

Focus Group 3 (FG3):

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURE "COOPERATION" IN LEADER



**LEADER**  
EESTI



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## FG3: Main Issues

1. Different timing in decision-making and different administrative rules
2. Different expectations towards beneficiaries in different programmes
3. Information needs of different partners involved in TNC implementation
4. What are the key areas in which cooperation projects are most needed - what issues and how would that fit or contribute to the regional/national EU strategy?



## FG3: Participation & Process

- Representatives from fifteen Member States and one NGO expressed interest
- Representation: LAGs, MAs, PAs and NRNs
- 3 virtual meetings (web), 2 physical meetings (hosted by co-chairs)
- Actual involvement & extent of contribution varied.



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# FG3: Proposals for Solutions

Proposals were classified by feasibility and impact:

- *High priority:* solution assumed feasible & recommended to take place as soon as possible
- *Second priority:* suggestions for the future



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# Different timing in decision-making and different administrative rules (1)

## ***Different timing in decision-making***

Ongoing application or periodical calls, different approval processes

→ Delays to the start of projects

- Solution 1: Facilitate communication among MAs:
  - Contact lists of TNC Managers (MAs/PAs/NRNs) on the Contact Point's web site
  - More exchange, cooperation & joint problem solving between TNC Managers
- Solution 2: The timing of periodical calls, where applied, should be harmonised & kept to an adequate number of calls (3 calls per year)
- In the future: the maximum timeframe from submission of the TNC project application to its approval should be set for 6 months by each Member State.



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# Different timing in decision-making and different administrative rules (2)

## ***Absence of preparatory technical support***

→ Preparatory technical support for TNC projects is not available in all MS.

- Solution: where no option for preparatory technical support exists, provision should be made by other means for travel and negotiation costs
- In the future: include preparatory technical support in RDPs

## ***Differences in the maximum level of funding***

→ The maximum level of funding for TNC projects might vary considerably in different Member States

- Solution: preference not to set max. or min. levels of funding to maintain flexibility. Instead, communicate relevant examples of eligible costs to illustrate how funding requirements are coped with



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# Different timing in decision-making and different administrative rules (3)

## ***Differences in documentation requirements***

- Solution 1: Provision of basic documentation requirements through the Guide on the measure 'Cooperation', as a means of communicating examples
- Solution 2: A database on national administrative procedures (referred to later under 'Information Needs')
- In the future: Letters of intent or a provisional agreement should be considered sufficient at the stage of TNC project application



# Different expectations towards beneficiaries in different programmes (1)

## *Definition of "common action"*

RDPs apply different criteria to define **"common actions"**.

→ Need to communicate existing definitions.

- Solution: Where existing, provision of national definition of common action by means of TNC administrative procedure fiches (referred to later under 'Information Needs').
- In the future: Complement the current definition of common action in the Guide on the measure 'Cooperation' with typical examples as and when Member State information becomes available, to reduce uncertainty.



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# Different expectations towards beneficiaries in different programmes (2)

## ***Funding of common costs***

- Common costs are activities shared among partners. An invoice related to common costs is examined by different authorities with a risk of contradictory decisions taken
- Solution: Where existing, provision of information about eligible and/or not eligible costs by means of the TNC administrative procedure fiches.
- In the future 1: Limitation of the definition of common costs to general cost categories to provide for maximum flexibility (specifics to dealt with at cooperation agreement level).
- In the future 2: Unrestricted support to common action by avoiding territorial restrictions being applied to common costs.



# Information needs of different partners (1)

## ***Sharing information is of key importance***

- Central concern was the absence of information about different rules, timing of project-calls, approval of projects and the way to monitor the process
- Solution: TNC administrative procedure fiches with comparable information - the most appropriate way to inform LAGs, including:
  - Selection procedure details.
  - Financial framework: min/max financing available
  - Typical examples of eligible common costs (or link to info source)
  - Typical examples of common actions



## Information needs of different partners (2)

- Solution 1: ENRD Contact Point to circulate the agreed template for TNC administrative procedures for completion by MAs which have not replied to the previous TNC survey.
- Solution 2: ENRD Contact Point to collect relevant information from the Member States to prepare and post on the ENRD website:
  - List of TNC managers in National Rural Networks
  - List of TNC managers in Managing Authorities
  - List of TNC managers in Paying Agencies;
- Solution 3: ENRD and Leader Subcommittee to consider the organisation of 'technical meetings' for TNC managers.



# Information needs of different partners (3)

## ***Information exchange between Managing Authorities delivering transnational cooperation grants***

- Solution: ENRD Contact Point to collect relevant information from the MS to prepare and post on the ENRD website:
  - List of TNC managers in charge of SFC project approval notifications
  - List of periodicities of calls for TNC applications (where applicable).



# What are the key areas in which cooperation projects are most needed

## *Views of the Focus Group participants:*

- Neither thematic restrictions nor fixed ideas for TNC projects should be written into the RDPs or local action plans of LAGs. A TNC project contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the local development is considered sufficient.
- More examples are needed to inspire & activate and should be disseminated as and when becoming available. At this stage partnership offers collected by the Contact Point may provide trend information.



## FG3: Concluding Remarks

### ***The experience of TNC varies significantly***

→ This was expressed by the needs expressed by FG 3 participants:

- Actors with less TNC-experience are looking for rather strict guidelines
- More experienced actors advocate for more flexibility and degrees of freedom.



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## FG3: Questions for Discussion (1)

1. Different timing in decision-making and different administrative rules
  - *Beyond proposed solutions what do you suggest to encourage exchange, cooperation & joint problem solving among NRN/MA/PATNC Managers?*
  - *Is it feasible to synchronise periodical project calls, and how?*
  - *Do you see options to finance travel/accommodation if specific preparatory technical support is not foreseen?*



## FG3: Questions for Discussion (2)

2. Different expectations towards beneficiaries in different programmes
  - *Definition of ‘common action’: can you foresee to support FG3 with the collection and collation of typical examples?*
  - *Funding of ‘common costs’: can you foresee to support FG3 with typical examples of eligible or not eligible costs (or case studies how the issue has been approached/solved in your country)?*



## FG3: Questions for Discussion (3 & 4)

3. Information needs of different partners involved in TNC implementation
  - *Are TNC administrative procedures in place, enabling you to complete the Contact Point template (programmes for which information has not been provided yet)?*
  - *Beyond proposed solutions, what do you suggest?*
4. What are the key areas in which cooperation projects are most needed?

