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European Commission



**Leader+ Observatory
Contact Point**

81, Rue du Marteau

B-1000 Brussels

BELGIUM

Tel: +32 (0)2 235 20 20

Fax: +32 (0)2 280 04 38

contact.point@leaderplus.org

Flash News

Leader+ Observatory

focus



Finland

The last project to be approved under the Finnish Leader+ programme in Finland will be in this April, with a total of 4 221 projects funded. One third of these involve small-scale businesses, and the rest support development projects. The Leader method was mainstreamed in Finland 11 years ago. Over the period 2000-2006, 58 LAGs used the Leader-methodology and were funded by four different national programmes, with a total public funding of EUR 220 million. There are many tangible results of the Leader method which has been crucial for rural development in Finland. For example, social capital in the rural communities is growing and hundreds of new enterprises have been created along with thousands of new jobs. Consequently rural inhabitants are more skilled than before and have better living conditions. This is particularly so for women and young people.

In the new programming period LAGs will continue to work as before, and the Leader-approach will cover the entire country. This means that municipalities finance 20% of the public funding via annual payments. LAGs are NGOs whose boards are open to all, and are made up of three categories: municipalities, local organisations (villages, farmers and environment etc.); and local residents. The selection and evaluation procedure for the 2007-2013 programming period concerning the LAGs is in its final stage. The ministry of agriculture and forestry will approve the Leader LAGs as soon as the European Commission adopts the national mainland rural development programme.

The ministry has also renewed the contract with the national network of LAGs (SYTY) and will provide network services for the LAGs until 31 October 2007. These services include: LAG training; magazine; web- pages; support for transnational cooperation; and organising a transnational seminar in Finland (in September). The first 2007 issue of Maaseutuplus magazine was published in English. Preparation of the future Rural Network is being finalised. All parties taking part in the implementation and activities of the programme belong to the rural network. For more information, please contact [Salla Rossi](#) from the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture.



The Leader+ orchard project

This project aims to revive the British orchard culture by encouraging the production of local species. Today, fruit sold in supermarkets are limited to a few varieties due to concerns of price and convenience. This leaves little room for the traditional varieties of apples, pears and plums. The project was launched in autumn 2006 and will culminate with a good practice guide at the end of 2007. The project involves six UK Leader+ LAGs: Herefordshire Rivers; Teignbridge; Cumbria Fells and Dales; Mid Kent; Somerset Levels & Moors; and North West Devon. The LAGs have developed priorities to maintain traditional orchards as part of their local landscape and economy. At national level the projects are networked for mutual support and exchange of experiences. For more information or to obtain a copy of their newsletter please contact [Ida Fabrizio](#).



Information day on Leader: French NNU one-day seminar 20 March 2007

Paris, France

The French NNU is organising an information day on the particularities of the Leader method, through the lessons learned and the experience gained from Leader+. During this one-day seminar, the conditions for implementing Leader-type measures under the EAFRD will be examined: how will LAGs be selected; which territories will benefit?, and how will the NNU work?

The seminar is mainly for managing authorities and local stakeholders. The programme for the seminar and the registration form are available on the [French NNU's website](#). For more information, please contact [Guylène Nonnon](#).

FLASH NEWS

links

[Leader+ website](#)

[Leader+ Magazine](#)

[New Rural Development
Regulation 2007-2013](#)

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click on the headlines*



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Third workshop of the European island farm landscapes 28 – 29 March, 2007

Menorca, Spain

The Leader+ LAG from the Spanish island of Menorca; the Balearic Ornithological Group; and the Island Council of Menorca; are organising a two-day workshop on the topic, "The European island landscape". This workshop will examine how to go from theory to practice on farm diversification, tourism and biosphere reserves. The event also includes several relevant excursions and visits. For more information please contact the [LAG in Menorca](#).

The European info-pack "Rural Europe: definitions, issues and policies" is now available online

The European citizen's panel has compiled an information pack entitled "Rural Europe: definitions, issues and policies". It is composed of fact-sheets which introduce issues at stake for rural Europe such as: environmental issues; employment and other social issues; rural economy; and information and communication technologies. The info-pack presents a European level overview and is available in English and French. Other useful information on the theme "What are the roles of rural areas in Europe?" can also be found on the European citizen's panel's website.

The Comédie experience sheets

Comédie is a French programme that aims to support local initiatives offering consultation or mediation in the field of the environment, local development and territorial management, in order to make them more efficient and to promote a culture of dialogue. Comédie has elaborated more than 200 sheets on experiences relating to environmental and territorial issues such as: agriculture; hunting; fishing; sports; leisure activities; life in small towns; landscapes; and rural economy. The sheets are designed to promote the exchange of experiences, visits and mutual assistance, and a better inter-territorial dialogue. They can be found on the [Comédie website](#).

Re-introducing capercaillies: a project to restore biodiversity

The bird species, known as capercaillies (related to the grouse), was native to the lowlands of East Germany, until its extinction around the year 2 000. Its disappearance has been put down to an intensive use of the bird's natural habitat for forestry and coal mining. This project aims to repopulate the region using capercaillies from other European areas, since the activities that disturbed the birds: the mining and related transport activities, as well as military training, have now ceased. The project is expected to answer several questions: can the relocated animals survive? What effects will there be on wildlife as a whole? Can a richer biodiversity repair, in a sustainable way, the damage that human activity has caused?

This project is open to all European partners sharing an interest in the re-introduction of species into their original habitats. For more information, please contact [Mr. Thomas Wude](#).

COOPERATION CORNER

Partner search tool

Finding partners for cooperation on Leader+ projects concerns many LAGs. If you have specific information about a cooperation event or project, you can send us details. Remember also to use the partner search tool, which you can find on both European and national Leader+ sites.

A LAG in Wales is looking for partners for a project to organise festivals and other events to promote locally produced cider and perry. A Turkish group is looking for European partners for a project on the local production of bio milk and beef.

These projects are looking for partners. You could be one of them! Learn more about these proposals by consulting the partner search tool via the above-mentioned link.



"Flash News" contributions

Don't forget "Flash News" is your news too! Help us to keep you informed by telling us about what you are doing in rural development in your area. Please send to flashnews@leaderplus.org.

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Published by:

Joern-Uwe LERBS, Head of Unit, EC Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.
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For further information:

European Commission
Office: L/130 06/197
Tel. (32-2) 2952355 or (32-2) 2951294
Fax (32-2) 2988808
Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm

