



COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

TRAINING MANUAL

**Training for Local Actors and Urban Local Action Groups on
Community Led Local Development (CLLD) and how to increase the
impact of Local Action Groups in Marginalized Urban Areas (MUA)**



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Context

An attention directed towards vulnerable groups such as Roma and their inclusion in Local Development Programs activities is essential. In this context, the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) process represents a promising tool, because it aims at establishing local development strategies aimed at improving the quality of life, the empowerment and participating of all citizens in Marginalised Urban Areas (MUAs).

After the year 2016, we started training for the members of Local Action Groups (LAG), of Local Public Authorities (LPAs), of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and members of the Roma community from rural LAGs, taking into account the results and the positive feedback received for them we started a similar process for the Urban LAGs (ULAG).

This initiative also comes in response to requests from Roma NGOs and from community members who became members of Urban Local Action Groups (ULAGs) and who didn't know what their role was and how to participate in ULAG structures as efficient as possible for the communities they came from.

If, during the 2007-2013 program period, the LEADER program was the only one in Romania to promote the CLLD principles and which had a specific and explicit approach to the inclusion of Roma and other marginalized groups in the 2014-2020 programming, the bottom-up approach, was also found in urban programs targeting Marginalised Urban Areas (MUAs) in particular.

At present, there are 37 LAGs in Romania that have local development strategies approved for funding through the HCOP and ROP programs and have already begun the process of implementing the measures included in the MUA Local Development Strategies (LDS).

All 37 strategies finalized in Romania targeted MUA in which the disadvantaged population was majority Roma and the measures of those strategies were integrated measures meant to improve the life of the MUAs population.

Given that in most MUAs from Romania (some of them included in the Marginalized Urban Areas Atlas of World Bank) the population living in these areas has a very low level of education and no experience of civic participation and involvement in solving community problems, we considered it imperative to provide information and facilitate direct dialogue between them and other actors within the ULAG.



Aim, objectives and target group

The main aim of the proposed training is to increase the involvement of Roma community members in the work of Urban Local Action Groups (ULAG)

Objectives:

1. The dissemination of relevant information about the CLLD within the ULAG, of members of their legal entities and individuals and of Local Public Authorities (LPAs);
2. The development of communication between ULAG and LPA team members with Roma NGOs and individuals of Roma origin;
3. The support and counselling in order to address / apply for financial support for the implementation of ULDS, especially with reference to the participation of Roma communities as equal shareholders.
4. The building of a connection and the development of a relationship between Roma communities and NGOs or other actors from the territory of urban LAGs and the management of urban LAGs through transparency and equal principles and opportunities.

Target groups:

A sample of 30 people is used in this activity:

- 10 persons from ULAG, two persons per ULAG, preferably the animator and the manager;
- 20 persons representing potential beneficiaries of ULAG: public authorities and / or NGOs, preferably one representative for each party and citizens, MUA members.

The number of recommended participants is 6 from each ULAG: 2 of the LAG team, 2 potential beneficiaries (LPA and NGO) and 2 community members.

Participants' profile:

Two distinct groups of participants are used for this activity. 30 people are to be divided into two groups:

1. **The LAGs managerial team - the fund manager and an LPA representative:** In this case, two of ULAG's management team members are particularly concerned: the ULAG manager, the animator and the person in charge of the ULAG within the town/city hall. They need to better understand how they can communicate with the Roma community, how they can work within this community, and how they can involve Roma in the strategy implementation process in order to become active members of the ULAG. At the same time, they need to



establish direct and concrete contacts with the Roma and other local actors working with or for the Roma.

2. Local public authorities: This category includes those responsible for projects within the specific department, the mayor or local councillors or any other person from the municipality who is responsible for the implementation of the ULAG strategy. They must learn to listen to, identify and better understand the problems of Roma and find solutions with them in accordance with their specific needs. They also need to better understand how ULAG works.
3. Roma or (pro) Roma NGOs - which receive funds: In this case reference is made to the representatives of the Roma NGO members from the ULAG, but also of the pro-Roma NGOs that can submit projects in the ULAG areas, using ULAG funds and targeting the Roma group.
4. Members of the MUA Roma community: Natural persons/ individuals may be LAG founding members and / or people with influence within the ULAG identified within the MUA territory, that can help improve communication with MUA residents.

Training agenda:

1st Day
9.00 – 10.00: Participants registration
10.00 – 11.30
Participants: The team of Local Action Groups (LAG), Local Public Authorities (LPA) Non-governmental organisations (NGO), Natural persons members of LAG (NP)
Section I The specificities of Roma communities (social, economic and cultural perspectives). Techniques and methods of inter-ethnic communication.
11.30 -12.00 Coffee break
12.00 – 13.30
Participants: The team of Local Action Groups (LAG), Local Public Authorities (LPA) Non-governmental organisations (NGO), Natural persons members of LAG (NP)
Section II: CLLD principles – community development: a chance for the development of marginalised communities.
13.30 – 15.00 Lunch break
15.00 -16.30
Participants / in groups

The team LAG, LPA	NGO, NP
Section III: The relation between urban LAGs and other local actors: transparency and cooperation	Section III: Functioning and financing rules of LAGs – Urban NFLAG
16.30 -17.00 Coffee break	
17.00 – 18.30	
Participants / in groups	
The team LAG, LPA	NGO, NP
Section IV: The development of urban LAGs External financing opportunities for ULDS	Section IV: The role of local actors in LAGs
2nd Day	
9.30 - 10.30	
Participants: The team of Local Action Groups (LAG), Local Public Authorities (LPA) Non-governmental organisations (NGO), Natural persons members of LAG (NP)	
Section V: Project development and the specificities of managing projects financed through the LEADER/LAG programme: how to develop specific guides	
10.30- 11.00 Coffee break	
11.00 – 12.00	
Participants / on groups	
The team LAG, LPA	NGO, NP
Section VI: Functioning and financing rules of LAGs – the assistance of beneficiaries	Section VI: The realisation of guides. Key elements, the contribution of beneficiaries
13.00-14.00 Lunch break	
14.00 – 16.00	
Participants: The team of Local Action Groups (LAG), Local Public Authorities (LPA) Non-governmental organisations (NGO), Natural persons members of LAG (NP)	
Section VII: The identification of cooperation and activation methods of MUZ member to actively get involved in	
16.00-16.30 Coffee break	

16.30 – 17.30

Participants:

The team of Local Action Groups (LAG), Local Public Authorities (LPA)
Non-governmental organisations (NGO), Natural persons members of LAG (NP)

Section VIII:

The inclusion of proposal specific to community members in future projects

Section 1: The specificities of Roma communities

a) Social, economic and cultural perspectives

Title	I am.....
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants get to know each other ▪ Increase interaction among participants ▪ Develop communication between participants.
Duration	20-30 minutes
Description	<p>Participants are arranged in a circle and are offered a sheet of paper, then asked to note down their name and 10 things to describe themselves (hobbies, education, family, favourite things).</p> <p>After this activity, a person is asked to say his/her name and state a characteristic about him/her out loud. The other participants are asked to verify their sheet of paper and if they have the same characteristic to raise their hands, say their names and erase this characteristic from their lists.</p> <p>The following participant will do the same thing, say his/her name and a characteristic, and so on. Each time, the characteristic mentioned has to be the first one on their list which isn't cut off yet.</p> <p>When all characteristics have been cut off, then an 11th characteristic may be added to the list.</p> <p>In the end, the facilitator will offer badges for each participant to write their names on and the characteristic they have read out.</p>
Resources	40 sheet of paper, 40 pens, 40 badges

The specificities of Roma communities:

Title	Roma in our area are....
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help participants get to know each other ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on Roma from the LAG area; ▪ Develop communication between participants.
Duration	20-30 minutes
Description	<p>The facilitator prepares a list with 30 statements on Roma, some true and some false (See Appendix 1), which are read to the group and confirmed with the group if these are true or false.</p> <p>Each answer demands explanation, so that the other participants may learn more from the explanation received.</p> <p>In the case a Roma doesn't offer an explanation, the trainer must do so, after being properly informed.</p>
Resources	A list of questions

Appendix 1: Roma in our area are...
In Romania 650 000 Roma have been registered
Roma from the Timis district belong to the "Caldarari" ("boiler builders") tribe.
Roma raise horses.
Roma from the ... village, work in agriculture.
Roma people move abroad.
Roma from the ... village are a traditional community.
Roma women from the ...village need education.
Roma children from the ...village marry at young ages.
Roma from the ...village dress in cheap clothing.
Roma from the ...village build pipes/baskets of rod/ (other local handcrafts)
Roma men decide what activities are realized inside their house
Roma children need a school mediator in order to go to school.
Roma pupils don't go to school because they don't understand Romanian.
Roma from the ...village are good musicians.
In the.... Roma community gypsy law is practiced.
Roma are afraid of doctors.
The health mediator from the... village helped Roma families.
Roma from the ...village are isolated because of the poor infrastructure.
Roma from the ...village don't have identity cards.
In Roma families children are very important.
Roma from the ...village consider traditions very important.
Roma people from the ...village speak Romani.
Until 1856 the Roma were slaves in Romania.
Roma from the ...village speak Hungarian.

Roma from the ...village are Baptist.
Roma refuse to have legal business and pay taxes.
The village needs road and sidewalk reparations in the Roma community.
Roma people don't want to work in agriculture.
In the village children need afterschool services.
Family connections inside Roma communities are strong.

The Romanian example:

Romania is the European country with the largest Roma minority. According to the European Council and to civil society estimates, between 1.800.000 and 2.500.000 Roma are now living in Romania, of which more than 60% live in rural areas. 80% of the Roma population live under the poverty threshold and 84% of them have no connection to utilities (water, electricity and sewage). These challenges are the main reason for giving the Rural Development Programmes a very important role in the process of inclusion and in increasing participation of Roma as equal citizens at all levels of the society.

1 out of 5 people who enter the labour market in Romania are Roma. This number underlines the importance of investing in the development, inclusion and participation of the Roma population at all levels of the social and economic life because they can ensure demographic growth and a potential social base for development.

Approximately 60% of all Roma communities live in poor conditions, with more than 50% of the total Roma population living inside these communities. The largest concentration of people with Roma ethnicity is found in communities of more than 500 people and in medium sized communities with a population between 200 and 500 people.

