

Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi



The guide to cooperation projects

in Poland
under axis 4 RDP
2007-2013



Program
Rozwoju
Obszarów
Wiejskich
na lata 2007-2013

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The guide to cooperation projects
in Poland
under axis 4 Leader
RDP 2007-2013

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Glossary of terms:

LGD – lokalna grupa działania

LAG – Local Action Group

LDS – Local Development Strategy

MARD - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

ARMA - Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture

VSG – Voivodship Self- Government

MO – Marshall Office or Voivodship Self- Government Organisational Unit

EC - European Commission

EU - European Union

RDP 2007-2013 - Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

EAFRD - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

AFA – Application for Aid

AFP –Application for Payment

1. Introduction

Cooperation is one of the seven founding principles, on which the Leader method is based. Cooperation projects are a new challenge to Polish Local Action Groups, as in the 2004- 2006 programming period, the scheme II of the Leader+ Type - measure implemented under the Sectoral Operational Programme „Restructuring and modernisation of the food sector and rural development 2004- 2006“ did not provide with the possibility of implementing the „cooperation“ measure. Naturally it does not mean, that Polish LAGs did not undertake cooperation with Polish or foreign partners, however this cooperation would normally take the form of study visits and was limited to exchange of experiences. Activity of this kind is a good basis for starting real cooperation, which is to implement a joint undertaking in order to achieve common objectives.

Implementation of cooperation projects is a measure of a completely different nature to the remaining measures of the RDP 2007- 2013, as there are several partners involved in implementation of a single project, thus the success of implementation is directly linked to their activities.

Why cooperate?

Cooperation may have a significant impact on the quality of a strategy. It may improve it by adding a new interregional or international dimension, it will facilitate taking another perspective on the area covered by the strategy, and in planning activities aiming at achieving objectives of the strategy it will help going beyond the local context.

Through cooperation it is possible to:

1. better promote local products and help their producers enter new markets,
2. reduce production costs,
3. better use of local resources, e.g. develop agrotourism,
4. develop or reinstate local traditions in the area (e.g. fading professions, handicraft).



Cooperation may also have a favourable influence on strengthening (or changing) the image of the area covered by the strategy, and through involvement of local communities it may help them to identify themselves with the area and develop local patriotism.

A lot of people from various areas meet through cooperation, therefore they look at certain problems in a new way, and they discover other ways of thinking on the same matters and reacting in similar situations. This facilitates taking a new perspective on one's own area covered with the strategy and helps to discover complementarities with a partner, i.e. to see that two seemingly completely different areas, which have nothing in common at the first glance, perfectly complement each other due to this diversity.

2. Cooperation projects in RDP 2007-2013

Some basic information.

Beneficiaries of Measure 421 Implementation of cooperation projects are LAGs selected for implementation of a Local Development Strategy under RDP 2007-2013.

Implementing Authority for Measure 421 Implementation of cooperation projects is, as in the case of Measure 431 Functioning of a Local Action Group, acquisition of skills and activation is Voivodship Self- Government.

Types of projects.

There are two types of projects under the Measure: **interregional projects** (also referred to as interterritorial) and **international** (also referred to as transnational).

„International/interterritorial cooperation“ refers to cooperation within a single Member State, that is e.g. Poland, while „international/transnational cooperation“ refers to cooperation between territories in several Member States as well as third countries.

„Territory“ shall mean a LAG area covered by LDS.

Note: The term „interregional“ should not be used to refer to regions in the meaning of voivodships and interpreted as „intervoivodship“, assuming that a cooperation project must involve cooperation of LAGs from two different voivodships. There are no obstacles for LAGs within a single voivodships to jointly prepare or implement a cooperation project.

Types of operations

There are two types of operations under the Measure:

- operation consisting in preparation a cooperation project
- operation consisting in implementing a cooperation project

Under each of the operations a separate application for aid (AFA) is filed and two separate contracts for aid are concluded, and each of the operations is completed by filing a separate application for a final payment.

Though a single AFA form was developed for the Measure, it takes into account specific features of the types of operation and the manual for the form precisely indicates which fields in the form must be obligatorily completed depending on whether the application pertains to preparation or implementation of a cooperation project.

Note: There is no possibility to simultaneously file applications both for preparation and implementation of a given cooperation project.

Detailed rules for granting aid under the Measure, taking into account the type of operation and resulting differences, have been described in subchapters 2.1 Preparation of a cooperation project and 2.2 Implementation of a cooperation project.

Financial ceilings under the Measure.

The financial ceiling under the Measure for a single LAG is calculated on the basis of a product of the number of inhabitants registered for permanent residence in the area covered by LDS as of 31 December 2006.

The number of inhabitants is defined on the basis of statistical information published in the Regional Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office (GUS)¹.

The aid for the Measure shall be **limited to PLN 3 per each inhabitant registered for permanent residence in the area covered by LDS as of 31 December 2006**, while no more than PLN 1 from this limit may be used towards preparation of a cooperation project

Note: If a LAG uses only PLN 0.5 for preparation of a cooperation project, there shall be still PLN 2.5 left for implementation.

Note: The above amounts refer to a single LAG only. The actual budget of a cooperation project is a total of contributions from all partners of a cooperation project, as this is how a cooperation project should be perceived: as a whole, both in terms of financing and responsibility for completing specific tasks under the project.

Example:

For clarity the example provides for all partner LAGs contributing the whole available limit in implementation of a cooperation project. There are three partner LAGs, whose LDS cover:

LAG 1: 50 thousand inhabitants, i.e. 50 000 x PLN 3 = PLN 150 000

LAG 2: 60 thousand inhabitants, i.e. 60 000 x PLN 3 = PLN 180 000

LAG 3: 80 thousand inhabitants, i.e. 80 000 x PLN 3 = PLN 240 000

The budget of the cooperation project in question may total PLN 570 thousand.

¹ This information can be found on the following website: http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdr_n/app/dane_podgrup.wymiar?p_kate=3&p_grup=7&p_pgru=1336&p_dane=0

Note: The aid limits refer to eligible project costs only, so the total budget of a cooperation project, eligible costs of which shall amount to PLN 570 thousand, may be higher, as it would also contain items which are not eligible, but necessary from the point of view of correctness and possibility of implementation of a cooperation project.

Deadlines for filing and processing AFAs.

AFAs may be filed not earlier than on the day LAG is selected for implementation of LDS, and not later than:

- by 30 June 2013 - in case of preparation of a cooperation project,
- by 31 December 2013 – in case of implementation of a cooperation project.

AFAs shall be processed within:

- one month – in case of preparation of a cooperation project + if required, 2 x 14 day for complementation of documents,
- two months – in case of implementation of a cooperation project + if required, 2 x 14 day for complementation of documents,

Each LAG shall file AFA directly to MO competent for the seat of LAG.

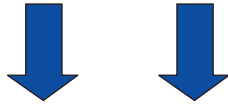
Note: Correct preparation of necessary documentation and careful completion of the application is essential. While completing application, the applicant should read the manual carefully, follow the guidelines included and remember that the application should be signed in all relevant places by authorised persons. The time devoted to careful completion of the application will save significant amount of time during its verification, which will translate into shorter processing time, and will help to avoid the calls to remove irregularities or omissions (complementing process), which significantly delay the processing. In case AFA is positively verified, VSG shall determine the date of signing the contract for granting assistance. The date indicated shall be no later than 14 days from the date the decision is received.

2.1 Preparation of a cooperation project

The level of assistance that may be granted to a LAG for an operation consisting in preparation of a cooperation project depends on the number of inhabitants registered for permanent residence in the area covered by LDS as of 31 December 2006.

