



Common strategy on cross-border and interregional development in the field of Culture in Central Europe

Rural Development & Culture (Fact Sheet)

Background

The “problems” and “challenges” to be addressed by **rural development policy** can be summarised as followsⁱ:

- **Economic:** Rural areas have a significantly lower income than the average, an ageing working population, and a greater dependency on the primary sector.
- **Social:** There is a clear evidence of higher unemployment in rural areas. Low population density and depopulation in some areas, may also increase the risk of problems like poor access to basic services, social exclusion, and a narrower range of employment options.
- **Environmental:** The need to ensure that agriculture and forestry make a positive contribution to the countryside and the wider environment requires a careful balance to be struck.

The EU’s rural development policy follows the overall orientations for a sustainable development in line with the conclusions of the Lisbon (March 2000) and Göteborg (June 2001) European Councils.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) will concentrate its interventions on the following priority axes:

- **Priority axis 1:** Improving the Competitiveness of the Agricultural and Forestry sector (like support for setting up young farmers, support for semi-subsistence farmers in new Member States, etc.)
- **Priority axis 2:** Land Management (like natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas, Natura 2000 payments, etc.)
- **Priority axis 3:** Diversification of the Rural Economy and the quality of life in Rural Areas (e. g. support for the creation of micro

enterprises, encouragement of tourism, village renewal, etc.)

- **Axis Leader** (local development strategies built on the three thematic axes – see above)

Key areas of EAFRD intervention and the cultural sector

Cultureⁱⁱ can contribute to and actively participate in the different fields of intervention areas of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Fund. Furthermore village renewal as well as the protection of rural heritage has been evaluated as successful contribution to rural development especially because of the high potential to mobilise the local populationⁱⁱⁱ. The highest potential for cultural contribution is therefore in the priority axis 3 and 4 of the new EAFRD-regulations:

1) Priority axis 3: Diversification of the Rural Economy and the quality of life in Rural Areas

Support of EAFRD under this section involves:

(a) Measures to diversify the rural economy:

- Diversification into non-agricultural activities
- Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises
- Encouragement of tourism activities
- The protection, upgrading and management of natural heritage (sustainable economic development)

(b) Measures to improve the quality of rural life in the rural areas:

- Essential services for the economy and rural population
- Village renovation and development; conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage.

(c) A vocational training measure for economic actors operation in the fields covered by priority axis 3.

(d) A skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy.

In the conclusions of the **Second European Conference on Rural Development held in Salzburg** on 12 to 14 November 2003 have been also stressed the importance of the preservation of the diversity of Europe's countryside and that this must be one of the guiding principles of the future rural development policy: „Preserving the diversity of Europe's countryside and encouraging the services provided by multifunctional agriculture is of ever growing importance. Managing the farmed environment and forests will serve to preserve and **enhance the natural landscape and Europe's diverse cultural heritage**, particularly in more remote rural areas with their sites of high nature value.” And it continues: “**Rural development policy must serve the needs of broader society in rural areas** and contribute to cohesion. Strengthening the wider rural community will promote the sustainable development of rural areas sought by all rural stakeholders.”^{iv}

Potential fields of intervention:

The potential of the **cultural sector** should therefore be fully integrated into the support activities for the diversification of the rural economy and the quality of life in rural areas in order to fully use its potential for sustainable rural development:

(a) Measures to diversify the rural economy:

- Development of farming houses to cultural centres as well as to centres for access to the knowledge economy for the rural population (Internet-access points, library services, creative education of pupils and children, etc.)
- Support for the creation of micro-enterprises in the field of rural crafts as well as in the creative/cultural industries (graphic design, media companies in order to get regional rural newspapers or internet-information services, TV, etc.)
- Further development of rural tourism activities not only in the field of traditional rural culture but also by integrating young artists in rural areas (e. g. guidebooks to artist's ateliers or days of the “open atelier” in rural areas, etc.)
- Protection of natural heritage like culturally valuable historic gardens but also the creation of

new landscapes with means of contemporary architecture and art

- Environmental awareness actions by means of creativity (e. g. environmental art, environmental youth theatre, etc.)
- Etc.