In general, the size of Roma communities is increased:

- from the rural environment to the urban one,
- from those at the periphery to the central.

The highest concentration of poor people with Roma ethnicity is found in developed villages and in small towns. Roma who live in poor Roma communities possess lower educational levels, a small temporary foreign migration rate and a traditionalist value orientation (and mainly speak Romani language).

Roma communities that are very poor also lack infrastructure, road accessibility, income and human resources capital as a result of poor educational experiences and of relatively small migration rates. This observation indicates that the classification proposed is especially relevant for projects that target the reduction of poverty and social inclusion for Roma communities.

A variation of the poverty level in Roma communities has been observed, taking into consideration traditional cultural groups as "Roma nations". The poorest cultural groups seem to be those of "brick builders", which represents 8% of the poor Roma communities.



The hierarchy is continued by the “Rudari” and the “Vatrasi”. The seriousness of social problems, perceived at a general level, is greater in poor neighbourhoods, with a decreased population percentage, representing another ethnicity living in the same area/community. The minimum guaranteed income and occasional activities represent the main income sources of Roma inhabitants.

Details for the association of income sources to different communities:

- The minimum guaranteed income represents a specific income source for communities found at the peripheries of villages;
- Occasional activities represent an income source that is characteristic to large cities and towns;
- Salaries are specific to Roma communities from urban areas;
- Agriculture represents the third income source for Roma who live in rural areas.

The local Roma elite perceive as main problems those connected to the lack of employment or lack of income. Roma communities have a low professional occupation rate/a low working force and a low (and uncertain) income level as a result of poor educational resources, in the context of a low general offer of jobs for unqualified persons, and sometimes, as a result of discrimination observed during the hiring process. Poor living and health conditions go hand in hand with poor employment conditions. Problems with housing and health are also the result of residential segregation.

The hierarchy of objective social problems, as offered by a data analysis, indicates the fact that most acute problems are connected to income sources, to housing accessibility and infrastructure: 74% of Roma communities have severe income problems, 67% have problems regarding housing accessibility and 23% have problems connected to infrastructure (electricity, drinkable water etc.)

b) Inter-ethnic communication techniques and methods

Title	Presentation and discussion
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on inter-ethnic communication
Duration	20-30 minutes
Description	The facilitator presents a ppt. presentation with definitions of communication and initiates a discussion between LAG animators and potential beneficiaries, with the aim of brainstorming possible communication barriers. The results are put down on the flipchart so that the group develops a list of recommendations for the animator on how to overcome these barriers, and in order to facilitate communication between potential facilitators and the Roma community.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flipchart, markers ▪ Video-projector

Most frequent communication blockages stem from ignoring certain communicational barriers during a communication process. Ignoring them throughout a longer period will lead to conflict situations and in the end to the suspension of communication relations.

Types of inter-ethnic communication blockages and methods to combat them

In order to eliminate these blockages, self-evaluation and knowledge about the most frequent blockage elements during the process of daily communication is needed. Thus, the following can be observed:

- Perception differences.* The ways in which one looks at the world is influenced by previous experiences, thus people of different age, nationalities, cultures, education, occupation, gender, temperament etc, will have different perceptions on things and will interpret situation in different ways. Differences in perception are often the root of communication barriers.
- Hasty conclusions.* Often people see what they want to see and hear what they want to hear, thus avoiding seeing the reality. This may lead to the statement "Two plus two is five".
- Stereotypes.* By permanently learning from one's experiences will meet the risk of treating different people as being the same one.
- Lack of knowledge.* An efficient communication is difficult, especially if the other person has a different education and a different level of knowledge about the topic of discussion. The person who starts the communication must be aware of differences between the knowledge levels and adapt accordingly.
- The lack of interest.* One of the greatest barriers is the lack of interest of the speaker related to the message transmitted. People are often more interested in one's own problems, not in others. Where a lack of interest is obvious and understandable, one must

- skilfully act in order to direct their message, so that it fits the interests and needs of the person receiving the message.
- f) *Expression difficulties*. If the transmitter has problems in finding proper words to express ideas, this will certainly represent a barrier in communication and, inevitably, must contribute to an enrichment of one's vocabulary. The lack of confidence, which may also cause difficulties in communication, may be defeated by careful planning and preparing of messages to be transmitted.
 - g) *Emotions*. Strong emotions can be responsible for an almost complete blockage of communication. One method of fighting this blockage would be an avoidance of communication when powerful emotions are felt. Too strong emotions may cause incoherence or may definitively change the meaning of messages transmitted. Still, at times, the one receiving these messages may be less impressed by the person speaking with no emotion or enthusiasm, considering him/her boring – thus emotions may sometimes become a catalyst of communication.
 - h) *Personality*. Not only differences between different types of personalities may cause problems, but at times the perception of people around us may be affected; thus, one's behaviour may influence that of the communication partner. This collision of two personalities represents one of the most frequent causes of failure in communication. People are not always capable of changing the personality of others but must be prepared to study one's personality in order to observe change in behaviour, which may generate satisfactory reactions.

Factors which may lead to communication blockages are:

a. The temporal factor

Any message is received in a certain time sequence. This sequence can be smaller or greater, according to the size of the message transmitted and to the flow of information. The meaning of the message is also built by the receiver according to the order of receiving different components of that message. The order in which different components of the message are transmitted may influence its general meaning.

Two possible effects are produced: **the primary effect**, when by decoding the message its first part is more important than the second part of the message, and **the secondary effect**, which refers to the opposite situation. The type of message transmitted also influences the type of effect observed: either primary or secondary. The importance of this fact may be explained by the way a message like "Grigore is intelligent, hardworking, fast, critical and envious" is not decoded as in the following statement "Grigore is envious, critical, fast, hardworking and intelligent".

b. Accentuation of perceptions

Different components of a message, independent of temporal dimensions, are irregularly received. In other words, certain sequences are accentuated due to contextual factors, which can influence one's attention and interest in receiving those messages.

Zick Rubin realized an experiment in which students, divided into two groups, were asked to read a text. The first group had to read a text on women and the second on oysters. After the reading activity, both groups received the same photo of a woman and they were asked to describe her. The two groups' descriptions were significantly different. The group who read the story about women accentuated women's sexual attributes, while the second groups had a more neutral description. Differences observed were a result of different influences received from the anterior communication context in accentuating certain types of messages in connection to others. The accentuation also referred in this example, to the fact that one group managed to observe the photographer's details while the other ignored them.

c. A self-fulfilling prophecy (Thomas' theorem)

Humans always define their situation at a subjective level. This definition also contains a communicational component. Thus, one expects certain types of messages from actors in a given situation. Because of these expectations people are more sensitive and focalised on these messages and thus receive these messages faster, usually giving them a higher importance as others.

There is a tendency that in the messages transmitted one also transmits messages similar to the definition offered to the situation, which can lead to an exchange of messages between the transmitter and the receiver that can influence the transformation of a subjective definition of the situation into a real situation.

If the situation was defined as potentially conflictual, this can imply that one gives greater importance to the components of the receiver's message that prove this conflict. It can also imply a tendency to transmit a feedback with "defence" and "attack" messages.

The natural tendency in any inter-personal communication process is to reach a common nomination, thus imposing the definitions of the one who has a greater persuasive capacity.

d. Stereotypes

Stereotypes are attributes people consider as belonging to a person based on the idea that a person belongs to a certain social group or to a certain category. In other words, there are attributes one considers as being culturally connected to certain groups of people.

For stereotypes to exist, a certain degree of visibility of a group of is necessary. In most occasions, stereotypes appear in communication by influencing the way in which messages are perceived.

If for example, messages like "Thinking is the coffee of the soul" or "Rich make poor" are mentioned by a Chinese, there is a tendency to perceive these messages as being "complex", "Full of meaning", and one might try to seek latent, connotative meanings. But if these messages are launched by another individual, the tendency is to interpret them at a denotative level and to consider them as lacking meaning, or as being less important. What is important in this case is not the interpretation and the decoding of messages according to different contexts of communication, but the different attention and interest offered to these messages.

e. Assuming and the assumption fundamental error

When speaking about the behaviours of others or about situations produced by others, the fundamental error of assuming is often produced. One may attribute external factors to success and internal factors to failures. If one receives a high grade at one exam, then one tends to consider the result as being caused by internal factors (I knew all the answers, I am intelligent and I knew what to answer, I am smart and I know what to learn and what not to learn etc.). If, instead, a low grade is given, one tends to consider it an unfavourable context (I had bad luck, I received a subject I couldn't solve, the teacher was angry etc.). If a colleague receives a good grade, then they might receive characterisations like "You were lucky!", and if he fails, then one has the tendency to say, "I was expecting this", or "they didn't manage".

One tends to perceive and decode information or components of messages with a priority offered to messages that confirm the fundamental assumption error.

The knowledge of the elements that may lead to a communication blockage confirms the need of an efficient communication act. At the same time, their recognition and the minimizing of their effects (when it is too late to avoid them) can intensify the relation between the teacher and the learner. In the same way these may be exemplified and used as active learning and teaching methods in the development of communicational and social competencies.

In conclusion one may state that errors are human, but more human would be their avoidance, especially when the consequences of ignoring them may be worse (leading even to the annulment of communication).

Section 2: CLLD Principles: Community development, a chance for disadvantaged communities

Title	Presentation and group work
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on CLLD; ▪ Increase the degree of participation of community members in the decision-making process; ▪ Increase the knowledge of LAG teams on the participative approach and its effects; ▪ Identify real community problems, which can be solved with the help of the ULAG's financial support.
Duration	90 minutes
Description	<p>The facilitator begins by presenting the CLLD principles and its history with the help of a PPT presentation (15 minutes), after which participants are asked to form 5 groups of 8 persons.</p> <p>Each group will have 4 ULAG participants and 4 community participants. If possible, the ULAG members should belong to the same ULAG, so that they know each other.</p> <p>Inside the group they will have the task of noting down a list of problems of disadvantaged communities and who is responsible for tackling these problems, using Appendix 2 (20 minutes).</p> <p>Then the trainer asks the group members to write in the third column of the appendix what citizens can do to solve these problems and how they can contribute to activities of responsible institutions to help solve these problems (20 minutes).</p> <p>After the two stages of discussions, results are presented (25 minutes).</p> <p>At the end of the exercise each group is asked to select one problem they believe they can solve by developing a project for the LAG. The LAG team will then explain potential beneficiaries what they can do to solve the problem by applying for a LAG measure.</p>
Resources	Appendix 2 printed on an A3 sheet of paper for each group, video-projector

Appendix 2		
Community name		
Problems	Who is responsible for solving this problem?	What can citizens/the community do to solve this problem?

Community-led local development programmes (CLLD) are a tool for the involvement of citizens at local level in the development of responses to social, environmental and economic challenges faced today.

CLLD is an approach that requires time and effort, but with relatively small financial investments it can have an important impact on people’s lives, and it can generate new ideas and shared commitment in putting these ideas into practice.

The European Commission expects CLLD to facilitate the implementation of integrated approaches for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), which refer to the application of 11 thematic objectives set out in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) at a local level. The Commission encourages the use of CLLD because it also allows local communities to own objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy in line with the Common Strategic Framework 1: “Member States shall promote the development of local and sub-regional approaches, in particular via community-led local development [...]”.

CLLD (Articles 32-35 of the CPR) is a relatively new tool to be used at a sub-regional level. It is based on the LEADER experience of community-led local development. It aims to strengthen synergies between local actors, both at a public and at a private level.

The articles mentioned are:

- (32) In order to facilitate a manageable approach to its integration into the programming process, the community-led local development can be carried out under a single thematic objective, either to promote social inclusion and combat poverty, or to promote employment and labour mobility, notwithstanding that actions financed as part of community-led local development could contribute to all other thematic objectives.

- (33) Where an urban or territorial development strategy requires an integrated approach because it involves investments under more than one priority axis of one or more operational programmes, it should be possible for action supported by the Funds, that can be complemented with financial support from the EAFRD or the EMFF, to be carried out as an integrated territorial investment within an operational programme or programmes.
- (34) Financial instruments are increasingly important due to their leverage effect on the ESI Funds, their capacity to combine different forms of public and private resources to support public policy objectives, and because revolving forms of finance make such support more sustainable over the longer term.
- (35) Financial instruments supported by the ESI Funds should be used to address specific market needs in a cost-effective way, in accordance with the objectives of the programmes, and should not crowd out private financing. The decision to finance support measures through financial instruments should be determined therefore based on an ex ante assessment, which has established evidence of market failures or sub-optimal investment situations and the estimated level and scope of public investment needs. The essential elements of the ex-ante assessments should be clearly defined in this Regulation. Given the detailed nature of the ex-ante assessment, provisions should be made allowing for the performance of the ex-ante assessment in stages and for reviewing and updating the ex-ante assessment during implementation.

CLLD is a method used to involve partners at a local level, including the civil society and local economic actors, in the designing and implementing of local integrated strategies that help their areas make a transition to a more sustainable future. It can be a particularly powerful tool, especially in times of crisis, showing that local communities can take concrete steps towards forms of economic development, which are smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive, in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy.

What is CLLD? Community-led local development programmes are:

- focused on specific sub-regional areas;
- led by local action groups composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, in which, at the decision making level neither public authorities, as defined in accordance with national rules, nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the voting rights;
- carried out through integrated and multi-sectorial area-based local development strategies;
- designed taking into consideration local needs and potential, and shall include innovative features in the local context, networking and, where appropriate, cooperation.

The fundamental conditions for using CLLD is that these principles improve on the results achieved by traditional, centralised top down approaches. However, CLLD should not be regarded as competing with or opposed to top-down approaches from national, regional authorities or local authorities, but instead as a tool interacting with them, in order to achieve better overall results.

Table 1 (below) summarises the main advantages or added value of using CLLD in relation to its main principles:

Sub-regional areas. The local territorial approach (Article 32.2.a)	Funds are concentrated in the areas that need and can use them most. Solutions are adapted flexibly to meet their diverse needs and opportunities - at the right time and place.
Community led partnerships. Participatory and partnership approaches (Article 32.2.b)	Co-responsibility and ownership. No one interest group, whether public or private, dominates. The partnership mobilises the knowledge, energy and resources of local actors.
Integrated multi-sectorial local strategies (Article 32.2.c)	The actions reinforce each other and build on the strengths of the area. Linkages are improved horizontally with other local actors and vertically with other levels in delivery or supply chains. There may be different priorities and entry points.
Innovation (Article 32.2.d)	In a local context, the method generates new ways of thinking and doing - new markets, new products, services, ways of working and social innovation.
Networking and cooperation (Article 32.2.d)	Local areas and communities learn from each other and find allies for strengthening their position in a global economy.

The main advantages of bottom-up approaches are the following:

- Local actors have a better knowledge of local challenges that need to be addressed and the resources and opportunities available.
- Therefore, they can mobilise local resources for the development process in a way that does not happen with top-down approaches.
- This gives local actors a greater sense of ownership and commitment to the projects, which allows them to make the best of the local assets.
- However, the community-led approach can only be effective if it develops trust among stakeholders and is supported by enduring local structures with the necessary experience and expertise.

Based on the above, the establishment of Urban Local Action Groups and the implementation of integrated strategies that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of MUA residents, the partnership achieved gains legitimacy in local communities, increasing confidence in state institutions and civil society.

CLLD turns upwards, conventional approaches, in the opposite, by starting from the vision of local actors and where they want to go in the future, what they should change to get there. By meeting local needs in the first place, funding becomes just a means to accomplish this goal.

An appropriate and sustainable CLLD process must follow the following steps:

1. **Making a clear agreement** on "what needs to be changed" is the first and most important step in formulating a strategy, and it should not be rushed. On the contrary, conventional local development is often driven by funds. Local authorities apply for funding based on the deviation from the national average with respect to certain identified indicators. According to this scenario, local actors are just the links from the fund and service delivery chain.
2. **Building trust within the group.** This step usually takes place in parallel with the community's decision to change. It requires face-to-face contact, and enough time to discover the main concerns, hidden things, and historical errors behind these communities. This can be supported using formal tools such as "local actors' analysis" that include different local actors on a list according to a series of characteristics, such as their level of interest and ability to influence results. Individual or group can help clarify common long-term and short-term goals that can lead to quick gains and build support. They can also help to clarify the number of people and the level of involvement in creating a formal partnership. Before building a formal partnership structure, it is good to build trust and develop a work experience through informal action groups that can supervise the next steps.
3. **Defining the boundaries of the Area.** In this case, the CLLD again differs from downwards approaches, in that targeted areas don't need to have predefined administrative boundaries. However, national or regional authorities should indicate the types of areas that will be or will not be eligible and could provide clear criteria for their selection. Within these limits, local actors must decide which borders are best suited to achieving the goals. In other words, the first thing to ensure is that the area is large enough and has enough "critical mass" to accomplish objectives, and secondly, that it is not too large to risk losing control of the community. Ultimately, the rules should be "coherent" in physical, social and / or economic terms and in terms of strategy. However, the boundaries established for the strategy implementation are a clear delineation of Marginalized Urban Areas (MUA) - the area which is a focus of the strategy measures and of the Functional Urban Area (FUA) - the area surrounding the MUA and where services of the MUA population come from, which is also considered a buffer zone between MUA and the rest of the city. In the case of UCLLD, the territory targeted by the strategy may be more small areas represented by districts, streets or even buildings joined together by the FUA - Functional Urban Area. There are no clear rules on the size of MUA, it can include a whole city with a population of more than 20000 inhabitants.
4. **Preparing a local strategy for change** based on the involvement and needs of the local population (Strategy). Once there is an agreement on the willingness of the community to change, who can help in this and the area in which the intervention can take place, it is possible to move on to further details on how a local strategy can be prepared. This requires a clear and realistic knowledge of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in

that area as well as the community involvement, in order to understand how these factors have an impact on the main needs and how they can be addressed. The local development strategy becomes the CLLD implementation map and the partnerships select and support projects according to their contribution to the goals of the strategy. To support the preparation of high-quality strategies, the Commission has included a list of key components to be covered by that strategy and developed several key principles for CLLD.

5. **Making a partnership and clarifying the tasks of each (Partnership).** Local communities have different levels of capacity, a history of joint activities and / or conflicts, and different institutional cultures. For this reason, experience has shown that building a partnership that fits the reality of the local context is important. However, there are two different models of partnerships. The first, a totally new entity brings together local partners. It can take different forms, depending on the context (although most are non-profit associations). Regardless of the legal form adopted, the entity requires a representative from local stakeholders involved in the strategy, which is open, transparent and accountable to both the local population and the founders. The exact balance of the partners involved, and their decision-making power depends on local circumstances, but as mentioned above, a key feature of CLLD is that partnerships should not be dominated by a single public or private interest group. A second model can be used where there is a need or desire to create an additional structure and / or if there are clear benefits arising from the administrative capacity of an experienced partner. In this case, the experienced partner can become the "responsible structure" for legal and administrative objectives, while other partners form a sort of decision-making committee or project selection. However, the same principles of representativeness, openness, accountability and transparency apply here, as in the first model. In order to ensure the implementation of higher strategies through participatory and effective partnerships, the Commission has provided a list of the main tasks to be carried out. Each partnership needs to be sure that they have the skills and experience they need in the area where they work and whether they need to seek outside help. Both models described above can be used to coordinate multiple funding lines.

6. **Adjusting of boundaries (Area).** In the process of preparing the development and partnership building strategy, it becomes clear whether certain issues are easier to solve by including other parts of the territory or not. For example, a MUA needs to consider links with local jobs and other services, which lead to the establishment of a FUA to meet these needs. Similarly, a useful ally within the partnership may be beyond the original boundaries. It is also possible to improve the synergy between local initiatives funded by different EU funds by aligning them with the imposed boundaries. Finally, the national and regional criteria for selecting CLLD areas may require assistance in defining the area. For these reasons, the exact limits of intervention should be something fluid, which can be modified to adapt to changing circumstances. In fact, CLLD offers local gamblers a range of alternatives to solve problems at different levels. For example, adjacent local partnerships can focus individually on actions funded by a specific fund, and then they can use cooperative measures or jointly participate in other funding, which solves problems at different levels, and across borders. CLLD offers a flexible menu to ensure that borders are matched to local needs, rather than

being fixed at a certain point in time. In all cases, however, increasing the area requires careful management. Most pressures will lead to increased areas that can lead to the loss of a local identity and the loss of real community involvement.

