

COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ROMA INCLUSION

**Training manual for local stakeholders and local action groups on
rural CLLD and how to increase access to funds available through
the LEADER programme for Roma**

This manual has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>



The information contained in this manual does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.

Contents

Introduction	3
Aim, objectives and target groups	4
Training agenda.....	5
Section 1: The specificities of Roma communities	7
a) Social, economic and cultural perspectives	7
b) Inter-ethnic communication techniques and methods	11
Section 2: CLLD Principles: Community development, a chance for disadvantaged communities..	15
Section 3.1 The role of LAGs in the implementation of CLLD	19
a) Local Action Groups (LAG)	19
b) Community-led Local Development (CLLD)	22
c) The connection between LAGs and CLLD	25
Section 3.2. The role of local actors in LAGs	26
Section 4.1 External financing opportunities for Local Development Strategies	28
Section 4.2. Functioning of LAGs and financing rules	31
a) Functioning of LAGs	31
b) Granting funding	37
Section 5: Project development and the specificities of managing projects financed through the LEADER/LAG programme – how to realize specific guides.....	39
Section 6.1 Functioning and financing rules for LAGs – Assisting beneficiaries	41
Section 6.2 How to write a guide. Key elements, the contribution of beneficiaries	42
Section 7: Measures for the inclusion of Roma communities registered by Local Development Strategies (LDS). Types of projects.....	44

Introduction

This training manual is designed to support the implementation of Community Led Local Development (CLLD) as a funding tool for Roma inclusion.

Reaching out to vulnerable groups such as Roma and including them within the work of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) is essential. Community-Led Local Development is a particularly promising tool, as it aims to give ownership of development strategies to all concerned citizens through capacity building, empowerment, transparency measures and shared governance. In the 2014-2020 programming period, the LEADER method has been extended under the broader term Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) to three additional EU funds.

Throughout the past years, ERGO Network (European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network) with its members in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Slovakia conducted research on Roma involvement in the CLLD. Addressing the inclusion of Roma and their participation in rural areas were identified as clear challenges. Very few Local Action Groups (LAGs) include Roma in their membership, and Roma are rarely successful with their funding applications under the CLLD.

Through partnerships with National Federations of LAGs, information and advocacy to support the inclusion of Roma in local development strategies, some progress has been achieved, but potential beneficiaries have difficulties in applying for those funds. Public authorities do not have the experience and capacity to manage the situation, Roma NGOs are not prepared to submit applications and LAG staff is not trained to address problems of Roma inclusion. This leads, in the best case, to a situation where local authorities implement projects without any involvement from Roma communities.

Therefore **Local Action Group staff and potential beneficiaries are targeted together in a common training in order to build their capacity in helping to improve inclusion and participation of the Roma population in the geographic area of the LAG.** The common training fosters partnerships between these actors and enables learning from each other that would not be able in a training solely targeting LAGs or solely targeting potential beneficiaries.

This package can be used by the LAG staff, by trainers, by community members or by potential beneficiaries.

The user can find in this package the detailed programme for a two-days training planned in a participatory way with the purpose of increasing competences and of offering a space for sharing experiences.

The training manual includes workshop plans, background information, field experiences and rules and procedures. This information has to be adapted to the national context in which the training is

delivered, as specificities of the LEADER programme and the CLLD process differ from country to country.

The agenda for the two-days training includes sessions in which the LAG teams (manager and animator/facilitator) and potential beneficiaries (NGOs, public and private entities) participate together, as well as some sessions in which the group will be split into LAG teams and potential beneficiaries.

Aim, objectives and target groups

Aim: The aim of the training activity is to increase the number of Roma as beneficiaries of EU funds that are disseminated through the method of Community-Led Local Development.

Objectives:

- To disseminate relevant information on CLLD to local groups, active Roma and (pro)Roma organisations;
- To improve the ability of Roma civil society to influence Local Development Strategies and design and implement projects under the CLLD that benefit Roma communities at a local level;
- To monitor, support and counsel groups and individuals to apply for financial support within the LEADER Programme in the implementation of CLLD and its integrated strategies, in particular with regard to the participation of Roma communities as equal stakeholders.
- To strengthen the relationship between active Roma and (pro) Roma organisations and the LAGs management teams on the basis of transparency and equal opportunities.

Target groups:

- **LAG members** (preferably the animator and the funds manager): They need to better understand how to communicate and engage with the Roma community and how to involve Roma in the strategy implementation process, so that they can become active LAG members. At the same time, they need to establish concrete direct contacts with Roma or pro Roma stakeholders.
- **Local Public Authorities** as beneficiaries: Mayors, local counsellors or any other person of public authorities in charge of solving problems faced by Roma people. They need to learn how to identify and better understand problems faced by the Roma population and find solutions for those problems together with Roma, according to their specific needs. In addition, they need to better understand how the LEADER programme functions.
- **Roma and (pro) Roma NGOs** as beneficiaries: Representatives of Roma NGOs from the LAG area represent the main target groups, but also pro Roma NGOs or other bodies that use funds from those LAGs for projects targeting Roma.

Training agenda

Day 1	
9.00 – 10.00: Participant registration	
10.00 – 11.30	
Section I	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The specificities of Roma communities from social, economic and cultural perspectives ▪ Inter-ethnic communication techniques and methods 	
11.30 -12.00 Coffee break	
12.00 – 13.30	
Section II:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CLLD Principles: Community development, a chance for the development of disadvantaged communities 	
13.30 – 15.00 Lunch	
15.00 -16.30	
LAG members	LPAs and NGOs
Section III:	Section III:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The role of LAGs in the implementation of CLLD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The role of local actors in LAGs
16.30 -17.00 Coffee break	
17.00 – 18.30	
LAG members	LPAs and NGOs
Section IV:	Section IV:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External financing opportunities for Local Development Strategies (LDS) 	Functioning of LAGs and financing rules
Day 2	
9.30 - 10.30	
Section V:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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	
LAG members	LPAs and NGOs
Section VI:	Section VI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Functioning of LAGs and financing rules: Assisting beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to write a guide: Key elements and possible contribution of beneficiaries
13.00-14.00 Lunch	
14.00 – 16.00	

Section VII:

- Measures for the inclusion of Roma communities registered in Local Development Strategies: Types of projects

16.00-16.30 Coffee break

16.30 – 17.30

Section VIII:

- Measures for the inclusion of Roma communities registered in Local Development Strategies: Types of projects.
- Final conclusions, recommendations

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	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.

