

South Eastern Europe



Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group

Third Interim Meeting of the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on LEADER

“Standing up for LEADER” North Macedonia

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Skopje, N. Macedonia

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Overall aim

To facilitate the process of setting up structures and delivery mechanisms for the LEADER measure during the current IPARD period and the new period 2021-27 to increase the capacities of the rural areas in the SEE countries.

Objective

Provision of national expertise related to facilitation of the process of horizontal and vertical integration, cooperation, dialogue and exchange of relevant stakeholders involved in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of CLLD/ LEADER in SEE and provision of policy advice to boost capacities to implement (CLLD).

Method

Desk research

-Assessment of available policy documents, legislation, rule books, research papers, reports, studies etc. from public authorities, from academia and from international donors and organizations.

Dialogue meetings and consultation workshops

On 19 February 2020, MAFWE & RDN organized workshop to discuss opportunities for using support from the measure Technical assistance for LEADER within the IPARD Program 2014-2020, as well as use of funds from the Program for financial support of rural development of MAFWE. Representatives from MAFWE, PA, LAGs participated at the workshop



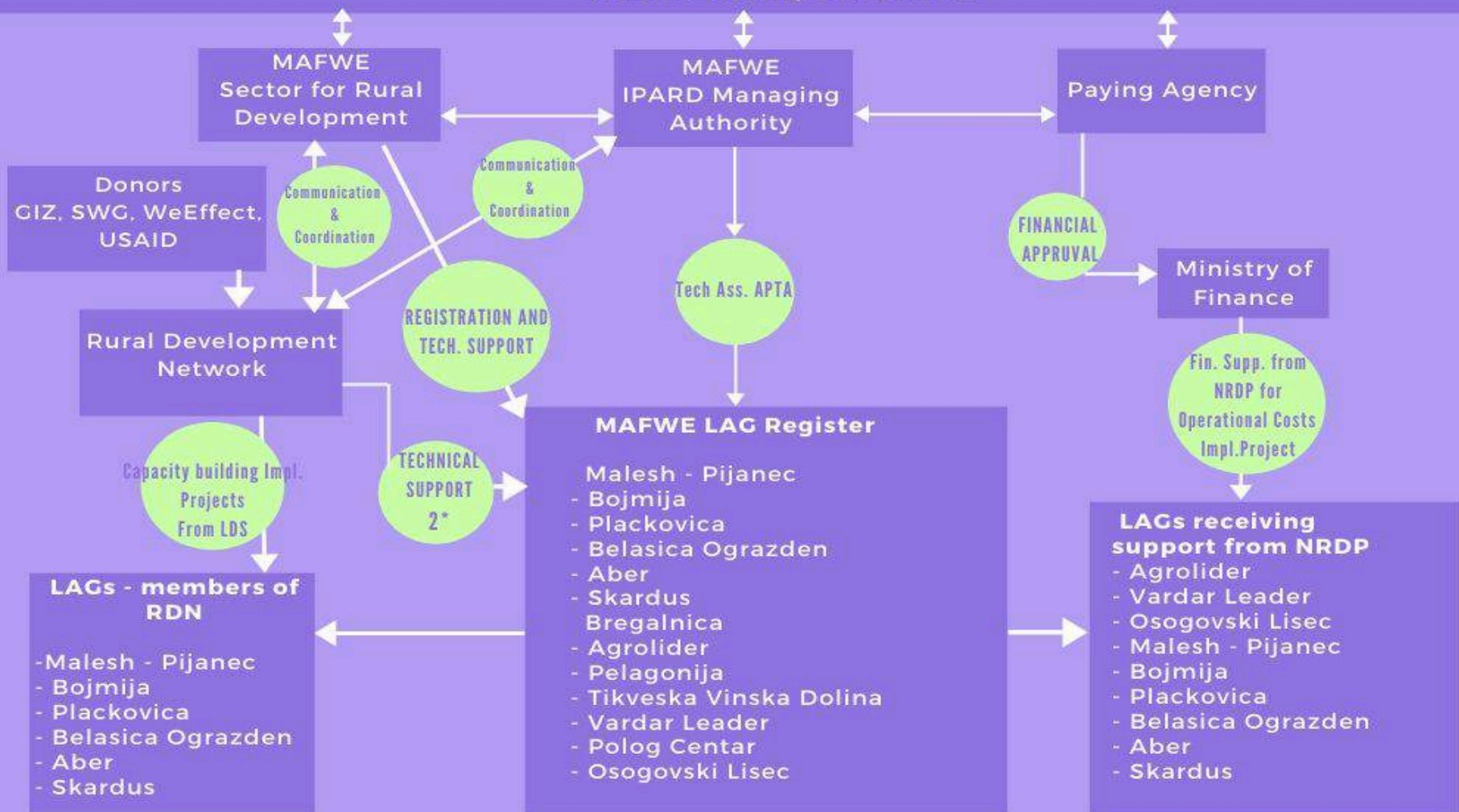
National Road Map

As per the given outline the following input was prepared

Introduction – one page, brief explanation of the situation on LEADER in the country stating information on: national regulatory and policy framework, registration of LAGs , national and IPARD support

Human Resources and Organizational Capacities		Society	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Authority – knowledgeable human capacity in IPARD implementation; Paying Agency; knowledgeable human capacity as part of the system for payment in IPARD and other programs for RD; Sector for rural development; LEADER/like measure in NRDP Local Action Groups; good spread within the LAG territories, basic human capacities are available 13 LAGs established as legal entities, registered in the MAFWE register Municipalities; EU/donor project implementation Rural Development Network <p>Profound experience in introduction of LEADER approach and unique organization with systematic and continuous approach in capacity building, LDS creation, support and establishment of LAGs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Rural Development Network – envisioned part of IPARD Managing authority – good management of IPARD process and cooperation with relevant stakeholders Paying Agency – established process for approval and allocation of funds between MA and PA for the potential IPARD applicants Sector for rural development - NRDP management collaborates with MA and PA Local Action Groups; established cooperation with RDN and MAFWE Municipalities; available funds to support LAGs <p>Rural Development Network – established cooperation systems with MAFWE Municipalities and LAGs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEADER in national documents: NARDS; NRDP; IPARD LEADER in the legal settings: Law on agriculture and rural development; Rulebook for the detailed conditions for registration in the records of the local action group; Rulebook for content and methodology for preparation of strategies for local development of rural areas Available funding mostly from donors and as of 2020 from NRDP
	Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Authority; lack of staff to work on LEADER, Paying Agency: lack of capacities and staff for LEADER; not developed procedures for LEADER projects Sector for rural development; lack of staff and coordination Local Action Groups lack of continuous funding for operational costs; lack of human capacities; lack of experience in management of LDS Municipalities lack of knowledge related to the role in the LAGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Rural Development Network – not established yet Managing authority – weak inter-sectoral cooperation Paying Agency – weak system for responsive coordination between the MA and PA Sector for rural development insufficient coordination between the sector ,MA and LAGs Local Action Groups; lack of frequent cooperation with the MAFWE lack of outreach campaigns that will increase the local awareness and rally support for the LEADER Approach, lack of ongoing coaching support to the LAG management on administrative and programming operations, Municipalities; lack of knowledge regarding LEADER on territories where LAGs are not established Rural Development Network –insufficient funding to introduce and promote LEADER
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Authority ready to collaborate with PA, Sector for RD, LAGs and RDN in setting up quality LEADER program; draft measure fiche prepared, provision of funds to LAGs under IPARD TA Paying Agency express interest to be involved in the preparations and implementation of LEADER Sector for rural development provision of financial support to approved LAG projects under NRDP ; express interest to regularly adjust the NRDP according LEADER principles as part of IPARD; Local Action Groups basic animation of local population in process; availability of financial support to approved LAGs from NRDP Municipalities ; generally supportive in implementation of LAG LDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Rural Development Network – great potential for coordinative role in the process of IPARD and NRDP implementation if established Managing authority - to guide the inter-sectoral coordination of the LEADER process; by establishing coordination body consisted of relevant stakeholders Paying Agency – developing procedures for LEADER measure together with MA Sector for rural development; work together with MA and PA on simulating LEADER through NRDP Local Action Groups; involvement of the LAGs in planning NRDP; continue cooperation between LAGs , MA,PA and RDN Municipalities; coordination of municipal programs with LDS Rural Development Network-facilitate the networking in the process of LEADER operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law on agriculture and rural development – improvement of articles related to LEADER Accreditation of LEADER measure APTA New NARDS Regional and local development strategies
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Authority – frequent changes of the management structure Paying Agency – postponing employment of new staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing authority change of staff defocus on LEADER Paying Agency defocus on LEADER 	

IPARD Monitoring Committee 1*



1*. Ministries, Municipalities, National Federation of Farmers, National Extension Agency, Chambers of Commerce, Academia, Rural Development Network, Secretariat of EU Affairs, Government Agencies, Association of Farmers, Women Association, Environmental Associations.

