

LAGs ON THE TERRITORY OF ARAD COUNTY AND THEIR PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

ORODAN ELENA*¹, DOBRA CĂLIN², PANGRATIE ALEXANDRU¹

¹*Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I of Romania" from Timisoara, Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism*

²*"Aurel Vlaicu" University, Arad, Romania*

*Corresponding author's e-mail: elena_orodan@yahoo.com

Abstract: *As almost half of the population of the European Union lives outside the cities - 90% of the territory - rural development is a policy of vital importance. The LAG is the concrete solution, the transformation into reality of the potential that local communities can capitalize on in order to be part of this new approach to the development of the European village, one that encourages the return and establishment of young people in rural territory and economic, social and cultural development. In Arad County, four Local Action Groups are registered, selected by MADR for funding. In addition to these LAGs in Arad County, there are communes that are part of Local Action Groups belonging to other neighboring counties.*

Key words: *Arad County, LAGs, priorities*

INTRODUCTION

Two of the most important actors in supporting European rural development [1,2,6,] are the ENRD and the LAG. The most relevant information on the European Network for Rural Development is provided on the official website of the European Commission. Thus, according to him, the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) represents the nodal system of interconnection of all parties involved in rural development throughout the European Union. The ENRD provides broad support to those involved in rural development and clarifies the debate on EU rural development policy by: [14]

- highlighting the examples of successful rural development projects;
- promoting transnational cooperation between Local Action Groups (LAGs);
- providing analysis on relevant topics, including the wider benefits of agriculture, forestry, and rural entrepreneurship.

The activities of the network are meant to support and promote:

- relevant administrations and institutions;
- rural networks;
- relevant organizations at European level;
- Local Action Groups;
- other bodies and actors involved in rural development.

The objectives of the European Network for Rural Development are the following:

- collecting, analyzing and disseminating information on rural development measures and practices at European level;
- providing information on developments in rural areas;
- organizing meetings and seminars;
- setting up and operating networks designed to support the implementation and evaluation of rural development policy;
- supporting national networks and transnational cooperation initiatives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The issue of public-private partnership is and we believe that it will remain a current one, both for agriculture and for rural areal/rural development to. [3,4,5,7,8,9] The Local Action Groups are the best examples of public-private partnership, and their status in Arad County is somewhat satisfactory. The purpose of the paper is to review the existing

Local Action Groups and the actions and priorities undertaken by them. In order to achieve the proposed goal, materials were collected, analyzed, and the final results are illustrated in this paper.

RESEARCH RESULTS

As a form of organization for the implementation of joint projects of micro-regional interest, local actors of Arad County can associate in the form of an inter-community development association, a Local Action Group or a simple association (non-governmental organization according to GO 26/2000). The most common forms of association are inter-community development associations and Local Action Groups (LAGs).

Table 1

Local Action Groups in Arad County

Name	Territory included
1. Local Action Group Lunca Muresului de Jos	Communes: Vladimirescu, Frumuseni, Sagu, Vinga, Zadareni, Felnac, Secusigiu, Semlac, Seitin, Dorobanti, Iratosu, Peregu Mare, Saravale – TM, Sanpetru Mare – TM Cities: Pecica
2. Local Action Group The Upper Valley of the White Cris	Communes Arad: Bocsig, Barsa, Dezna, Buteni, Chisindia, Almas, Dieci, Gurahont, Brazii, Plescuta, Varfurile, Halmagiu, Halmagel Cities: Arad, Sebis Communes Bihor: Cristioru de Jos
3. Local Action Group Minis Maderat Vineyard	Communes: Paulis, Ghioroc, Covasant, Siria, Tarnova, Silindia, Taut Cities: Pancota
4. Local Action Group Microregion of Black and White Cris Valleys	Communes: Socodor, Graniceri, Pilu, Apateu, Zerind, Misca, Cermei, Sinteia Mare, Beliu, Craiva, Hasmas, Archis, Sicula, Seleus, Sepreus, Zarand, Olari, Simand Cities: Chisineu Cris
5. Local Action Group Faget Coutry	Communes Timis: Pietroasa, Tomesti, Margina, Balint, Dumbrava, Manastiur, Nadrag, Bethausen, Barna, Traian Vuia, Fardea Cities: Faget Communes Arad : Savarsin
6. Sargetia LAG Association 1	Communes Hunedoara: Balsa, Bacia, Gurasada, Zam, Martinesti, Beriu, Bosorod, Branisca, Orastioara de Sus, Turdas, Burjuc, Harau, Vorta, Soimus, Rapoltu Mare Cities: Geoagiu Communes Arad : Petris.

Source: List of Local Action Groups selected by MADR, www.madr.ro[15]



Figure 1. Local Action Groups in Arad County

Source: List of Local Action Groups selected by MADR, www.madr.ro[15]

The particularities of each of the four Arad LAGs and the priorities for action are analyzed in the following, taking over the information centralized by the county authorities. [10,11,12,13,16]

Lunca Muresului de Jos Local Action Group is an active association, consisting of 87 members, of which 20 public institutions and 67 partners representing the private sector, launching various measures during 2012 and 2014 on various PNDR measures, from supporting small farmers and agricultural products, to support the development of tourism and infrastructure. For the period 2014-2020, 69 members signed the Partnership Agreement, of which 21 public sector partners (20 territorial administrative units), 41 members representing the private sector and 7 NGOs. The Local Development Strategy 2014-2020 of the Lunca Muresului de Jos LAG Association provides the following strategic priorities:

1. Balanced and sustainable local rural development;
2. Supporting the modernization of competitive agriculture;
3. Development of the non-agricultural rural economy;
4. Innovation of society and the rural environment;
5. Promoting social equity, inclusion and diversity.