7. **Preparing an action plan and applying for funding (Strategy).** Once a partnership is established, this wants to start the change and establish an "intervention logic", proving that this change can be measured, what actions should be taken to succeed. These intentions must be translated into a realistic action plan and an application for financing. There are many detailed guidelines on how to accomplish this step. At all stages, applicants are challenged to provide enough detail to make the plan credible, while flexibility is retained to respond to unforeseen circumstances. Member States, regional and local partnerships, face these challenges in different ways. However, it is important to prove that the program, human and financial resources devoted to the same type of activity, correspond to the needs identified above and have a reasonable chance of achieving the desired change. Similarly, the partnership must prove that it possesses the skills, systems and procedures that ensure the plan implementation in an efficient and transparent manner.
8. Establishing a system for reviewing, evaluating and continuously updating the strategy. As preparation for the last round of local development strategies begun in 2007, the situation with which local partners struggle in many countries was severely affected by the economic crisis. But even in relative stability times, partnerships require mechanisms to measure how the results are met and learn from mistakes and successes.

In reviewing the LEADER program, which was the first form of CLLD, the European Court of Auditors argued that monitoring, self-evaluation and external evaluation of local development strategies require improvement and the incorporation of regular activities as part of the practical learning cycle. While this is an area that still needs development, there are many guides to how actions can be done without losing in a lot of irrelevant data.

It takes time and effort to accomplish these eight steps. However, the Commission has improved the training support covering this situation. And even if this has been achieved, local people appreciate and enjoy the process of building a common map for the future.

CLLD implementation in urban areas has the goal of poverty alleviation / poverty reduction and social integration by stimulating an upwards association of actors in a territory that develops and implements integrated and multi-sector local development strategies.

In this respect, the HCOP (Priority Axis 5 – Community led local development) and the ROP (Priority Axis 9 - Supporting Economic and Social Regeneration of Disadvantaged Communities in the Urban Area) ensure the financial allocations necessary for the implementation of integrated local development strategies for cities with a population of over 20,000 inhabitants. These programs will finance only the LAGs established in the urban area.



The ROP and HCOP projects to be proposed for funding under CLLD Strategies will target complementary investments focusing on **infrastructure** (housing - social housing, social infrastructure - education, health, social services, renovation of degraded urban space and / or urban public spaces etc.) and on **services** (measures to encourage employment - including through social economy and social inclusion activities and community-based socio-medical services development, including the implementation of integrated community development activities - information / counselling / mediation, etc.).

Each area targeted by a local partnership (local action group) must meet the following at the same time:

- ✓ Have a total population (including the marginalized population) of at least 10,000 inhabitants and a maximum of 150,000 inhabitants;
- ✓ Be part of a city with a population of over 20,000 inhabitants;
- ✓ Be coherent (unitary) from an economic, social and physical point of view.

Territory may vary, as a form and delimitation, from a single area of a city (for example, a block ghetto area) to several areas of this type. The decision on the exact delimitation of areas belongs to local action groups, thus ensuring the specific conditions and goals of the local strategy.

1. Stages in the Community Led Local Development Process in Romania

In agreement with the HCOP¹ provisions, the CLLD implementation mechanism is structured in three stages, namely:

- **Stage I – The development of the Local Development Strategy**

Under Phase I of the CLLD mechanism, two calls for projects were launched within the HCOP to provide financial support for the establishment / adaptation of the LAG and the development of LDS in line with the CLLD requirements.

The development of LDS could also be achieved without preparatory support. However, the Local Development Strategies that have been submitted in Stage II have met all compliance and eligibility criteria, in agreement with the LDS Framework Model and Support Documents for the development of LDS.

- **Stage II – The Selection Local Development Strategies (LDS)**

- **Stage III – The selection and implementation of selected LDS projects**

¹ *Appendix 4 of the Human Capital Operational Program 2014-2020 available at http://old.fonduri-ue.ro/res/filepicker_users/cd25a597fd-62/2014-2020/po/HCOP/Programme_2014RO05M9OP001_1_4_en.pdf*

The process of evaluation and selection of ROP / HCOP projects related to the selected LDS will take place in two steps:

1. The realisation of a pre-selection of project proposals (on a project-based basis) based on a non-discriminatory and transparent procedure at the LAG level;
2. The submission to MA ROP / MA HCOP of grant applications for projects pre-selected / endorsed by the LAG for the final selection and approval of their funding.

The LAGs, the LDSs of which were selected for SELECTION COMMITTEE funding will organize their own pre-selection procedure for ROP / HCOP project proposals, based on National Guidelines provided by the 2 MAs. Within the pre-selection process organized by the LAG, representatives of RDA and RIO HCOP will also be involved as observers. The list of projects pre-selected by the LAG will be submitted to MAHCOP and MAROP for validation, within 3 months after starting the pre-selection process at the LAG level.

Grant applications for projects pre-selected / endorsed by the LAG will be submitted later in the call for proposals opened by the MA ROP, respectively MA HCOP, according to the specific Guidelines.

In the context of the information given, this Applicant's Guide regulates the conditions for the financing of the animation and functioning expenses of Local Action Groups, the Local Development Strategies of which have been selected for funding in the call for applications for the submission and selection of Local Development Strategies (Stage II of the CLLD mechanism).

Section 3. The relation between urban LAGs and the other local actors. Transparency and cooperation

Title	Transparency and cooperation
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants learn about roles of different actors
Duration	90 minutes
Description	Presentation of the content below
Resources	Powerpoint presentation

a. The Urban Local Action Group

The Urban Local Action Group (ULAG) is a form of partnership established in a city with more than 20,000 inhabitants bringing together representatives of the public, private sectors such as the civilian entity and individuals from that territory, created with the aim of realizing and implementing ULDS (Urban Local Development Strategies) promoting CLLD principles.

The Urban Local Action Group is a partnership formed of representatives of the local socio-economic interests of the public and private sectors: local authorities, NGOs, representatives of the private environment, of civil society, of neighbourhood associations, groups of citizens and individuals, where no interest group holds more than 49% of the voting rights and each member has the same power (in the general assembly each one has one vote).

In the Local Development Strategy (LDS) developed, the local partnership (Local Action Group) will identify the types of areas using two criteria: the size and consistency of the LDS territory.

1. requirements for the size of the territory concerned:
 - a) belong to a town / city with over 20,000 inhabitants;
 - b) target a population of 10,000 to 150,000 inhabitants (according to the provisions of (EU) Regulation No 1303/2013, article 33 paragraph 6)
2. requirements for CLLD specific consistency
 - c) to target economically, socially and physically coherent urban areas by coherently understanding their "functionality" to support the strategy objectives.

According to the applicant's guide for "Preparatory Support for Local Development Strategies (LDS)" - cities / municipalities with greater than 20,000 inhabitants, PA 5 / IP 9.vi/ OS 5.1., Published on the External Finances Ministry website www.fonduri-ue.ro, the marginalized community refers to the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in a territory targeted by CLLD interventions (also called LDS territory) covering one or more marginalized urban areas (MUA) together with the functional urban area of which they are part of. The LDS territory may vary in shape and delimitation, stretching to the limits of a larger city.

The relevant functional urban area is the existing area around / in the MUA proximity of the LDS, having a unitary and functional character from a social, economic, demographic point of view, etc. For example, in larger cities / municipalities one may consider less-favoured urban neighbourhoods, but the approach can also be applied in other urban areas (e.g. areas with certain types of housing / habitation, areas subject to industrial change, areas which present some environmental issues). The LDS territory may comprise a single neighbourhood or multiple neighbourhoods. Territory may vary in shape and delimitation from a single marginalized urban area of a town / city to several areas of this type. Thus, the territory may include one or more marginalized urban areas (such as block-ghetto areas) alongside the non-marginalized neighbouring areas over which MUAs have an impact (the functional urban area they are part of).

Urban Local Action Groups have the role of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of ULDS (Urban Local Development Strategy) in line with CLLD principles.

The ULDS implementation is based on the following administrative functions realized by ULAG:

- Taking operative decisions on the ULDS implementation (or early detection of problems);
- Daily management of the project;
- Operational and correct execution of the resource management procedures;
- Facilitating coordination between component activities;
- Monitoring and reporting in time project achievements and results;

- Designing a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and of objective selection criteria to avoid conflicts of interest that ensure, which guarantee at least 51% of the votes on selection decisions and which are expressed by partners who do not have the status of public authorities and allow for selection by written procedure, provided that the representation of each sector does not exceed 49% of total members of the selection committee;
- Insuring, with the selection of operations, consistency with local LPA development under the responsibility of the community, prioritizing operations based on their contribution to the objectives and targets of LDS;
- Preparing and publishing calls for proposals or a permanent procedure for the submission of projects, including the definition and dissemination of selection criteria;
- Receiving and evaluating applications for funding;
- Selecting operations, setting the amount of the contribution and submitting proposals to the body responsible for the final verification of eligibility before approval;
- Monitoring the implementation of ULDS and supported operations, as well as performing specific ULDS evaluation activities;
- Disseminating ULDS and results to local communities, decision-makers and any other interested parties;
- Making a rigorous and transparent financial management and ULDS implementation device with systematic collection and annual data structure;
- Implementing a monitoring system with interested local stakeholders;
- Developing a clear registration device and reporting to the MA some suggestions and remarks about ULDS implementation.