	Each answer demands explanation, so that the other participants may learn more from the explanation received.
	In the case a Roma doesn't offer an explanation, the trainer must do so, after being properly informed.
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.	
Thevillage 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 of time 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:

- a) *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.
- b) *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".
- c) *Stereotypes.* By permanently learning from one's experiences will meet the risk of treating different people as being the same one.
- d) *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.
- e) *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 manner in which 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.

In order 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, than 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 LAG'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 LAG participants and 4 community participants. If possible the LAG members should belong to the same LAG, 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 on the basis of 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 also 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 are able to 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.

On the basis of the above, when selecting the local action groups with their respective strategies major importance is to be attached to the quality of the partnership.

Section 3.1 The role of LAGs in the implementation of CLLD

a) Local Action Groups (LAG)

Title	How can community participation be increased in LAG activities?
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on communication with LAG beneficiaries; ▪ Identify the most efficient communication methods with LAG beneficiaries.
Duration	90 minutes
Description	<p>The facilitator begins the discussion by asking the participants to brainstorm methods to consult the community (15 minutes). While these are presented by the participants, the facilitator takes notes.</p> <p>After noting down a list of consultation methods, the facilitator divides the participants into 5 groups of 4 people and asks each group to discuss one of the methods in detail, keeping in mind that the target group for the consultation activity are Roma communities from the LAG. At the end a flipchart with all the information discussed is filled in (20 minutes).</p> <p>After the preparation of flipcharts these are presented to the whole group (25 minutes).</p> <p>At the end, the facilitator asks participants to go back to their group and think of parallels between consultation meetings and information meetings for the population, noting on the flipchart positive and negative aspects of these activities (20 minutes). Once this task is finished, the result will be presented to the other colleagues.</p>
Resources	Flipchart, markers

A Local Action Group (LAG) represents a form of partnership built in a rural or in an urban area, which unites participants of the public and the private sector, together with civil societies belonging to the respective territory, created with the purpose of realizing and implementing Local Development Strategies (LDS), thus promoting the principles of CLLD.

LAGs are organised and function according to the Government Order no. 26/2000 with its further modifications and completions.

Local Action Groups represent a public-private partnership, in which the public part holds a percentage of 49%, at the decisional and construction level, and 51% is held by the private part.

A LAG area should be large enough to “offer sufficient critical mass in terms of human, financial and economic resources to support a viable development strategy”, but also “it shall also be sufficiently small in order to allow local interaction”. This has been interpreted in the following manner: the population, where the LAG functions, mustn’t be less than 10 000 and not more than 150 000 inhabitants. In duly justified cases, in particular, where an area is sparsely populated or in densely populated areas, these limits may be lowered or respectively increased.

Local Action Groups have the role of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of Local Development Strategies (LDS), by following the CLLD principles.

The implementation activity of LDS is based on the following administrative functions realized by LAGs:

- The consolidation of local actors’ capacity to develop and implement operations, including the promotion of their management capacity in different projects;
- An operative decision taking, regarding the implementation of LDS (or the precocious discovery of problems);
- Daily project management;
- Operative and correct execution of resource management procedures;
- Facilitating coordination between component activities;
- Monitoring and reporting in time of accomplishments and of project results;
- The realization of a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and of objective criteria, regarding the selection of operations, which allow the avoidance of interest conflicts, which guarantee at least 51% of votes on selection decisions expressed by partners, who don’t have the status of public authorities and which allow a written selection procedure, with the condition as each sector represented not to overpass a percentage of 49% of the total members belonging to the selection committee;
- The insurance, with the occasion of operations selection, of a coherence with a community - led local development strategy, by offering priority to different operations according to the contribution offered in the reaching of objectives and goals of LDS;
- The preparing and publishing of proposed applications or of a permanent procedure for project proposals, including the defining and sharing of selection criteria;
- The receiving and evaluating of financing applications;
- Receiving and verifying if payment applications registered are correct; The selection of operations, the establishment of the contribution quantum and the presentation of proposals towards the organism responsible with the final verification of an eligibility, before its approval;
- The monitoring of LDS implementation and of supported operation, and the realization of evaluation specific activities of LDS;
- Dissemination of LDS and of results among local communities, among decisional factors and any other interested party;
- The realization of a rigorous and transparent device of financial management and implementation of LDS, with a systemic collection and an annual structuring of data;

- The implementing of a monitoring workshop for interested local actors;
- The elaboration of a clear registration device and of suggestions and complaints regarding the implementation of LDS.

In order to fulfil the functions mentioned above, LAG will realize, at least, the following activities:

- LDS managing, monitoring, evaluating and controlling;
- the organisation of meetings, conferences, debates, round tables and workshops;
- participating in exchange activities and in training stages, in internal and European networks;
- the editing of publications;
- the development of cooperation projects inside LEADER;
- the collaboration with other entities at a national and international level, with a similar goal; information and communication;
- the support of project applications; the organisation of the verification process for projects registered;
- the monitoring of projects;
- other forms and means established by the Statute, the Constitutive Act and by the General Assembly, according to the law.

b) Community-led Local Development (CLLD)

CLLD turns conventional top-down development approaches by starting with the vision of where local actors would like to be in the future and what they think should be changed in order to get there. Responding to local needs comes first and funding is seen as a means to an end.

A good and sustainable CLLD process needs to follow the following steps:

1. **Building a clear agreement on “what you want to change”** is the first and most important step in designing a strategy and should not be rushed. In contrary, conventional local development is often funding-led. Local bodies apply for funding on the basis of their deviation from the national average in terms of certain identified indicators. Under this scenario, local agencies are simply the last link in the chain for delivering funds and services.
2. **Build confidence inside the group.** This step normally takes place in parallel with the decision on what the community wants to change. It requires face to face contact and sufficient time to uncover the main concerns, hidden agendas and historical resentments that lie deep in most communities.

