

LEADER Co-operation Project Operating Rules

Rural Development Programme Ireland

2014 – 2020

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An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



'The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development: Europe
investing in rural areas'.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

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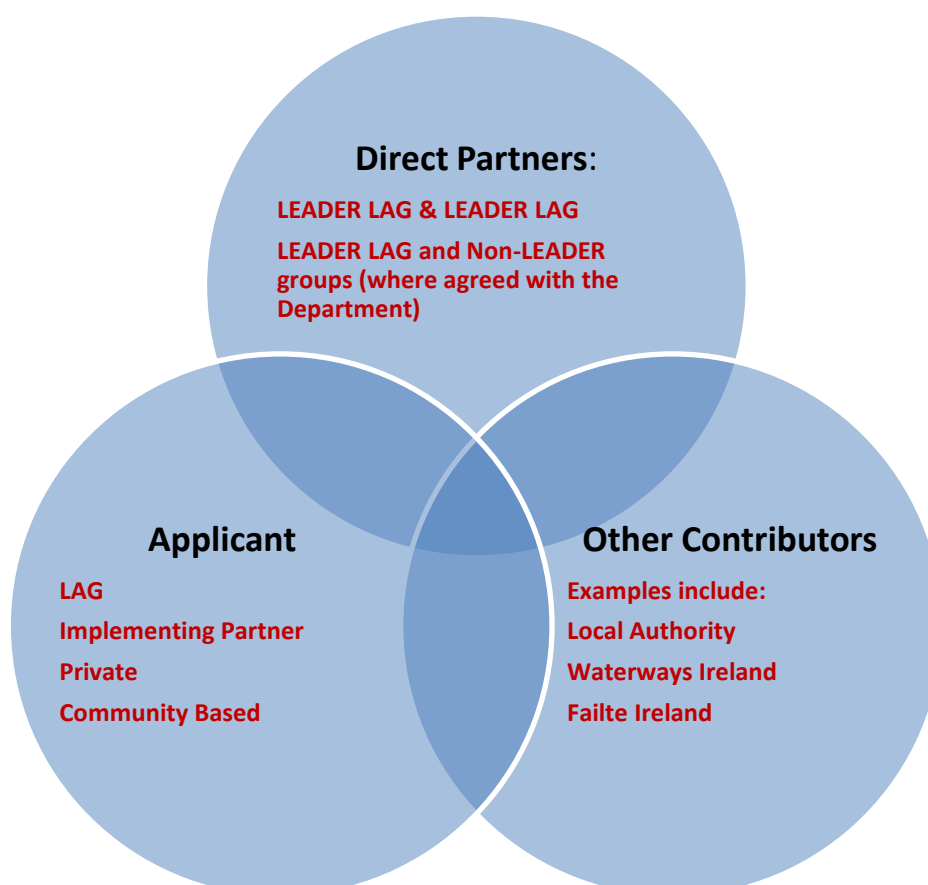
Co-operation Projects

1. Background

The LEADER 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme ring-fenced an allocation of €10m for trans-national (outside Ireland) and inter-territorial (within Ireland) LEADER Co-operation Projects. Funding will be allocated by the Department of Rural & Community Development (“the Department”) for co-operation projects on the basis of an open call to all Local Action Groups (LAGs) based in Ireland. Funding will be available for co-operation projects involving partners within Ireland, in other LAG areas, EU Member States, EU candidate states and EEA states. Projects outside of these areas may also be eligible for funding subject to prior approval by the Department.

It may also be possible to have a partnership between a LAG and non-LEADER Groups – this should be discussed with the LEADER Unit of the Department before proceeding.

2. Partners, Contributors and Applicants



2.1 Partners

A co-operation project is one which takes place as a joint action between two or more direct partners and which provides mutual benefit for each partner. For most if not all co-operation projects, it is envisaged that the direct partners will be between LEADER Local Action Groups i.e. the partners will be LEADER LAGs. The Implementing Partners cannot enter into a co-operation project in their own right i.e. as a direct partner, as the relationship is at LAG level. However, in the majority of cases, it is likely that the actual co-operation activity/interaction/management will in practice take place between the Implementing Partners on behalf of the LAGs.

Note: Co-operation projects can also take place between a LEADER LAG and:

- a group of local public and private partners in a rural territory that is implementing a local development strategy within or outside the Union; or,
- a group of local public and private partners in a non-rural territory that is implementing a local development strategy.

Departmental approval **must** be obtained from the outset where the Direct Partner of a LAG in a Co-operation project is not another LAG.

2.2 Contributors

The co-operation project may also involve other contributors which are not applicants or direct partners of the project but who may be able to support delivery of the project. Examples of other contributors that can bring additional expertise and added value to the project include Local Authorities and Waterways Ireland. Note: these are referred to as “associate partners” in the joint documentation agreed for North South co-operation with LAGs in Northern Ireland.

2.3 Applicants

The applicants for a co-operation project do not need to be the LAGs themselves. While a co-operation project is a partnership between two or more LAGs, the applicant and ultimate project promoter can be a LAG, an Implementing Partner, a private enterprise or a community based applicant in the same manner as for any other LEADER project.

In cases where the LAG is not the applicant/project promoter, the project will be delivered by the applicant/project promoter (e.g. Community group, Implementing Partner etc.) once approved by their respective LAGs and subsequently approved by the Department.

2.4 Local Authority Participation

Specific guidance in relation to Local Authority participation in co-operation projects was provided in Circular 03/2019

- Involvement of Local Authorities in the delivery of LEADER Co-operation projects. See Appendix 6 for details.