An example of LAG's budget for preparation of a cooperation project (depending on the number of inhabitants covered by LDS):

10 000 – 150 000 inhabitants / LDS



PLN 10 - 150 thousand/LAG

The detailed rules of granting aid, including eligibility criteria, are regulated by the regulation of MARD of 25 June 2008 on detailed conditions and procedures for granting and payment of financial aid under the Measure „Implementation of cooperation projects“ included in the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (Journal of Laws, No. 128, item 822).

What conditions must be met, in order to receive aid for preparation of cooperation project?

The aid shall be granted for an operation consisting in preparation of a cooperation project, if the project:

1. is in line with LDS, though it does not have to be included in it;
2. does not provide for financing from other public funds; this condition is of course limited to this part of the project only, which comprises an eligible cost and shall be reimbursed from RDP 2007-2013 funds;

and if the operation:

3. shall be implemented in no more than two stages, i.e. no more than two payment applications shall be filed;
4. shall be completed within 12 months of signing the contract for aid, but not later than by 31 December 2013, which means that in principle the partners have a maximum of 12 months for preparing the project, but if the applications are filed (because each partner files own application covering the part of the project, for which they are responsible) e.g. in June 2013, there shall only be 6 and not 12 month for the preparation of the project;
5. an application for the final payment shall cover at least 25% of the total planned amount of aid.

Preparation of a cooperation project – Implementation chart

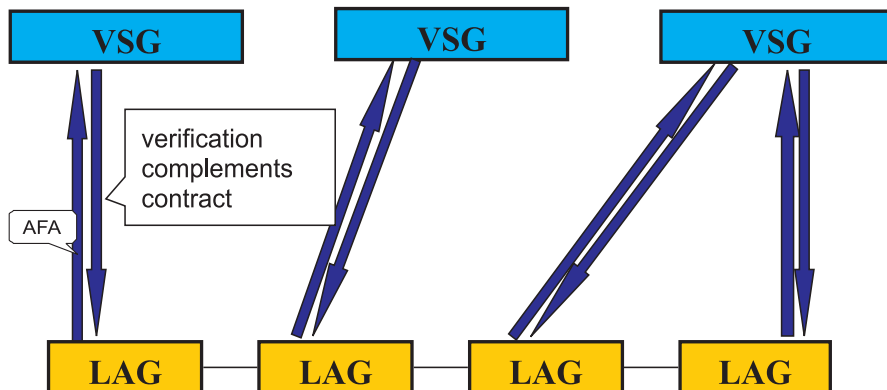


Fig. 1

The figure above shows an implementation chart for operation consisting in preparation of a cooperation project. For the purpose of this example a premise has been made, that the partners who would jointly prepare (and as a consequence probably jointly implement) a cooperation project, are LAGs from three different voivodships. AFA shall be filed accompanied by necessary attachments, which are listed in the application form, while the manual provides detailed information which attachment is required and when.

In case of the operation consisting in preparation of a cooperation project, the document confirming the will of the partners to implement the project shall be the obligatory attachment to AFA. This document shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 „Preparation of a cooperation project – step by step.

Acronym.

Already at the stage of preparation of a cooperation project it is necessary to create an acronym for the cooperation project.

An acronym is a word formed by shortening an expression consisting of two or more words. For example: DIY – Do It Yourself, RP- Republic of Poland, NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, or the LEADER itself - Liaison Entre Actions de Development de L'Economie Rurale. The acronym should be created from the first letters of the title of the cooperation project, without Polish diacritical signs. The acronym created for the purpose of a specific project should be uniformly used by all project partners. In case of an international cooperation project,



the acronym should be derived from the name of the project in a language agreed by the partners, so that it remains unchanged despite translation into different languages.

Future coordinator of a cooperation project.

As in the case of the acronym, already in the stage of project preparation each LAG should name a person, who will be responsible for project preparation on behalf of this LAG. One should bear in mind, that at the stage of cooperation project implementation such person will become a coordinator, or co-ordinator (depending on whether a given LAG will become a coordinating LAG or not). Though experience and qualifications of these persons shall not be evaluated by VSG while verifying AFA in case of operation consisting in preparation of a cooperation project, while appointing such a person one should bear in mind, that they will be evaluated at the time LAG files AFA for operation consisting in implementation of a cooperation project.

In case of positive verification of the application for granting aid VSG shall sign a contract for aid with LAG detailing – inter alia – LAG’s obligations and conditions of implementing the operation.

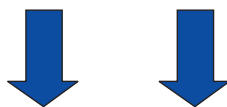
One should keep in mind, that changing the provisions of the contract shall require a written form, and the procedure for amendments is regulated by the contract.

2.2 Implementation of a cooperation project

Similarly to the case of preparation of a cooperation project, the level of aid that may be granted to a LAG for an operation consisting in implementation of a cooperation project depends on the number of inhabitants registered for permanent residence in the area covered by LDS as of 31 December 2006.

An example of LAG’s budget (depending on the number of inhabitants covered by LDS)

10 000 – 150 000 inhabitants / LDS



PLN 30 - 450 thousand/LAG

Note: These are the maximum level of aid, which may be granted to LAGs for implementation of cooperation projects, providing they do not use aid

for preparation of their projects. In case part of the limit available for the measure is used for the preparation of the project (maximum PLN 1 per an inhabitant), the limit for implementation of the project shall be reduce by the amount used for the preparation. See explanation in the part of Chapter 2. Cooperation projects in RDP 2007- 2013 entitled „Financial ceilings under the Measure“.

What conditions have to be met to be granted aid for implementation of a cooperation project?

The aid shall be granted for an operation consisting in implementation of a cooperation project, if the project:

1. is in line with LDS, though it does not have to be included in it;
2. does not provide for financing from other public funds; this condition is limited to this part of the project only, which comprises an eligible cost and shall be reimbursed from RDP 2007-2013 funds;
3. provides for implementation of a joint undertaking, i.e. all partners of the project are involved in implementation of tasks;
4. has been awarded at least 60% of the maximum amount of points, which may be awarded under evaluation of the project's compliance with selection criteria for cooperation projects;
5. under the project a person coordinating and supervising implementation, financing, promotion and monitoring of the cooperation project has been appointed, i.e. the coordinator of the cooperation project, and in case LAG seeking assistance is not a coordinating LAG, a co-coordinator, who will cooperate with the coordinator;
6. shall be implemented in no more than eight stages, while in no more than four stages in one year. This means, that no more than four payment application may be filed in a year, while they do not have to be filed periodically, in equal intervals (e.g. quarterly). It is very probable, that the first three payment application will be filed e.g. in monthly intervals, and the fourth after 6 months from the date of filing the third one, since the dates of filing payment application are closely connected to the dates of completion of specific stages of the project. The dates of completion of project's stages depend on its specificity;
7. shall be completed within a period no longer than 48 months, not later though that by 30 June 2015. This means, that in principle the partners have a maximum of 48 months for implementation of the project, however if they start the implementation near the end of the programming period, e.g. in December 2013, they will have only 18, and not 48 months.