In order to accomplish these functions, ULAG will perform at least the following activities:

- a. The development and implementation of local development strategies;
- b. Staff training in order to develop and implement local development strategies and information strategies;
- c. The collection, analyse and dissemination of information referring to the state of community development, especially to marginalized areas, vulnerable groups, and initiatives to address the community challenges;
- d. The realization studies and analyzes on local conditions and resources;
- e. The setting up and animating expert networks to facilitate the knowledge exchange and to support the implementation and evaluation of local policies targeting marginalized areas and vulnerable groups,
- f. The organization of meetings, conferences, round tables, workshops;
- g. The organisation of communication sessions to disseminate papers, studies and strategies developed;
- h. The organisation of exchanges of experience and training sessions;
- i. The production of publications;
- j. The submission of applications for funding for projects calls specific to LAGs and the launching of calls for projects in accordance with the requirements and attributions described in the operational programs concerned;
- k. Accessing European and other funding to achieve the association purpose and objectives;

- l. The participation as a partner or project leader in the preparation and implementation of projects related to the association purpose and objectives;
- m. The organisation of the evaluation and decision processes for submitted projects;
- n. The monitoring and evaluation of projects;
- o. Collaborating with other organizations in order to achieve the purpose and objectives proposed;
- p. Other activities and means established by the General Assembly, in accordance with the law;
- q. The association may conduct any other direct economic activities if these have of an appendix nature and are closely related to the association stated objectives.

b. Transparency and cooperation

Community led local development (CLLD) represents a method of implementation that enables local partners to develop local development strategies based on MUA specific needs and priorities.

In our case, the urban LGAs are the associative structures that have assumed the community local led development (CLLD) process and which through a well-defined methodology, are responsible for the implementation of local urban development strategies.

Their role is to be those who manage the funds for the implementation of the local development strategy so that the indicators and outcomes created and assumed by local partnerships in strategies are met.

By obeying regulations and procedures, and by monitoring their compliance, including its members, the LAG has the role of being the structure that consistently promotes, monitors and supports governance that respects CLLD principles and ensures the participation of all members of the community in decision-making.

Transparency in LAGs is a very important element underpinning the cooperation between the actors involved in setting up the LAG and implementing the strategy. All information from the LAG is public and available to each LAG member and to each beneficiary or potential beneficiary of the LAG who, if desired and with the support of the community, can become a LAG member and a candidate for a position in the LAG leadership.

Transparency and information of ULAG members is ensured by:

- Regular meetings of ULAG members;
- Periodic meetings in the local community;
- Diverse promotional materials;
- The monitoring and evaluation of initiatives and projects implemented with ULAG support;
- Support granted to both financing beneficiaries and to those whom these financing address



to have access to the information related to the activity of the ULAG team and its beneficiaries.

To improve cooperation with community members, each ULAG must have on its team a Facilitator to facilitate cooperation between the ULAG team, potential beneficiaries and ULAG residents. The facilitator is the one who conveys and transmits the information related to the ULAG activity and the ULAG beneficiaries' projects into the community to the citizens living in the ULAG area.

Cooperation between LAG members and the mobilization of local communities is very important and these are the pillars behind the ULDS implementation and its successful implementation.

In order to mobilize communities, staff with communication and organizational skills are needed, e.g. a facilitator. Their task is to encourage members in particular and the more passive areas of the community to participate in the local development process by analyzing the local situation, identifying and developing possible projects, stimulating potential beneficiaries and assisting those with local project ideas to turn them into eligible projects for funding.

Key elements of mobilizing marginalized communities could imply:

- Mobilize resource people and community leaders. An important element in the process of mobilizing a marginalized urban community is to identify the resource people ("local supporters") and community leaders as well as convincing them to enter the project. The first step in mobilizing the community is to recognize and communicate that community members are resourceful.
- In addition to community leaders, valuable resource people can be identified among women in the community, who are well aware of the situation of children and mothers in the community (who represent the majority of the population) and can be easily mobilized in actions aiming at children's well-being.
- Involvement of an external facilitator (instructor or mediator). In many marginalized urban areas, resources (financial, human, or decision-making resources) are concentrated in the hands of a few community leaders, sometimes in conflict with each other. Community mobilization involves the involvement of all community members, including those who are not part of the leaders' families or who do not recognize the leaders' authority. Thus, the presence of a neutral community facilitator, from outside the community and working with community leaders, is essential in the mobilization process. The facilitator must ensure community cohesion, but also create a link between the community and local authorities.
- Realizing community development activities. In terms of attracting interest and increasing community cohesion, cultural identity promotion activities are very important. Most of these activities address children, as they can later ensure parents involvement. The goal is that adults and children in marginalized areas become citizens of cities with full rights, connected to the social and urban reality of their neighbourhood and city, which is done through non-formal education.



- Monitoring with the help of the community. The involvement of community members in monitoring and evaluation activities enables information, mobilization and community activation, as well as its direct participation in all activities.

3.2. Functioning and financing rules of Urban LAGs

Urban LAGs are organized and operate according to Government Order no. 26/2000 with subsequent amendments and completions.

They are structured as follows:

1. General Assembly - represents the supreme decision-making forum;
2. The Board of Directors - Ensures the implementation of the General Assembly decisions;
3. Censor;
4. Selection Committee - responsible for the selection of projects;
5. The administrative division of the association - includes the executive team.

1. The General Assembly:

It is made up of all members of the LAG association and represents the supreme forum of the Association. Each member has the right to vote in the General Assembly with an indefinite vote if he is an NGO, local public authority, or is a simple citizen of the marginalized community domiciled in MUA.

The General Assembly meetings are ordinary or extraordinary. The Ordinary General Assembly shall be convened at least once a year in the first quarter.

The competencies of the General Assembly include:

- a. approving the strategy and general objectives of the Association,
- b. approving the revenue and expenditure budget and the balance sheet,
- c. the election and revocation of the Board of Directors,
- d. the censor's election and revocation, or of the members of the censors committee,
- e. the establishment of headquarters, branches, workplaces in the country and abroad,
- f. the modification of the constitutive act and the association statute,
- g. the dissolution and liquidation of the Association as well as the destination of the remaining assets after liquidation,
- h. the fulfilment of any provisions stipulated in the statute,
- i. it determines the amount of the subscription and the registration fee,
- j. the approval of new members,
- k. the adoption the Organization and Functioning Regulations of the Association,
- l. it decides to be affiliated to federations and confederations, this attribution being delegated to the Board of Directors through the Association Regulation,



m. The General Assembly may delegate some of its tasks to the Board of Directors.

The Extraordinary General Assembly shall be convened whenever necessary at the initiative of the UALG Board of Directors or if there is a written request from at least one third of the members. If convened at the members' request, the General Assembly shall be held no later than two months after the receipt of the written request. The Extraordinary General Assembly may be convened for:

- the change of the internal status or regulation;
- the appointment or revocation of the members of the Board of Directors;
- the approval of the development strategy;
- the approval and modification of the revenue, the operating budget and the balance sheet;
- the election or revocation of members of the Selection Committee and the approval its functioning;
- the election and revocation of the censor;
- the revocation of financial aid.

The date, time and agenda of the General Assembly shall be communicated in writing to all its members at least 10-15 days before the due date.

For the Extraordinary General Assembly, the reason and the agenda shall be communicated at least 10 days before the convocation.

In the General Assembly sessions, the issues raised on the agenda by the Board of Directors will be discussed. Under certain conditions, if members present would like to raise questions to the General Assembly other than those set out in the agenda, they will communicate them for approval to the Board of Directors before the day set for convening the General Assembly.

The meetings of the General Assembly will be chaired by the LAG coordinator / manager / director and, in the absence thereof, by the vice-president appointed by the latter.

The General Assembly convened in compliance with the above provisions is the LAG established if more than half of the active members or their representatives are present (some LAGs require the presence of two-thirds).

The decisions of the General Assembly are taken by a simple majority of 50% plus one of the numbers of members present (in some cases, two-thirds of the members present or more than half of the members).

Each active member is entitled to a vote in the General Assembly.

The decisions established by the General Assembly within the limits of the law, of the constitutive act and its statute are binding even for associate members who have not taken part in the General Assembly or have voted against.



2. The Board of Directors

The ULAG's Board of Directors is the management body, which ensures the achievement of the ULAG's goals and objectives. The Board of Directors also ensures that the General Assembly's decisions are enforced.

The Board of Directors is made up of members appointed by the General Assembly.

The Board of Directors will be able to appoint a General Secretary / an Executive Director / a LAG Manager from among its members, from inside or outside the LAG.

The Board of Directors consists of 3-11 members and operates for a period of 2-4 years, during which it directly ensures the management of ULAG. Board members may be re-elected.

The component of the Board of Directors must be so established that each of the categories of members is represented. At the same time, the re-election of the members of the Board of Directors promotes the principle of members' rotation so that each of the members of the LAG reaches a position in the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall be convened on a quarterly basis or whenever necessary by the President or in his absence by the Vice-president. The meetings of the Board of Directors shall be chaired by the President and, in the absence thereof, by the Vice-president.

The Board of Directors will be convened by the President through the Secretary who will send the invitations at least two days before the meeting. The call will be made in nominal, written by fax, e-mail to each member of the Board of Directors. The invitations submitted will include the date, time and agenda of the meeting.

The meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held in the presence of at least 50% plus one of its members.

Decisions of the Board of Directors shall be adopted by an absolute majority of the votes of those present. When there is a tight vote, the decisive one is the President's vote. The decisions of the Board of Directors are recorded in a special register and will be signed by the President and Secretary.

The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a quarter at the initiative of the President or whenever there is a request from at least two-thirds of the Board of Directors members of. If there is a written request from the members of the Board of Directors to convene the Council, it shall be gathered within one month from the date of the request.

In exercising its competence, the Board of Directors has the following responsibilities:

- a. schedules and manages ULAG activities;
- b. defends and manages the group's interests;

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- c. schedules the ULAG's administrative, economic and financial management in accordance with the objectives it must meet directly or indirectly;
- d. launches project selection calls;
- e. proposes a temporary settlement for the granting of financial aid;
- f. proposes a final settlement for the financial aid;
- g. approves projects to be implemented by the ULAG;
- h. studies and approves changes to investments if necessary;
- i. grants extension periods for projects implementation;
- j. proposes the modification ULAG's operating costs in the budget;
- k. presents to the General Assembly of the activity report of the previous period, the execution of the revenue and expenditure budget, the balance sheet, the draft income and expenditure budget and the ULAG projects;
- l. concludes legal acts in the name and on behalf of ULAG;
- m. approves the ULAG staff organization chart and policy, unless otherwise provided by statute;
- n. proposes to the General Assembly the exclusion of those members who do not fulfil their obligations or carry out an activity prejudicial to ULAG;
- o. fulfils any other duties provided for in the Statute or established by the General Assembly.

