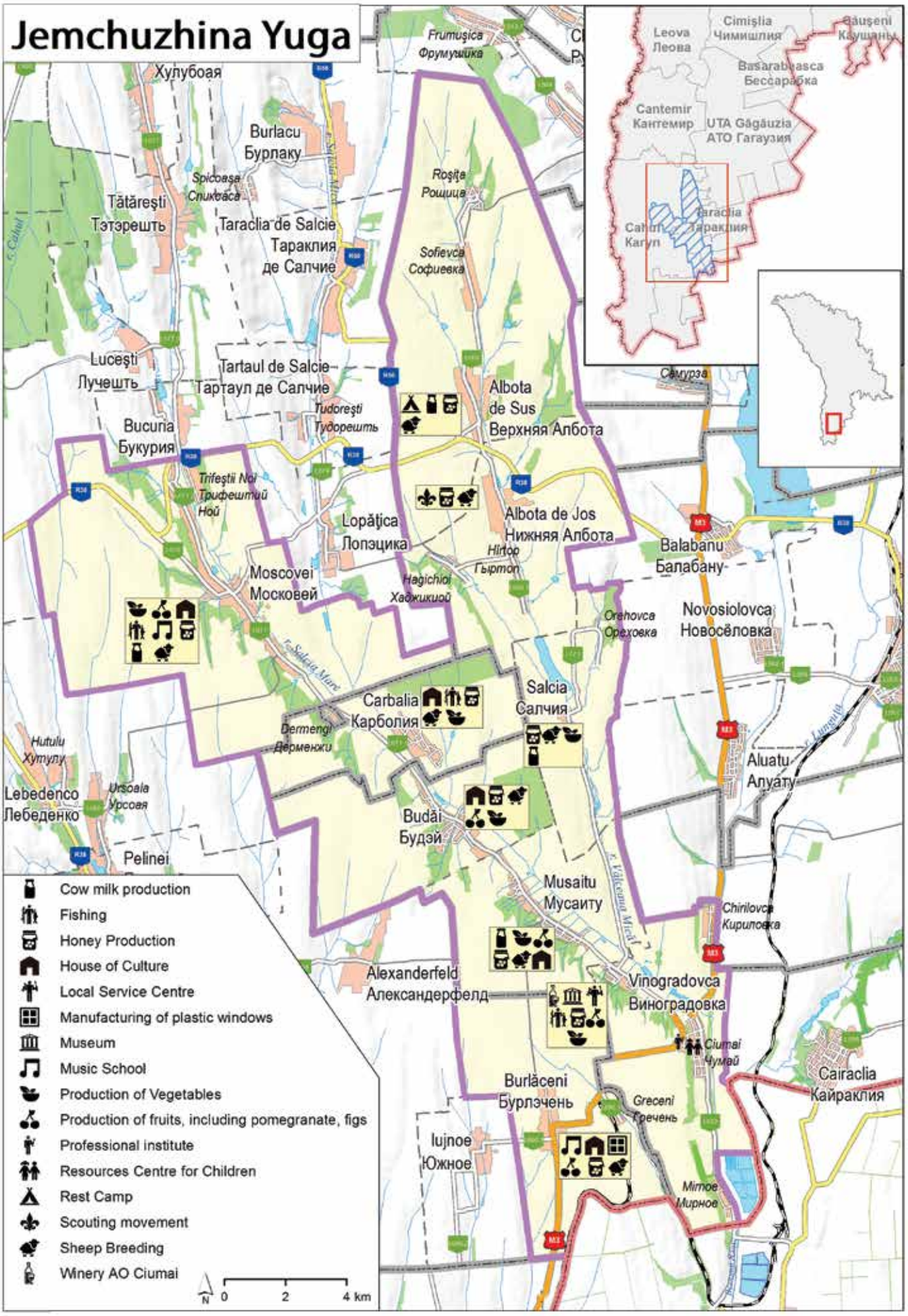
Introduction. "As a Local Action Group, we cover the territory of nine communities: Vinogradovca, Budăi, Salcia, Musaitu, Albota de Sus and Albota de Jos from Taraclia district, Burlăceni and Moscovei from Cahul district and Carbalia from the ATU Găgăuzia, with a total population of about 13,500 citizens. Our territory is characterized by common features, such as the beautiful landscape, economic activities with a strong influence of vineyards and sheep farming, as well as by its ethnic and cultural diversity (particularly, Moldovans/Romanians, Bulgarians, Gagauzians and Ukrainians)."

Mission statement. "We, as members of LAG Zhemchuzhina Yuga, are committed to acting to promote the utilization of local human, social as well as natural capacities and resources to ensure sustainable and inclusive local economic growth in all the localities of our LAG territory. We will work to update public utilities and social infrastructure to ensure better living conditions for the residents, to support service providers (commerce, craft, accommodations) and cultural initiatives, and to promote the wine culture to increase the tourist attractiveness of our territory."