3. Approach to co-operation

Co-operation enhances the innovative character of local development by combining knowledge, skills and experience in thematic areas common to the strategies of each participating LAG area. Co-operation can encourage complementary actions in different LAG areas or provide the critical mass required for a joint project to be viable,

Co-operation projects must:

- Address the themes and objectives identified in the strategies of the LAGs based in Ireland;
- Deliver added value to the LAG areas, the activities targeted, the people involved and/or the local populations;
- Have a clear and defined rationale for co-operating, i.e. deliver benefits over and above that which each group could do on their own;
- Have well-defined and realistic objectives that are identified as part of the application.

The European Commission has developed guidance for the implementation of LEADER Co-operation activities for the 2014 to 2020 period. This reference document sets out the Commissions framework and key processes associated with the delivery of LEADER Co-operation actions. This guide may be downloaded from:

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/leader-cooperation_guide_en_update_april-2017.pdf

4. Eligibility Conditions – General Principles

4.1 Geographical Scope

The requirements of Article 70 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 apply as regards the location of any investment i.e. the project must be to the benefit of the region covered by the respective LAG areas.

4.2 Primary Eligibility Criteria & Scope of Projects

The qualifying criteria for co-operation projects are as follows:

- The co-operation action must involve Direct Partners as described in section 2;
- It must set out actions and outcomes with clear plans for dissemination of the results;
- It must involve the implementation of a joint action.

As with all LEADER projects, the co-operation project must be in line with the LEADER themes outlined in the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules and the objectives set out in the LAG Local Development Strategy (LDS), and must be to the benefit of the region covered by the respective LDS.

Examples of co-operation projects include:

- Assisting local industry in targeting new markets;
- Improving the quality of products manufactured by co-operating in relation to processing techniques;
- Joint marketing and short supply chain activities;
- Introducing new approaches in areas such as town and village renewal, rural tourism or environmental management by building on the experience of LAGs in other areas,
- Providing economies of scale or critical mass to enable a project which would not have been possible within a single LAG area.

Co-operation projects that include elements of knowledge transfer / training-type activity must take account of the following principles:

- support shall not include courses of instruction or training which form part of normal education programmes or systems at secondary or higher levels;
- the activity must be based upon the transfer of knowledge and skills from one partner region to another, or across the projects combined area on a common theme;
- the activity must result in measureable added value for the area and not replace or compete with similar provisions already in existence in the area.

4.3 Eligibility of Common and Local Costs

Common costs are those incurred and jointly shared among partners in the co-operation project. Local costs are incurred for activities that directly relate to the costs of the co-operation project in each LAG area and the cost is not shared with other LAGs.

LAGs sharing common costs must ensure that a single invoice is forwarded to one lead LAG who will take responsibility for payment and subsequent invoicing of partner LAGs to recoup their respective contributions.

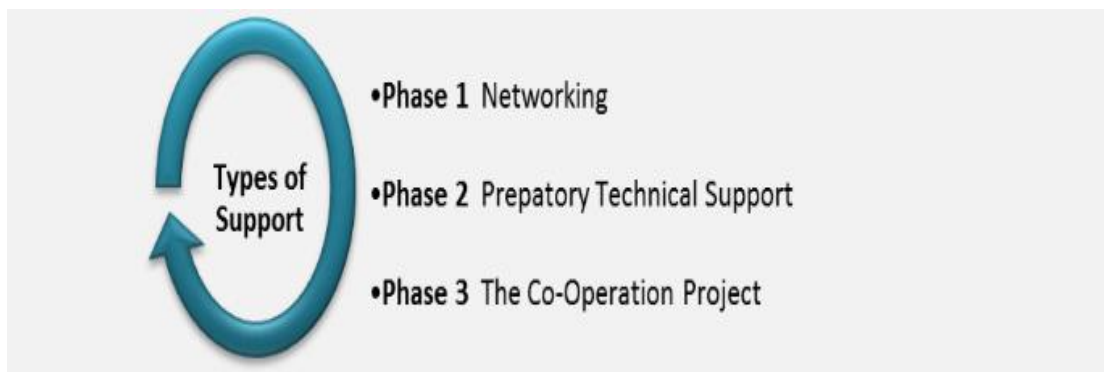
The table below lists examples of Common and Local Costs

Cost Type	Eligible Cost	Examples
Common Costs	Concepts, planning and certification expenses	• Preparatory activity: expenses relating to conception and development of the project; general expenses relating to the organisation and coordination of planning and pre-development activities
	Interpretation	• Preparatory and Co-operation activity
	Translation	• Preparatory and Co-operation activity:
	Surveys	• Development, elaboration & implementation

	Studies	Feasibility studies, research, specific consultancies and associated activities
	External consultants, coaching,	Best practice exchange, including the recourse to third parties for research, evaluation and the transfer of experience
	Training	- Training/dissemination among members of participating LAGs - Training module development and introductory/pilot training of beneficiaries
	Project information & communication	- Public relations - promotional material (flyers, leaflets, guides, websites), events, - Investments in equipment for communication
	Managing the project	Expenses of the lead partner LAG for coordination activities of the project, monitoring and evaluation of the project, if and as agreed by partners, not including salaries.
	Running a common structure / network	Expenses relating to the constitution and running of a common structure
Local Costs	Construction costs	Costs associated with the building / creation of a tangible, fixed asset
	Office equipment	Purchase of telephone and computer services
	Travel & accommodation	International & local travel expenses in line with the conditions of, and up to the level of, the prevailing Civil Service rates only
	Seminars, Workshops	- Room rental for joint meetings (note: if meetings are related to coordination, these can be considered common costs) - Preparatory activity: partner search – study visits and associated activities
	Organising meetings	- Coordination of partner meetings including travel costs (note: if meetings are related to coordination, these can be considered common costs), board and accommodation, local transport, mission allowance, hire of premises and equipment - Preparatory activity: partner search – including the hire of premises, equipment & catering - Catering costs are only eligible for meetings between co-operation partners and can only cover the following; ➤ Tea & Coffee up to a maximum of €5 per person ➤ Lunch up to a maximum of €10 per person

5. Types of Support – Project Phases

Co-operation activities take time to identify, plan, implement and manage. The three phases of a co-operation project are as follows:



5.1 Phase One - Networking

A key element of the animation activity of the LAG is networking. This provides LAGs with the opportunity to identify and develop links with other LAGs and organisations. Networking is considered as the starting point for co-operation activity.