This can be helped by the use of formal tools like “stakeholder analysis”, which maps out different stakeholders according to a series of characteristics, such as their level of interest and capacity to influence results.

Individual and group discussions can help to clarify longer term common goals, as well as shorter term activities that can achieve quick wins and build support. They can also help clarify who is good at what and the level of commitment needed in creating a formal partnership. Before rushing to create a formal partnership structure, it is useful to build trust and develop experience of working together through an informal working group, which can supervise the following stages

3. **Define the boundaries of your area.** In this case, once again, CLLD differs from traditional top down approaches, in the sense that the areas targeted do not have to follow predefined administrative boundaries.

National or regional authorities should however indicate the types of areas that will or not be eligible, and provide clear criteria for their selection. Within these broad frameworks, local actors are meant to decide on the most appropriate boundaries for achieving their goals. This refers to first being sure that the area is large enough and has sufficient “critical mass” to achieve its goals, and secondly, that it is not too large to risk that the community loses control. Finally, it should be “coherent” in physical, social and/or economic terms, and in terms of the aims of the strategy.

However, physical boundaries created by coastlines, water tables or mountain ranges do not necessarily coincide with the locations of activity economic clusters, such as fishing or farming, or

functional areas based on commuting or the use of basic services. Similarly, historic boundaries between municipalities in dense urban areas or on the urban fringe can be a barrier to effective action. Many areas confront problems that cross local, regional or national administrative boundaries. This is why different local projects often operate over slightly different territories. It is basically up to local actors to take these factors into account and to forge a realistic compromise on the boundaries of intervention area, which provides the best opportunities for achieving the aims of their strategy.

4. Prepare a local strategy for change based on the involvement and needs of local people.

Once there is a broad agreement on what the community wants to change, who can help to achieve this, and which the broad area of intervention is, then it is possible to go further into the details on how this can be achieved by preparing a local strategy. This requires objective evidence and facts about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the area, as well as the full involvement of the community, so they understand how these factors impact on their main needs and how they can be addressed.

The local development strategy becomes the roadmap of CLLD implementation, and partnerships normally select and support projects according to the contribution they make to the strategy goals. In order to support the preparation of high quality strategies, the Commission has included a list of the key components to be contained and has strengthened a number of the CLLD key principles. These are described and explained with examples in chapter 5 (see also sections on strategies in chapters 3, 4, 5 + 6).

5. Agree on a partnership structure and clarify who does what. Local communities have different levels of capacity, histories of working together and/or conflict, and very diverse institutional cultures. Because of this, experience has shown that it is vital to design a partnership that fits the realities of the local context.

Nevertheless, there are two broad models. In the first, a completely new legal entity is created, one that brings together local partners. This can take various forms, depending on the context (although most are non-profit associations). Whatever the legal form adopted, the entity needs to be broadly representative for the local stakeholders concerned with the open, transparent and accountable strategy, both to local people and to its funders. The exact balance of partners involved and their decision taking power depends on local circumstances, but as mentioned earlier, a key feature of CLLD is that the partnerships should not be dominated by any single public or private interest group.

A second model can be used when there is no need or desire to create an additional structure and/or when it is clearly advantageous to draw on the administrative capacity of an experienced partner. In this case, the experienced partner can become the “accountable body” for legal and administrative purposes, while the other partners form some sort of decision making or selection committee for projects. However, the same principles of representativeness, openness, accountability and transparency as in the first model should apply.

In order to ensure that high quality strategies are actually implemented by participative and efficient partnerships, the Commission has also provided a list of the main tasks they should carry out. Each partnership needs to consider whether it has the skills and experience within the area to carry out these functions or whether it is necessary to bring in help from outside. Both models described above can be used to coordinate more than one funding stream.

6. **Adjust boundaries (Area).** In the process of preparing the local development strategy and building the partnership, it is clear that certain issues can be better tackled by including other parts of the territory. For example, a rural area may need to take into account a local market town or a deprived urban neighbourhood may need to consider the links to areas providing local jobs and services. Similarly, a potentially useful ally in the partnership might find itself just outside the original boundaries. It may also be possible to improve the synergy between local initiatives financed by different EU funds by aligning their boundaries. Finally, the national or regional criteria for selecting the areas for CLLD may require some adjustment in the definition of the area.

For all these reasons, the exact boundaries of intervention should be seen as something fluid that can be adapted to meet changing circumstances. In fact, CLLD offers local partnerships a range of alternatives for dealing with problems at different scales. For example, adjacent local partnerships may each focus individually on the actions financed by one particular fund but then use the measures for cooperation or jointly participate in another fund, where problems are best solved at a different, trans-boundary level.

CLLD provides a flexible menu for ensuring that boundaries match evolving local needs rather than being fixed at a specific point in time. In all cases, however, enlarging the area needs to be handled with care. Most pressures will drive areas to become larger but this should not be at the expense of losing a sense of local identity and real community involvement.

7. **Prepare an action plan and funding application (Strategy).** Once the partnership has agreed what it wants to change and it has established a clear “intervention logic” showing how this change can be measured and what kinds of action might lead to success, it needs to translate these broad intentions into a realistic action plan and funding application.

There are many detailed guides on how to complete this stage. At this stage, all applicants are faced with the challenge of providing sufficient detail to make the plan credible while, at the same time, retaining the flexibility to respond to unforeseen circumstances.

Member States, regions and local partnerships deal with this challenge in different ways. However, it is important to show that the calendar, and the human and financial resources devoted to the main types of activity, correspond to the needs identified earlier and have a reasonable chance of achieving the desired change. Similarly the partnership needs to demonstrate that it has the skills,

systems and procedures in place to ensure that the plan can be implemented in an effective and transparent way.