Vision. By 2022, the area of Zhemchuzhina Yuga LAG will be known for improved living standards, a developed local economy, and high-quality public services.

Strategic objectives. The following **strategic goals** have been identified through a participatory process:

- Goal 1. Develop and ensure access to high-quality social and public services
  - 1.1 Modernize public utilities infrastructure
  - 1.2 Increasing quality of social services
- Goal 2 Diversify economic activities in the region
  - 2.1 Develop business environment
  - 2.2 Promoting rural tourism
- Goal 3 Rehabilitate communities and ensure sustainable management of natural resources
  - 3.1 Revitalization of communities
  - 3.2 Ensure sustainable management of natural resources



"Talking map" prepared by Jemchuzhina Yuga LAG

Annex 10

Workshop for specific objective and priority selection of LAGs

Agenda

First hour

- Opening by the responsible SARD coach
- Introduction of the contents of the meeting (EU expert)
- Introduction of the participants
- Presentation on the LAG activities and results implemented until now (relevant SARD rural development expert)
- Summary of the project idea collection procedure and results (relevant community coach)

Second hour

- Establish thematic activity (project idea) categories to be based on the project dossier – these categories are the basis for the specific objectives in the strategy for the first five years of implementation
- Link the activity categories to the strategic objectives and define the specific objectives for five years
- Conclusions, discussion, corrections (if needed), decision (if it is possible) on specific objectives for the five years

Third hour

- Develop a logical order for the planned activities. Key question: Which activities are the bases for others) – this order is the basis for defining the priorities for the first five years of implementation
- Relate the identified priorities to the strategic and specific objectives and identify the five-year priorities
- Conclusions, discussions, corrections (if needed), decision on priorities, if it is possible

Fourth hour

- Decide on time order for activities. The main questions: Which activities are the most needed and most financeable during the first two implementation years?
- Link the "urgent" and "finance-able" activities to priorities. This is the basis for the first two-year action plan
- Conclusions, discussions, corrections (if needed), decision on priorities of the two first-year action plan, if it is possible
- Summary of the day's results, next steps, closing remarks, workshop evaluation

FOR THE ABOVE PLANNING PROCESS it is needed to write the title and a very short description of each project idea in three different colour stickers before the meeting. Additionally, to this, each LAG participant needs at least 3 x 20 stickers in three colors.

Annex 11

Call for proposals and application form template to support local LEADER initiatives in the Republic of Moldova

This call for proposal is being announced within the framework of the …… programme, implemented by …….. in the Republic of Moldova (years of implementation).

The programme invites LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs), whose territorial partnership covers villages in ….(regions or country) ….. to answer this call and apply for support to the implementation of the local management and financing principle of the LEADER approach, and the first projects, in … year…..

1. Programme description

…. Summary of the funding programme…..

2. Objective and purpose

The overall goal of this call for proposal is to support LEADER/CLLD activities implemented by local actors in target territories of the programme, particularly work on the implementation of the local decision-making and management principle, and realization of projects, after approval of the LAG Strategic Action Plan

For each LAG, fund available range up to … amount…., and it supports …. number… of years of activities. The LAG activities to be supported should be related, but not limited, to the following areas:

- Setting up and the functioning the LEADER office, the management team and the management and financial system of the LAG.
- The functioning of the LAG council, board, selection committee and audit committee on the base of the approved Mode of Operation of the LAG.
- Selection of projects for implementation, relevant to prioritized measures of the LAG Strategic Action Plan introduced in the proposal submitted by the LAG.
- Preparing the Implementation Plan of the selected projects.
- Implementing the selected projects.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the above process, and reporting.

3. Eligibility

LAGs formalized by signature of the Partnership Agreement are eligible to submit their proposal to answer this call. Applicant LAGs should organize their first LAG council meeting before submitting their proposal. Proposal must be signed by the legal representative of the LAG's accountable body and the president of the LAG.

Eligibility criteria for the LAG partnership and the delineation of the LAG territory. (Proposals not meeting these criteria will not be funded):

- Each rural community can be part of only one LAG, and the LEADER territory should be cohesive.
- The LAG should be established by at least three municipalities, and the number of inhabitants covered by the municipalities should be a minimum of 10 000.
- Urban centres should not be part of the LAG, but it is recommended to LAGs to cooperate on strategic issues with urban centres in their territory.
- The proportion of different stakeholders in an LAG should be based on tri-party balance. Close to one-third of the LAG members should represent public bodies, one-third businesses and one-third civil society representatives.
- In LAG decision-making bodies businesses and civil society should be represented by at least 50% of the members plus one person, and the local public sector should be represented by 50% of the members minus one person.
- It is important to identify the common cultural and/or economic and/or historical and/or environmental, etc. background behind the established territorial partnership as a backbone of the necessary territorial cohesion, and to give an attractive name to the LAG, which is linked to the common identity of the LAG members.
- LAG members should be local organizations and individuals. National, international or regional non-governmental organizations, which have local activists, offices or member organizations in LAG areas, cannot be members of more than one LAG.
- A statement should be signed by the legal decision-making body of each member organization declaring it is joining the given LAG partnership, and giving the name, function and contact of the elected representative of the given member organization, who will have the voting power in the LAG. Individuals can become members of the LAG by signing a letter of interest and the LAG Partnership Agreement.
- LAG territories should be delineated by a decision of the relevant local councils. Local councils should make the decision on joining a given LAG, and the mayors should sign the LAG Partnership Agreement
- LAG members are those who have signed the LAG Partnership Agreement

