



European Commission

Issue 77

31 March, 2008



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Flash News

Leader+ Observatory

FOCUS

Cooperation under the Leader+ initiative

At the beginning of January 2008 a survey requesting key information on cooperation under Leader+ was sent to the Managing Authorities of the EU-15. The survey results were then analysed by the Leader+ Contact Point and the initial findings presented at the Leader+ Observatory Steering Committee, March 12, 2008.

Nearly 80 000 projects were approved during the Leader+ initiative, and of these, 2 188 were cooperation projects (1 330 interterritorial and 858 transnational cooperation projects). One quarter of cooperation projects were targeted at women or youth. In terms of participation in interterritorial cooperation projects, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Luxembourg and Greece are the countries where all their LAGs have been involved, while the EU average LAG participation is 83%. In the case of transnational cooperation, then the EU average is 69%. Only three Member States, Ireland, Luxembourg and Sweden had all of their LAGs in transnational cooperation. That some countries are more active participants in cooperation projects can be explained by the differences between Member States in terms of: the actual number of LAGs; the financial and administrative systems; and the Managing Authorities' commitment to cooperation.

According to the survey results, the total budget spent on Leader+ projects is EUR 4,4 billion with 40 % European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) contribution. The total budget spent on cooperation projects is EUR 0,2 billion, where the EAGGF contribution on the total is 49%.

Member States were also asked to rank the different countries according to their project partners. In order of popularity, the results showed partners coming from: the United Kingdom; Germany; Spain; Italy; Ireland and Portugal. In terms of origin of partners, cross border favorites exist between: Austria- Germany; Ireland- the United Kingdom; and Spain-Portugal. Therefore a degree of geographical clustering can be seen, namely: Nordic states prefer to cooperate with other Nordic countries; and the same can be stated about the Mediterranean countries. On average, each Member State cooperated with a total of 12 other countries. Since transnational cooperation projects can also involve non Leader+ groups outside the EU, projects were implemented with the participation of the following non- EU partners, including: Brazil, Morocco, Switzerland, Tunisia etc.

More details from this analysis will soon be available from the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/steercom/index_en.htm

Development of rural environment through tourism

3-4 April, 2008

Valencia, Spain

This international congress will be organised by the FEVADER (Valencian Federation of Rural Development), the [ADLYPSE](#) (Valencian Community Local Development Agents Association) with the technical assistance of the [Florida Centre de Formació](#). Over two days, the conference will bring together those involved in local development, such as: LAG members; experts; decision makers; researchers; and interested citizens, in order to share experiences of rural tourism. It also aims to draw up some concrete proposals which will have a special focus on the improvement of housing and complementary activities. For more information please contact [Ms. Inma Mora](#) or phone +34 96 122 03 84.



Leader Alps: competence through cooperation

10-11 April, 2008

Ötz, Tyrol, Austria

This workshop will be organised by LAG Imst, the regional management of the Imst region, Tyrol, Austria. The workshop will focus on Tyrolean possibilities to fund projects on renewable energies through the Leader axis in the new funding period. Representatives from the Swiss state secretariat for economy will also present the new Swiss regional policy. The aim is to get people to think about rural development opportunities linked to Leader in the Alpine region. For more information please contact [Dr. Daniel Wibmer](#).

Insights into the strategies and impacts of farmers' collective action

8 May, 2008

Brussels, Belgium

The research project entitled 'Encouraging collective farmers marketing initiatives' (COFAMI) has sought to identify the social, economic, cultural and political factors that help or hinder the development of collective marketing initiatives. The research activities have involved an assessment of the positive and negative effects of existing policy and support measures. What has been the most appropriate level of policy formulation and implementation for supporting COFAMIs (EU, national, regional, local level) has also been examined. The conference will

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present key results from the COFAMI project, and provide a platform for stimulating discussion between researchers, policy makers and stakeholders. It will look at the potential of collective farmers' action to address the challenges facing European agriculture and rural areas, as well as possible strategies and measures to support them. Please note that the deadline for registration is 30 April. For further details please contact [Heidrun Moschitz](mailto:Heidrun.Moschitz).

