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Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.3 "Civil Society Projects"

LEADER/CLLD for citizens and for the European Union – 6 events and 2 online-surveys involving 409 participants have been carried out within this theme

Short description of the theme - aims and activities

Europe is losing the connection with its citizens. The project aims to find answers for a more participative, inclusive citizens role in local rural matters in a partnership context.

Case studies, impact assessment and obstacle-analysis are done and supported by discussions at different levels.

Event 25 Main event - LEADER/CLLD seminar in Estonia at LINC Conference

Participation: The event involved 99 citizens from 12 countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Austria, Latvia, Romania, Germany, Czech Republic, Georgia, Poland, Hungary, Italy), including 40 participants from Estonia, 5 from Lithuania, 8 from Finland, 7 from Austria, 8 from Latvia, 6 from Romania, 8 from Germany, 5 from Czech Republic, 7 from Georgia, 2 from Poland, 2 from Hungary, 1 from Italy.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Pärnu, Estonia on 12th of September 2019.

Short description:

On 12 September, ELARD held a LEADER/CLLD seminar in Pärnu, Estonia, within the framework of European Rural Parliament ROAD project theme work and as part of the international LINC conference. The primary goal of the seminar was to introduce the application of the LEADER method in the utilisation of various European Union structural funds, particularly the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. There were more than 100 participants at the seminar. The seminar began with an introduction to the research conducted by ELARD on the application of multi-funds (ERDF, ESF), which more specifically focused on the application of these funds in other EU countries, the success stories and the main added value.

Karolina Jasinska, European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development gave her reassurance that the Commission's position facilitates and encourages Member States to use different European funds for rural development, but multi-fund approach implementation needs a strong commitment and the coordination of involved ministries on a national level.

Radim Sršeň, a LEADER practitioner from Czech Republic and a member of the European Committee of Regions presented his recent opinion document entitled "CoR's contribution to the renewed Territorial Agenda and pointed out that his opinion includes several supportive statements and arguments for the implementation of multi-funds and rural-urban linkages.

The final presentation of the seminar was delivered by **Michael Hohenwarter** from Regional Management East Tyrol stating that multi-funding from the LAG's perspective provides an opportunity for a more holistic development approach and allows the LAG to function as a one-stop shop for applicants in rural areas.

The panel discussed about the budget reduction, the increased role given to the member states and the implications.

Event 26 – subevent ELARD members meeting on LEADER/CLLD advocacy



Participation: The event involved **23 citizens from 16 countries**, including 1 participant from Denmark, 1 participant from Spain, 3 participants from Portugal, 1 from the Netherlands, 2 from Greece, 3 from Slovenia, 1 from Finland, 1 from Latvia, 2 from Czech Republic, 1 from Austria, 2 from Sweden, 1 from France, 1 from Hungary, 1 from Germany, 1 from Lithuania, 1 from Estonia.
Location / Dates: The event took place in Brussels, Belgium on 30.01.2019.

Short description: On the 30th of January an ELARD Members meeting with representatives of Local Action Groups Networks was held in Brussels and part of the agenda was the ROAD thematic project “LEADER/CLLD for citizens and for the European Union”. The main aim of the meeting was to clarify the needs and priority actions for LEADER/CLLD thematic work in the frame of ROAD project. 23 participants representing LAGs from 16 Member States had a long discussion on the future of LEADER and CLLD, in the framework post 2020 legislative proposals, both for the Common Agriculture Policy and for the Cohesion Policy. The participants were of the opinion that the legislative proposals (for the Common Provisions, the Cohesion Policy and the CAP) should ensure that, in each Member State, a real multi-funded CLLD is possible, which has to include reinforced funding from Rural Development Fund and ring-fencing of funding in the other Funds (Regional, Social and Fisheries), they also stressed the importance of Rural Development to be part of the Common Provisions Regulation and multi-funded CLLD to be part of the Partnership Agreement of each Member State. The achievements of LEADER/CLLD have shown that Local Action Groups (LAGs) are able to defend the European values, if recognised as local drivers for change and development and enabled to innovate in their areas, materializing the “Europe closer to citizens” objective, proposed by European Commission.

Event 27 – subevent - LEADER/CLLD seminar in Portugal

Participation: The event involved 64 citizens from Portugal from different regions.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Torre de Moncorvo, North of Portugal on 20th March 2019.

Short description:

Minha Terra Network, the Portuguese partner of the European Rural Parliament, that brings together all the 60 Rural Local Action Groups in Portugal, organized a meeting under the ROAD (Rural Opinions, Advocacy and Development) project, supported by the Europe for Citizens Programme, in Torre de Moncorvo, North of Portugal, at the 20th March. In this meeting the 64 participants, representing 40 Local Development Associations and LAGs, were informed on the European Rural Parliament activities and the final gathering in Asturias, in November. Minha Terra also informed on Conference “How to make rural areas the engines of a sustainable Europe” held by European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Rural Parliament (ERP) on March 14. The implementation of LEADER and multi-funded CLLD in Portugal and all the constraints felt by project promoters and LAGs, were deeply analysed amongst participants at the meeting. Local Development Associations and Minha Terra Network decided to prepare in the coming months “Pact for Local Development 2021-2027 to be discussed and endorsed by a large group of national, regional and local stakeholders.

Event 28 - LEADER/CLLD seminar and study visit in Sweden

Participation: The event involved 41 citizens from 2 countries, including 1 participant from Sweden and 40 participants from Czech Republic.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Tiraholm, Halland, Sweden on 16th of October 2019.