**Implementation of a cooperation project –
The implementation diagram for an international cooperation project**

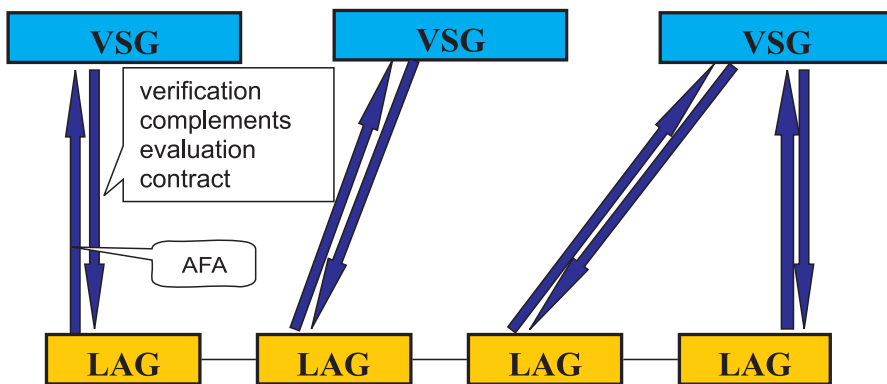


Fig. 2

The diagram above presents the implementation diagram approved for an operation consisting in implementation of an interregional cooperation project. For the purpose of this example a premise has been made, as in Fig. 1, that the partners who would jointly implement a cooperation project, are LAGs from three different voivodships. AFA shall be filed accompanied by necessary attachments, which are listed in the application form, while the manual provides detailed information which attachment is required and when.

In case of the operation consisting in implementation of a cooperation project, the agreement on joint implementation of a cooperation project concluded with all of the partners of a cooperation project shall be the obligatory attachment to AFA. This document shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 „Preparation of a cooperation project – step by step, subchapter 3.6 Signing of the partnership agreement.

Implementation of a cooperation project – The implementation diagram for an international cooperation project

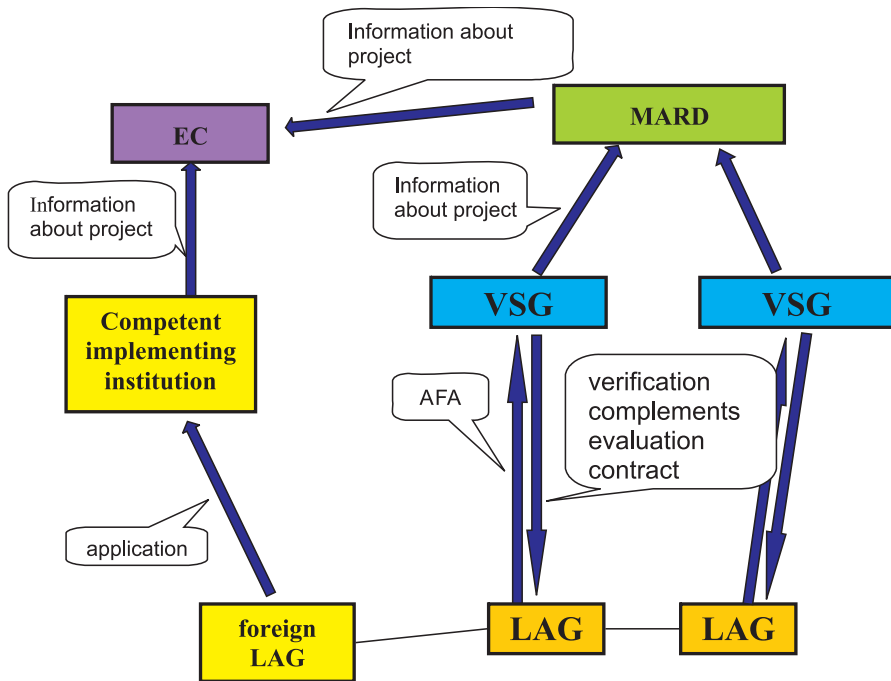


Fig. 3

In case of implementation of an international cooperation agreement, the implementation diagram is slightly more complex than in the case of implementation of an interregional project. However this does not influence the processing time for AFA, neither puts any additional obligation on LAGs. For the purpose of this example a premise has been made, that the partners who would jointly implement a cooperation project, are LAGs from two different voivodships and a foreign partner (e.g. LAG from France). Each of Polish LAGs files AFA to MO. At the same time the foreign partner applies to a competent implementing authority in his country in line with the local procedure. After the application is successfully processed and the contracts for aid are signed, VSG informs MARD, who forward this information to EC. The implementing authority for the foreign partner follows the same procedure for the application filed by this partner (in the case in question LAG from France). These action have no influence over the possibility to commence implementation of the operation by LAG, however the question of possessing the project approval by relevant implementing authority (in Poland this would be the fact of concluding the contract for aid between LAG and VSG) will be of key importance at the stage of the first payment under the operation.

Implementation of a cooperation project – The payment diagram for an international cooperation project

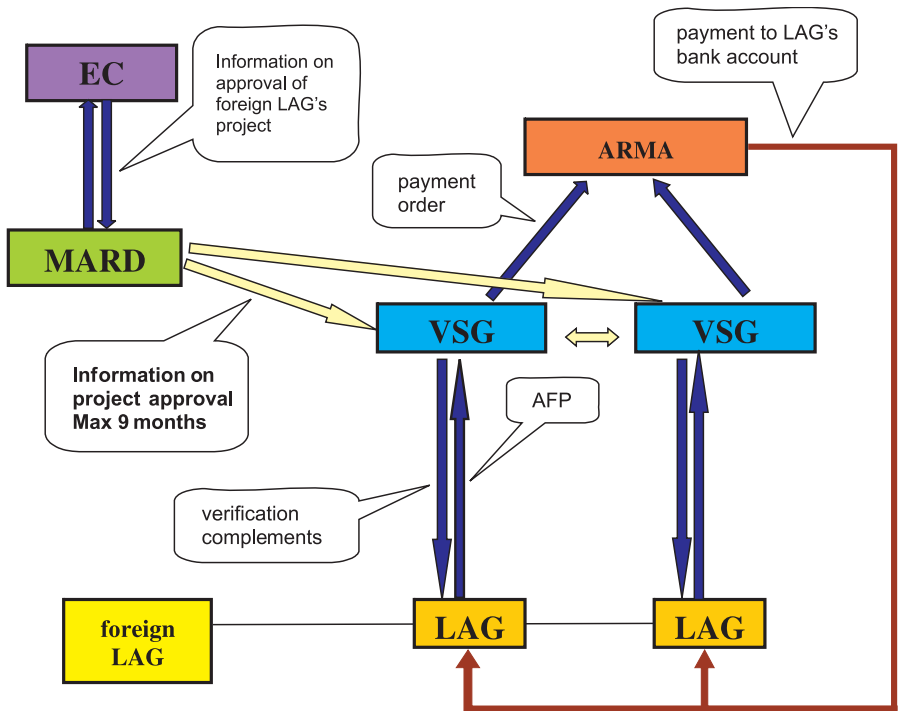


Fig. 4

The diagram above shows a payment procedure for an operation consisting in implementation of an international cooperation project. LAG files a application for payment (AFP) to MO after completion of a stage of the operation.

In case of the first PA under an operation, after its verification is completed, but still before ARMA issues a payment order, VSG verifies if remaining partners of a cooperation project (both domestic and foreign) have been granted approval of the project. VSG gets the information on domestic partners from remaining VSGs, while information on a foreign partner comes from MARD, which receives such information from EC. VSG may issue a payment order to ARMA (on the basis of which ARMA will credit the funds to LAG) only when the information received proves, that all the partners have been granted approval of the project. If the information shows that any of the partners have not been granted approval of the project yet, because its verification is still in progress, VSG suspends the payment order up to the moment it receives information on the result of the verification of the partner's application and informs LAG applying for

payment. Such suspension of payment until the information on all partners receiving approval of the project is obtained may not last longer than 9 months. This does not mean however, that possible waiting time for the payment (payment suspension) will last as long as 9 months, since the 9 month period starts already on the day the contract for aid is concluded by LAG applying for payment.