These strategic priorities correspond to the following measures:

M1.1 Cooperation for the purpose of creating associative forms, networks and clusters, groups for the diversification of rural activities;

M1.2 Knowledge transfer, training and lifelong learning;

M2.1 Small and medium farms;

M2.2 Modernization of agricultural and fruit farms;

M3 Support for the integration and promotion of quality schemes for local products;

M4 Village development;

M5 Establishment of non-agricultural activities;

M6 Investments in social and education infrastructure of marginalized groups;

M7 Actions for the integration of ethnic minorities.

Local Action Group The Upper Valley of the White Cris has a number of 61 members, out of which 17 public institutions and 44 partners representing the private sector, among the members of this LAG being the Arad County Council. The association is active. The partnership agreement for the period 2014-2020 was signed by 59 entities, of which 14 territorial administrative units. The Local Development Strategy „Sebis - Gurahont-Halmagiu Depression” 2014-2020 of the Local Action Group The Upper Valley of the White Cris Association provides the following strategic priorities:

- Modernization of infrastructure to support rural development;

- Consolidation and modernization of agriculture;

- Development of the non-agricultural economy and rural affairs;

- Increasing the impact of associative forms and ensuring the transfer of innovations;

- Social integration of marginalized groups and support for ethnic diversity.

To achieve these strategic priorities, the following measures have been identified:

M1 Cooperation for the purpose of creating associative forms, networks and clusters, operational groups for the diversification of rural activities

M2.1 Modernization of agricultural and fruit farms;

M2.2 Young farmers;

M3 Support for the integration and promotion of quality schemes for local products;

M6.1 Establishment of non-agricultural activities;

- M6.2 Investments in business modernization activities and tourism;
- M6.3 Village development;
- M6.4 Investments in social and education infrastructure of marginalized groups;
- M6.5 Actions for the integration of ethnic minorities.

Local Action Group Minis Maderat Vineyard covers the territory of 19 localities. 81 entities, of which 19 territorial administrative units, signed the Partnership Agreement for the period 2014-2020. In the Local Development Strategy Local Action Group Minis Maderat Vineyard 2014 - 2020 were identified objectives and priorities for rural development:

1. Achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities, including the creation and maintenance of jobs in the territory of the Minis Maderat Vineyard LAG;
2. Favoring the competitiveness of agriculture on the territory of Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs.

These objectives will be achieved by implementing the following measures:

- M1.1 Support for the development of non-agricultural activities in the territory of Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs;
- M1.2 Investments in the public sector for the development of the territory of Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs;
- M1.3 Creation and development of social infrastructure in the territory of the Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs;
- M1.4 Integration of the Roma population in the territory of Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs;
- M1.5 Broadband infrastructure in the territory of Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs;
- M2.1. Supporting agriculture in the territory of the Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs;
- M2.2 Support for the development of small agricultural holdings in the territory of the Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs;
- M2.3 Support for the development of agricultural activities by young farmers in the territory of Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs;
- M2.4 Certification and promotion of agri-food products from the territory of Minis Maderat Vineyard LAGs.

Local Action Group Microregion of Black and White Cris Valleys has 43 members, of which 14 public institutions, 5 non-governmental organizations, 11 private institutions and 13 individuals. 70 entities, out of which 23 territorial administrative units, have signed the Partnership Agreement for the period 2014-2020. The Territorial Development Strategy of the LAG Microregion of Black and White Cris Valleys 2014-2020 provides the following strategic priorities:

1. Development and modernization of competitive agriculture;
2. Supporting the diversification and development of entrepreneurship and the non-agricultural rural economy;
3. Increasing the quality of life by supporting infrastructure of all types and services to the population;
4. Capitalizing the rural intellect through training, information and innovation;
5. Combating poverty and integrating marginalized and struggling groups

To achieve these strategic priorities, the following measures have been identified:

- M1.1 Cooperation for the purpose of creating associative forms, networks and clusters, groups for the diversification of rural activities;
- M1.2 Knowledge transfer, training and lifelong learning;
- M2.1 Modernization of agricultural and fruit farms;
- M2.2 Small and medium farms;

- M2.3 Young farmers;
- M3.1 Support for the integration and promotion of quality schemes for local products;
- M6.1 Establishment of non-agricultural activities;
- M6.2 Investments in business modernization activities and tourism;
- M6.3 Village development;
- M6.4 Investments in social and education infrastructure of marginalized groups;
- M6.5 Actions for the integration of ethnic minorities.

CONCLUSIONS

In Arad County, there are four local action groups, selected by MADR for funding. In addition to these LAGs in Arad County, there are communes that are part of Local Action Groups belonging to other neighboring counties, such as Savarsin commune which is a member of Faget Country LAG, Timis County, and Petris commune which is a member of Sargetia LAG Association 1, Hunedoara County. LAGs can effectively stimulate the development of local identity, given the fact that: [14]

- associates local participants around collective projects and multisectoral actions, in order to achieve synergies and co-ownership in order to improve the economic competitiveness of the area;
- strengthens dialogue and cooperation between different rural “actors”, who often have little experience of collaboration, by mitigating potential conflicts and by facilitating negotiated solutions through consultations and discussions;
- facilitates, through the interaction of different partners, the processes of adaptation and change in the agricultural sector (for example, the creation of food chains), the integration of environmental concerns, the diversification of the rural economy and the increase of the quality of life;
- gathers and combines available human and financial resources from the public and private sectors.

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