The Board of Directors may elaborate an internal operation regulation.

3. The Censor

Depending on the legislation of each country, if the number of associations is higher than 15, the appointment of a censor is mandatory. This may be a person outside of the LAG.

The censor ensures the internal financial control of the LAG.

In order to fulfil his/her competence, the Censor performs the following tasks:

- a. verifies how the ULAG patrimony is administered;
- b. draws up reports and submits them to the General Assembly;
- c. may participate in meetings of the Board of Directors without the right to vote;
- d. performs any other duties provided for in the Statute or established by the General Assembly.

4. The selection committee

The Project Selection Committee is the technical body responsible for the selecting of projects to be funded submitted in the Local Development Plan of Measures (LDP), in accordance with the Association Statute and the selection procedure.

The process of selecting projects submitted for funding to the Urban Local Action Group within the HCOP or ROP, is based on:

- once submitted to the LAG, projects will be taken over by a secretariat made up of the LAG employees who will check them from the point of view of their eligibility and their

- documentation administrative compliance;
- a working group consisting of external consultants / LAG members / employees (evaluators) will proceed to project evaluation based on the selection criteria proposed in the financing guide and will develop evaluation reports;
 - the evaluation reports together with the support documentation will be subject to the final decision of a committee made up of ULAG members, called the Project Selection Committee.

The Project Selection Committee will be composed of representatives of the Urban Local Action Group partners proposed and voted by the General Assembly. The Selection Committee will have the following main responsibilities:

- a) to comply strictly with the rules set out in the Internal Regulations of each ULAG;
- b) to consult the selection procedure drawn up in accordance with the measures and the implementation mechanism set out in the strategy;
- c) to respect the work confidentiality and impartiality in decision-making;
- d) to select the projects that will be financed based on the criteria and scores obtained during the evaluation;
- e) to sign the selection reports;
- f) to get involved directly in promoting the funding program to potential beneficiaries.

The Committee will have established members, and substitute members, representing the various categories of partners so that none of the groups hold the majority. Members will be in the following categories:

- representatives of the public administration;
- a representative of public services;
- representatives of the private sector;
- representatives of civil society;
- representatives of the local community

If one of the Committee members is absent, s/he shall be replaced by a substitute member nominated by the LAG.

In order to obtain functionality and effectiveness, the selection committee can also work through sub-committees, depending on the members' expertise and experience and of the projects being evaluated.

In addition to the selection committee, a dispute resolution committee is in place to resolve the appeals that may arise each ULAG.

The Complaints Resolution Commission is the technical body with responsibility for solving of complaints about the results of the evaluation and selection process of the projects for funding.

Its composition and attributions are determined by each individual ULAG. The details referring to the information on the tasks and the functioning of each of these structures / persons are detailed in the



statutes or operating regulations of each ULAG.

5. The management team

In general, the minimum number of employees required to carry out the core functions in the LAG partnership is of two - a manager and an administrative assistant. It is advisable that the number of employees be directly proportional with the strategy and the partnership's complexity. The human resource requirements may be higher, depending on the number of additional administrative tasks delegated by the area, the targeted population, the strategy budget and the necessary mobilization activities.

Besides the two, it is recommended that the LAG team also include a facilitator. It helps people develop their ability to act.

This:

- (i) reaches a community where it establishes good relations with the community and community leaders;
- (ii) encourages the active participation of all members;
- (iii) facilitates the choice and support of the community to natural persons (resource persons), women and men;
- (iv) supports the formulation of simple action plans to achieve the objectives of the strategy;
- (v) provides motivational and technical support for Community actions;
- (vi) facilitates the link between service providers and local firms;
- (vii) addresses the right questions and helps people express their ideas;
- (viii) allows community members to come up with ideas and make decisions themselves, etc.

Following the facilitation process, the community must identify its own problems, find solutions, make decisions, plan organize and act independently.

The attributions / tasks and responsibilities of the members of the LAG teams are set out in the LGG Lead Factsheet and approved by the Board of Directors / General Assembly.

The LAG tasks, according to art. 34 of the (EU) Regulation No. 1303/2013, are mandatory and essential for the successful implementation of the LDS and aimed at:

- strengthening the capacity of relevant local actors to develop and implement operations, including the promotion of their project management capacity;
- animating the territory;
- preparing and publishing selection calls, in accordance with LDS;
- designing a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective selection criteria to avoid conflicts of interest that ensure that at least 51% of the votes on selection decisions are expressed by partners who do not have the status of public authorities and allows for selection by written procedure;
- receiving and evaluating grant applications (except where the LAG is a beneficiary);
- selecting operations, setting the amount of the contribution and of submitting proposals to the Agency for the financing of Rural investment;
- monitoring the implementation of the Community led local development Strategy and supported operations and carrying out specific evaluation activities of that strategy;

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- monitoring of contracted projects;
- preparing of reports, payment demands, acquisition files for operating and animating costs;
- fulfilling the specific attributions of the domains: financial, accounting, legal, human resources, etc.
- ensuring the consistency with LPA's community led local development strategy, in the selection of operations, by prioritizing operations according to the contribution made to achieving the objectives and targets of the strategy;

4. Granting financing

After selecting and approving the local development strategy, the LAG will have to approve the package of Integrated Operations / Projects within the shortest possible timeframe (3 months) and submit it for evaluation to the Joint Selection Committee composed of representatives of the Authorities Management (MA HCOP, MA ROP).

The final approval of the operation / project package is under the responsibility of the Joint Selection Committee consisting of representatives of Project Management Authorities (HCOP, ROP).

In order to implement this mechanism in the marginalized urban area, with more than 20,000 inhabitants, the HCOP established at the level of the Priority Axis 5, the specific objective 5.1 "Reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in marginalized communities (Roma and non-Roma) with more than 20,000 inhabitants, with emphasis on those with a Roma minority population, by implementing integrated measures / operations in the context of the CLLD mechanism", where the interventions included in the LDS will be financed in the third stage of the CLLD mechanism.

After testing the package of integrated operations / projects, the ULAG team will develop specific selection guides for each of the measures contained in the Strategy and will open project calls.

The process of evaluation and selection of ROP / HCOP projects related to the selected LDS will take place in two steps:

1. Making a pre-selection of project proposals (on a project-based basis) based on a non-discriminatory and transparent procedure at the LAG level;
2. Submission to AM ROP / AM HCOP of grant applications for projects pre-selected / endorsed by the LAG for the final selection and approval of their funding.

The LAGs, the LDSs of which were selected for SELECTION COMMITTEE funding will organize their own pre-selection procedure for ROP / HCOP project proposals, based on National Guidelines provided by the 2 AMs.

4.1. Development of external financing opportunities for Urban LAGs

The local development strategy is a set of integrated actions to be carried out by the LAG to meet the priority objectives set for the development of rural communities.



Urban Local Action Groups (ULAG) develop and implement integrated and multi-sector local development strategies that are consistent with the programs they receive support, and which include at least the following elements:

- Analysis of needs and the assessment of local (territorial) development potential, including a SWOT analysis;
- Defining the area and population that are the subject of the strategy;
- Establishing clear and measurable objectives;
- An action plan that includes translating goals into actions;
- Monitoring procedures and a financial plan.

In order to achieve the objectives set out in the local development strategies, specific projects will be selected and implemented through an integrated and connected use of funds.

The main source of funding for ULDS implementation is the funds from the Human Capital Operational Program (HCOP), for the soft component and the Regional Operational Program (ROP), for the hard component (infrastructure investments) that each LAG obtains with the LDS approval management Authority.

The LAGs are organized and operate according to GO no. 26/2000 with subsequent modifications and completions that is according to the model of non-governmental organizations.

The main sources of funding that non-governmental organizations can benefit are:

- private non-refundable financing (individual donations, corporate donations or non-refundable funding from private foundations or funds);
- public funding (grants, service contracts, granted by governments, local authorities, agencies and non-governmental organizations);
- revenues generated by own activities (membership fees, marketing of own products - publications, handicraft products, services, consultancy, etc.)
- participation fees at various events (charity balls, conferences, etc.).

In addition to the NRDP funds for implementing the LDS, the LAGs can use any type of funding available on the market to achieve the LDS indicators. These external funding can be directly accessed individually by the LAG, by the LAG in partnership with other institutions or NGOs in the LAG area or outside, or by outside institutions or organizations taking the LAG as a partner.

From the sources of funding currently available in Romania that the LAGs can access, the following can be mentioned:

- Structural programs (HCOP, ROP, ACOP);
- The Europe for Citizens Program;
- the Erasmus program;
- Cross-border cooperation programs (IPA);
- Programs initiated by private donors (mobile phone companies, banks, oil companies, multinationals);
- Government funding (culture, youth, education, infrastructure);



- Any other funding from other associations or foundations in the country or abroad.

4.2. The role of local actors in LAGs

Local actors can be the following:

a) Public institutions:

- public administration (at local and county level - mayors, local councils, county councils, etc.);
- public services (social, health and transport services, schools, universities, etc.).

b) Private institutions:

- from the commercial sector (joint-stock companies, limited liability companies, etc.);
- from the financial sector (banks, credit institutions, etc.);
- from the agricultural sector (agricultural cooperatives, producer groups, etc.);
- entrepreneurial organizations;
- companies providing community services (cultural, radio, TV, non-cultural services, etc.).

c) Civil society:

- non-profit organizations, associations, foundations, federations (environmental associations, cultural, social, religious associations, chambers of commerce, cults, etc.);

d) Individuals

- individuals, groups of people not officially registered;
- local opinion leaders from the Marginalized Urban Area. The participation of representatives of the community was encouraged both as founding members and as members of the Association's Board of Directors inside LADs.

All those mentioned are also LAGs voting entities, participating in an equal manner (1 vote / entity) in the ULAG decision making.

These are those who are part of the LAG General Training, they are part of the Board of Directors, Selection Committees and all ULAG committees.

At the same time, ULAG members are those who decide by the LAG manager by vote and, after consulting the manager, decide the LAG team.

All important decisions in the LAG are approved by the General Assembly of the LAG, which brings together all members with voting rights. At the same time, all changes to the ULAG strategy are made with the vote of the General Assembly, of all members of the LGL with voting rights.