Possible suspension of payment pertains also to operations consisting in implementation of an interregional cooperation project, but in such case MOs receive the information on project approval, i.e. on signing a contract for aid, from one another; this takes place without EC's participation and without MARD's mediation. In case of an interregional cooperation project the risk that it will be necessary to suspend the first payment until AFAs submitted by partners are verified is very low, since procedures for AFA verification, including deadlines for processing applications are uniform for all VSGs. For this reason, in order to further minimise the risk of payment suspension, it is recommended that partners submit AFAs to MOs at the same time. Thus, all partners will conclude contracts for aid, i.e. will be granted approval of a project, in a similar time.

Note: In case a partner of a cooperation project is not granted approval of the project within 9 months from concluding the contract for aid by LAG applying for payment, payment is not executed and the contract for aid is terminated.

Criteria for selection of cooperation projects.

Pursuant to the annex to the regulation, there are 9 criteria applied in selection of cooperation projects, with a maximum of 45 points (in case of international projects) or 40 points (in case of interregional projects).



In order for aid for project implementation to be granted, project must receive at least 60% of the maximum amount of points, which can be given in the process of evaluation of a cooperation project's compliance with selection criteria. In case of an international project the minimum is 27 points, while in case of an interregional project 24 points.

Criteria for selection of cooperation projects.

1. There are more than two partners involved in implementation of a cooperation project (0 or 4 points).

2. The cooperation project defines and describes group of entities targeted by the project, or whose participation in the project is expected (0 or 4 points).

Under this criterion points may be awarded if a group of entities targeted by the project, or whose participation in the project is expected has been defined and described. Definition of the target group of the cooperation project should be included in the application in the part entitled *Target group of the cooperation project*, while its description should be included in an agreement for joint implementation of a cooperation project or in the part of the application entitled *Description of operation*. Points will be awarded only if both condition (definition and description of the target group) are met. Target groups of cooperation projects may include, for example: private sector (entrepreneurs) minorities (national, cultural), tourists, unemployed, women, youth, etc.



3. Objectives of a cooperation project are measurable, defined in time and attainable in the period of the project's implementation (0 or 4 points).

As in the case of the criterion pertaining to the target group of a cooperation projects, in order to be awarded points under this criterion it is necessary to meet all three conditions together: measurability, definition in time and attainability in the period of the project's implementation.

Measurable – that can be measured and expressed in a specific numeric value (through product indicators), e.g.

- number of kilometres of bicycle tracks built, in case of the objective Improvement of tourist and recreation infrastructure,
- number of beds created in case of the objective Development of tourism facilities, etc.

Defined in time – objectives should be formulated in a manner, which will allow to clearly indicate in what period of time the expected objectives of the project will be accomplished. E.g. to design and sign 15 kilometres of canoe track in 6 months, to organise two canoe trips for students of post gymnasium schools in a year, etc.

Attainable in the period of project's implementation - objectives should be formulated in a manner, which will facilitate their accomplishment in the period of project's implementation, so they should rather be short term objectives, adapted to both financial and organisational potential of partners.

When formulating an objective of a cooperation project, one should – as in the case of formulating LDS objectives – use the top- down method, first formulating

general objectives, and then detailed objectives, bearing in mind, that the objective should be expressed concisely and clearly indicate, what is planned through implementation of the project. Objectives should indicate the change which will take place after the project is implemented, rather than directly describe activities which will lead to this change.

Note: Objectives of a cooperation project must be convergent with LDS objectives, i.e. the vision of the development of the area covered by LDS should be implemented through the cooperation project.

As in the case of LDS objectives, when defining general and detailed objectives of a cooperation project, one should bear in mind, that the general objective serves implementation of a vision (general concept agreed in LDS), while the detailed objective serves the accomplishment of the general objective.

For example: If the general objective is Development of tourism on the basis of local natural resources, then the detailed objective could be Improvement of tourism and recreational infrastructure. In such circumstances, if the project provides for – inter alia – construction of bicycle routes, kilometres of bicycle routes/paths could be a product indicator.

4. A cooperation project is of innovative nature for a given area (0 or 3 points).

Following are understood as innovative:

- application of ideas and solutions known elsewhere, but of innovative nature in a given area;
- innovative use of local resources;
- development of new types of production and services;
- new ways to involve local community in the development process.

Note: Partners may expand the above definition, pointing to other innovative solutions. It is however necessary, that the partners describe in their cooperation project how they perceive the concept of innovation.

Innovativeness in a given area may be related, for example, to the manner in which local natural resources² - which determine attractiveness of a region - are used, such as: varied lay of the land, numerous lakes, and vantage points. So far, tourist attractions of the area have been based exclusively on aquatic resources in the form of lakes, around which tourist infrastructure has emerged. Therefore tourist season has been limited to summer and depended strongly on weather. Significant competition from neighbouring regions, changing market demand and resulting threat of stagnation of the tourist function of

² Based on LDS developed by LAG Tourist Association Kaszuby.

the region led to a new approach to the manner of using available natural resources. The emphasis has been placed on development of active forms of tourism and recreation so far offered only to a small extent, using resources other than lakes only. The development of activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding, Nordic walking, diving and sailing is planned. Following natural resources will be used to this end: attractive lay of the land, picturesque landscapes, numerous vantage points and lakes, but not in the classic form as watering places, but for active forms of recreation: sailing and diving. The history of the development of tourism in the area shows, that the activities of this scale have not been carried out in the region, thus this approach will be of an innovative nature.

5. A cooperation project is based on local resources (0 or 3 points).

The usage of local resources is understood as involvement in the implementation of a project of local: human resources, local tradition, history, culture, local infrastructure (including tourist infrastructure), local products or services.



6. Tasks included in a cooperation project go beyond exchange of experiences between partners (0 or 8 points).

Points under this criterion may be awarded, if an agreement on joint implementation of a cooperation project or information in the part of the application entitled *Description of operation* show, that the cooperation project goes beyond exchange of experiences between partners.

Note: A study visit is not a cooperation project! A cooperation project is a joint implementation of tasks covered by the project and leads to common objective agreed by the partners.

7. Implementation of a cooperation project will facilitate stimulation or retaining activity of local communities during or after the implementation of the project (0 or 6 points).

Points under this criterion may be awarded, if an agreement on joint implementation of a cooperation project or information in the part of the application entitled *Description of operation* show, that the cooperation project will facilitate stimulation or retaining activity of local communities during or after the implementation of the project. Points will be awarded if the project:

- facilitates animation and integration of local community, or
- answers identified problems and needs of the community, or

- involves at least one target group (listed in the application), or
- involves at least one topical area (listed in the application), or
- promotes voluntary service for the inhabitants, or
- involves persons/organisations/other entities who/which are not LAG members, e.g. inhabitants of areas covered by LDSs of project partners

8. Managing a cooperation project – qualifications and experience of a coordinator relevant from the point of view of implementation of a cooperation project, and if LAG applying for aid is not a coordinating LAG, qualifications and experience of a co-coordinator, who will cooperate with the coordinator.

1) in case of international cooperation projects – documented command of at least one of the working languages of the European Union (English, German or French) or the language of a country from which a partner of the cooperation project originates (0 or 5 points).

Documents confirming the command of a foreign language are listed in the AFA manual.