Costs incurred by LAGs involved in this type of networking activity, such as travel and accommodation, are payable from the LAG's existing Administration & Animation budget and may not be a separate project under the Programme.

5.2 Phase Two - Preparatory Technical Support Project (Pre-Development phase)

Phase two precedes the full co-operation project and allows LAGs, project promoters and other contributors to meet and to investigate the merit and potential to develop concrete actions that could form a full co-operation project.

It also provides an opportunity to develop an application and a cooperation agreement in preparation for the full co-operation project in Phase 3. Preparatory technical support (Pre-Development Phase) could involve a feasibility study, market analysis and / or elaboration of the common issues that contribute towards a series of actions of mutual benefit to all of the LAG areas involved. This type of project, by its nature, will inform whether or not a full co-operation project should proceed; although it is not mandatory to avail of this funding under phase 2 in advance of a full co-operation project.

Approval of a Preparatory Technical Support project is contingent on all of the parties involved in the project demonstrating that they are envisaging the implementation of a full co-operation project. The application should at least identify the objectives and the character of a possible full co-operation project. Receiving preparatory technical support does not imply an obligation to subsequently carry out a full co-operation project – the decision to proceed further will be informed by the outcome of the pre-development phase.

The costs eligible for preparatory technical support include:

- costs related to exchange of experience (e.g. meetings with potential partners, travel, accommodation, and interpreter's fees) that are specific to the project.
- project pre-development costs (e.g. project feasibility study, consulting for specific issues, translation costs etc.).

As with all projects, these costs must be incurred after the letter of offer/contract is signed.

The maximum grant amount per Preparatory Technical Support project is €6,000 per LAG and the costs incurred may be reimbursed at a rate of up to 100%. Funding can only commence where all elements of the preparatory co-operation projects have been approved by all the respective LAG partners. Funding cannot be provided for any element of a preparatory co-operation project once an agreement for a full co-operation project has been completed i.e. Phase 2 must precede phase 3.

The costs associated with preparatory technical support will be paid from the €10 million allocation and will not be deducted from the LAGs LEADER allocation. All claims for preparatory technical support must be submitted together (i.e. no phased payments) and payment will only be made where accompanied by an end of project report describing the engagement undertaken, the issues addressed, any research/analysis undertaken, the outcome of the project and lessons learned for future co-operation.

5.2.1 Preparatory Technical Support Application process

- Please see Appendix 1A - Flow Chart for Preparatory Technical Support Projects up to Letter of Offer Stage.
- The application process for Preparatory Technical Support projects is the same as for any other LEADER project, i.e. an EOI and the Standard Application Form must be completed and submitted to each LAG for approval.
- Each project applicant must complete its own application form. However, the applicants can share text for common sections of the application form (e.g. project description) so as to reduce the administrative burden of the application process.
- All Planning and Procurement must be completed at application stage, i.e. Provisional Approval is not permitted.
- For travel and subsistence cost, the prevailing Civil Service Rates apply. In the case of flight and hotel costs only, these costs can be approved by the LAG based on estimates from an internet search. The actual flight and hotel costs incurred will be claimable provided the €6,000 threshold for Preparatory Technical Support Co-operation projects is not exceeded.
- The Standard Project Assessment Report must be completed for the preparatory co-operation project:
 - A separate report should be completed by each LAG as is the case for all projects – common information can be shared between each LAG to assist in completing the report.

OR

- Where there is a high degree of commonality between each area, the Lead LAG can agree to produce a single report to cover all areas – this must reflect the individual circumstances in each LAG area including how it fits with each LDS, different financial arrangements etc.
- The participant LAGs may consider the project for approval based on
 - an evaluation completed by its own Evaluation Committee in the same way as for all other LEADER projects.

OR

- an evaluation completed by one selected Evaluation Committee from a **partner LAG in Ireland**. Where a single Evaluation Committee is used, the Project Assessment Reports from each partner LAG must be forwarded to this Evaluation Committee for consideration or a single Project Assessment Report must be completed which reflects the position in all LAGs as noted above.
- A sample Evaluation Committee Scoresheet (see Appendix 2) is provided and may be adapted by the LAG to suit its own local needs provided that all of the assessment requirements are met.
- The Partner LAGs should submit their respective applications for Article 48 Checking, as is the case with other LEADER projects and, once completed, it can be forwarded to the LAG for decision.
- Where the LAG approves an application, the Preparatory Technical Support Generic Template (Appendix 3) must be completed, signed by the chairperson and forwarded by e-mail to cooperation1420@drcd.gov.ie. This template must be completed by the LAG even when the Implementing Partner is engaging with other direct partners on behalf of the LAG.
- Co-operation Preparatory Support project applications will only be considered when all LAG Partners have submitted the required documentation.
- The Department will review the application and notify the LAG of its decision once a Preparatory Technical Support template has been received from all of the project partners in Ireland.
- For transnational co-operation projects, all approvals for Preparatory Technical Support will be made conditional upon the other parties also gaining approval from their Managing Authorities/Funders. An e-mail from the partner LAGs outside Ireland stating that the project has been approved will suffice at application stage and confirmation of this approval from the Managing Authority must be provided at claim stage.
- Each LAG must issue a letter of offer for Preparatory Technical Support to the relevant applicant once the Preparatory Technical Support project application has been approved by the Department.
- Each LAG retains responsibility for delivery of the Preparatory Technical Support project in its own area in the same manner as for all other projects.