A very important role is played by the citizens of the LAG area, composed of MUA and FUA. These are those who, following consultations conducted by the LAG team with local facilitator support, give direction to the action of the LAG, which will be included in the local development strategies, in the form of measures to be implemented after the approval of the strategy in line of the budget to support projects to implement these measures.



After gathering field information, action realised by the LAG team, on the basis of more extensive research and studies (some LAGs have even carried out a house-by-house census by applying thousands of questionnaires), each public institution, company or NGO in the LAG area is consulted and together with them, taking into account the citizens' needs, measures are decided that have the most significant impact on the life of the MUA inhabitants.

At the same time, during the implementation phase of the strategy, all LAG projects are intended to achieve the objectives set, when the strategy was planned, which aimed at improving the economic, social or cultural conditions of MUA and ZUF (especially MUA) so that the life of the inhabitants in the LAG area will improve.

A very important role is played by the local public authority in the ULAG as it needs to consider citizens' needs and to come up with applications / projects to meet these needs so that the citizens lives can be improved. At the same time, public authorities have a very important role because the LAG is operating in their area and without their participation it cannot exist.

5. Design and management specificity of projects funded by the LAG - development of specific guides

All projects funded in the urban LAG are based on the LDS and aim to achieve the indicators that each LAG has set when it has made that strategy.

During the first phase, the LDS set out financing measures that provide directions for action and establish the distribution of available funds from the two programs (HCOP - Priority Axis 5 - Local Led Community Development) and ROP (Priority Axis 9 - Supporting the economic and social regeneration of disadvantaged communities in the urban area), which ensure the financing of the actions supported by the LAG, in order to implement the strategy. The measures were established through consultations between all relevant partners (public, private, NGO, citizens) in the LAG area and on the basis of diagnostic analysis (presentation of the territory) and SWOT analysis.

The measures proposed in the LDS, to achieve the objectives, must be coherent with the eligible activities funded by the HCOP (PA 5, Specific Objective 5.1) and those in the ROP (PA 9, Specific Objective 9.1.). At the level of operations / projects that will be financed from HCOP (Phase III). In the case of Romania, it is recommended that employment measures have a share of at least 40% of the total proposed measures in the projects.

Given the fact that the idea of participation and involvement of all actors was promoted, social innovation and participation was given special importance.

In the case of Romania for projects that promote innovative methods of active involvement of community members in the selection process, additional score is given.

Applicants and eligible partners must highlight in the application form whether the project proposal contributes to social innovation.

Innovation has been addressed in terms of introducing measures that support development into LDS.

In order to avoid double funding, the communities benefiting from the measures targeted in the priority axis PA 5 (IP) 9 will be excluded from the funding provided at PA 6 - IP 10, respectively PA 4 - IP 9, for avoid duplication and double funding.

In the LDS there are also actions that are eligible through other funding from the two operational programs: HCOP and ROP. In this case, the projects carried out by the LAG forced to demonstrate that they are integrated projects linked together, which together lead to the achievement of LDS objectives.

Each measure is detailed in the intervention sheet of that measure. The intervention sheet includes:

Intervention File Name - CODE S or H (Soft or Hard)

Measure type:

- SOFT- services (financed by HCOP)
- HARD – infrastructure (financed by ROP)

1.	Development region County/District Town/City/Municipality
2.	LAG Name
3.	LAG Contact data
4.	LDS territory aimed at
5.	Intervention title
6.	LDS specific objective, which the intervention helps fulfil
7.	Action plan measure aimed by the intervention
8.	Intervention justification
9.	Territory marginalized population
10.	Target groups (people in risk of poverty and social exclusion)
11.	Intervention estimate date
12.	Estimative budget
13.	Financing sources
14.	Intervention sustainability after the CLLD financing period is closed

6. Preceding stages to launching calls for proposals at the LAG level

6.1. Signing the financing contract for LAG operating expenditure

LAGs, the SDLs of which have been selected for funding will sign at the AM HCOP level a financing contract for running costs related to SDL implementation management and community animation, according to SDL actions and up to 15% of SDL total budget for SDL. Details on the procedure for contracting LAG operating expenditure will be published and transmitted to the LAG by HCOP.

6.2. Procedure elaboration for the LAG project proposals selection

In order to implement the LDS, the LAGs have the obligation to develop a procedure describing the process of evaluation and selection of ROP / HCOP project proposals related to LDS.

The procedure will include:

- **the stages and the organisation manner of the evaluation and selection process of project proposals;**
- **frame models of the ROP / HCOP² project files to be submitted by the beneficiaries;**
- **The Methodology for the valuation and selection of project proposals, which involves:**
 - **evaluation and selection criteria:**
 - the minimum eligibility criteria to be met by the applicant and the project;
 - criteria for prioritizing and selecting projects for that call, in accordance with the relevant LDS objectives and indicators;
 - **a maximum score** for each criterion and the minimum score that a project must achieve for selection;
 - framing projects in **the budget** offered for the intervention;
 - a way of announcing the outcome of the selection process (date and manner of notifying applicants, the procedure for resolving complaints).
- **The organization and functioning Regulation of the Selection Committee at the LAG level;**

The selection procedure must comply with the following conditions:

- be non-discriminatory and transparent,
- include objective criteria for the selection of projects;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- ensure that at the decision-making level of project selection, none of the types of actors involved (public sector, private sector, civil society and the marginalized community) hold more than 49% of the voting rights;
- ensure that at least 50% of the votes on selection decisions are expressed by partners who do not have the status of public authorities;
- allow selection by written procedure.

² The minimum mandatory content for the ROP / HCOP project proposal sheets is presented in Appendixes 1 and 2



The procedure will be approved by the LAG's Board of Directors, and to ensure transparency, it will be posted on the LAG web site and / or displayed at LAG headquarters etc.

Within **one month** of signing the contract for running costs, the LAG will transmit the Two MA Procedures for validation.

7. The process of evaluation and selection of project proposals at the LAG level

7.1. Launch of calls for proposals by the LAG

The LAG launches calls for project proposals in line with the indicative SDL intervention list within a maximum **of 1 month** after validation of the Selection Procedure by the 2 MA.

The deadline for submitting project proposals will be 45 calendar days, so that potential beneficiaries have enough time to prepare and submit them.

The calls address local actors or other beneficiaries who propose projects to be deployed in the **LDS coverage area** (LDS territory).

The LAG technical department shall provide the necessary public information to beneficiaries to complete the project proposal sheets on the compliance and eligibility aspects they must meet.

Also, RDA / RIO representatives will provide help desk for the LAG to prepare and run project calls.

7.1.1. Mandatory elements of calls for proposals

The call for project proposals must contain at least the following information:

- **administrative details** about call launch and timetable:
 - a) the date of the selection call launch;
 - b) deadline for the submission of project proposals;
 - c) the place and the timeframe in which the projects can be submitted;
 - d) the LAG contact details where applicants can obtain detailed information;
 - e) the amount of the call;
 - f) the minimum and maximum eligible value of a project;
- **the template sheet** for that call;
- **supporting documents** to be submitted by the applicant once the project sheet has been submitted in accordance with the requirements for the ERDF and ESF interventions;
- **evaluation and selection criteria:**

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- the minimum eligibility criteria to be met by the applicant and the project;
- the criteria for prioritizing and selecting projects for that call, in accordance with the relevant SDL objectives and indicators;

In order to ensure transparency, all information on project calls will be published at the LAG headquarters, at the town/ city hall and possibly at the headquarters of the county council, and it will also be posted on the LAG's website.

The LAG will also publish on its website the detailed information on the interventions launched and will make available to the potential beneficiaries of an electronic version (support CD / DVD) or on printed support detailed information on the interventions launched.

7.1.2 Minimum eligibility criteria

For all project calls launched by the LAG, the following eligibility criteria will be considered:

1. Area of implementation and project objective
2. Duration of the project
3. Target group
4. Types of applicants
5. Types of eligible interventions
6. Indicators
7. The insurance of complementarity between soft and hard investment
8. The insurances of the applicant (s)' contribution

7.1.3. Priority and selection criteria for projects³:

1. the project's contribution to the achievement of specific LDS objectives;
2. the project contribution to the achievement of the specific LDS indicators targets;
3. the project targets as many people as possible, found at risk of poverty or social exclusion;
4. the ERDF / ESF project is complementary to an ESF / ERDF project;
5. for ROP projects:
 - I. the project is implemented in ghetto-type areas with blocks in ghetto-like areas of former workers' colonies (given the highest number of marginalized urban categories, according to the Marginalized Urban Areas Atlas, with high risk of residential segregation) and aims at providing public utilities: sanitation (waste management), drinking water, electricity, heating, sewerage, lighting;
 - II. the project has the technical / economic documentation under preparation / completion or is finalized;
 - III. the project envisages the modernization of urban public spaces and their transformation into playgrounds, parks, pedestrian / commercial areas or streets, etc., in order to create / improve the link between the area where the marginalized community lives and the functional area;

³ These will be customized by each LAG, depending on SDL's specifics / objectives

6. In case of HCOP projects:

- IV. the project targets larger targets for employment indicators;
- V. the project targets a Roma community⁴.

7.2. LAG evaluation and selection of projects

7.2.1. The establishment of the Selection Committee

The Selection Committee is established inside the LAG, with a role in the project evaluation and selection, for projects to be implemented on LDS territory.

The Selection Committee must meet the following requirements:

- At least 50% of members should belong to non-public partners;
- None of the actors involved (public sector, private sector, civil society and the marginalized community) holds more than 49% of the voting rights;
- The selection of projects is realized by applying the "double quorum" rule, respectively for the validation of votes, at least 50% of the members of the Selection Committee must be present at the time of selection, out of which over 50% shall be private and civil society;

7.2.2. Avoiding conflict of interest in the project evaluation and selection process

All persons involved at the LAG level in the evaluation and selection of projects (members of the Selection Committee, the Complaints Board or the LAG evaluators involved in the selection process) will need to complete a Declaration on avoiding conflicts of interest in which to do reference to the provisions of Articles 10 and 11 of GO no. 66/2011, Section II - Rules on conflict of interest.