- 8. Establish a system for periodic reviewing, evaluating and refreshing the strategy.** Since the preparation of the last round of local development strategies began in 2007, the situation faced by local partnerships in many countries, has been severely affected by the economic crisis. But even in times of relative stability, partnerships need mechanisms for measuring the extent to which they are achieving their expected results and learning from past mistakes and successes.

In its LEADER review, the European Court of Auditors argued that monitoring, self-evaluation and external evaluation of local development strategies needed to be improved and incorporated into regular activities as part of a learning-by-doing cycle. While this is an area that still requires further development, there are a series of useful guides and toolkits on how this can be done without getting submerged in masses of irrelevant data.

It takes time and effort to properly carry out these eight steps. However, the Commission has strengthened the preparatory support to cover this. And even when these steps have been done before, local people generally appreciate and enjoy the process of building a common road map to the future.

c) The connection between LAGs and CLLD

Community-led Local Development (CLLD) represents a method of implementation which allows local partners to elaborate a strategy of rural development, on the basis of an analysis of needs and priorities specific to a territory.

In this case, LAGs represent associative structures which assumed the role of Community-led Local Development (CLLD), and which are responsible for the implementing of local development strategies through a well defined methodology.

Their role is to manage funds destined for the implementation of a local development strategy, so that indicators and results assumed by local communities in strategies proposed are reached.

By obeying regulations, procedures and by monitoring the way in which these are obeyed by LAG members, it receives the role of representing the structure that constantly monitors sustains a management of CLLD principles and insures the participation of all community members in the decision making process.

Section 3.2. The role of local actors in LAGs

This section is facilitated by a LAG animator, who presents the roles an NGO or LPA representative may have inside the LAG and what their tasks could be.

Title	The role of local actors in LAGs
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on their role inside a LAG
Duration	90 minutes
Description	<p>The facilitator will present all positions an LPA or an NGO member may have inside a LAG, with specific roles and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member of the Council of Directors; ▪ Member of the Selection Committee; ▪ Member of the General Assembly; ▪ Beneficiary of LAG projects; ▪ Member of the Censors' Commission; ▪ Applicant; ▪ Financer; ▪ Animator. <p>For each situation, the roles and tasks of a specific position inside the LAG are presented.</p>
Resources	Power point presentation

Local actors are represented by the following:

a) Public institutions:

- Public administration (at a local and at a district level – town halls, local councils, county/district councils etc.);
- Public services (social services, health services, transport services, schools, universities etc.).

b) Private institutions:

- The commercial sector (joint-stock corporations, limited liability companies, etc.);
- The financial sector (banks, credit institutions, etc.);
- The agriculture sector (agriculture cooperation, groups of producers, etc.);
- Organisations of entrepreneurs;
- Community services supplies societies (cultural, radio, TV, non-cultural services, etc.)

c) The civil community:

- Non-profit organisations, associations, foundations, federations (environment associations, culture, social, religious associations, commerce chambers, religious units etc.);
- Natural persons, groups of persons without an official registration.

All mentioned represent entities that have the right to vote inside LAGs and can equally participate in making decisions inside LAGs (one vote per entity).

All these entities are also members of the LAG General Assembly, of the Director Council, of selection committees and of all LAG commissions.

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

All important decisions taken by a LAG are approved by the LAG General Assembly, which reunites all rightful members with a right to vote inside the LAG. Every modification of the LAG strategy can only be made with the vote of the General Assembly, that is, of all LAG members with the right to vote.

A very important role is held by the LAG area citizens. These are the ones who, after consulting the LAG teams from their local communities, offer action directions of the LAG, which will be contained by local development strategies as measures that will be realized after the strategy is approved, especially its budget meant to sustain projects that can implement these measures.

After all information is gathered from the filed by the LAG team, each public institution from that are is consulted and together with the LAG and by taking into consideration the citizens' needs, they can decide which measures need to be taken in order to have a significant impact on the lives of people living in the LAG area.

During the same implementation phase of the strategy, all LAG projects meant to reach objective established when the strategy was planned are taken into consideration, which aim at improving economic, social or cultural conditions in the LAG area, so that the citizens' lives from LAG area may be improved.

A significant role belongs to public authorities, because these are the ones that need to keep in sight the citizens' needs and to offer applications/projects that contain these needs, so that in the end, the lives of these citizens may be improved. At the same time, public authorities also have an important role, because LAGs develop their activities in their area and without their participation, LAGs couldn't exist.

Section 4.1 External financing opportunities for Local Development Strategies

Title	Potential financiers for LAGs
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants’ knowledge on financing sources for the LAG; ▪ Increase LAG teams’ understanding regarding the fundraising process of LAGs;
Duration	90 minutes
Description	<p>The facilitator divides participants into teams of two people, so that always both team members are from the same LAG.</p> <p>The facilitator offers participants a list of potential financiers relevant for their area (Appendix 3) and asks them to discuss it (20 minutes). They then choose the financier they know best and present it to their colleagues in a few words, covering the essential elements (name, activities, finances, sums offered, eligible beneficiaries, co-financing, budget, specific aspects) (60 minutes).</p> <p>In the end, the trainer can add information on sources of financing that have not been discussed.</p>
Resources	<p>Flipchart, markers</p> <p>10 copies of Appendix 3</p>

Appendix 3: Potential funders	
European Commission Erasmus+ Programme	
European Commission Europe for Citizens Programme	
Human Capital Operational Programme	
Operational Programme Administrative Capacity	
Operational Programme “Environment”	
Cross-border Co-operation Programmes (IPA)	
World Bank	
Private banks	
Oil companies	
Corporate social responsibilities programmes	
Ministry of Culture	
Ministry of Labour	
Churches	
International networks	
Private philanthropists	
Donations	

Businesses from LAG area	
Crowdfunding	
Charitable events	
Governmental programmes from other countries	
EEA/Norway grants	
Embassy funding	

The local development strategy represents an ensemble of actions that need to be realized by LAGs in order to fulfil priority objectives, which were established in order to obtain the development of rural communities.