Short description: The seminar took place in the frame of study visit of Czech delegation. The survey on best practice in CLLD using ERDF and ESF conducted as part of ROAD-project within the European Rural Parliament (ERP) was introduced. Practices from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, Croatia were introduced as well as results of analysis of these practices. Participants had possibility also to visit Swedish examples of multifunded local development strategy implementation during the study visit that followed to the seminar.

Survey 1 – subevent - Survey on ESF and ERDF usage via LEADER approach



Participation: The event involved directly 6 citizens as responders of the survey from 6 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, Croatia). There were about 30 LAGs that contributed to the survey in these 6 countries sending their examples.

Location / Dates: The event was Europe wide and took place May-October 2019.

Short description: This Survey was conducted by ELARD, within the theme “LEADER/CLLD for citizens and for the European Union” as part of the ROAD project within the European Rural Parliament (ERP). Marion Eckardt worked out the format of the survey and collected information from LEADER and rural development networks across Europe. The purpose of the work was:

- To identify case studies in the Member States in order to demonstrate the added value of the use of ESF and ERDF via the LEADER approach;
- To identify case studies and implementation models in the Member States to show the contribution of LEADER/CLLD to good governance, social innovation, smart villages, capacity building, innovation practice, etc. on a local level;
- To conclude and declare suggestions on how LEADER/CLLD can strengthen the connection between the European Union and its citizens at local level via integrated local development and the well managed use of different ESI Funds. 52-page survey with good practice and conclusions is available on ELARD website www.elard.eu

Survey 2 Subevent - Survey on Simplified Cost Options and simplified procedures

Participation: The event involved directly 25 citizens as responders of the survey from 20 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Portugal, Romania), including 3 participants from Finland, 2 participants from the Netherlands, 2 participants from Romania. The rest of countries had 1 participant per country submitting responses, but the number of LAGs that were involved into the process in all countries was about 2000.

Location / Dates: The event was Europe wide and took place September-December 2019.

Short description: The survey was conducted in the frame of the European Rural Parliament ROAD project LEADER/CLLD theme work in order to explore good simplification practices that were used by LAGs and managing authorities across Europe. The main aim of the survey was to contribute to the LEADER/CLLD legislative proposals to be used in Member States and also outside of the EU to design balanced legislation for the implementation of a LEADER bottom-up approach for the next programming period.

All the submitted cases were analysed and 10 good practices were selected in total under the categories: administration, animation, transnational cooperation, project beneficiaries

The outcome of the survey is available at www.elard.eu

Event 29 – subevent - LEADER/CLLD Conference in Portugal, Amarante

Participation: The event involved 126 citizens from 20 countries (Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Bulgaria, Belgium, Slovenia, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Poland, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Austria, Georgia, Ireland, Romania, Lithuania), including 85 participants from Portugal, 2 from Latvia, 1 from Greece, 2 from Romania, 5 Italy, 2 from Belgium European Commission, 9 from Georgia, 1 from Slovenia, 2 from Germany, 3 from Czech Republic, 3 from the Netherlands, 2 from Denmark, 1 from Estonia, 1 from Spain, 1 from Sweden, 1 from Bulgaria, from Poland, 2 from Austria, 1 from Ireland, 1 from Lithuania. LEADER/CLLD seminar involved 34 citizens from 8 countries (Ireland, Portugal Czech Republic, Georgia, Slovenia, Denmark, Germany, Latvia), including 20 participants from Portugal, 1 from Ireland, 1 from Czech Republic, 7 from Georgia, 1 from Slovenia, 2 from Denmark, 1 from Germany, 1 from Latvia.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Portugal, Amarante on 26th of November 2019.

Short description: The conference gave an overview of the extent to which the CLLD instrument has been adopted across the EU. It shows the variety of models in different EU Member States and regions, ranging from a simple continuation of the 2007-13 mono-Fund approach to a country-wide use of multiple Funds in all LAGs in 2014-2020. LEADER/CLLD conference included the introduction of surveys conducted in the frame of ROAD project. Marion Eckardt, Vice-President of ELARD and Manager of LAG Halland, Sweden introduced the added value of ERDF and ESF



projects under CLLD. Kristiina Tammets, Vice-President of ELARD and Manager of LAG Tartu, Estonia delivered presentation about inputs from ELARD survey on simplification.

Event 30 – subevent – Croatia X-factor

Participation The event involved 25 citizens from Croatia

Location / Dates The event took place **Tisno, Croatia**, on **22.5.2019**

Short description: Research, analysis and reports highlight the importance of improvement local community management system, that is the goal involve stakeholders from the local area in the adoption processes a decision emphasizing the importance of a bottom-up approach because each rural area has its own characteristics, potentials, peculiarities and distinctiveness and should be built upon planning for the future. Also, by establishing local partnerships, and an integral and multi-sectoral approach, contributes and the importance of achieving sustainable rural development the younger generations of mayors and mayors also play a role young people in the local community who innovate approach and innovative solutions indicate the importance of facing different challenges and ways management - digitalization, information and communication technologies, multiple sources of financing (the public budget plays a very important role in supporting rural communities, but it is facing increasing requirements, and the reason is a general increase in the cost of living and an increase in the cost of providing services), public involvement in decision-making processes, transparent governance, networking and collaboration. The goal is to make the specific rural area comfortable and acceptable for the life and work of its population.