- If one of the partners withdraws from the process after the project has been approved and/or contract signed, the continued viability of the project must be discussed with the Department. The Department may allow the project to continue where it is satisfied that the project can still deliver on its objectives in the remaining LAG areas.
- Where the Preparatory Technical Support co-operation project applicant is the LAG or Implementing Partner (in-house projects), the LAG must ensure an appropriate segregation of duties between –
 - staff involved in the project application and delivery elements; and,
 - staff involved in project evaluation and administration process.

5.3 Phase Three - the full Co-operation project

Phase three involves the implementation of a concrete joint project with clearly defined deliverables producing benefits for all of the participating areas. Projects can be focused on a broad range of actions such as capacity building, common publications or physical investment.

The project is managed under a coordinating/lead LAG (or by the Implementing Partner on its behalf) that must be identified at the application stage. In all types of co-operation projects, the direct partners and applicants (where the applicant is not the LAG partner) must pre-define/agree the key criteria related to the activities to be selected and carried out. It is also important that all parties keep each other informed about progress with the project and any changes to its implementation.

The maximum grant amount per full co-operation project is €200,000 per partner LAG and costs incurred may be reimbursed at the same rate as applies for all LEADER projects. The final payment for a full co-operation project will only be made where accompanied by an end of project report briefly describing the engagement undertaken, the issues addressed, any research/analysis if undertaken, the outcome of the project and lessons learned for future co-operation. This report should be provided regardless of the type of investment carried out.

5.3.1 The Co-Operation Project Application Process

- Please see Appendix 1B - Flow Chart for Full Co-operation Projects up to Letter of Offer Stage.
- A new project application is required regardless of whether the project was the subject of funding under Phase 2 i.e. preparatory technical support funding.
- The application process for full Co-operation projects is the same as for any other LEADER project, i.e. an EOI and the Standard Application Form must be completed and submitted to each LAG for approval.
- Each project applicant must complete its own application form. However, the applicants can share text for common sections of the application form (e.g. project description) so as to reduce the administrative burden of the application process.

- All Planning and Procurement must be completed at application stage, i.e. Provisional Approval is not permitted.
- It should be noted that for Phase 3 - full co-operation projects, there is no requirement to have completed Phase 2 Preparatory Technical Support.
- The Standard Project Assessment Report must be completed for a full Co-operation Project.
 - A separate report should be completed by each LAG as is the case for all projects – common information can be shared between each LAG to assist in completing the report.

OR

- Where there is a high degree of commonality between each area, the Lead LAG can agree to produce a single report to cover all areas – this must reflect the individual circumstances in each LAG area including how it fits with each LDS, different financial arrangements etc.
- The participant LAGs may consider the project for approval based on
 - an evaluation completed by its own Evaluation Committee in the same way as for all other LEADER projects.

OR

- an evaluation completed by one selected Evaluation Committee from a **partner LAG in Ireland**. Where a single Evaluation Committee is used, the Project Assessment Reports from each partner LAG/IP must be forwarded to this Evaluation Committee for consideration or a single Project Assessment Report must be completed which reflects the position in all LAGs as noted above.
- A sample Evaluation Committee Scoresheet (see Appendix 4) is provided and may be adapted by the LAG to suit its own local needs provided that all of the assessment requirements are met.
- The Partner LAGs should submit their respective applications for Article 48 Checking, as is the case with other LEADER projects and, once completed, it can be forwarded to the LAG for decision.
- Where the LAG approves an application, the Project Generic Template (Appendix 5) must be completed, signed by the chairperson and forwarded by e-mail to cooperation1420@drcd.gov.ie. This template must be completed by the LAG even when the Implementing Partner is engaging on behalf of other partners on behalf of the LAG.
- Co-operation full project applications will only be considered when all LAG Partners have submitted the required documentation.
- The Department will review the application and notify the LAG of its decision once the Project Generic template has been received from all partners in Ireland.

- For transnational co-operation projects, all approvals will be made conditional upon the other parties also gaining approval from their Managing Authorities / Funders. An e-mail from the partner LAG outside Ireland stating that the project has been approved will suffice at application stage and confirmation of this approval from the Managing Authority must be provided at claim stage.
- Each LAG must issue a letter of offer for full Co-operation project support to the relevant applicant once the full Co-operation project application is approved by the Department.
- Each LAG retains responsibility for delivery of the full Co-operation project in its own area in the same manner as for all other projects.
- If one of the direct partners withdraws from the process after the project has been approved and/or contract signed, the continued viability of the project must be discussed with the Department. The Department may allow the project to continue where it is satisfied that the project can still deliver on its objectives in the remaining LAG areas.
- All parties engaging in a full co-operation project must enter into a written Co-operation Agreement before commencement of the project.
- Where the co-operation project applicant is the LAG or Implementing Partner (in-house projects), the LAG must ensure an appropriate segregation of duties between –
 - staff involved in the project application and delivery elements; and,
 - staff involved in project evaluation and administration process

5.4 Administration and Animation costs

The administration and animation budget ascribed to the Local Development Strategy of the LAG will be increased by an amount equal to 25% of the grant amount paid for the co-operation project within each LAG **for Phase 3 projects only**, subject to the overall administration and animation budget not exceeding 25% of the LDS expenditure over the duration of the programme (see examples below).

The LAG LDS Administration Budget will be initially increased by 12.5% (half of the 25% of project grant amount approved) of the project grant amount approved. The balance due will be added to the LAG LDS Administration Budget when the final claim is made by the LAG for the project and approved for payment by the Department. This balance will be 12.5% if the full project grant amount approved is drawn down by the project promoter and will be less if the full project grant amount approved is not fully drawn down by the project promoter.