2) documented experience in managing projects similar in scope to the evaluated cooperation projects:

- a) more than 2 projects – 4 points,
- b) 1 or 2 projects – 2 points,
- c) no experience mentioned in letter (a) or (b) – 0 points.

Examples of documents confirming experience in project management include: employment contract (responsibilities), contract to perform a specific task, project settlement, final report from a project.

9. A cooperation project will be implemented in a systematic and continuous manner ensuring effective spending of funds (0 or 4 points).

The schedule of the project will indicate its continuity, i.e. task will be allocated in time and shared between partners in such a manner, that there will be no periods of „inactivity“ during implementation of the project. The timeframe for project's implementation (neither too short, nor excessively long) will be adapted to the tasks implemented by the partners in such a manner, that effective spending of the funds for the project is ensured.

In case a minimum of 60% of points is awarded in evaluation based on the above criteria, VSG and LAG conclude a contract for aid detailing – inter alia – LAG's obligations and conditions for implementation of the operation.

One of the most important obligations indicated in the contract for aid is the one to submit to MO a completed report on implementation of a cooperation

project, signed by all domestic partners of a cooperation project. The up-to-date template of the report is available on MO websites.

The report on implementation of a cooperation project shall be submitted by the coordinating LAG, and in case of an international cooperation projects, when a foreign partner is a coordinating LAG, the report shall be submitted by this Polish LAG, which according to the timetable for implementation of the cooperation project included in an agreement on joint implementation of the cooperation project, is responsible for the implementation of the last task under the project. The report shall refer to the implementation of the whole project, and not to the part consisting in operation implemented by a given LAG. The report shall be submitted within 3 months from completion of implementation of the cooperation project. The date of completion of implementation of the cooperation project is indicated in the agreement on joint implementation of the cooperation project.

One should keep in mind, that changing the provisions of the contract shall require a written form, and the procedure for amendments is regulated by the contract.

Note: Under the Measure „Implementation of cooperation projects“ it is possible to implement both non-investment (soft) operations and investment operations (hard). The type of investment should be defined through the catalogue of eligible costs pertaining to investments, indicated in Article 55 of Regulation 1974/2006, which provides that in the case of investments, eligible expenditure shall be limited to:

- a) the construction, acquisition, including leasing, or improvement of immovable property;
- b) the purchase or lease-purchase of new machinery and equipment, including computer software up to the market value of the asset. Other costs connected with the leasing contract, such as lessor's margin, interest refinancing costs, overheads and insurance charges, shall not be eligible expenditure;
- c) general costs linked to expenditure referred to in points (a) and (b), such as fees of architects and engineers and consultation fees, feasibility studies, the acquisition of patent rights and licences.

Note: One should bear in mind, that despite the fact, that the cost of leasing has been indicated as eligible expenditure in Article 55 of Regulation 1974/2006, pursuant to MARD's regulation setting forth the conditions and procedure for granting aid under the Measure „Implementation of cooperation projects“, **instalments paid under a leasing contract are not eligible expenditure.**

Coordinator/co-coordinator of a cooperation project.

As it has been already mentioned in subchapter 2.1 Preparation of a cooperation project, at the stage of implementation of a cooperation project each LAG is obliged to appoint a person, who will be responsible for supervision over implementation, financing, promotion and monitoring of the cooperation project. In case of a coordinating LAG this person is a coordinator of the cooperation project, while in case of a LAG, which is not coordinating, it is a person cooperating with a coordinator, i.e. co-coordinator of a cooperation project.



One should bear in mind, that experience and qualifications of this person will be evaluated by VSG during verification of AFA at the implementation stage of a cooperation project.

The contract for aid details responsibilities of a coordinator and co-coordinator of a cooperation project.

The responsibilities of a coordinator include:

- 1) coordination of implementation of a cooperation project through:
 - a) supervision over implementation and financing of a cooperation project,
 - b) monitoring of a cooperation project,
 - c) continuous cooperation with co-coordinators representing partners of a cooperation project,
- 2) initiating and carrying out of promotional activities of a cooperation project,
- 3) drafting the report from implementation of a cooperation project, which shall be signed by all domestic partners of a cooperation project.

The responsibilities of a co-coordinator include:

- 1) coordination of implementation of operation covered by the contract through:
 - a) supervision over implementation and financing of the operation,
 - b) monitoring of the operation,

- c) continuous cooperation with the coordinator of the cooperation project, particularly in drafting the report from implementation of a cooperation project, which shall be signed by all domestic partners of a cooperation project,
- 2) initiating and carrying out of promotional activities for the operation.

Note: A cooperation project is a term broader than operation, as the cooperation project consists of all operation implemented by single project partners. An operation is a part of the project, which is covered by AFA of one LAG, and for implementation of which this LAG is responsible.

Change of a coordinator/co-coordinator of a cooperation project.

The contract for aid contains provisions pertaining to a possible change of coordinator/co-coordinator of a cooperation project.

The change is acceptable if a candidate for coordinator/co-coordinator possesses qualifications and experience not inferior to the previous coordinator/co-coordinator.

In case the qualifications and experience of the candidate for coordinator/co-coordinator are inferior to those of the previous coordinator/co-coordinator, it is acceptable to appoint this person as the coordinator/co-coordinator providing that points awarded in the process of evaluation of a cooperation project under the criterion pertaining to the qualifications and experience of the coordinator of the cooperation project were not decisive in receiving the minimum of 60% of points available in the evaluation process of a cooperation project.

In case the qualifications and experience of the candidate for coordinator/co-coordinator are inferior to those of the previous coordinator/co-coordinator, and the points awarded in the process of evaluation of a cooperation project under the criterion pertaining to the qualifications and experience of the coordinator of the cooperation project were decisive in receiving the minimum of 60% of points, VSG shall inform LAG about the lack of possibility for replacing the coordinator/co-coordinator with the person proposed by LAG within 14 days from receipt of information about the intention to change the coordinator/co-coordinator.

In such case LAG should present another candidate or refrain from changing the coordinator. For this reason, selecting the right person for the position of the coordinator is of key importance. When making such a choice, LAG should take into account a number of other factors besides experience and qualifications, for example: interpersonal skills, including an ability to meet new people, cooperation skills, organisational talents, ability to lead the team, creativity, and availability. These factors will be of key importance for proper management of the project and success of its implementation.

2.3 Eligible costs of a cooperation project

Eligible costs include the costs incurred by LAG in the process of:

- preparation of a cooperation project – not earlier than a year before submitting AFA,
- implementation of a cooperation project – not earlier than on the date when AFA was submitted

(providing the contract for aid has been signed).

Note: Eligible costs include the tax on goods and services (VAT) paid in connection with incurring costs of preparation or implementation of a cooperation project, as far as LAG has no possibility to reclaim it.

Eligible costs of preparation of a cooperation project include:

- 1) organisation and effecting of meeting of a cooperation project partners, including costs of:
 - a) travel and stay of persons involved in preparation of a cooperation project on the part of LAG,
 - b) equipment and facilities rental,
 - c) translation and interpretation,
 - d) preparation, printing or copying of materials,
- 2) remuneration for research, analyses, studies, feasibility studies, economic development plans or plans for the development of entrepreneurship (documents, which will provide the knowledge, which LAG considers indispensable for proper preparation of a cooperation project),
- 3) legal fees (including e.g. legal advisory services when designing provisions of the agreement on joint implementation of a cooperation project).