Local Action Groups (LAGs) elaborate and apply integrated and multi-sectorial strategies of local development, coherent with programmes that receive support and contain at least the following elements:

- A needs analysis and the evaluation of the local (territorial) potential for development, including a SWOT analysis;
- The area defining and that of the population included in the strategy;
- The establishment of clear and measurable objectives;
- An action plan which includes the transposition of objectives in actions;
- Monitoring procedures and a financial plan.

In order to reach the objectives established through local development strategies, specific projects will be selected and implemented, through an integrated use which is related to funds applied for.

The main financing source for the implementation of LDS is represented by funds offered by the National Programme of Rural Development (NPRD), obtained by each LAG at the same time with the LDS approval, by the management authority of the LEADER programme.

LAGs are organised and function according to the Government Order no. 26/2000 with its further modifications and completions, that is, according to the model of non-governmental organisations.

The main sources of financing which non-governmental organisations may benefit of are:

- private non-refundable financing (individual citizens' donations, donations from companies or non-refundable financing offered by foundations or private funds);
- public financing (non-refundable grants, services contracts, offered by governments, local authorities, non-governmental agencies and organisations);
- income generated by proper activities (members taxes, commerce with products realized by LAGs – publications, manufactures, services, counselling etc.);
- Participation fees to different events (charity balls, conferences etc.).

Besides funds obtained from NPRD for the implementation of LDS, LAGs may use any type of financing, which exists on the market, in order to reach indicators responsible for through LDS. This external financing may be accessed directly, individually by the LAG, by the LAG in a partnership with other institutions or NGOs from the LAG area or from the exterior or by institutions or organisations from the exterior which hold the LAG as their partner.

Among the financing sources available at the moment in Romania, which LAGs may access, the following can be mentioned:

- Structural Programmes (POCU, POR, POCA);
- The European Citizenship Programme;
- The Erasmus Programme;
- Cross-border Co-operation Programmes (IPA);
- Programmes initiated by private donors (mobile phones companies, banks, oil companies, multi-national companies);
- Government funding (culture, youth, education, infrastructure);
- Any other finances from associations or foundation from Romania or from abroad.

Section 4.2. Functioning of LAGs and financing rules

Title	Functioning and financing rules of LAGs
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on the functioning and financing rules of LAGs
Duration	90 minutes
Description	<p>The facilitator will present the regulations that govern a LAG, the role of each structure and of each team member, followed by a presentation on LAG finances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Assembly; ▪ Council of Directors; ▪ Selection Committee; ▪ Censor/Auditor; ▪ LAG team – LAG manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Animator ▪ Projects evaluator ▪ Financial responsible ▪ Financial procedure inside LAGs <p>For each position the role and tasks are presented.</p>
Resources	Power point presentation

a) Functioning of LAGs

LAGs are organised and function according to the Government Order no. 26/2000 with its further modifications and completions, that is, according to the model of non-governmental organisations.

LAGs have the following structure:

1. General Assembly – represents the supreme forum for decisions making;
2. The Director Council – insures the application of the General Assembly decisions;
3. The Censor/Auditor;
4. The Selection Committee– is responsible for the selection of projects;
5. The association administrative compartment – contains the executive team

1. The General Assembly

The General Assembly is formed of all members of the LAG association and represents the supreme forum inside the association. Each member has the right to vote inside the General Assembly.

All meetings held by the General Assembly are ordinary or extraordinary. The General Assembly is called on at least once a year, during the first year trimester.

The competence of the General Assembly contains the following:

- The approval of the LAG strategy and of its general objectives;
- The approval and the modification of the income and expenses budget and that of the accounting balance;
- The election and dismissal of the Selection Council members;
- The election and the dismissal of the Censor/Auditor;
- The dismissal of financial help;
- The approval of the Internal Regulation.

The extraordinary General Assembly is called on every time it is needed, at the initiative of the LAG Director Council or if there is a written request from at least one third of the LAG members. If the Assembly is called on the members' request, The General Assembly will be held in at least two months after the written request is received. The extraordinary General Assembly may also be called on for the following reasons:

- The modification of the LAG statute or of its internal regulation;
- The appointment or dismissal of the Director Council members;
- The approval of the development strategy;
- The approval and the modification of the income and expenses budget for the LAG functioning and that of the accounting balance;
- The election and the dismissal of the Censor/Auditor;
- The dismissal of financial help.

The date, hour and agenda of the General Assembly will be communicated in written to all members with at least 15 days before the deadline already established.

For the Extraordinary General Assembly the reason and its agenda will be communicated at least 10 days before its call.

During the meetings of The General Assembly, only the problems established by the agenda realized by the Director Council, will be discussed. In the conditions in which at least 50% plus one member present would desire to discuss other problems, than the ones established by the agenda, inside The General Assembly, these will be communicated to be approved by the Director Counsel, at least 4 days before the date established for the General Assembly meeting. The rejection of the Director Council of one of these proposals will be mentioned in the minute of the meeting and will be presented to The General Assembly.

All meetings of The General Assembly will be presided by the LAG coordinator/manager/director, and if he/she is missing, the vice-president designated by the later, can held these meetings.

The General Assembly called on, by respecting the regulation presented above, is legally assembled if a third of the active members' number or their representatives are presented.

The decisions of The General Assembly are voted with a simple majority of 50% plus one member from the members presented.

Each active member has the right to vote inside The General Assembly.

Decisions made by The General Assembly, according to the law, according to its constitutive act and statute are compulsory even for associate members, which do not take presence at The General Assembly or have voted against.

2. The Director Council

The LAG Director Council represents the management and administration organisms, which insures the realization of the LAG purpose and objectives. The Director Council is also responsible with the execution of the General Assembly's decisions.

The Director Council is composed of members designated by the General Assembly. It may also contain persons from outside the LAG, in the limits of maximum one quarter of its component.

The Director Council may designate a LAG General Secretary/An Executive Director/Manager, which can be a member of the Director Council, of LAG or from the outside.

The Director Council is formed of 3-11 members and functions for duration of 2-4 years, during which it is responsible for the LAG management. The members of the Director Council may be re-elected.