2*. The Rural development Network also provides support to non-member LAGs: Pelagonija, Tikveshka Vinska Dolina and Bregalnica, by giving advise to overcome the difficulties in their administrative work, they also involved in the RDN's ongoing projects. They also expressed interest in join RDN and become members

Core processes

Level	Process Nr.	Description of process	Actual state of play, main bottlenecks	Validation (A, B, C)
1. MA/PA /SRD	1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification of the legislative framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law on Agriculture and rural development contains ambiguities related to criteria for LAG establishment and functioning the rulebooks are not specific enough and some articles are unclear 	B
	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening administrative capacities of MAFWE and PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of inter-sectoral cooperation 	C
	1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEADER measure in IPARD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft LEADER measure fiche prepared National accreditation is pending EU accreditation expected PA lacks human capacities 	B
	1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Assistance in IPARD for LEADER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support LAGs for development of LDS and acquisition of skills to be conducted 	B
	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Local Development Strategies under the National Program for Rural Development; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 LAGs received support The support measure from NRDP is not adjusted according LEADER principles as part of IPARD 	B
2. Networks /RDN of NM	2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building of LAGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of LDS of 4 LAGs Support implementation of projects Support new LAG initiatives to be conducted 	A
	2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange of experience International and regional actions on LEADER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEADER, TNA and TOT for local LEADER experts conducted in the WB countries Participation of few LAGs in transnational projects and visits TWINLAG etc. 	A
3. LAGs	3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAG cooperation with MA, PA, RDN and municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications channels established 	B
	3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Local Development Strategies under the National Program for Rural Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of involvement of LAGs in creation of methodology for financial support from the NPRD 	B
	3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking among LAGs and local stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEADER thematic group under RDN established Lack of local animation 	B

Priorities

	Respective priorities set by the stakeholders for developing the LEADER system at three levels	Comments from the national expert...	
		...concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of the actual or planned delivery system	...concerning the implementation of the LEADER method (8 features)
...by public authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEADER as part of IPARD Technical assistance Implementation of LDS under the National Program for Rural Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEADER is still not part of the new IPARD programming period Accreditation of LEADER within IPARD requires national and EU accreditation which is still in a process The Action Plan for Technical Assistance measure foresees expenditure associated with "acquisition of skills" and Implementation of LDS only for LAGs registered in MAFWE. The approval and tendering procedures for TA are time consuming slowing the process of procurement. The eligible activities (expenditures) are listed in the rulebook nr.90 for LAG financing for measure 412 and 413. The rulebook on LAG registration nr. 89 states the criteria for registration. Revision of both rulebooks is requested from existing LAGs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft LEADER measure is in line with the LEADER principles The APTA is in line with the networking as one of the LEADER features where RDN and LAGs are directly involved in creation of this document. In general the process satisfies LEADER bottom up approach and networking although greater transparency by MAFWE is needed
...by networks and intermediary agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation with MAFWE, PA and LAGs Strengthen capacities of LAGs Improve LAG networking and animation Setting up LAGs on territories where LAG structures do not exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation established through the RDN's LEADER thematic group. Training covers building social capital to foster local initiatives. Build capacities to draft, implement and monitor the strategy. Training of animators in animation techniques, monitoring and evaluation is in process New LAG initiatives are identified and further animation of stakeholders is in process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is networking coordination at national level making LEADER visible to the national authorities, for future policy making The capacity building process is part of the LEADER approach thus, LEADER depends on "social capital". The key role of LEADER in building the networking and animation should be played by local animators. They mostly come from the civil society The formation of LAGs as previous experience follows the LEADER principles
...by LAGs and local actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve LAG LDS Strengthening administrative capacities of LAGs Implementation of LDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDN supports 4 LAGs in revising the current LDS, the rest will continue with this process using funds from IPARD TA Few of the LAGs have administrative and financial capacity able to administer public/EU funds and ensure satisfactory operation of the partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LAG LDS are following the MAFWE rulebooks based on the LEADER principles. Administrative capacity is still low in order to manage public funds for LEADER Implementation of the LDS under NRDP must be adapted to IPARD