(b) Measures to improve the quality of rural life in the rural areas:

- Development of places of creativity for the young generation as well as for the elderly in rural areas (e. g. Cultural centres for the generation 60plus with special focus on their limited mobility, etc.)
- Creation of places where the rural population can make full use of their surrounding where special focus is given to harmonious cooperation with the needs of the agricultural sector (e. g. parks with artistic interventions, etc.)
- Village renovation and development; conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage (Renovation of culturally valuable villages or buildings, marketing measures for the access to rural heritage, integration of contemporary architecture into the upgrading of rural heritage, etc.)
- Etc.

(c) A vocational training measure for economic actors operation in the fields covered by priority axis 3.

- Training for politicians and decisions makers on creative village renewal including exchange of good practice.
- Sensibilisation measures for the rural population in order to improve the awareness for the cultural value of the surroundings
- Training on the cultural heritage tourism sites for the local population working in the field of tourism
- Etc.

(d) A skills-acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy.

- Integration of cultural actors into the development of local development strategies
- Integration of cultural values into the development of local development strategies
- Integration of culture into the implementation of local development strategies
- Studies on the cultural potential of rural areas
- Data collections about cultural values rural areas
- Etc.

Project examples:

DIVERSIFICATION OF RURAL ECONOMY: Development of an art-garden for educational purposes in the village Steinhöfel – Leader +; LAG “Oderland”

The protected garden of Steinhöfel has been further developed with means of contemporary art in the framework of Europe wide cooperation of the regional artists association "LandKunstLeben". The art is not integrated as decorative aspect but as input for our contemporary approach to nature. Furthermore are developed interactions between park and village as well as the integration of the local youth. Public awareness will be created for the history of plants and the related recent developments towards a commercialised and globalized plant culture. In the park is also situated an old castle which is used for tourism and hopes to improve economic development by the project.

More information (so far in German only):
<http://www.landkunstleben.de/startd.htm>
<http://www.global-village-garden.net>
<http://www.leaderplus.de>

**IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF RURAL LIFE:
 „Burgarena Reinsberg“ – Rural Development
 Lower Austria**

The old castle Reinsberg has been renovated by the local population during 5 years and more than 30.000 unpaid working hours have been invested into the renovation. In the year 1998/99 has been integrated a modern arena for events into the old castle. With contemporary forms and elements has been established a clear contrast to the old castle and therefore a link to the third millennium. The project has been awarded many prizes, e. g. the European Prize for Village Renewal as well as a prize for architecture.

More information (in German only):
<http://www.reinsberg.at/architektur.html>

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING:
 “Common education for cultural mediation in
 the Leader regions in general as well as in
 regional museums” – Leader +, LAG
 “Außerfern” (Austria), LAG “Auerbergland”
 and “Ostallgäu” (Germany)**

The three Leader-regions share a common economic and cultural tradition and are rich in cultural heritage as well as in historic relevant sites. The aim of the project is the qualification of at least 10 local persons (interested in culture, women with rural background, elderly) for the mediation of cultural values and regional museum. By this way, a new attractive offer is established for the tourists in the region as well as a reinforcement of regional cultural identity and the further abolishment of regional borders.

More information (in German only):
<http://www.allesausserfern.at/art-culture/kulturfuehrer>



**ANIMATION FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
 STRATEGIES ELABORATION:
 “Barockbaumeister” - Leader +, LAG Natur
 und Kulturerbe Vorarlberg**

The Vorarlberg region of Bregenzerwald aims at being integrated in UNESCO world heritage list. The region is also part of Vorarlberg Local Action Group. During the elaboration of UNESCO application has been found out that the Bregenzerwald “Barockbaumeister” (Baroque Architects) have been of great influence for the cultural development of the whole region. Therefore have been elaborated the project “Barockbaumeister”. It comprises a study on the subject, a concept for exhibitions and targeted offers. It will be achieved a transfer of knowledge from baroque times to the 21st century, a further development of regional identity (especially concerning the tradition of crafts) as well as an improvement of attractiveness for tourism offers.