A reconciliation will be carried out by the Department periodically to identify Co-operation projects where the LAG LDS Administration Budget has been increased by 12.5% but the project has not been carried out or completed. In all such instances the LAG LDS Administration Budget will be corrected accordingly.

Example A – Proposed project eligible for 75% grant funding to be funded on a 50/50 basis by each LAG

Total cost of Project	€200,000
Funding request by each LAG	€75,000
Grant amount paid to each LAG	€ 75,000
Administration & Animation amount for each LAG	€ 18,750

Example B – Proposed project eligible for 50% funding to be funded on a 50/50 basis by each LAG

Total cost of Project	€200,000
Funding request by each LAG	€50,000
Grant amount paid to each LAG	€ 50,000
Administration & Animation amount for each LAG	€ 12,500

6 Selection by the Department

The co-operation project (Preparatory Technical Support Project / Full Co-operation Project) selected by the LAG must be forwarded to the Department (cooperation1420@drcd.gov.ie) for final approval using the appropriate template (Appendix 3) signed by the LAG Chairperson. In assessing final approval, the Department will consider the available budget, the benefits to the local areas of the project being delivered as a joint action as opposed to separate projects in each area and the type of co-operation activity. The Article 48 checks must also have been successfully completed.

The Department will inform the European Commission of all approved transnational Co-operation projects.

7 Co-operation Agreement

All of the participants (LAGs/IPs/Applicant)) engaging in a full co-operation projects must enter into a written Co-operation Agreement before commencement of the project in their respective region. The Co-operation Agreement is separate from the Letter of Offer/Contract. With a view to ensuring effective project management, it is important at the outset to clarify:

- the goals to be achieved;
- the roles and responsibilities (for management, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation); and
- the financial contributions of each partner.

Note: A Co-operation Agreement is not required for Pre-Development activities (Phase 2 projects) as the Template at Appendix 3 is sufficient to outline the proposed budget and activities. However, LAGs may decide to develop a written agreement to record the role of involved partners, the common objectives of the Pre-Development activity and how costs will be shared and paid.

The Co-operation Agreement for full Co-operation projects must be signed by all the participants and should set out:

- a written undertaking by the participants with the name and address of the Lead Partner and all other participants involved
- a detailed description of the project
- how the need/demand for the project was identified
- the project goals (inputs; outputs; and impacts) and the activities that will be taken to achieve them
- the role of each party in organising and implementing the project;
- the financial participation of each partner in the project; and all components of the whole budget for the joint initiative.
- The arrangements for payment of shared costs.
- the arrangements for organising, monitoring and evaluating the project;
- a timetabled project implementation and management plan;
- procedures for amending the Agreement.
- Details of all components of the overall joint initiative budget and a detailed description of the project

The Co-operation Agreement must be signed by all co-operation partners before commencement of the project.

8 Management process

Each participating LAG is responsible for the component of the project in their own area and each component is recorded as a unique project on the LEADER IT system, with the other components cross-referenced. When recording the project on the IT system each LAG will be prompted to select their Partner LAG and Project Reference Number on the LEADER IT System. These details must be added at Stage 2, as additional co-operation partners cannot be subsequently added.

The co-operation partners must identify a Lead LAG prior to approval by the Department. The Lead LAG will be responsible for coordinating the project although the tasks involved can be divided between the LAGs and others in any way which the partners agree. The Lead LAG can change during the delivery of the project with the agreement of all partners – this must be notified to the Department.

The Lead LAG should ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across all participating LAGs, including the use of the same terminology (e.g. name of project), the same project description, application details etc.

9 Letter of Offer

The letter of offer must issue from each LAG involved in the co-operation project and each LAG retains responsibility for delivery of the project in the same manner as for all other projects. A letter of offer/contract must issue for both the preparatory technical support project (Phase 2 projects) and the full co-operation project (Phase 3 projects).

10 Project Delivery and payment Claims

The co-operation project should be delivered as per the approved application and agreement between the LAGs involved.

Each LAG makes separate payment claims in respect of their own project component.

Where project costs are shared:

