



## International Seminar

# “Cooperation Projects - interregional and international dimension”

Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

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Mikołajki - POLAND

## “The informal LEADER networks and their role in the promotion of LEADER approach”

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# Networking under LEADER method

***"networking = providing organized and professional support for LAGs"***

- *... a network bringing people together to...*
- *... exchange experience and knowledge....*
- *... boost ideas, thinking, innovation and quality...*
- *... have people feel stronger because being part of a greater unit..*
- *... play the role of mediator between people with different approaches*
- *... find project partners and develop cooperation...*
- *... inform and promote rural development actions...*
- *... promote transparency of practices and of results..*



# different types of rural development networks in EU:

1. **Institutional networks** funded by the European Commission, which defines also their role;
  - The EU supports networking structures at both European and national level which bring together LEADER groups, administrations, and all other interested partners active in rural development.;
  - From 2007 onwards the types of institutional network will be (Reg EU 1698/05):
    - *a **European Network for Rural Development - ENRD** (run by the Commission);*
    - *a **National Rural Network**, to be set up in each Member State;*

## different types of networks:

2. **Informal networks** at European, National, regional and local level not funded by the European Commission;
- They are established at **voluntary basis** and consist of :
    - Networks or associations of LEADER groups or other rural actors that have been set up or have emerged more informally at **local, regional or national level** in some Member States (e.g. the National LEADER Networks of Irish, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Hungarian and Greek LAG's);
    - at **European-level** ;
      - the network **PRE**-accession **PA**rtnership for **R**ural **E**urope (PREPARE),
      - the **E**uropean **LEADER** **A**ssociation for **R**ural **D**evelopment (ELARD),
      - the network **E**uropean **R**ural **A**lliance (ERA),
      - the network **E**uropean **CO**uncil for the **V**illage **A**nd **S**mall **T**own (ECOVAST),

# The various types of LEADER and rural development networking

1. The character of **official network units** is one of **technical assistance**: a network unit ought to *provide technical support* to actors, members and target groups with their day to day tasks and thus have a direct bearing on local implementation;
2. The character of **informal network units** being more of a **lobbying function**:
  - *to represent the **interests** of its members and to ensure effective representation of rural interests;*
  - *to play the role of **interface** between the actors and the decision makers at national and European level (advocacy role);*
  - *to be a strong and **influential** partner;*
  - *and be able to have a **direct** bearing on policy development;*

# ELARD

European LEADER Association for  
Rural Development



EUROPEAN LEADER ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT



# Identity

1. International non-profit organization founded in 1999 by European national LEADER networks :
  - *French LEADER Network;*
  - *Greek LEADER Network;*
  - *Irish LEADER Network;*
  - *Italian LEADER Network;*
  - *Spanish LEADER Network;*
2. Today, ELARD by expanding its members is representing more than **800 Local Action Groups** through national and regional voluntary networks in:
  - *France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, United Kingdom, Belgium, Finland;*
3. In contact with Rural Networks in *Slovenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Cyprus;*





EUROPEAN LEADER ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

# Network members of ELARD

- Romania

Association for zone development Medgidia – LAG Medgidia

- Italy

AssoGal Toscana – Associazione dei GAL Toscani

- Ireland

Comhar LEADER na hEireann

- Greece

Greek LEADER+ Network

- Hungary

Hungarian LEADER Alliance





# Network members of ELARD

- France

LEADER FRANCE

- Lithuania

LITHUANIAN RURAL COMMUNITIES UNION

- Portugal

MINHA TERRA – Federação Portuguesa de Associações de Desenvolvimento Local

- Czech Republic

Národní síť Místních Akčních Skupin České republiky, o.s.



# Network members of ELARD

- Latvia

National “Latvian Rural Forum”

- United Kingdom

NORTHERN IRELAND LEADER NETWORK

- Spain

RED ESPAÑOLA DE DESARROLLO RURAL - REDR

- Poland

The Malopolska Network of LAGs

- Finland

Village Action Association of Finland (SYTY)



EUROPEAN LEADER ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

# ELARD aims

- One of the most important aims of ELARD is to:  
**"campaign to spread the philosophy, principles and reach of the LEADER method grounded in the seven specific features in order to achieve sustainable rural development across Europe".**
- The association aims also to:  
**"represent the interests and needs of its members in front of other international, European, and national institutions to liaise with other stakeholders and institutions working towards an integrated rural development, and to influence EU policies in favour of rural development".**
- ELARD supports members directly in their efforts **to carry out innovative work in the field of rural development.**

# ELARD aims

- support rural and regional development based on LEADER philosophy;
- promote experience exchange, sharing information and cooperation activities through its members, partners and European Institutions;
- influence European Policy on rural development taking in account the regional strength of local areas in Europe;
- To serve as a forum for the LAG's, the various NGO, rural groups and other organisations that wish to exchange their views and experiences on rural development and the future of rural areas in Europe;



# ELARD aims

- To serve as a link with similar networks and institutions that work towards an integrated rural development;
- To support the partners/members in their efforts to carry out innovatory actions in the field of rural development;
- To organise meetings and thematic conferences between different Local Action Groups (LAGs) at European level;
- To encourage initiatives that will lead to cooperation;



# Join ELARD

- website : [www.elard.eu](http://www.elard.eu)

New website with full content , newsletter list, forum, registration and process for new member application.

- Offices in Brussels:

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