More information on Leader regions website (in German only): <http://www.leader-vlbg.at>

**2) Axis Leader (local development strategies
 built on the three thematic axes – see above)**

The support granted under the LEADER priority axis is for:

- (a) Implementing local rural development strategies, through a LEADER approach, with a view to achieving the objectives of one or more of the three priority axes defined for EAFRD interventions.
- (b) Implementing cooperation projects involving the objectives selected under point (a) above.
 - Inter-territorial cooperation (within Member States)
 - Transnational cooperation (between several territories in several Member States and with territories in non-member countries)
- (c) Running the local action group (LAG), acquiring skills and animating the territory.

The integration of culture into the innovative rural development is a success story. Leader networks on national or European level have dedicated special interest also to the rural cultural development (e. g. Leader forum – magazine of German national Leader network)^v. So culture can play a very important role in order to create **regional identity**. This is an interaction between **internal and external awareness of the region**. For example over regional interest on cultural and historic assets in a Leader-Region can provoke



positive reactions from the inhabitants toward their region and their identification with the area they feel at home. Furthermore, the more people get to know about the history of their own region, the more they identify themselves with it. Projects which did elaborate for example **local history** by means of theatre have been very successful in Leader region "Oberschwaben" in Germany.

Leader and culture have been also very successful in the framework of **tourism** development in rural areas, culture has been proven to be a tool in order to integrate **young people** in local development processes and **artists** have been integrated to newly define questions of integrated and innovative rural development in Leader +.

Potential fields of intervention:

Due to the draft Proposal for a Council Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), Leader will be integrated into the new programmes for rural development and should be built up on the three thematic areas for rural development. Therefore the potential fields of intervention for Leader are identical with those mentioned under point 1) of this fact sheet (page 2).

Project example:

"Kulturvernetzung REGATTA", Leader +, LAG REGATTA

Cultural network means cooperation and bundling as well as common presentation of the regional cultural offers and of the cultural actors. Thematic cultural walking trails as well as cooperation with the tourism are part of the project. An important role plays also marketing, information transfer and public relations inside the LEADER + region as well as external communication. The activities of the project comprise a common internet platform, a cultural guidebook as well as online calendar of events and related digital mailings.

More information (in German only):
<http://www.regatta.co.at/>

"To raise awareness and estimation on water by the means of artistic and aesthetical senses", Leader +, LAG "Natur und Kulturerbe Vorarlberg"

The rediscovering of natural resources as basis of regional income is only the first step in rural development. It is also fundamental to raise awareness for this natural resource. One of the most successful approaches for communication is the emotional level. And exactly on that level starts the project "art and water". It aims at contributing to regional awareness for and creates access to the topic "water". Art in this context is not a matter of elites, but works on a broad approach accessible for everybody. In the framework of the project will be elaborated an artistic integrative concept and will be guided the implementation.

More information on Leader regions website (in German only): <http://www.leader-vlbg.at>

3) Some Facts & Figures

1	EAGGF Contribution to <i>cultural projects</i> in STRATCULT-partner regions (2000-2004): Rural development and Leader + 4.4 Mio. € (76 projects)
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ⁱ European Commission: "Proposal for a Council Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)", Brussels 14.07.2004 (COM(2004)490 final)

ⁱⁱ Culture is meant in its broadest sense including the Arts, the activities of cultural institutions and administrations as well as the creative industry.

ⁱⁱⁱ Europäische Gemeinschaften: "Fact Sheet: Neue Perspektiven für die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums in der EU", Luxemburg 2004, page 7

^{iv} European Commission: "Conclusions of Second European Conference on Rural Development in Salzburg", Brussels 21 November 2003 (Memo/03/236)

^v Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle LEADER+ : "Welche Bedeutung hat Regionale Identität?", in Leader forum 3/2003, pages 16-28