The tenth European day of parks: nature bridging borders

24 May, 2008

Various European locations (see [europarc web-site](http://europarc.org))

This event was launched by the [EUROPARC Federation](http://europarc.org) with the aim of raising the profile of Europe's protected areas and generating public support for their work. Every year since 1999 a variety of events have been organised in and about protected areas across Europe. This year, Europe's protected areas are invited to join in the celebrations and promote any of the following themes: park festivals; guided walks and excursions; open days in visitor centres; publications; posters; exhibitions; concerts; television broadcasts; competitions etc. You can register your event [on-line](#). For more information please contact [EUROPARC](http://europarc.org).

Open farm Sunday 2008

1 June, 2008

United Kingdom

As part of this event, farmers across the United Kingdom will open their farm gates to the public for one day. The campaign, now in its third year, is organised by [Linking Environment and Farming \(LEAF\)](http://leafuk.org), and provides an excellent opportunity for children and adults to learn more about where their food comes from and the environment in which they live. Activities during the day may include: a farm walk; a nature trail; tractor and trailer rides; pond dipping; mini farmers' markets; picnics etc. If you wish to open up your farm for this event, you can register [on-line](#). For more information please e-mail: enquiries@leafuk.org.

Green week 2008

3-6 June, 2008

Brussels, Belgium

This event organised by the European Commission will take a closer look at the sustainable use of natural resources. It will focus on waste management, sustainable consumption and production, and provide a unique opportunity for debate, exchanges of experience and best practice. Targeted groups include: non-governmental organisations; businesses; various levels of government; and the public. Registration begins in April 2008 and will remain open until the start of the conference. The event will also be complemented by an exhibition. To be present as an exhibitor and for more information please e-mail ENV-GW2008@ec.europa.eu.

Opportunities and rewards for regional development through ICT: new paradigms – new challenges

11-13 June, 2008

Newport, South Wales, the United Kingdom

Organised by [eris@](http://eris.org) (the European Regional Information Society Association), this seminar will provide an important opportunity for

regions to: share their experiences; exchange good practices; and to build new collaborative projects. It will also be possible to debate some of the strategic policy issues and associated technology challenges that they face. The targeted audience of the conference includes: European, national and regional policy decision makers; information society practitioners; those responsible for regional development; members of the European networks and projects concerned with local and regional development and the information and knowledge based society; and the European ICT industry etc. For further information please contact [eris@ Office](mailto:eris@Office).



COOPERATION CORNER

Partner search tool

Finding partners for cooperation on Leader+ projects concerns many LAGs. If you have specific information about a cooperation event or project, you can send us details. Remember also to use the Partner Search Tool, which you can find on both European and national Leader+ sites.

A French LAG, with one of Europe's most important oak forests on its territory, is looking for potential project partners in order to create a virtual project about oak. The project will be built around the following topics: production zones according to types of wood and types of soil; different uses of oak: associated professions and industries; characteristics and particularities; creation of a virtual arboretum; and an initiative to associate school children of the partner LAGs. For more information please contact [Yveline Dubillon](mailto:Yveline.Dubillon).

This project is looking for partners. You could be one of them! Learn more about this proposal by consulting the partner search tool via the above-mentioned link.



COMPETENCE CORNER

Leader competence pool

[The Leader Competence Pool](http://The.Leader.Competence.Pool) (LCP) allows Leader actors to share with others the experience and expertise they have gained under the Leader initiative. Registration to the pool is free and is open to all those who have contributed to the Leader programme at local, national or European level.

If you feel you are a suitable candidate, then please [register](#) and publish your profile. For more information please contact: LCP-info@leaderplus.org.



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European Commission

Published by:

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This publication does not necessarily express the official views of the Commission.

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