Eligibility criteria for LAG plans. (proposals not meeting these criteria will not be funded):

- LAG should have its approved Strategic Action Plan.
- Five-year and two-year Implementation Plan.
- Estimated budget.
- The action plan that is planned to be implemented with SARD's financial contribution.

4. Application deadline

The deadline for submission of relevant proposals is midnight, …. date….

See information on submission under point 11 below.

5. Project funding

The programme provides funding for implementation of the above activities up to …. for …. years. 20% self-contribution of the LAG is required. Self-contribution can be provided in cash and/or in kind. In-kind contribution details should be included in the filled and submitted application form (see attached). The approved funding should be applied to the following costs:

Eligible local LEADER activities	Maximum amount of funding applicable for the given activities	Eligible expenses
Functioning of LAG council and elected bodies; setting up and functioning of the local LEADER office; management team, and the management and financial system of the LAG; monitoring, evaluation and reporting.	… amount…	Salaries, office/venue rent, travel costs, maintenance fees, office equipment and office supply
Local project selection, based on selected measures included in the LAG application; and preparing the concrete implementation plan of the selected projects. First milestone report to SARD (deadline March 31, 2017) should contain the locally approved list of projects, project documents and budgets. Project implementation should start after approval of the first milestone report by SARD.	…. amount…	Limited costs of relevant meetings, travel expenses
Implementing LAG-selected, SARD-confirmed projects.	…. amount….	Relevant and efficient costs of the locally selected and programme-confirmed projects
Total SARD contribution		**…. amount…**

6. Duration

… timeframe…., without the opportunity of extension. Draft final report should be provided to…. on … date…. ….. is assigned to serve as the contact point for the LAG accountable body as a contractor.

7. Proposal review procedures

Proposals are evaluated by a Selection Committee consisting of ….. representative, with …. office acting as secretariat. Proposals should meet the submission criteria as laid out in this call for proposals. Proposals not meeting these criteria will not be further evaluated and will not be funded. Submitted proposals will be evaluated from the perspective of: **relevance, expected results and impact, feasibility, sustainability and incorporation of local development principles.**

Overall evaluation criteria (weight in evaluation 30%):

- Is the submitted proposal clearly described and are the objectives clearly stated?
- Is the activity plan designed to be successfully completed within one year?
- Are outcomes, impact and deliverables specifically identified?
- Does the proposal meet LEADER/CLLD principles and basic cross-cutting criteria (gender balance, sustainability and inclusiveness)?

Criteria for evaluation of LAGs' participatory Strategic Action Plan *(weight in evaluation 40%),* **and the one-year Implementation Plan** *(weight in evaluation 30%):*

- Regarding the participatory strategic process, guidelines have been prepared and used by the SARD Local Expert Team and the LAG working groups. The Selection Committee will follow these guidelines when evaluating LAGs' strategic documents. The concrete evaluation criteria are as follows:
  - Relevance and quality of the local assessment and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analyses included in the Strategic Action Plan.
  - Level of understanding and identification of the LEADER principles by the LAG – introduced in the Strategic Action Plan.
  - Relevance of the mission statement and vision of the LAG to the local values and challenges.
  - Relevance of the objectives to the mission statement and vision of the LAG.
  - Relevance and clarity of the selected strategic priorities to the strategic goals and to the collected local action and project ideas.
  - Relevance of the estimated budget to the planned measures and projects.
  - Relevance of the five-year and two-year action/implementation plans to the values, needs, mission, vision and priorities of the LAG.
  - Innovativeness and weight of the selected flagship projects.
  - Relevance to selected priorities and the action plans, and timeliness of the development measures selected for SARD implementation

Criteria for the evaluation of the one-year LAG Implementation Plan submitted for finance

Relevance – Focus on priorities in the LAG Strategic Action Plan, efficiency of proposed solutions, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups
Results and impact – Direct, quick and broad impact for the community; clear and measurable results and replicability potential
Feasibility – Selected measures' technical, financial, social, environmental characteristics and institutional readiness
Local development principles – Process transparency, inclusiveness, equality and gender prism
Sustainability criterion – Beneficiaries' ability to maintain results, demonstrated continuity after completion of donor support and community contribution

8. Financial milestones and reporting

…… Programme provides advanced funding to contracted LAGs, up to 30% of the contracted amount. Reports on implemented activities should be provided by the LAG accountable body to ….. at reporting milestones: ….. dates…. . Payments will be transferred after approval of reports in ….. tranches.

