

## ***First Interim Meeting on the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group on LEADER***

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### **Draft country report: Albania**

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# I. Introduction

- (ISARD) 2014-2020 and Regional Development Strategy to target unbalanced territorial development, rural depopulation and rising poverty
- GoA efforts in updating the legal and institutional base in compliance with the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP).
  - Implementation of IPARD and strengthening of overall administrative capacities
- Need for more tailored support to local communities such as through LEADER initiatives.
  - For 2016, the level of national direct support at EUR 14.7 million (direct producer support) but little effect on sustainable local community development.
  - IPARD Program II (71 million Euros till 2020) creates conditions for designing LEADER measures



## 2. Objectives

- To present the current state of LEADER in Albania from the perspective of policy, regulatory and institutional framework;
- To assess the available funds from public sources and donors;
- Review practical activities already undertaken to identify good practice from previous actions and initiatives and lessons learned;
- To draw conclusions by generalizing from the findings on the specific national needs, challenges and constrains
- **Definition** INSTAT Census of Population and Housing 2011: Rural areas in Albania are defined as “the territory of all municipalities with populations, below 50,000 people”.



# Approach

- i) Desk Research of available documents
- ii) Interview(s) with representative(s) of the Ministry of Agriculture or other relevant Governmental bodies
- iii) Case studies to illustrate the diversity of contexts, approaches and institutions developed by LEADER/ LEADER like initiatives and partnerships.

## II. LEADER ENVIRONMENT IN ALBANIA

# LEADER in policy agenda

- (ISARD) 2014-2020, measure number 8: Preparation and implementation of local strategies for rural development - "Leader" approach –aim, processes, components, etc
- Regional policy urges for a new approach to rural development and insertion of PPPs at the local level
- LGUs more authority in terms of placement/connection of public-private partnerships.
- IPARD II 2016-2020: after 2018 Preparation and implementation of local development strategies – Leader approach;
  - study of situation, a measure is designed for LEADER and documentation package to be presented to EC for assessment and revision

# Institutional and Legal Settings

- MARDWA-Managing Authority (MA) responsibility rests on "implementation of local development strategies - LEADER approach and "technical assistance."
- METDE and other line ministries
- Civil Society organizations-i.e. Albanian Network for Rural Development
- 61 municipalities under economic development and rural and agriculture development functions Law of 2015 On Local Self-Government.



# MARDWA task:

- Design a draft LEADER measure fiche
- Conduct an introductory training workshop and a further workshop for the stakeholders
- Prepare draft administrative procedures for the selection of the LAGs
- Elaborate a draft capacity building program to be implemented under the IPARD TA measure for potential LAGs and TORs
- Provide on-the-job-training
- IPARD agreement has determined
  - the intensity of aid, the rate of contribution to the EU, the admissibility
  - The comprising elements of LEADER at the program level
  - Criteria that need to be met , are and supportive measures of the LEADER approach

# The legal and regulatory requirements

- (i) National legislation that include normative acts and laws Law No. 9817, dated 22.10.2007 *“On Agriculture and Rural Development”* and the *Law 139/2015 “On Local Self-Government”*.
- (ii) Common legal acts and agreements between EU and Albania including FA and IPARD
- (iii) EU legal documents including regulations regarding the Instrument for Pre-Accession and other regulations concerning the LEADER approach.

## Gaps

- there are no conditions and procedures prescribed by law for the Local Action Groups.
  - A non-profit association is a typical legal form registered in the Court (founding act and statute)
  - The highest governing body the General Meeting or the Assembly of all its members.

# Funding

- LAG longevity is highly depended on the funding.
- Several Local Action Groups have been formed and functioned in different regions of the country.
- Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD, 2016 (c) survey 11 of of 23 surveyed organizations report to have established LEADER type local action groups or other community led local development initiatives in the recent 5 years.
- There is no estimation of the amount of funding used to establish LAG type organizations.
- Less than 10 million Euro mainly from foreign funding (interview with Gjeci).
- Donors: GIZ, Italian Co-operation, Swedish Government , OXFAM, etc.

# III. PREVIOUS INITIATIVES AND LESSONS LEARNED

# Initiatives

- Albanian Agency for Mountainous Areas (MADA) implemented a project called "Sustainable Development in Rural Mountains Area Programme (SDRMA)".
  - established 21 Forums of Mountain Area - utilized for the implementation of Strategic Economic Investment Programs (SEIP).
- ALCDF has implemented and supported 141 local initiatives through Local Initiative Fund”, “Leveraging the Capacities of CSOs in the North of Albania”
- Oxfam three LAGs: LAG Adrijon-Vlore, LAG Maranaj-Shkoder, LAG Drini – Diber.
- Swedish Government supported the work of CNVP in cooperation with 24 Forest and Pastures Users Associations and 24 local producers groups

# Other initiatives

- NGO VIS Albania has established and promoted “Fryma e Kelmendit” Consortium in Malesi e Madhe, in the frame of the project "Integrated rural development project in the communes of Kelmend and Shkrel, District of Malesia e Madhe” 2009-2013.
- Stakeholder Groups established in the framework of “Area Based Development” project implemented by SWG.
- Sustainable Rural Development projects supported by GIZ, CABRA project is piloting new community governance and participation instruments, Local Action Group (LAG) “Bjeshket e Namuna”

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

# 4. Findings and recommendations

- **Capacity building...**
  - Considerable human resources which are trained and skilled on area-based, participatory and integrated development, local partnerships, promotion of the territory,
  - Development strategies and action plans at different levels such as at local, sub-regional and regional level, including cross border areas,
  - Comprehensive methodologies on local and regional development planning which ensure highly participatory local planning processes
  - Public-Private Partnership Agreements have been drafted and are active among the development stakeholders at local, regional and inter-municipal level.



# Findings and recommendations

## Utilise the previous capacities....

- A number of LAG-type organizations are inactive
- Creation of LAGs may initiate relying on and enabling synergies with previous area-based development initiatives (for instance using or refreshing the 21 FORAs created by MADA).
- Existing studies and local development strategies should be used for drafting LAGs' strategies-identify the LAG territory and development priorities.
- LAG creation should be consolidated geographically when possible

# Findings and recommendations

## New opportunities...

- Initiative on creating new LAGs (Deshati LAG) are awakening due to future financial support from IPARD component.
- Review, promote, create and assist LAGs-type organizations/entities in accordance with EU guidelines
- Sustainability should be ensured through the creation of partnership
- LEADER type entities/organizations at local subregional / regional level such as consortiums, clusters, associations etc. should take a leading role (ie. ANRD)
- MARDWA lead the process and foster the financing after 2018 Leader Promotion measures from IPARD II.
- Donor coordination is essential in enabling a proper establishment and sustainable financing of these initiatives.

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# Thank you for your attention!

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