The Director Council is called on a trimester basis or every time it is needed, by the LAG President or if this is missing, by the designed Vice-president. The Director Council meetings are presided by the Presidents, or if this is missing by the designed Vice-president.

The Director Council is announced by the President through the Secretary, who transmits invitations with at least two days before the meeting. Its call is made on a nominal basis, in written or by fax, email for all member of the Director Council. Invitations sent will contain the date, hour and the meeting agenda.

The meetings of the Director Council are legally gathered if at least 50% plus one of its members number are present.

The decisions of the Director Council are adopted with an absolute majority of votes from by the members present. If there is an equality of votes, the decisive vote belongs to the President. The

decisions of the Director Council are written in a special registrar and will be signed by the President and the Secretary.

The Director Council gathers at least one every trimester at the President's initiative or every time there exists a request from a third of its members. In the case of a written request from the members of the Director Council, for its gathering, it will be called as late as one month from the date registered on the request.

In the exercise of its competence, the Director Council has the following responsibilities:

- it programs and manages all LAG activities;
- it protects and manages the group's interests;
- it schedules the administrative, economic and financial management of the LAG, according to the objectives that need to be directly or indirectly fulfilled;
- it launches selection calls for projects;
- it proposes temporary solutions for the offering of financial help;
- it proposes definitive solution for the offering of financial help;
- it approves projects that will applied by the LAG;
- it studies and approves investments modification, if this is necessary;
- it agrees on longer periods for project implementation;
- it proposes modifications for LAG functioning expenses inside the LAG budget;
- it presents the General Assemble report of activity for the previous period, the execution of the income and expenses budget, the accounting balance for incomes and expenses and the LAG projects;
- it concludes and signs judicial documents for the LAG;
- it approves the management organization chart and the personnel politics for the LAG , if its statute doesn't provide otherwise;
- it proposes for the General Assembly the dismissal of members that don't fulfil their obligations or develop an activity which can bring prejudice to the LAG;
- it fulfils any other attributions provided for in the statue or established by the General Assembly.

The Director Council may elaborate it own internal operating rule.

3. The Censor/Auditor

If the number of associates is higher than 15, the nomination of a censor or an auditor is obligatory. This person may also come from the outside environment.

The censor/auditor insures the internal financial control of LAGs.

In the realization of his competencies, the Censor fulfils the following attributions:

- He verifies the manner in which the LAG patrimony is managed;

- He formulates reports and presents them to the General Assembly;
- He participates at all meeting held by the Director Council without the right to vote;
- He fulfils all attributions mentioned in the LAG statute or are which are established by the General Assembly.

4. The Selection Committee

The Selection Committee of Projects represents the technical organisms with responsibilities in the selection of projects received for financing, registered by the Local Development Plan (LDP), according to the Association Statute and to the selection procedure.

The selection process for projects registered for financing by the Local Action Group, in the LEADER axis of in the NPRD, will follow the next stages:

- Once registered with the LAG, project will be taken over by the secretariat of the LAG, which is formed by some of its employees, who will verify them from a document eligibility and from an administrative conformity points of view;
- A working group formed of external consultants/LAG members/employees (evaluators) will move to the evaluation of projects based on selection criteria proposed in the financing guide and will elaborate evaluation reports;
- The evaluation reports, together with the entire support documents, will be subjected to a final decision of a committee composed of LAG members, called the Projects Selection Committee.

The Projects Selection Committee is composed of representatives of partners from the Local Action Groups, proposed and voted by the General Assembly. The Selection Committee will have the following main responsibilities:

- To respect the rules established by the Internal Regulations of each LAG;
- To consult the selection procedure established according to different measures and to the implementation mechanism formulated inside the strategy;
- To respect a confidentiality of working activities and an impartiality in the adoption of decisions;
- To select projects which will be finances on the basis of criteria and points obtained during the evaluation process;
- To sign the selection reports;
- To be directly involved in the promotion of the financing program towards all potential beneficiaries.

The Committee will be composed full members and substitute members, representing different categories of partners, so that private partners are represented in a percentage of at least 50%. These members result from the following categories:

- public administration representatives;
- public services representatives;
- private sector representatives;

- civil society representatives.

If a member of the committee is missing, he/she will be replaced by a substitute member designated by the LAG.

For a proper functionality and efficiency to be obtained, the Selection Committee may also work through sub-committees, according to the members' specialty and experience and according to the types of projects to be evaluated.

Besides the Selection Committee, for the solving of claims which may appear, each LAG possesses an Appeal Commission.

The Appeal Commission represents the technical organism responsible with the solving of appeals and claims address to the LAG, on the process of evaluation and selection of financing projects.

Its component and attributions are established individually by each LAG. The detailing of information regarding the tasks and functioning of each structure/persons mentioned is presented in the LAG statute or its operating rules.

5. The Association Administrative Compartment

According to the 19.1 Measure Guide, the LAG organisation chart is composed of at least 5 positions for minimum compulsory activities for its proper functioning, these being:

- The Manager (the administrative responsible person) – who coordinates the LAG activity from an organisational point of view and from the obedience of working procedures point of view;
- The financial responsible – the accountant – who deals with the surveillance and control of a financial-accounting management of the LAG;
- A responsible for territory animation – who develops animation activities for the promotion of LAG activities;
- A responsible with monitoring activities;
- A responsible for the verifying, evaluating and selection of projects to be implemented, their number being established according to the complexity of activities realized by the respective LAG;
- External consultants – according to the LAG needs for a proper development of its activities.

The attributes/tasks and responsibilities of all LAG members are established by job description documents, realized and approved by the LAG management and by the Director Council/General Assembly.