9. Submission criteria

LAG proposals for financing LEADER/CLLD activities, should include the following:

1. Filled application form.
2. LAG Partnership Agreement, signed by all LAG members.
3. LAG-approved rural development Strategic Action Plan and Implementation Plan, including estimated budget.

4. Minutes of the first LAG council meeting on approval of:
   - LAG's Strategic Action Plan;
   - LAG's Mode of Operation;
   - location of the LAG office;
   - membership fee; and
   - the proposal, which will be submitted to answer the SARD call.
5. Minutes should also include the results of
   - election of the LAG decision-making bodies;
   - selection of the LAG's accountable body; and
   - selection of the LAG managers.

10. Submitting proposals

Please submit proposals electronically. **The deadline for submission is 23:59:59 your local time on …. date... Contact ……** for questions or clarifications. Submit proposals in PDF or in Word.

Application form

Call for proposals on supporting community-driven local development initiatives in …. regions… in the Republic of Moldova

1. Applicants' data

Name of the applicant LAG:	
Villages/communities covered by the LEADER territory:	
Name of the president of the LAG:	
Contact:	
Name of LAG's accountable body (AB):	
Official address of the AB:	
Name and position of the legal representative of the AB:	
Contact:	
Registration number of the AB:	
Tax number of the AB:	

2. Implementation Plan and budget

Local activities to be implemented	Details of the planned activities	Requested financial contribution from SARD	Self-contribution	
			In cash	In kind
Setting up and functioning of the LAG council and elected bodies, functioning of the local LEADER office, the management team, and the management and financial system of the LAG. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting				
Sum				
Selected measures of the LAG's Implementation Plan, for which this contribution is requested				
Sum				
SUM TOTAL				

3. Submitted documents (checklist)

Name of the document	+/-
Filled, signed (and scanned) application form	
Signed Partnership Agreement	
LAG rural development Strategic Action Plan	
LAG Implementation Plan and estimated budget	
Minutes of the first LAG council meeting	

Annex 12

Evaluation sheet template for LAG proposals for strategy approval

LAG name……

1. Overall evaluation criteria *(weight in evaluation – 30%)*

Criteria	Max. score	Given score
Are the selected strategic priorities clear and relevant to the strategic goals and to the collected local actions (measures) and project ideas?	10	
Is the estimated budget relevant to the planned measures and projects?	10	
Are implementation plans relevant to the values, needs, mission, vision and priorities of the LAG?	10	
Are the strategy and the selected flagship projects innovative?	10	
Sum	**80**	

2. Criteria for evaluation of LAGs' participatory Strategic Action Plan *(weight in evaluation – 40%)*

Criteria	Max. score	Given score
Is the local assessment and SWOT analysis included in the Strategic Action Plan relevant to the given LAG territory?	10	
Do the submitted strategic documents meet LEADER/CLLD principles?	10	
Is the mission statement and vision of the LAG relevant to the local values and challenges?	10	
Are the objectives relevant to the mission statement and vision of the LAG?	10	
Are the selected strategic priorities clear and relevant to the strategic goals and to the collected local actions (measures) and project ideas?	10	
Is the estimated budget relevant to the planned measures and projects?	10	
Are implementation plans relevant to the values, needs, mission, vision and priorities of the LAG?	10	
Are the strategy and the selected flagship projects innovative?	10	
Sum	**80**	

3. Criteria for the evaluation of the two-year LAG Implementation Plan submitted for finance *(weight in evaluation – 30%):*

Criteria	Max. score	Given score
Relevance 1 – Does the plan focus on priorities in the LAG strategy documents?	12	
Relevance 2 – Are the proposed solutions efficient, addressing the needs of local inhabitants, including vulnerable groups?	12	
Results and impact– Does the plan facilitate direct, quick and broad impact at the local level, with clear and measurable results and replicability potential?	12	
Feasibility –Are the selected measures feasible based on the given technical, financial, social, environmental characteristics and institutional readiness?	12	
Sustainability criterion – Are potential beneficiaries' abilities able to maintain results after completion of donor support and community contribution	12	
Sum	**60**	
Total	**200**	

Date:

Signature:

.....

Member of the Evaluation Committee

Annex 13

LAG call for proposals template

Call for proposals

To support local rural development projects by …. (LAG name) in the territory of

……

(LAG territory, village by village)

This call for proposals is announced by LAG …., which is subsidized to implement rural development projects within the framework of the LEADER measure ……. programme, implemented by …… in the Republic of Moldova (2016–2018).