If one of the Selection Committee members, the Complaints Board or one of the LAG employees with project appraisal or affiliate ratings or a legal entity in which that person has implications is involved in one of the projects submitted for selection in the depositary entities interests, according to the provisions of the national law (Law no.161 / 2003, GEO no.66 / 2011) and the Community (EC Regulation 1605/2002, Regulation 2342/2002 etc.) applicable, the person concerned will participate in the evaluation and selection process, have no right to vote and will not attend the meeting of the respective committee for the selection session, the contest in question.

⁴ According to the HCOP definition, Roma communities are: "those communities where the population belonging to the Roma minority represents at least 10% of the total population at the community level." Accordingly, communities where the population of the Roma minority is present in less than 10% of the total population of that community are considered to be non-Roma communities.

- ▶ The population belonging to the Roma minority refers to people who declare themselves to be Roma.

If one of the LAG employees or the members designated by the Selection Board finds that the Appeals Committee finds that they are in a situation of conflict of interest, the latter has the obligation to request immediate replacement.

7.2.3. The evaluation and selection procedure of projects proposals

The Selection Committee aims to meet the minimum eligibility criteria and scores according to its own prioritization and selection criteria set at the LAG level for that call, in line with the LDS specificity.

Upon completion of the evaluation and selection process, the Selection Committee will issue an Intermediate Selection Rapport, which will include the selected, ineligible, eligible unselected and eligible project proposals, their value, the names of the applicants, and for the eligible project proposals, the score obtained for each selection criterion. Based on this, the LAG will send the results of the selection to the applicants. Notifications must contain the reasons why the project proposals have not been selected, as well as the period for submission and resolution of appeals.

Beneficiaries notified by the LAG that their project proposals have not been selected may lodge complaints at the LAG headquarters. The Complaints Board will review at the level of those project proposals, except for the issues that have been the subject of the complaints. Following the settlement of any complaints, the Complaints Board will develop a Rapport of Complaints, to be signed by the members of the Commission and submitted to the LAG Selection Committee. On the basis of the Complaints Rapport, the Selection Committee will issue the Selection Ratio (final), which will include the selected, ineligible, selected and selected eligible project proposals, their value, the names of the applicants, and for the eligible project proposals the score obtained for each selection criterion.

The final selection rapport must be approved by the LAG's Board of Directors and must state that certain project proposals may be rejected if SELECTION COMMITTEE levels are found to be non-compliance with the minimum eligibility requirements or breach of general selection principles / approved selection procedure.

Project proposals that have at least the minimum score but have not been selected for funding in the selection rapport, due to budget depletion at the call level, will constitute **the reserve list** at that call level.

In order to ensure the transparency of the selection process conducted at the LAG level, Selection Reports must be made public at least at the LAG's premises and at the Town/City Hall and the County Council and possibly also on the LAG web site.

Note: LAG may also develop / implement other activities / projects that can be funded from other sources of funding, in addition to the ERDF and the ESF, provided that double funding is avoided.

7.2.4. Verification of the package of project proposals selected by the LAG at SELECTION COMMITTEE level

The package of project proposals selected in calls developed by the LAG will be submitted to the SELECTION COMMITTEE Secretariat at the Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds for verification by the two Managing Authorities. LAGs have the obligation to submit together with the selected project proposals and a copy corresponding to the original of the Final Selection Ratio approved by the Board of Directors. Details on the procedure for submitting the list of projects selected at the LAG level will be transmitted to the LAG during the implementation process, depending on the type of calls for proposals launched.

SELECTION COMMITTEE will check the list of selected projects using the Correspondence Matrix on the complementarity of the interventions included in the indicative intervention list for which funding is sought from the HCOP and the ROP (Annex 20 of the approved LDS).

SELECTION COMMITTEE will request clarification / or reject the list of projects in the following situations:

- In the case of non-compliance with one or more eligibility requirements, the eligibility of interventions;
- If there are projects in the list of projects that are not satisfactory in order to ensure complementarity between ERDF and ESF type investments;

If it is decided that the list of projects does not meet the above conditions, the LAG will be able to review the list of projects by replacing projects that are not in conformity with the following projects as a reserve list score (if applicable). In the absence of a reserve list at that call level, a new call may be launched at the LAG level, following the same steps. In this situation, the minimum number of calendar days from launch to the deadline for submitting project proposals may be reduced to 30 days.

8. Uploading selected projects submitted in the information system

MA ROP / MA HCOP will open the MySMIS computer system to load projects. It will be open only to beneficiaries whose projects have been selected by the LAG and successfully passed the SELECTION COMMITTEE verification. ROP / HCOP projects selected by LAGs, verified by SELECTION COMMITTEE and uploaded to the MySMIS computer system, will comply with the conditions set out in the Specific Guidelines.

The supporting documents for the selected projects (technical and economic documentation) will be submitted to MYSMIS with the request for funding in the call made by the RDA / RIO for the region where the project is being implemented.

The responsible authority will also upload MYSMIS as support documents, including documents issued in the context of the assessment and selection made at the level of the LAGs (e.g.



intermediary and final selection reports, technical reports, checklists, notifications, etc.).

Grant applications will be reviewed and contracted according to MA ROP / MA HCOP procedures

In this context, from the launch of call for proposals at the LAG level, potential beneficiaries will be informed of the conditions they have to meet when submitting grant applications to M AROP and MA HCOP, in accordance with the *Applicant Guidelines*.

8.1. Urban LAGs functioning and financing rules– beneficiaries' assistance

Direct / indirect (target group) beneficiaries of projects funded by the LAG may be:

- The Civil Society;
- Private entities;
- Public entities.

Specific guidelines for each of the LDS measures are carried out by the LAG team taking into account the fact sheets and adding to each of them specific MUAs targeted by those measures, elements related to the indicators concerned, beneficiaries targeted by future projects or potential applicants for these measures.

The process of delivering specific guidelines may include consultation with potential beneficiaries / applicants for these projects or consultations with the target group of projects to be carried out so that local specificities and local needs can be best identified in future interventions through the projects approved by those guides.

Throughout the implementation of projects, in order to achieve the best possible result from the implementation of projects funded by the LAG, the LAG team will support the beneficiaries of the projects funded by the LAG.

It is very important that all LAG projects are implemented as best as possible for both applicants and target groups targeted by these projects as well as for the LAG because the cost of operating a project is up to 15% of the HCOP budget related to each Local Development Strategy selected in the second stage of the CLLD Urban Mechanism.

8.2. Guides establishment. Key elements, the beneficiaries' contribution

Specific guidelines are the documents that contain the rules that any applicant must meet for a call for proposals open for a measure.

It must contain several minimum criteria that any applicant must meet to submit an eligible project for funding in the LAG.

For Urban LAGs, for all calls for projects launched by them, according to the document "Guidelines for local action groups on implementing local development strategies at cities with more than

20,000 inhabitants - Stage III of the CLLD Mechanism" the following eligibility criteria will be considered:

1. Area of implementation and project objective
2. Duration of the project
3. Target group
4. Types of applicants
5. Types of eligible interventions
6. Indicators
7. The insurance of complementarily between soft and hard investment
8. The insurance of the applicant (s)'contribution

Mobilizing the community and potential beneficiaries of ULAG funding is essential for the successful implementation of ULDS. Mobilizing the community is important because they will be the future beneficiaries of the projects submitted for financing at the ULAG and the mobilization of the Potential LPA beneficiaries, commercial companies or NGOs is very important because only through their involvement these projects can be realized.

In order to make an effective consultation and to include all local needs in the call for projects, it is important to regularly consult the community. The facilitator must create the premises for the creation of effective and functional communication channels to provide the LAG team whenever information is needed on the grass in the community.

At the same time, the involvement of community members in the ULAG Board of Directors and selection committees will facilitate this communication.

Regarding communication with potential beneficiaries, this has to be constantly maintained through regular meetings, to discuss progress, to achieve documents, the implementation phase of projects covered by the LAG in measures LDS and European and national regulations on the implementation of non-refundable financing so that they can accomplish it when it is necessary to make changes / adaptations of the specific guidelines so that they can meet the eligibility conditions and become beneficiaries of the LAG.

9. Identifying methods of cooperation and activation of MUA members to be actively involved in the LAG activity

The relationship between the LAG and the local community in MUA and FUA must be maintained by the facilitator. It must include in the job sheet as the main activity the communication and the relation with the members of the local community so that it is the person who knows the problems of this community best and who, whenever necessary, can provide relevant information to the LAG team as well potential beneficiaries of projects funded by the LAG.

The knowledge and interaction between the LAG team and the community members is important because they can identify new issues / situations they encounter during the implementation of the



strategy, and in the elaboration of specific guidelines to include them in terms of funding.

When thinking about the cooperation and activation of all MUA members, we must consider the following:

- Group Diversity: In such communities there are people of different ethnicities that are often gathered from different parts of the country;
- The MUA members' education level: given that MUA members have a very low level of education, each time we organize meetings or want to inform these people we must be careful about language used in order to be understood, the materials we use that are often ineffective because they do not read (the most effective are face-to-face meetings) as well as the messages that we transmit that work may be misinterpreted and may lead to conflicts;
- Age: In such communities we often have a very young population, so we need to adapt our activities and messages to this age group;
- The diversity of the issues they face and their perception: even if the problems faced by community members are very diverse, we will see that, many times, what the LAG team considers to be a problem for community members, is not the prioritization of problems in the community perspective and is not realized from the perspective of the LAG team;
- The relationship between public authorities and the community concerned: Care must be offered when explaining certain interventions, because in the case of communities with evictions or conflicts with the police, if meetings are reached to discuss these issues, we can generate conflicts. At the same time, we should avoid inviting responsible people (considered responsible by the community).
- The image of this community in the rest of the city: it should be noted how the interventions and activities are presented, as well as the general image these communities have in the cities where the LDS is implemented. If we discuss relocation or desegregation, we will have to pay close attention to discrimination issues and to impose a set of principles and rules to be respected by everyone starting with LAG members and up to all benefits and applicants for funding from LAG.

10. The inclusion of specific proposals of community members in the projects to be carried out

The LAG should not only monitor project implementation but also provide support for potential applicants in the communication with MUA beneficiaries. This will be the Facilitator's and the LAG manager's role of gathering as much relevant information as possible to the applicants so that the projects developed by them will include the specific proposals of the community members in the projects to be carried out.