Eligible costs of implementation of a cooperation project include:

- 1) organisation of visits related to implementation of a cooperation project, including costs of:
 - a) travel and stay of persons involved in implementation of a cooperation project on the part of LAG;
 - b) translation and interpretation;

- 2) rental of rooms or other spaces or lease of land;
- 3) preparation of technical documentation, research or analyses;
- 4) purchase, rental or lease and assembling of machines, devices, equipment, tools, accessories or software;

Note No 1: Computer equipment purchased under the Measure „Implementation of cooperation projects“ must be purchased for the needs of a project and shall not be used by LAG office.

Note No 2: Costs of purchase shall be considered to be eligible costs only if costs of rental or lease would exceed cost of purchase.

Note No 3: Costs of purchase of means of transport shall not be eligible.

- 5) purchase of materials or objects;
- 6) investor's supervision (in case construction works are carried out under a project);
- 7) construction works;
- 8) purchase of seed material and seedling of perennial plants;
- 9) organisation and execution of promotional, cultural, recreation and sport events;
- 10) design, printing or copying and distribution of information material, including audiovisual, related to a cooperation project, purchase or rental of advertising space, purchase of air time and placing press material in the press;
- 11) design and signposting of tourist paths, nature and educational trails, including natural monuments, historical, natural, cultural and sacred objects, going beyond LDS area;
- 12) creation and updating of data bases, including tourist information data bases;
- 13) creation of websites (related to an implemented project, not LAGs' own websites);
- 14) remuneration for services, including legal and accounting;
- 15) court fees and licence or patent fees.



General note No 1: Eligible costs of a cooperation project implementation do not include instalments paid under a leasing contract for second hand goods, except for items connected to local culture or historical heritage, that is items which are exhibits in heritage parks or museums.

General note No 2: The term „persons involved in preparation or implementation of a project on the part of LAG“ does not refer solely to LAG employees, but includes LAG members, who are not employees, and persons connected to LAG and involved in preparation and implementation of a project (e.g. students of schools involved in exchanges and internships).

3. Preparation of a cooperation project – step by step

3.1 Identifying the idea

In many LAGs the idea for a cooperation project has probably been born already at the stage of developing LDS, during consultation with local communities and diagnosing the need and topical areas, which resulted in identification of strategy objectives. This does not mean however, that the idea matured automatically and effortlessly and was included in the strategy as a readymade project. Though some LAGs did include cooperation projects in their strategy, these were isolated cases, and – what is essential – it was not obligatory. In order to prepare and subsequently implement a cooperation project, it does not have to be included in the strategy, but it must be in line with its objectives.

Ideas for cooperation should be sought for example on the basis of an analysis of local resources. A good starting point is to identify potential target groups for a project, including groups willing to get involved in a cooperation project, e.g. folk ensembles, brass bands, voluntary fire brigades, rural women associations, school interest clubs, local non-governmental organisations working in the fields of – for example – environment protection, cultivation of local historical or cultural heritage.

Ideas for cooperation project may result from an analysis of previous or ongoing cooperation and the lessons learned. This could be a cooperation between communes (partner communes and towns), student exchange programmes etc. A cooperation project may be a form of continuation or supplementing of projects implemented before. It may also stem from LAG's experiences in undertaking cooperation in various fields.

It is important to organise meeting with potential participants of a project and with target groups, discussions on the project, broad dissemination of information on the project and presentation of added value of the project to these persons.

For example: 20 kilometres of bicycle paths were built under the project. The objective of the project was to increase attractiveness of the region for tourists. The added value of the project in this example may be e.g. improved conditions for carrying out economic activities by the inhabitants of the region (catering establishments, bicycle rental) or improvement of health status of inhabitants through active lifestyle.

3.2 Searching for a partner

Step 1: How to define a partner's profile?

In order to find the right partner, one should ask several questions about what is expected from a partner, in order to create the partner's profile. Criteria for creating the profile may include:

- primary features of a partner: geographical, historical, socio-economic environment, resources (natural, tourist) etc.,
- human resources at partner's disposal,
- objectives of the partner's strategy, fields of interest,
- type of the partner (knowledge, experience and know-how, i.e. ability to use this knowledge and experience in practice),
- expectations as to a contribution of the partner to the project (innovation transfer, a concept of a joint project),
- proximity of the partner (neighbourhood),
- coherence of objectives included in the strategies (own and partner's),
- legal form of the partner,
- language (in case of a foreign partner it is extremely essential to be able to communicate freely),
- interpersonal relations with the partner, possible influence of cultural differences on feasibility of the project.



Step 2: Who can be a partner in a cooperation project?

The partners in a cooperation project may be first of all LAGs selected under RDP 2007- 2013 in any of the EU Member States, as well as partners from outside EU. One should bear in mind though, that participation of a partner, which is not a LAG (whether from the territory of the Community, or from outside EU) is not an eligible cost. Only costs of coordination are eligible in such case.

A partner of a cooperation project, which is not a LAG, must meet the criteria set forth in Article 39, par. 2 of Regulation 1974/2006, i.e. it must be a local

partnership (acting in an area other than area of activity of remaining partners) organised with the following features:

- a) presence of a local group in a geographical territory, which is active in rural development, with the capacity to draw up a development strategy for that territory³;
- b) the organisation of that local group is based on a partnership of local actors⁴.



Note: A declaration of a partner (or partners, if there more than 2 partners involved in preparation of a project) clearly indicating if the partner is a LAG selected under RDP 2007-2013 and if it meets the criteria set forth in Article 39 of Regulation 1974/2006/EC is shall be attached to AFA. The declaration shall be drafted on a form, which is attached to the application. In case of preparing an international cooperation project, the declaration of a foreign partner does not have to be filed on a form, which is an attachment to the application, but must have the same contents as the attachment. This means it must clearly indicate whether the partner is a LAG selected under RDP 2007-2013 and whether it meets the criteria set forth in Article 39 of Regulation 1974/2006/EC. The declaration of the foreign partner must be translated into Polish by a sworn translator.

Thus, pursuant to Article 39 of Regulation 1974/2006/EC, apart from LAGs selected under RDP 2007-2013, following may be partners of a cooperation project:

- LAG selected for implementation of LDS under RDP 2007-2013,
- a group operating under Leader+ (or earlier) initiative, and not selected for implementation of LDS under RDP 2007-2013,
- association registered under the Act of 7 March 2007 on supporting the development of rural areas with EAFRD (in case of partners from Poland),
- other organisations functioning according to principles on which LAGs function, meeting the criteria set forth in Article 39 of Regulation 1974/2006/EC.

Note: Taking into account the above, e.g. a public university, an entrepreneur, a school, a scientific institute or territorial self-government unit **may not be** partners in a cooperation project.

³ I.e. to act in a rural area, which is consistent (geographically, culturally, historically), to have a development strategy for this area, have an administrative potential for managing the process of strategy implementation.

⁴ I.e. to be a partnership of local entities (partners representing social and business sectors).

Step 3: How to define the number of partners in a cooperation project?

When looking for a partner, once we already have an idea for a cooperation project, we should think about what number of partners would be optimal for a given project. It would seem, that a project with two partners only would be simpler in implementation, however it may happen, that due to the specificity of a project, two partners will not be able to develop proper solutions for problems emerging during the implementation. It seems that a project with 3-4 partners would ensure the proper dynamics and a variety of solutions in answers to emerging problems, however it would require more effort in order to reach agreement with partners, more flexibility and more effort put into coordination.

Step 4: Where and how to look for a partner?