1. Background

LEADER is a European Union (EU) initiative, a method and a programme instrument, which, since 1991, has been designed to support locally-driven rural development processes to reinvent rural areas and create local jobs. Since 2013, the LEADER method has been expanded to apply to coastal and urban, as well as rural, areas, under the title **'community-led local development' (CLLD)**. The method has been implemented also in EU pre-accession and neighboring countries with the aid of EU and other donor-financed programmes. The key actors of all local LEADER/CLLD initiatives are the so-called Local Action Groups (LAGs), formed by local partners in a bottom-up way. The LAGs are responsible for local governance in development and represent local authorities, businesses and civil society. LAGs decide on the territorial delineation of their activities, establish formal partnerships, prepare and agree on integrated local rural development strategies, and identify and implement local development actions. The LEADER approach is based on specific principles: 'go local' by implementing the territorial, bottom-up and partnership approach; and focus on integrated development, sustainability and inclusiveness. The development process is managed locally, and networking and cooperation ensure mutual benefit from the experience.

The ……. programme …. (introduction of the financing programme) ……

2. Objective and purpose of the call

The overall goal of this call for proposals is to support local rural development activities implemented by local actors in the territory of LAG …. – in particular, contribution to financing the implementation of the first local projects, based on the prepared and approved strategic action plan of LAG ….

Based on the first-year action plan of LAG …., supported local projects should be related to the following development measures:

- ……..
- ……

3. Eligibility

Proposals not meeting these criteria will not be funded.

The following potential beneficiaries are eligible to submit their proposals to answer this call for proposals:

– Public, civil society, non-governmental and business organizations, which have a legal address in the territory of LAG ….
– Private persons, having a local address in the territory of LAG ….
– Branches of regional or national organizations (public, civil society, non-governmental and business organizations), which have a subsidiary in the territory of LAG….

The proposal must be officially signed by the legal representative of the given organization or, if the applicant is a private person, by the given person.

Please note that projects whose expenses are covered by other donor(s) will not be eligible (double financing is not allowed).

4. Funding

LAG …. provides support to projects to be implemented within the following timeframe: …. dates…. Available funding is up to …amount....., to support at least …. projects. Self-contribution of the recipient of the funding is required. The self-contribution is …. % of the project budget for public, civil society and NGO beneficiaries and …. % for businesses. Self-contribution can be provided in cash and/or in kind. In-kind contribution details should be included in the filled and submitted application Form. See attached. The approved project funds should be applied to the following development measures and costs:

Development measures to be supported	Eligible local project activities	Maximum amount of fund applicable for the given development measure	Eligible expenses
Total		**$**	

5. Duration

The duration of the project implementation is …. timeframe…., with no opportunity for extension. A draft final report should be provided to LAG …. by …. deadline…. LAG …. The management office is assigned to serve as contact point for local beneficiaries as contractors.

6. Proposal review procedures

Proposals are evaluated by the LAG …. Selection Committee, consisting of … elected LAG members, with LAG … management office acting as secretariat. The Selection Committee's recommendations are approved by the LAG Council and forwarded to …. programme office (management agency) for final approval. The proposal should meet the eligibility and submission criteria, as laid out in this call for proposals. Proposals not meeting these criteria will not be further evaluated and will not be funded. Submitted proposals will be evaluated from the perspective of: **relevance, expected results and impact, feasibility, sustainability and incorporation of local development principles.**

Overall evaluation criteria of the proposal *(weight in evaluation – 40%):*

– Is the submitted project proposal clearly described and are the objectives clearly stated?
– Is the activity plan designed to be successfully completed within six months?
– Are outcomes, impact and deliverables specifically identified?
– Does the proposal meet LEADER/CLLD principles and basic crosscutting criteria (gender balance, sustainability and inclusiveness)?

Evaluation criteria relevant to the project impact *(weight in evaluation – 30%):*

Results and impact – Direct, quick and broad impact for the community; clear and measurable results; and replicability potential
Feasibility – Selected measures' technical, financial, social, environmental characteristics and institutional readiness
Sustainability criterion – Beneficiaries' ability to maintain results; demonstrated continuity after completion of donor support; and community contribution

Criteria to evaluate the relevance of the project proposal with LAG …. 's participatory Strategic Action Plan, approved by SARD *(weight in evaluation – 30%):*

- Relevance to the results of the local assessment and SWOT analyses included in the Strategic Action Plan (How does the given project proposal meet local needs?)
- Relevance to the mission statement and vision of the LAG.
- Relevance to at least one of the strategic objectives.
- Relevance to at least one of the strategic priorities.
- Relevance to the one-year action plan of the LAG, submitted to and approved by SARD.
- Relevance to the estimated budget to the planned measures and activities.
- Innovativeness and multiplicativity y of the project.

7. Financial milestones and reporting

LAG …. provides advanced funding to the contracted beneficiary, up to 30% of the contracted amount. Reports on implemented activities should be provided by the beneficiary to LAG management body at reporting milestones: …. dates…. Payments will be transferred by the LAG accountable body after approval of reports in three tranches: 30% after approval of first report, 30% after approval of second report and 10% after approval of the final report.

8. Submission criteria

Project proposals to LAG …. for financing local rural development activities, should include the following:

- Filled and signed application form.
- Technical documents for realization of the project, containing the following details:
- ……
- ……
- ……
- Copy of the legal (registration) document of the organization, or ID card copy if the applicant is a private person.
- Detailed project budget.