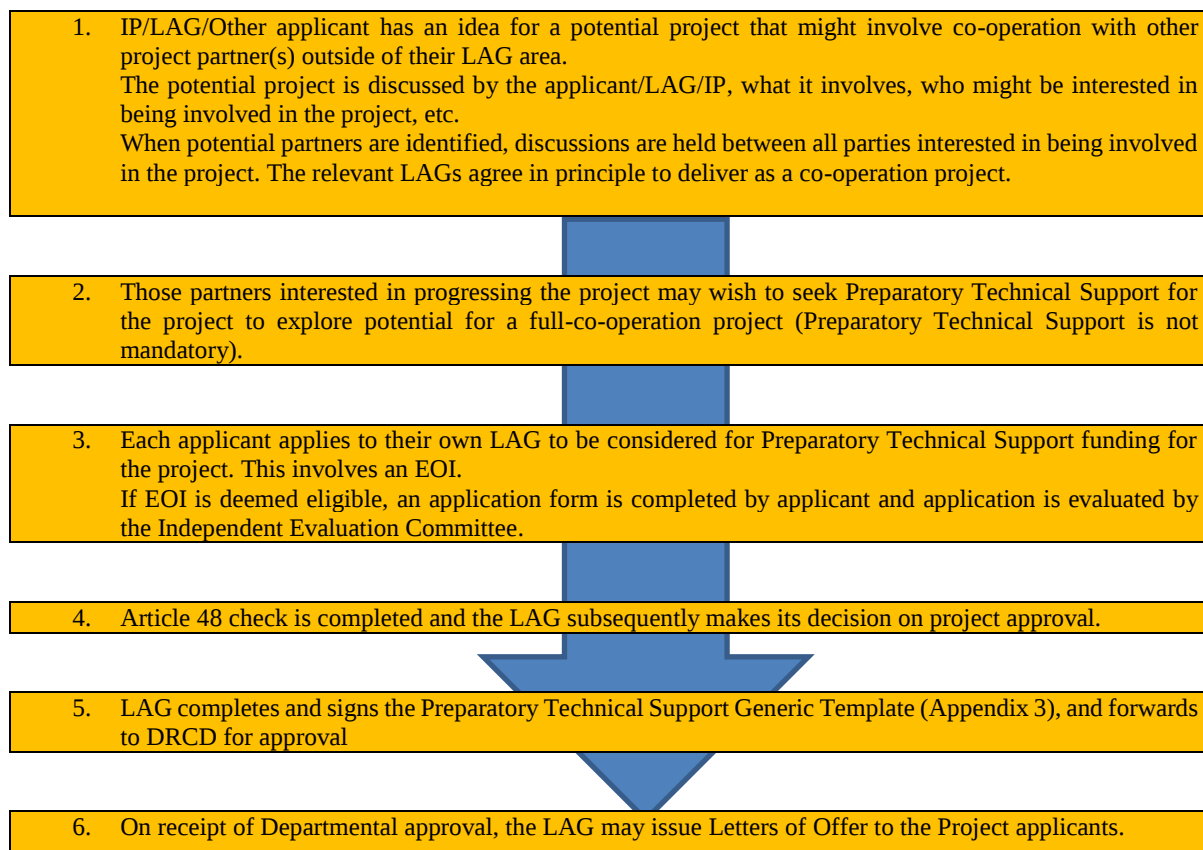
- claims for payment, together with invoices, receipts and supporting documents, should in the first instance be submitted to the Lead LAG to complete its administrative checks. The Lead LAG pays its portion of the grant aid to the applicant on the eligible expenditure established. This documentation can then be copied to the partner LAGs to process their element of the grant aid.

OR

- the Lead LAG may pay the full cost for shared elements of the project and then invoice the partner LAGs for their portion of the cost. This invoicing between LAGs must contain the relevant backup documentation e.g. a copy of the relevant supplier invoices. The Co-operation agreement should outline the agreed payment process.

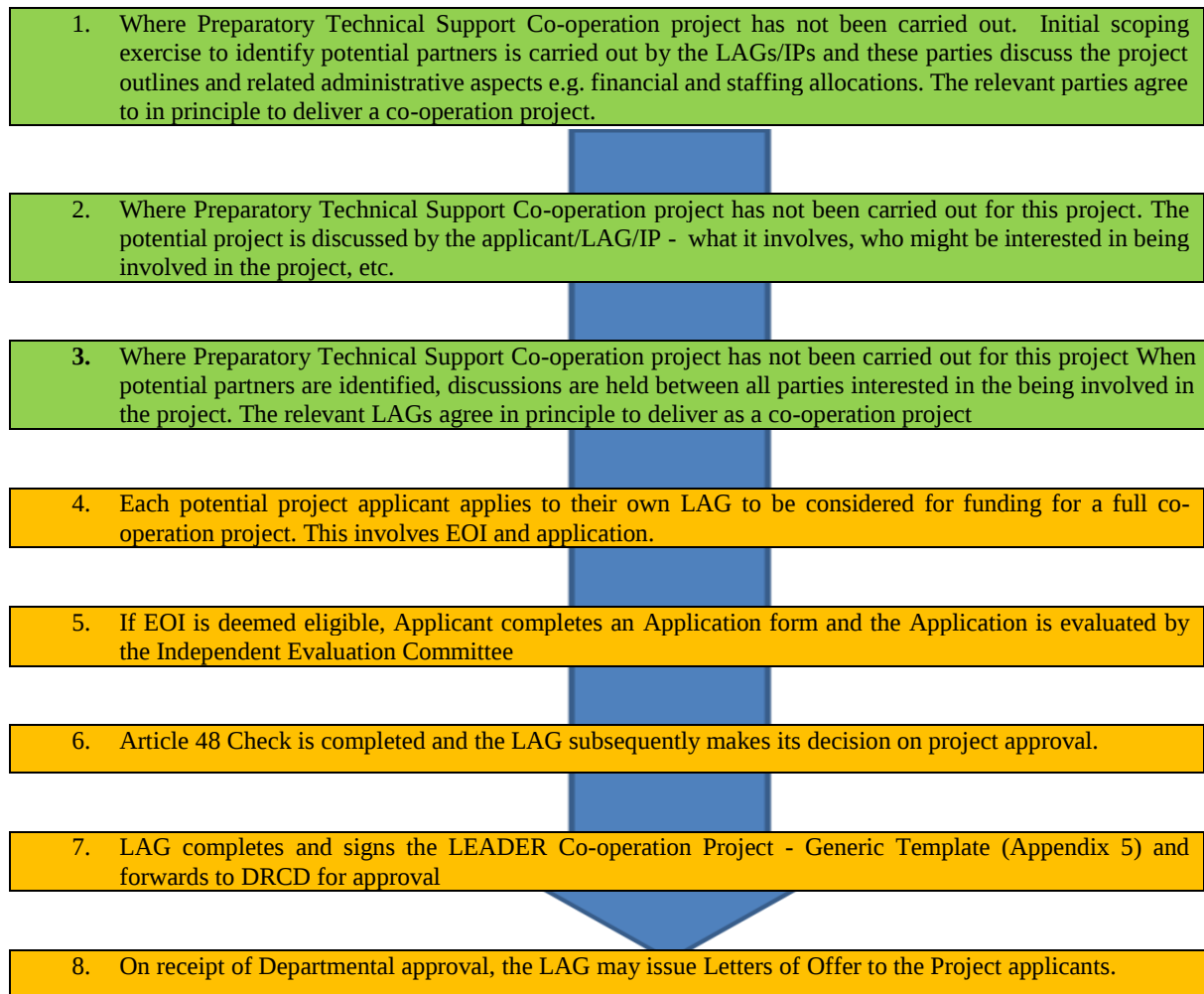
Appendix 1: Co-operation project process flow

Appendix 1A - Flow Chart for Preparatory Technical Support Projects up to Letter of Offer Stage



Appendix 1B - Flow Chart for Full Co-operation Projects up to Letter of Offer Stage

The first 3 stages may be ignored if this is a Phase 2 project for which all relevant points have been considered and resolved.