In order to find a partner for a project, one should draft concise information about the idea for the project, which will contain a characteristics of own LAG alongside the profile of the desired partner. Such information should be translated into a foreign language (depending on whether LAG is also interested in international cooperation). The choice of the language should result from the profiled of the desired partner, but also from the ability for efficient communication on the part of persons involved in preparation of the project (and prospectively in its implementation). The most popular language, in which LAGs disseminate information on searching the partner for international cooperation projects, is English.



E-mail is a good, efficient and cost effective tool for searching partners. National rural areas network of individual Member State keep (and make available) e-mail data bases. The data base of all LAGs selected under RDP 2007-2013 in the Member States is also developed by the Contact Point. It will be available on the following website: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/enrd/>

One should also systematically monitor internet websites (e.g. these of the Contact Point, national and regional rural areas networks), calendars of events (meetings, conferences, seminars), subscribe to newsletters, and review search engines of cooperation projects. Information on looking for a partner should be uploaded to such search engines and data bases, so that potential partners can get in touch.

3.3 Preparation of the first meeting

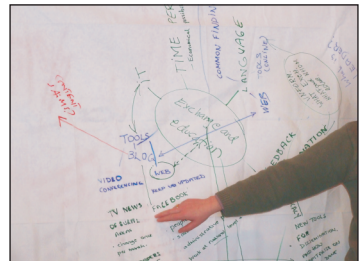
The first meeting of project partners may be of key importance to the success of its preparation, and subsequent implementation. Therefore one should do their best to prepare it well.

It is important to continuously keep in touch with the partner, and both sides should take equal care in this respect, irrespective of which party initiated the contact. This contact may be effected in an electronic form (e-mail, internet communicators, e.g. skype) or by phone. This will allow the parties to get to know one another better, find understanding and exchange experiences.

Efficient technical organisation of the meeting is also of significant importance. It is important to secure (and agree with the partner) well in advance organisational matters, such as: room for the meeting, transportation, lodging, meals. The date and place of the meeting should be agreed jointly, so that they are convenient for all partners. It should be agreed, which partner is responsible for various aspects of the organisation of the meeting, as well as – which is very important, who pays for what.

It is also of considerable importance to properly prepare (and exchange between the partners) documentation on territories covered by LDSs and project target groups, including groups willing to be involved in the implementation. Also the list of participants of the first meeting should be given a lot of thought and carefully created. On top of the representatives of partners or experts, it is worth to invite representatives of local authorities or target groups.

In case of an international project it is necessary to verify if the participants of the meeting are able to communicate in one language, and provide interpretation during the meeting if necessary. The same pertains to all prepared documents.



The agenda of the meeting should provide time for both work: presentations, debate and relaxation: coffee breaks, lunch and field trips in the area, where the project will be implemented. It is important that the agenda facilitates achieving the two primary objectives of the meeting:

- getting to know the partner
- achieving progress in project preparation

Apart from documentation on the territories covered by LDSs, it is important to prepare a preliminary presentation of the project, which will be a basis for subsequent discussions and agreements. This should be a framework for the project, which will leave room for some adjustments resulting from arrangements made between the partners.

At this stage it is already possible to start the work on **the document confirming the will of the cooperation project partners to implement it**. This document

is an obligatory attachment to AFA under the operation consisting in preparation of a cooperation project – of course in case LAG will want to seek assistance from EAFRD funds for the preparation of the project.

The contents of this document is to a certain degree regulated by the regulation of MARD of 25 June 2008 on detailed conditions and procedure for granting and payment of financial aid under the Measure „Implementation of cooperation projects“, however the following wording has been used: „... the document should contain in particular: ...“. The term „in particular“ means, that items indicated in the regulation do not constitute a closed catalogue and the partners of the project may include additional provisions in the document. Thus, pursuant to the regulation, the document should contain:

1. the data identifying the partners of the cooperation project – i.e. name, address, contact details (phone and fax numbers, e-mails, website address);
2. description of the objectives of the cooperation project and main tasks covered by this project – the tasks do not have to be described in great detail, as the details will emerge as the result of intensive efforts on the preparation of the project. The tasks may, but at this stage do not have to be allocated to partners of the project. The description of objectives and main tasks serves the purpose of presenting the primary idea of the project and drawing a certain picture of what will be accomplished through the project.
3. definition of a group of entities, who are targeted by the cooperation project or whose participation is expected during the implementation – at this stage of project preparation these groups probably can already be defined, since their definition is one of the starting points in the process of going from the idea to searching the potential partner of the project;
4. indication of persons responsible on the part of each partner of the cooperation project for preparation of the project – such persons will become coordinators or co-coordinators of the project in the implementation stage.

Furthermore, it is worth including the following items in the document:

- title of the cooperation project
- acronym of the cooperation project,
- estimated budget of the cooperation project – as long as it is possible at this stage of the work on the project.

The work on the document should run parallel to the preparation of the first meeting.

3.4 The course of the first meeting

The objective of the first meeting is to get to know the partner and to achieve progress in the preparation of the project.

It is important to assign a person responsible for chairing the meeting, who will moderate the meeting and look after organisational matters.

Each partner should have an opportunity to present their structure, model of functioning, management method, motivation they are driven by when getting involved in the project, the objective of the strategy and expectations from the project (and partners) as well as the needs, which the project is to satisfy.



It is important that the meeting clearly shows, if the partners have similar expectations from the project, and if their individual objectives are convergent.

The first meeting is a good occasion to start discussions on tasks, which will be implemented under the project, to assign LAG which will coordinate the project, to discuss the timetable of the project, to allocate tasks to the partners, and to define the budget of the project, including details of individual contributions of each of the partners.

The first meeting – providing that the partners are still ready to cooperate – may result in signing of the document confirming the will of the partners of the cooperation project to implement it, of course in case the partners will want to seek aid from EAFRD funds for the preparation of the project.

Note: The signing of the document confirming the will of the partners of the cooperation project to implement it does not have to take place at the first meeting. It may take place in the subsequent meetings, because in many cases, one meeting may not be enough for partners to take the decision of involvement in the project preparation.

3.5 Further steps after the first meeting

It is worth drafting a report from the first meeting, which will contain the summary of the arrangements made during the meeting and be approved by all the partners participating in the meeting.

Note: A person responsible for drafting the report should be appointed, the method for exchanging information between the partners decided and the procedure for submitting possible comments on the content of the report should be agreed.

If necessary, another meeting (one or more) with the partners should be organised, bearing in mind that the document confirming the will of the partners of the cooperation project to implement it should be signed at one of the subsequent meetings.



The information about the project and the readiness of the partners to undertake the cooperation should be disseminated among inhabitants of the areas, where it will be implemented. One should also make sure, that the representatives of local authorities have been informed and that the groups originally expressing the will to participate in the project are still interested.

At this stage the work may commence on drafting **the partnership agreement**, i.e. **the agreement on joint implementation of the cooperation project, which shall be concluded with all partners of the cooperation project**. This agreement is an obligatory attachment to AFA in case of implementation of a cooperation agreement.

3.6 Signing of the partnership agreement

The partnership agreement is a basic document regulating mutual relations of the partners of the project, including their rights and obligations.