9. Submitting proposals

Project proposals can be submitted electronically or by hard copy and can be hand-delivered (in exceptional and justified cases) to the LAG … office personally. Handwritten proposals are accepted. **The deadline for submission is 23:59:59 local time on …. date…. Please contact the LAG …. management team** for questions or clarifications.

10. Information on further non-financial support from LAG .... for the implementation of the financed projects

LAG .... management team provides expertise, training, mentoring and coaching to supported beneficiaries to ensure the success of the implementation of the approved projects.

Application form

To support local rural development projects by …. (LAG name) in the territory of ……. (LAG territory, village by village)

1. Applicants' data

Official name of the applicant:	
Villages, communities covered by the activities of the organization/ person in the territory of LAG …..:	
Contact person and contact details of the person:	
Official address of the applicant:	
Name and position of the legal representative of the applicant:	
Contact:	
Registration number of the applicant (if any):	
Tax number of the applicant (if any):	

2. Implementation Plan and budget

Title of the planned project	
Overall description of the planned project (up to half a page)	
Project's relevance to the Strategic Action Plan of the LAG ….	

Description of the main project activities in milestones and timelines	**Requested financial contribution from the LAG**	**Self-contribution**	
		In cash	**In kind**
Sum			
SUM TOTAL			

3. Expected project results

Description of the project milestones (maximum three milestones in relation to the reporting deadlines)	Expected outputs
Expected overall outcome of the project (1/4 page)	

4. Risk analyses

Potential risks of the project implementation	Suggested solutions

5. Submitted documents (checklist)

Name of the document	+/-
Filled and signed application form	
Copy of the relevant legal document of the organization or copy of the ID card of the applicant person	
Detailed project budget	
Relevant technical documents to support of the project contents, described in the application form	

Contacts of LAG ….

Address:

Postal address:

Email address:

LAG manager's name and phone number:

Annex 14

Evaluation sheet for SARD LEADER local project proposals for financial support

LAG name:

Project proposal registration number:

1. Overall evaluation criteria *(weight in evaluation – 40 %)*

Criteria	Max. score	Selection Committee given score
Is the submitted proposal clearly described and are the objectives clearly stated?	10	
Is the activity plan designed to be successfully completed within six months?	10	
Are the outcomes, impact and deliverables specifically identified?	10	
Does the proposal meet LEADER/CLLD principles (e.g. synergy with other projects, contribute to economic prosperity at the local level, innovativeness and multiplicativity), and basic cross-cutting criteria (gender balance, sustainability and inclusiveness)?	50	
Sum	**80**	

2. Evaluation criteria relevant to the project impact *(weight in evaluation – 30%)*

Criteria	Max. Score	Selection Committee given score
Results and impact–Direct, quick and broad impact for the community; clear and measurable results; and replicability potential	20	
Feasibility –Selected measures' technical, financial, social, environmental characteristics; and institutional readiness	20	
Sustainability criterion–Beneficiaries' ability to maintain results; demonstrated continuity after completion of donor support; and community contribution	20	
Sum	**60**	

3. Criteria used to evaluate the relevance of the project proposal with LAG …. 's participatory Strategic Action Plan, approved by SARD *(weight in evaluation: 30%)*

Criteria	Max. score	Selection Committee given score
Relevance to the results of the local assessment and SWOT analysis included in the Strategic Action Plan (How does the given project proposal meet local needs?)	10	
Relevance to the mission statement and vision of the LAG	10	
Relevance to at least one of the strategic objectives	10	
Relevance to at least one of the strategic priorities	10	
Relevance to the one-year action plan of the LAG, submitted to and approved by SARD	10	
Relevance of the estimated budget to the planned measures and activities	10	
Sum	**60**	

Annex 15

LAG project description template

Project title and number	
Sector	*(Business/public/civil society)*
Relevant LAG Action Plan priority	
Applicant (project owner)	
Leader of local project, position, and contacts	
Legal financial body for implementation (if the project owner is an informal organization)	
LAG name	
Villages, communities covered by the project activities	
Total budget	
Budget – requested contribution	
Budget – other financial sources (who is the donor, if it is not self-contribution)	
Budget – in-kind contribution (who will contribute)	
Why is the project important? *(e.g. What is the current situation and what will be changed concretely by the project?)*	
Concrete description of the project activities	
Concrete procurements with relevant budget: (*e.g. two flutes – 100 USD, 15 Gagauzian traditional costumes for girls – 500 USD)*	
Other costs	
Estimated direct recipients of the project (especially in social projects)	
Expected concrete project outputs	
Expected overall outcome of the project	
Are other, related projects running by the applicant?	
How is it planned to sustain the project results (e.g. who will maintain the built park, equipment, maintenance fees, etc)?	
Timeframe	
Contact person (project manager) – name, address, email address, phone number	

Annex 16

Narrative report form

Narrative report template for project implementation under the call for proposals to support rural development at the local level 'Towards Prosperous Villages', organized and implemented in LAG _____