Appendix 2 - LEADER COOPERATION - PREPARATORY TECHNICAL SUPPORT – LAG EVALUATION COMMITTEE

This template is designed for use by the LAG Evaluation Committee when considering applications to fund LEADER Cooperation Preparatory Technical support (Phase 2) projects. The maximum grant available per project per LAG is €6,000.

Application Reference No.	Working Title of proposed project

CRITERION		Yes / No	Comments
1	Does the proposed activity fit with the LAG's Cooperation priorities as per its LDS?		
2	Have Networking activity and / or baseline scoping of the proposed activity taken place between the potential LAG Partners to merit its progression to a Pre-Development project?		
3	At this stage, does the proposed activity offer potential to deliver positive outcomes for the LAG area?		
4	Are the potential outcomes from the proposed activity unlikely to be delivered without a joint Cooperation action?		
5	Do the proposed actions and associated costs appear reasonable and represent value for money?		
6	Is it evident that the Promoter envisages the implementation of a concrete project?		

All questions must be answered and in order for the application to be approved for funding, the answer to each question must be YES (by answering yes it is assumed to have scored a minimum of 65%). Comments should be recorded alongside each criterion to justify the decision.

Date of Evaluation Committee meeting:		Application Reference No.	
---------------------------------------	--	---------------------------	--

The (*LAG name here*) LAG Evaluation Committee has considered this Application and decided that it should be: Accepted / Rejected / Deferred* *(delete as appropriate)
The rationale for this decision must be recorded in the LAG Evaluation Committee minutes and the Chair of the LAG Evaluation Committee must sign below.

Signed: _____ Name in BLOCK Capitals: _____ Chair of LAG Evaluation Committee Date: _____

Name of Evaluation Committee (if not the LAGs own Evaluation Committee): _____

Appendix 3: Preparatory technical Support – Generic Template

Working Title of proposed project

Contact Details for Local Action Group submitting this template	
Name of Local Action Group (LAG):	
Name of Chairperson:	
Name of main contact for this form:	
E-mail address:	
Telephone number:	
Postal address:	

Description of the Preparatory Technical Support project
1. Brief description of the potential project for which Preparatory Technical Support is being sought. (approx. 250 words) This should include how the project links in with the priorities in your LDS and other relevant priorities and a timetable for the work.
2. Who has been identified as potential partner(s)* and what value do they add to the potential project? (*please identify by region/country)

3. What networking activity has already taken place with this/these potential partner(s) in association with this potential project? Attach evidence (e.g. copies of e-mails or minutes of meetings). Please summarise the outcomes and progress to date.		
4. (i) What do you expect preparatory support to achieve and (ii) what are the desired outcomes for the Local Action Group area from the potential Co-operation project – including the concrete project proposal which might ultimately result from the co-operation?		
5. Explain why the proposed project is likely to be achievable if undertaken as a joint Cooperation action as opposed to a regular project?		
6 Has an Article 48 administrative check been successfully completed?	YES	NO

Proposed Budget for Preparatory Technical Support project				
Anticipated Activities	Brief Description	Cost (€)		
		Applicant LAG	Partner LAG(s)	Overall
Studies / Consultancy				
Product Development				
Travel / Subsistence				
Meetings / Hospitality				
Other (please detail)				
Total Costs				

Local Action Group Decision		
Recommended to Proceed	YES	NO
Comments:		
Name: (Chair of LAG)		
Signature:		
Date:		

Noted / Ratified by LEADER Unit of the Department of Rural and Community Development
Comments:
Name:
Signature:
Date:

Appendix 4 - LEADER COOPERATION PROJECT LAG EVALUATION COMMITTEE

This template is designed for use by the LAG Evaluation Committee when considering applications to fund LEADER Cooperation Project (Phase 3) projects. The maximum grant available per project per LAG is €200,000.

Application Reference No.	Working Title of proposed project

CRITERION		Yes / No	Comments
1	Does the proposed activity fit with the LAG's priorities as per the LDS?		
2	Have Networking activity and / or baseline scoping of the proposed activity taken place between the potential LAG Partners to merit its progression to a full Co-operation Project?		
3	If the project has been the subject of Preparatory Technical Support, has the report on this project been provided and has it indicated that the project is viable and will add value?		
4	Does the proposed activity offer potential to deliver positive outcomes for the LAG area?		
5	Are the potential outcomes from the proposed activity unlikely to be delivered without a joint Cooperation action?		
6	Has a clear and defined rationale for co-operating been provided i.e. deliver benefits over and above what each group could do on their own?		
7	Do the proposed actions and associated costs appear reasonable and represent value for money?		
8	Has the potential level of deadweight been assessed for this Project?		
9	Is the Evaluation Committee satisfied that this project will not displace existing enterprises?		

All questions must be answered and in order for the application to be approved for funding, the answer to each question must be YES (Score based on merit of project must be a minimum of 65% to progress). Comments should be recorded alongside each criterion to justify the decision.