Similarly to the case of the document confirming the will of the partners of the cooperation project to implement it, the content of the partnership agreement is to a certain extent regulated by the regulation of MARD of 25 June 2008 on detailed conditions and procedure for granting and payment of financial assistance under the Measure „Implementation of cooperation projects“. The items indicated in the regulation do not constitute a closed catalogue and the partners of the project may include additional provisions in the document. Thus, pursuant to the regulation, the document should contain:

1. the data identifying the partners of the cooperation project – i.e. name, address, contact details (phone and fax numbers, e-mails, website address);
2. the description of the cooperation project and primary tasks covered by the project – here the tasks should be described in more detail, than in the case of cooperation project preparation. The task must be already allocated to the partners of the project. The description of objectives and main tasks serves the purpose of presenting the primary idea of the project and drawing a picture of what will be accomplished through the project;

3. definition of a group of entities, who are targeted by the cooperation project or whose participation is expected during the implementation - at this stage of work on the project these groups should already be clearly defined;
4. the description of activities of the partners of the cooperation project, including the scope of these activities and the area where they are carried out;
5. the definition of roles of each of the partners of the cooperation project in implementation of tasks covered by the project – the agreement should clearly define, which partner is responsible for a specific task. Clear definition of the scope of responsibilities of each of the partners will facilitate implementation and coordination of the project;
6. indication of the coordinator and co-coordinators of the cooperation project – (name, surname, address, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail, command of foreign languages);



Note: Indication of coordinator's and co-coordinators' command of foreign languages is required only in case of an international cooperation project.

7. the period of implementation of the cooperation project – estimated time of starting and completing implementation of the project;
8. timetable for the implementation of the cooperation project and indication of locations for implementation of specific tasks covered by the project;

Furthermore, it is worth including the following items in the agreement:

- title of the cooperation project
- acronym of the cooperation project,
- indication of the coordinating LAG,
- the budget of the cooperation project taking into account financial contributions of each of the partners – in case of an international cooperation project, if the budget is expressed in a currency other than EURO (e.g. pound sterling), the agreement should provide indicative amount in EURO,
- indication of the court competent for settling possible disputes between the partners,
- protection of the partners against the situation, in which any of the partners withdraws from the implementation of the project (e.g. provision on contractual penalties, which the remaining partners may claim from

the partner withdrawing from the project or failing to fulfil obligations, which the partner undertook when concluding the agreement),

- the procedure for amending the agreement (when, in what cases, and in what extent the amendment is possible),
- obligation of the partners to jointly develop indicators for monitoring the project, the procedures for monitoring and evaluation of the project – these questions will be further discussed in Chapter 5. Monitoring and evaluation of the project.

4. Implementation of a cooperation project – step by step

Step 1: Contact with the partners

For the implementation of the project to be successful it is necessary to continuously stay in touch with the partner. Such contact may take the form of periodically organised meeting, teleconferences, or at least exchanging e-mails. Free internet communicators (e.g. skype) are a good, inexpensive form of staying in touch.

It is worth to agree a schedule of meetings with the partners, as well as principles for exchanging and flow of information, including the manner of notifying the partners about emerging problems, or possible risk of delays in implementation of tasks. It is very important from the point of view of continuity in implementation of the project, because the delay in the implementation of task by one partner has an immense influence on the ability of the remaining partners to commence and timely implement subsequent tasks. Organisation of meetings, exchange of information and an on-going communication with the partners should be the tasks of the coordinator and co-coordinators of the project.



Step 2: Coordination of the project.

Establishing an advisory body, e.g. in the form of a Steering Committee, may facilitate solving the problems emerging during the implementation of the project together. The frequency of the meetings of the Committee should be agreed by the partners at the very beginning of the implementation of the project. The meeting should be periodical (e.g. monthly), but it is good to provide for a possibility to call a meeting outside of the agreed times, when an urgent problem emerges.

The Committee should consist of the coordinator and co-coordinators, as well as of the representatives of partners, experts, advisors and representatives of groups targeted by the project and participation of which is provided by the project.

Reports, notes and minutes should be drafted after the Committee meeting, subsequently distributed to all partners of the projects. The costs of the Committee meeting are eligible costs of the project, since they belong to coordination costs, thus should be covered by the coordinating LAG.

5. Monitoring and evaluation of a cooperation project

Monitoring of the project is the task of the coordinator and co-coordinators of the project and should be carried out in a continuous manner, on the basis of previously defined indicators. The partners of the project should jointly develop the indicators for monitoring of the project, bearing in mind that the indicators should measure the progress in implementation, so they should be connected to the objectives (e.g. the length of signposted trails, number of persons who participated in fairs, number of sports events organised etc. – depending on the specificity of the project.

The development of the indicators may be a task, which is entrusted to the Steering Committee, which should bear in mind the SMART principle, which says the indicators should be:

Specific – precisely define, what they are to verify;

Measurable – possible to be measured in numbers;

Achievable – they must result from previous analyses and refer closely to the objective of the project;

Results-oriented – realistic, attainable;

Time-specific – defined in time – with a time for measurement previously agreed by the partners;

The monitoring process should result in reports drafted by the coordinator and co-coordinator and presented to the Steering Committee. The reports should have both a content related aspect (progress in the implementation) and a financial aspect (spending) and should be drafted regularly during the project's implementation and after its completion. The reports should also take into account encountered and expected problems in the implementation. The report drafted after the completion of the project is an excellent basis for **the report on projects implementation**, which must be approved by all domestic partners of the cooperation project and which has been discussed in subchapter 2.2. Implementation of a cooperation project.

The partners should also foresee a possibility to change the monitoring indicators and develop a procedure for this purpose. The necessity to change the indicators (e.g. through adding new ones) may emerge as a result of an analysis of information contained in the reports from the project's implementation. This information should be used for possible corrections to the process of implementation or for the purpose of informing the local community on the progress in the project's implementation and on impact on the area, where it is implemented.

The primary question in the project evaluation is the choice of the method: self-evaluation or external evaluation.

Evaluation of the project should consist in measuring „the project’s success“. The process of defining „the success“ may have four levels, presented in the diagram below:

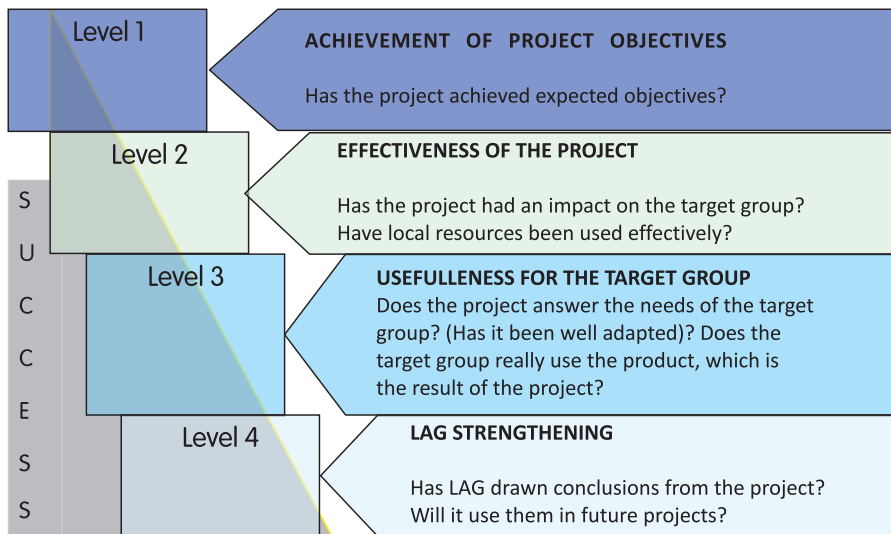


Fig. 5

It is worth to disseminate the results of the project’s evaluation, e.g. in the form of an information folder among inhabitants of areas covered by LDSs, partners and local authorities, and to place the information on the results of the project in data bases, where the information on seeking a partner was previously entered.