Number and name of the project:	*LAG (Name) 2018 (For instance: LAG ECO Bugeac-01-2018) "_____"*
Reporting period:	
Sector (public, entrepreneurial, civic):	
Applicant (project owner):	
Local project leader, position, contact data:	
Contact person (project manager) – name, email telephone number:	
Total budget amount:	
Amount of budget spent during the reporting period:	
Budget – SARD contribution:	
Amount of the budget spent from the SARD contribution during the reporting period:	
Budget – other financing sources (indicate who is the donor):	
Amount of the budget spent during the reporting period from other financing sources:	
Budget in kind (who has ensured the contribution):	
Amount of the budget in kind spent during the reporting period:	

Activities implemented under the project: (Describe the activities implemented under the project)	Name of activity 1: Implementation location: Implementation period: Description of activity: Obtained results: Name of activity 2: Implementation location: Implementation period: Description of activity: Obtained results: Name of activity 3: Implementation location: Implementation period: Description of activity: Obtained results:
Specific procurements during the reporting period in compliance with the budget: (e.g. two flutes – 100 USD, 15 traditional Gagauzian suits for girls – 500 USD):	
Other expenses during the reporting period: (Expenses which do not refer to procurement of specific goods)	

Questions for the final report

What has changed as result of project implementation? Why was project implementation important?	
What is the general result of the project?	
Who are the direct beneficiaries of the project? (Describe beneficiaries especially for social projects)	
How is the sustainability of the project results ensured (e.g. who supports the built park, equipment, who pays for maintenance, etc.)?	
Is your project interconnected with other projects or activities? If yes, please specify them.	

Important!

The report should contain justifying financing documents, technical documentation or documentation of any other nature (depending on the logistics and activities of the project), lists of participants of events, photos taken within the project, materials developed within the project, regulations related to use of assets procured within the project and others.

Annex 17

Progress report template for LAG management

A. General information

Report's author	Role in the project	Name of organization

LAG name	
Reporting period	
Date of report submission	

B. Activities organized within the reported period (organized LAG meetings, organized grant contests, project selection process):

C. List the categories and number of beneficiaries and describe the impact:

D. Describe the results achieved during the reporting period:

E. Challenges/risks of the project and measures for mitigating them:

Describe the problems/risks that emerged during the project implementation period and the action undertaken to resolve them:

F. Annexes (list of participants, links to posted articles)

LEADER implementation at the local level – Gantt diagram

SARD example, March 2017 - December 2018

Legend to the next diagram

Lightest colours – There is not relevant activity in the given period

Medium tint – Preparatory or follow up activities in the given period

Darkest colours – Intensive implementation period of the given activities

Milestones		March – August 2017	September 2017- January 2018	February – June 2018	July – December 2018
STEP 2 Implement local awareness-raising campaign	ACT 1 Implementing local, regional workshops and national conference to inform and mobilize potential LAG members				
	ACT 2 Implementing media c ampaign				
	ACT 3 Setting up preliminary local working groups and contact in potential LAG areas				
STEPS 3 and4 Supporting the setting up of formalized LEADER LAGs and generating innovation by example	ACT 4 Preparing relevant data base (Partner map and LAG level territorial data)				
	ACT 5 Setting up the necessary external facilitation system (facilitator's Implementation Plan and the team)				
	ACT 6 Local team's Fact-Finding Missions and reports				
	ACT 7 Building local partnerships, strengthening LAG initiatives				
	ACT 8 Supporting LAGs in territorial delineation of the LAG area				
	ACT 9 Travelling Trainings provided to LAG members in Tuscany, Bulgaria, Poland, and Portugal				
	ACT 10 Supporting the local initiator group in LAGs' formalization and submission of the documentation for approval		Approved Partnership Agreement and territorial delineation are the criteria for submission of the LAG strategy documents!		
STEP 5 Agreeing on needs, five-year strategy, and two-year implementation plan	ACT 11 Setting up conditions for LAG planning (guidelines, training, working groups, etc.)				
	ACT 12 Supporting LAGs in generation, identification, and collection of local development project ideas				
	ACT 13 Supporting LAGs in their participatory-based territorial assessment				