LAG tasks, according to art. 34 of the European Union Regulation no. 1303/2013 are compulsory and essential for a successful implementation of LDS and aim at:

- The consolidation of local actors capacities to develop and implement operations, including the promotion of project management capacities;
- Territory animation;
- The preparing and publishing of selection calls, according to LDS;
- The realisation of non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedures and of objective criteria, regarding the selection of operations, which avoid a conflict of interests, which guarantee that at least 51% of votes regarding selection decisions are expressed by partners which don't hold the statute of public authorities and which allow the selection through a written procedure;
- The receiving and evaluation and financing applications (excepting situations in which the LAG is the beneficiary);
- The receiving and verification of the conformity of payment requests registered ((excepting situations in which the LAG is the beneficiary);
- The selection of operations, the establishment of the contribution quantum and the presentation of proposals to the Agency for Rural Investment Financing;
- The monitoring of the implementation of the Community-led Local Development Strategy, and of operations supported and realized by specific evaluation activities of that strategy;
- The monitoring of contracted projects;
- The realization of reports, payment requests, files of acquisition for financing and animation costs;
- The fulfilment of attributions specific to the following domains: financial, accounting, judicial, human resources etc.;
- The insurance, with the occasion of a selection of operations, of coherence with the Community-led Local Development Strategy, by offering a priority to operations according to the contribution brought in the fulfilment of the strategy objectives and goals.

b) Granting funding

The LAG team has the role of evaluating financing proposals received and to realize selection reports, which will be transmitted the Agency for Rural Investment Financing, so that it can establish financing contracts and assist with funds necessary for the project implementing.

During the implementation stage, the LAG team is responsible for the verification of a proper project implementation, for its field monitoring and to a proper communication with the ARIF team regarding each project.

After the registration of all financing projects at the LAG headquarters, the LAG team verified the projects eligibility; evaluators realize a proper evaluation and the Selection Committee decides on which project received financing.

LAGs don't make any payments, in any project financed through them. ARIF is the institution responsible with this aspect.

All financial report of LAG beneficiaries, after being verified by the LAG team are registered with ARIF. Payments are made by ARIF. The LAG team has the role of supporting beneficiaries in the implementation process, but they are not the ones responsible for the final approval of cost and financing received.

Section 5: Project development and the specificities of managing projects financed through the LEADER/LAG programme – how to realize specific guides

Title	The realisation of guides in specific conditions
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on the way in which specific guides of LAGs are realized
Duration	90 minutes
Description	<p>The facilitator will present how the LAG-specific application guides can be developed by including criteria that fit to the target group for a line of financing. LAG animators can identify potential beneficiaries in a specific area, adapt the guides to the local context, to the legislation or to other unexpected aspects.</p> <p>Then the facilitator will point out the importance of the connection to the local context and to potential applicants, so that the participants understand that the guides can be built with specific local organisations in mind as applicants.</p>
Resources	Power point presentation

All projects financed inside LAGs have as basis the LDS and aim at fulfilling indicators that each LAG has established for the respective strategy.

During the first phase of LDS, financing measure were established to offer action directions and which underline the proper distributing of available funds inside NPRD for the strategy implementation. All measures have been established through consultations between relevant partners (public, private and NGOs) from the LAG area and on the basis of a diagnosis analysis (territory presentation) and of a SWOT analysis.

All measures included in LDS have an innovative character and will bring extra value to that territory, thus contributing to objectives, priorities and domains of intervention identified in the strategy, according to the ones provided by the European Union regulation no. 1305/2013.

Innovation was approached under the aspect of introducing inside LDS of measures, which support the development of some new services/products/technologies, of new organization methods, including the one regarding the social sphere etc. Innovation refers to needs identified at a local level (diagnosis analysis and SWOT analysis) and proves efficiency in comparison to existent methods and solutions for that respective territory. An innovative action proposed for a certain territory may have already been implemented for another territory.

The LDS also contains actions which are eligible through NPRD measures. In this case, LAGs must prove the need, opportunity and the local/territorial character of the intervention (correlated to the

diagnosis analysis), reflected in the establishment of eligibility and selection criteria for those respective measures, specific for that territory.

Each measure is presented in the measure sheet (Appendix 1). The measure sheet contains:

The measure name – the measure CODE - Measure/DI (e.g. codification: M1 / 1A; M2 / 3A)

Measure type:

- Investment
- Services
- Flat-Rate Support

1. The measure general description, including the its logical intervention and its contribution in the strategy priorities, in intervention domains, transversal objectives and in the complementarities with other LDS measures;
2. The measure added value;
3. References to other legislative documents;
4. Direct/indirect beneficiaries (target group);
5. Support type;
6. Eligible and non-eligible actions;
7. Eligibility conditions;
8. Selection criteria;
9. Sums (to be applied) and the support rate;
10. Monitoring indicators.

Specific guides for each LDS measures are realized by the LAG team by keeping in mind the measures sheets and by adding to each specific elements from the areas aimed at by these measures, elements connected to targeted indicators, beneficiaries targeted through future projects or potential applicants for these measures.

The realization process of specific guides may contain including consults with potential beneficiaries/applicants for these projects or consults with target groups, targeted by projects that will be realized, so that the local specific and the local needs may be underlined in future investments through projects approved by these guides.

Section 6.1 Functioning and financing rules for LAGs – Assisting beneficiaries

Title	Functioning and financing rules for LAGs – Assisting beneficiaries
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on the way in which guides are developed in specific conditions of LAGs
Duration	90 minutes
Description	<p>The trainer will divide participants into 5 teams, which will develop a presentation on how they could support LAG beneficiaries in order to obtain the best possible results after the implementation of projects (60 min).</p> <p>Then each group gives their presentation and answers questions from the audience.</p>
Resources	Flipchart, markers

Direct/indirect beneficiaries (target groups) of projects financed by the AG may be:

- The civil society;
- Private entities;
- Public entities.

LAGs may be the beneficiaries of operations of public interest which target minorities, the social infrastructure and broadband for the community and the respective territory identified by LDS, for which no other solicitant doesn't manifest interest and applied avoidance measures for a conflict of interests. In this case, the verification of eligibility and of selection criteria will be realized by another entity which will be established through implementing documents of the 19.2 sub-measure.

During the implementation period of projects, in order to obtain the best result of the implementation of projects financed through LAGs, the LAG team will offer support to beneficiaries' of projects financed through the LAG.