Date of Evaluation Committee meeting:		Application Reference No.	
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The (LAG name here) LAG Evaluation Committee has considered this Application and decided that it should be: Accepted / Rejected / Deferred* *(delete as appropriate)
The rationale for this decision must be recorded in the LAG Evaluation Committee minutes and the Chair of the LAG Evaluation Committee must sign below.

Signed: _____ Name in BLOCK Capitals: _____ Chair of LAG Evaluation Committee Date: _____

Name of Evaluation Committee (if not the LAGs own Evaluation Committee): _____

Appendix 5: – LEADER Co-operation Project – Generic Template

LEADER Project Number

Working Title of project

Contact Details for Local Action Group submitting this template	
Name of Local Action Group (LAG):	
Name of Chairperson:	
Name of main contact for this form:	
E-mail address:	
Telephone number:	
Postal address:	

Description of the LEADER Co-operation project
1 Brief description of the project for which LEADER funding is being sought. (around 250 words) This should include how the project links in with the priorities in your LDS and other relevant priorities and a timetable for the work.

2 Who has been identified as partner(s)* and what value do they add to the project? (*please identify by region/country)
3 Explain why the project is likely to be achievable if undertaken as a joint Cooperation action as opposed to a regular project?
4 How was the need/demand for the project identified?
5 Outline the project goals:
6 Outline the activities that will be taken to achieve these goals:
7 Identify the role of each partner in organising and implementing the project:
8 Provide details of the arrangements for organising, monitoring and evaluating the project:
9 What are the expected results of the project?

10 Outline a timetabled project implementation and management plan:
Empty space for project implementation and management plan

11 Has an Article 48 administrative check been successfully completed?		YES	NO	
Proposed Budget for Project				
Anticipated Activities	Brief Description	Cost (€)		
		Applicant LAG	Partner LAG(s)	Overall
Other <i>(please detail)</i>				
Total Costs				
Rate of Aid approved		%		
Maximum Amount of Aid approved				

Local Action Group Decision		
Recommended to Proceed	YES	NO
Comments:		
Name:(Chair of LAG)		
Signature:		
Date:		

Noted / Ratified by LEADER Unit of the Department of Rural and Community Development
Comments:
Name:
Signature:
Date:

Appendix 6: – Circular 03 – 2019 Involvement of Local Authorities in the delivery of LEADER Co-operation projects

Circular No: 03 - 2019
From: LEADER Unit
To: All LAGs and Implementing Partners
Date Issued: 11 February 2019
Subject: Involvement of Local Authorities in the delivery of LEADER Co-operation projects

The Department has reviewed the role of Local Authorities in the delivery of LEADER Co-operation projects in response to queries received and a demand for greater clarification. This review has been undertaken with a view to encouraging greater uptake of such projects in light of limited demand for Co-operation projects to date. The Department is also mindful of the need to provide additional flexibility to LAGS to address emerging challenges through Co-operation projects.

As a result of the review, it is now confirmed that a Local Action Group can choose with the agreement of its Local Authority to allow the Local Authority in its area to deliver a Co-operation project on its behalf i.e. where the LAG is the project promoter. As with all projects, it must be demonstrated that the co-operation project:

- i. is derived from the LAGs Local Development Strategy and is in keeping with the principle of Community Led Local Development; and,
- ii. does not substitute for work which comes under the remit of the Local Authority i.e. the involvement of the Local Authority in delivering the Co-operation project must not in any way substitute for the Local Authority's core responsibilities.

The involvement of Local Authorities in delivering Co-operation projects in this way is **optional** and is **open to all LAGs**. It is important to note that this **only** applies:

1. to Co-operation projects (both Preparatory Technical Support and Full Co-operation projects): and;
2. where the project promoter is the LAG itself.

The following points apply in respect of these provisions:

1. Private Matching Funds

Section 10.2 of the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules requires that at least 5% of the total project cost must be met by a private matching cash contribution (wherever sourced by the applicant), other than for training projects

that are funded at 100%. A derogation is being provided to Section 10.2 of the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules to permit the required 5% matching cash contribution to be made by the Local Authority where it is delivering a Co-operation project on behalf of a LAG.

It should be noted that where the Local Authority is providing the 5% private match contribution for Co-operation projects in line with this circular (i.e. from public funds), this amount should be inputted in the mandatory “private matching funds” field on the LEADER IT system.

2. Contribution in kind

Contribution in Kind/Voluntary Labour may not be provided by the Local Authority.

3. Work under the remit of the Local Authority

Per Section 3.3 of the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules, works that normally come within the remit of Local Authorities, such as large infrastructure projects, are not eligible for LEADER funding, i.e. the involvement of the Local Authority in delivering the Co-operation project on behalf of the LAG must not substitute for the Local Authority’s normal responsibilities and works. The Local Authority must certify that the proposed LEADER Co-operation project does not come within its remit and does not substitute for its normal responsibilities and works.

4. Procurement on behalf of the LAG

In instances where the Local Authority is carrying out procurement on behalf of the LAG, it should be made clear in the Request for Tender (RFT) that the Local Authority is carrying out the procurement process on behalf of the LAG for LEADER grant aid.

5. Entering a lease agreement on behalf of the LAG

In instances where the Local Authority is entering into a Lease Agreement on behalf of the LAG, it should be made clear in the Lease Agreement that the Local Authority is entering into the Lease Agreement on behalf of the LAG.

6. Invoices for the project

As for all projects, invoices for these projects **must** be in the name of the project promoter which in this case is the LAG and not the Local Authority.

The above arrangements are being introduced on a trial basis and will be kept under review by this Department.

It is advisable to discuss the proposed involvement of the Local Authority in the Co-operation project with this Department in advance of an application being made for project funding.