Milestones		March – August 2017	September 2017- January 2018	February – June 2018	July – December 2018
STEP 5 Agreeing on needs, five-year strategy, and two-year implementation plan	ACT 14 Supporting LAGs in defining their mission, vision, name and strategic directions				
	ACT 15 Supporting LAGs in defining their Priorities and Measures				
	ACT 16 Supporting LAGs in defining their two-year Implementation Plan and Budget				
	ACT 17 Supporting LAGs in submission of their Strategic Action Plan and two-year Implementation Plan for approval			Criteria of financing LAG activities and projects is the approval of the LAG strategy documents!	
STEP 6 Supporting the setup of the LAG management, and the translation of the strategy into the implementation process	ACT 18 Setting up and finance LAGs' Managing Body				
	ACT 19 Supporting LAGs announcement of local calls, in selection and approval of the projects				
STEP 7 Funding, and supporting the implementation & monitoring of LAG rural development projects	ACT 20 Supporting LAGs in implementation of local rural development projects, approved and financed by SARD				
	ACT 21 Supporting the design, submission and implementation of externally funded local rural development projects of the LAGs				
	ACT 22 Assisting the monitoring & evaluation procedure of the LAG activities; Monitoring of the LAG activities				
STEP 8 Networking and results' scaling up	ACT 23 Supporting LAGs in horizontal, vertical and international networking				
	ACT 24 Explaining the SARD LEADER process and results to the public of Moldova (Roadshows in other regions of Moldova, conferences, articles in periodicals)				
	ACT 25 Supporting the creation and functioning of the national LEADER network in Moldova; Linking the Moldovan LEADER Network to international rural networks (ELARD, ENRD, PREPARE Black See Initiative, etc.)				

Glossary

LEADER (a French acronym meaning 'Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy') is an EU initiative, a method, and a programme instrument that aims to support locally-driven rural development to reinvent rural areas and create local jobs. Since 2013, the LEADER method has been expanded to apply to coastal and urban areas as 'community-led local development' (CLLD).

Community-led local development (CLLD)is a term used by the European Commission to describe an approach that turns traditional 'top-down' development policy on its head. Under CLLD, local people take the reins and form a local partnership that designs and implements an integrated development strategy. The strategy is designed to build on the community's social, environmental and economic strengths or 'assets', rather than simply compensating for its problems. The CLLD local partnerships receive long-term funding from European funds and decides how it is spent.

Local Action Group (LAG). The key actors of all local LEADER/CLLD initiatives are the so-called Local Action Groups or LAGs, which are formed by local partners in a bottom-up way. The LAGs are responsible for local governance in development and represent local authorities, businesses and civil society. LAGs decide on the territorial delineation of their activities, establish formal partnerships, prepare and agree on integrated local rural development strategies, and identify and implement local development actions.

Strategic Action Plan (SAP). Each local LEADER programme is run by a Local Action Group (LAG) which awards grants to projects that support the delivery of SAP that is prepared in a participatory way, based on LAG members' ideas and contribution. The SAP is the base of the common work of the LAG; it is approved by all LAG members.

Further information

SARD LEADER website – www.leadermoldova.eu

SARD website – www.sard.md

Contact: UNDP Moldova – www.md.undp.org

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SARD Support for agriculture and rural development in ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia

UNDP

Towards Prosperous Rural Areas

Participatory planning. On one side, a LAG strategic working group creates the main chapters of a strategy document. On other side, LAG members collect project ideas from the relevant local stakeholders. At a certain point in the planning process, planned strategic objectives and the collected project ideas are linked by the strategic working group to define the priorities of the LAG for a given period.

LEADER territory. A LEADER area must have clearly defined geographical borders; these will not necessarily coincide with administrative districts, but rather may reflect practical, cultural or functional boundaries. Having such an area as a reference facilitates the recognition of local strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities, endogenous potential and the identification of major bottlenecks for sustainable development. One community cannot join more than one LAG.

LAG management. The LAG office, which is established by the LAG partnership, works as a small local development agency; it functions as an intermediary to bring development information close to villagers (e.g. possible business opportunities, available funds, etc.), and it is the contact point for national/regional state institutions or private donors and investors to communicate with the villages or get information about development needs and opportunities in the given territory.

Local development is a transformative process that local economies and societies undergo to solve interconnected issues (often of a socio-economic, cultural or environmental nature). Its objective is to support sustainable development and improve the quality of life of local populations. Local development is a participative process that allows local agents (both public and private) and their networks to define a common development strategy based on opportunities specific to their area ('territory'). It involves local agents coming together in concerted action.

Sustainable development is an integrated and systemic approach that takes into account the three spheres in which human societies operate: environmental, social and economic. These spheres are embedded, interconnected and interdependent. 'Sustainable' designates development that preserves the biosphere (biodiversity and natural resources) and whose footprint remains minimal. The effect of this development on the environment must not threaten humanity. Instead, it should be economically fair, serve people's quality of life and contribute towards inclusive societies.

Culture of 'co' is a principle that encompasses collaboration, cooperation, co-creation, community-centered action and caring for the common good.

SARD Programme. The Support to Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Programme is a three-year initiative of the European Union (EU) implemented by UNDP in the Republic of Moldova. The main objective of the programme is to develop regions and territorial administrative units with special status in Moldova, ATU Gagauzia and Taraclia. The programme connects national and regional authorities and structures facilitating dialogue in the development of national strategies. The main programme components, which are implemented in a synergic and comprehensive way, aim to enhance community empowerment, develop local entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises, encourages investment in small-scale infrastructure refurbishments and promotes inter-municipal cooperation. Implementation of LEADER and the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD approach is a cross-cutting measure of the programme.

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