



ELARD Cooperation meeting SUMMARY

Time and place: 31 March 2015 14:00-17:00, Hall of the Ministry of Agriculture (39/41 Lai St., Tallinn, Estonia)

Participants: ELARD (European Leader Association for Rural Development), Ministry of Agriculture, PRIA (national paying agency), Rural Economy Research Centre, Leader action groups of Estonia (annex 1 – participants list).

The meeting was focused on the implementation of the CLLD in the new programme period – opportunities and challenges, and Estonian Leader's role on an international level; ELARD's mission and activities; and the opportunities and responsibilities connected to the candidacy for the ELARD presidency.

The meeting took the form of speeches and open discussions:

- **Introduction and meeting moderation** – Kristiina Timmo, Estonian Leader Action Groups Representative at ELARD
- **Overview of current CLLD situation in member states and ELARD introduction** – Radim Sršen, President of ELARD; Petri Rinne, Vice-President of ELARD
- **Estonian rural development plan and Leader – priorities and goals of the new programme period; what has changed, what has evolved** – Marko Gorban, Rural Development Department Head at Ministry of Agriculture
- **Overview of Leader implementation** – Marek Treufeldt, Head of LEADER Support Unit, PRIA
- **Networking and international cooperation, Leader success stories** -
 - Ave Bremse, Head of Rural Network Office at the Rural Economy Research Centre
 - **Cooperation of Leader action groups over the years – challenges and future steps** - Tiina Sergo, Chairperson of the Estonian Leader Forum
- **Estonian Leader Union – current and future activities** – Piret Leskova, CEO of the Estonian Leader Union
- **Responsibilities and opportunities of ELARD presidency candidacy** – Kristiina Timmo, Estonian Leader Action Groups Representative at ELARD

Open discussion based on following questions:

1. What kind of good practices we have in Estonia to offer to Europe?

- All the rural area in Estonia is covered by leader approach. This is a quite unique situation. We have strong village movement, truly bottom up approach, many active LAGs and good cooperation between them. LAGs have become the real rural developers within last 10 years.
- Horizontal management and good involvement of target groups. Opened platforms and methods to negotiate and improve regulations. Close cooperation with ministry, paying agency and other stakeholders.
- Estonian LAGs and Leader system have been very effective – almost 7500 approved projects in the previous period.
- Good practice implementing e-applications and reports system.
- Many international and innovative projects.
- New applicants have been one of the biggest value of Leader approach in Estonia. Almost 60% of beneficiaries were totally new when Leader started.
- Many networks of small producers (food, tourism, handicraft), good cooperation with Fisheries LAGs.

2. Which are our biggest challenges we would like to get some support from other MS?

- CLLD implementation in the new programme period.
- Multi-funded approach.
- Increase the amount of transnational projects.
- Innovation in rural development.

3. What kind of focuses (agenda) we could take at international level?

- More attention to research, development and innovation (more cooperation with universities and research centers).
- Rural and urban cooperation.
- Promoting multi-funded approach.

Summary by Triin Lääne and Kristiina Timmo

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