Road map

Processes	Action	Responsible actor and other contributing actors	Output	Date	Comment
1.1 Modification of the legislative framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes of articles 87,89 in the Law on Agriculture Changes in the rulebook for preparation of LDS Changes in the rulebook for LAG registration in MAFWE register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAFWE MA MAFWE MA./SRD MAFWE MA./SRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved criteria for LAG establishment and functioning improved criteria for preparation of LDS improved criteria for registering LAG in MAFWE register 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision of the articles related to LEADER are necessary for establishing clear basis for setting up LEADER program The change in the rulebook is related to LDS criteria that should require detailed description of the type of activities. This will enable LAGs to use LEADER measure from IPARD for the small, pilot projects (when it will be entrusted) The previous change in the LoARD should consequently apply to the rulebook articles (from 2 to 7)
1.2 Strengthening administrative capacities of MAFWE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of inter-sectoral cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA/SRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jointly prepared 2020 action plan for LEADER 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold regular joint working meetings of LEADER responsible people from both sectors, Open the functional email address leader@mzsv.gov.mk
1.3. Implementation of LEADER measure in IPARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update of the LEADER measure fiche Implement national accreditation of the LEADER measure Implement EU accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA National Authorization Officer DG Agri 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized LEADER measure fiche LEADER measure nationally accredited LEADER measure accredited by DG Agri 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft LEADER measure fiche was prepared under the EU NIMS project, detailed revision is needed to upgrade and complement certain deficiencies prior accreditation process To accredit the LEADER measure, NAO requires from PA to increase human capacities. NAO to be involved in the process To accredit the LEADER measure, DG Agri requires from PA to increase human capacities. The process might take up to 2 years after the national accreditation

<p>1.4 Technical Assistance in IPARD for LEADER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for LAGs for development of LDS and capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAGs strategy revised and operation skills developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize workshops for LAGs to upgrade LDS • Conduct capacity building through a dialogue with all stakeholders. • Training LAG leaders to draft implement and monitor the strategy. • Mobilize and communicate with people. • MA to conduct regular meeting with LAG leaders to monitor progress on the field and adjust the process if necessary. • (APTA) for 2020 have to be approved by the IPARD Monitoring Committee (MC).
<p>1.5 Implementation of Local Development Strategies under the National Program for Rural Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade and adjust the NPRD according LEADER principles as part of IPARD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA/SRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed methodology according LEADER principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide funds for operational costs of LAGs and animation, promotion and cooperation activities. • Develop monitoring system for tracing the results and expenditures
<p>1.6 Capacity building of LAGs by RDN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To revise LDS of 4 LAGs • Support implementation of projects • Support new LAG initiatives to be conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDN • RDN • RDN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved LDS of 4 LAGs • Projects derived from LAG LDS implemented • New LAGs established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revision of the 4 LDS will take into consideration the needs of the local stakeholders in 4 LAGs. The process should continue and will apply to the rest registered LAGs that could be supported by IPARD TA measure • The implementation of the project will serve as mechanism to strengthen LAG capacities in simulation of LEADER like activities • Animation of stakeholders in territories with potential for formation of new LAGs. Facilitation of the process to be conducted by the RDN together with representatives of IPARD MA and PA
<p>1.7. Exchange of experience International and regional actions on LEADER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct follow up TOT on LEADER, for local LEADER experts in the WB countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of experts trained in LEADER on regional level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TOT will be conducted as a tailor made training in a form of a study visit in some of the EU LAG (Croatia)

<p>1.8 • G cooperation with MA,PA,RDN and municipalities</p>	<p>LA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen LAG cooperation with MA,PA,RDN and municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAGs, MA,PA,RDN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEADER working group established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The working group will exchange information, conduct workshops and meetings to guide the implementation of LEADER
<p>1.9 Implementation of Local Development Strategies under the National Program for Rural Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of LAGs in creation of methodology for financial support from the NPRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRD/LAGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRDP financial support developed based on LEADER principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial support will be upgraded in relation with LEADER as part of IPARD
<p>1.10 Networking among LAGs and local stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of the LEADER thematic group Conduct animation meetings with local communities regarding LEADER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAGs LAGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAGs well informed about their role in LEADER Local stakeholders well informed regarding opportunities of LEADER approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LEADER thematic group established under the RDN will increase participation of LAGs to improve coordination in addressing the needs of the local communities The local stakeholders will acquire relevant information regarding LEADER to be well prepared in developing projects that will be supported by the LDS



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Thank you