It is important that all LAG projects to be as best implemented, with best results for its applicants and for all targeted groups in these projects and for the LAG, because the quantum of functioning costs and of animation costs for each LDS mustn't be higher than 20% (25% for the Danube Delta) of total public costs realized for this strategy according to the Solicitant's guide of the measure 19.1.

Section 6.2 How to write application guides. Key elements, the contribution of beneficiaries

Title	How to write application guides. Key elements and contribution of beneficiaries
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on how beneficiaries can be involved in developing the specific guides for obtaining funds through LAGs
Duration	90 minutes
Description	<p>The trainer will divide participants into 5 teams, which will prepare a presentation on ways how potential beneficiaries can interact with a LAG team in order to influence the development of the LAG specific guides. (60 min)</p> <p>Each group will then give their presentations and answer to questions.</p>
Resources	Power point presentation

After the strategy approval, the LAG team starts its implementation process.

According to provisions of the EU Regulation no. 1303/2013 and of the Minister Order no. 90/07.04.2017 on the approval of the Guide for Local Action Groups, for the implementing of Local Development Strategies, the implementation activity of LDS has at its base the following activities, which facilitate the beneficiaries' contribution in the elaborating of financing guides:

- Territory animation;
- The preparing and publishing of selection appeals;
- The realisation of non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedures and of objective criteria regarding the selection of operations, which avoid conflict of interest, and which guarantee that at least 51% of the votes regarding the selection decisions are expressed by partners which don't have the state of public authorities and allow a written procedure for the selection;
- The monitoring of contracted projects.

1. Territory animation is one of the most important activities that need to be realized by the LAG team, it being the activity which insures the transposition of real needs of the LDS community and on the other side, insures a constant relation and a proper informing of potential LAG beneficiaries and of the local community members targeted through projects financed through LAGs.

Territory animation had in sight:

- An informing of the LAG area population on the LAG activity;

- An informing of LAG members on the measures schedule and on the LAG activity;
- An informing of potential beneficiaries of LAGs and their encouragement in applying for new projects inside LAGs;
- The insurance of a participation of the community members and of LAG members in consulting and informing activities.

2. The preparing and publishing of selection appeals: aims especially in the realisation of specific guides for each measure on the basis of information gathered from the field during the territory animation process.

Before launching selection appeals, LAG must elaborate the Solicitant's Guide for the LDS measures and for the evaluation and selections procedures to be applied to LDS measures. These Guides will be approved by the LAG General Assembly/ the Director Council of that LAG, according to its internal procedures. In order to insure transparency, these documents will be shared on the LAG internet page.

The Solicitant's guide must contain at least the detailed information on: how projects are registered, on the selection process, categories of beneficiaries, eligible and non-eligible costs, deadlines and conditions to register in advance payment requests and for payment rates, types of documents, approvals, authorizations or studies, according to each case, which solicitants or beneficiaries must present. These conditions/documents are established after discussions with potential beneficiaries by keeping in mind local needs and the Romanian legislation in force.

In order to support LAGs, on the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development website the document "***Orientările privind elaborarea Ghidurilor Solicitantului pentru măsurile incluse în Strategiile de Dezvoltare Locală***" (Orientations regarding the elaboration of the Solicitant's Guide for measures included in the Local Development Strategies) is presented, which mentions sections and information that need to be communicated to all solicitants from the LAG territory.

LAG will elaborate proper selection procedures, which will describe the evaluation procedure for the application of eligibility criteria and project selection criteria, including the procedure for solving appeals, those being included in the Solicitant's Guide elaborated by LAG for LDS measures.

Section 7: Measures for the inclusion of Roma communities registered by Local Development Strategies (LDS). Types of projects

Title	Planning future projects together
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase participants' knowledge on how beneficiaries can be involved in the development of specific application guides for financing through LAGs
Duration	180 minutes
Description	<p>The trainer will divide participants into 10 teams of 4 people, with all 4 being from the same LAG area (2 LAG members and 2 beneficiaries).</p> <p>The groups need to identify and discuss one problem of Roma communities in the LAG area in order to start a project inside the LAG to solve that problem, using measures dedicated to the inclusion support of Roma communities inside the LAGs.</p> <p>The project sheet (Appendix 4) will be used to plan the project.</p> <p>LAG representatives will also be encouraged to discuss aspects of the specific guides relevant for the measure used and to give the application sheet to potential beneficiaries.</p> <p>At the end, each group will present its idea.</p>
Resources	Project sheet (Appendix 4)

Appendix 4: Project sheet	
Project title	
Local context (the problem addressed)	
Applicant/ partners	
Purpose	
Objectives	
Activities	
Target groups	
Results expected	
Indicators	

During the preparing stage of new LDS, for the period 2014-2020, the Nevo Parudimos Association together with the National Federation of Local Action Groups (NFLAG) from Romania, organised a

series of consulting meetings through which the including of new specific measures targeting Roma ethnicities in LDS.

As a result, these activities were introduced in measures that target social inclusion of Roma societies in LAG areas in 72% LAGs.

In Romania, at this moment, a number of 239 LAGs function and are registered, which will be financed during the period 2014-2020 approximately 14000 projects. The 239 LDS contain specific measures for Roma ethnicity people, which a budget of 20 million Euros and which are estimated to finance a few hundreds of projects.

From the measures which aim to contribute to the social inclusion of the Roma people and which will be supported during this period, a large frame of projects are presented:

- Projects that aim school dropouts in the rural area;
- Projects that aim to promote the traditional handcraft of Roma and of non-Roma population;
- Projects for Day-care Centres;
- Projects that aim to develop entrepreneurship among Roma populations;
- Cultural projects;
- Infrastructure projects;
- Projects for professional qualification for Roma;
- Projects for Roma NGO's capacity building;
- Projects that encourages tolerance and communication between community members.

Those projects can be implemented by NGOs, Public authorities or by economic entities in approximately the same measure:

- 30% Public administration;
- 32% economic entities;
- 38% NGOs.