

4th Interim Meeting of the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group (REAWG) on LEADER

“Standing up for LEADER”

National Road Map Albania

14 October 2020
Edvin Zhllima

Supported by:

Content

1. Policy background
2. Old initiatives and recent initiatives for LAG
3. Institutional settings and relevant actors
4. SWOT Analysis
5. Core processes
6. Priorities for developing LEADER system
7. Road Map
8. Conclusions

Policy background

- (ISARD) 2014-2020 and Regional Development Strategy target unbalanced territorial development, rural depopulation and rising poverty.
- The Government of Albania (GoA) efforts in updating the legal and institutional base in compliance with the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP)
- Need for more tailored support to local communities such as through LEADER initiatives.
 - Low level of orientation on sustainable local community development in national policies.
 - LEADER measures are not yet designed - expected after 2020 under IPARD Program II (71 million Euros till 2020).

Policy background

- IPARD II 2016-2020: Preparation and implementation of local development strategies – Leader approach;
 - study of situation, a measure is designed for LEADER and documentation package are presented to EC for assessment and revision
 - Potential acceptance of LEADER support «Preparation and implementation of local development strategies - LEADER approach» expected after 2020
- Project “100 Villages” of Agency for Territorial Development urges for the use of LEADER Approach

Institutional settings

- MARD-Directory of Agriculture, Food Safety and Rural Development Policies and Strategies
- MARD-Directory of Programing and Evaluation of Rural Policies (which is the Managing Authority)
- ARDA (AZHBR)– The Paying Agency will be in charge for the implementation of the LEADER measure.

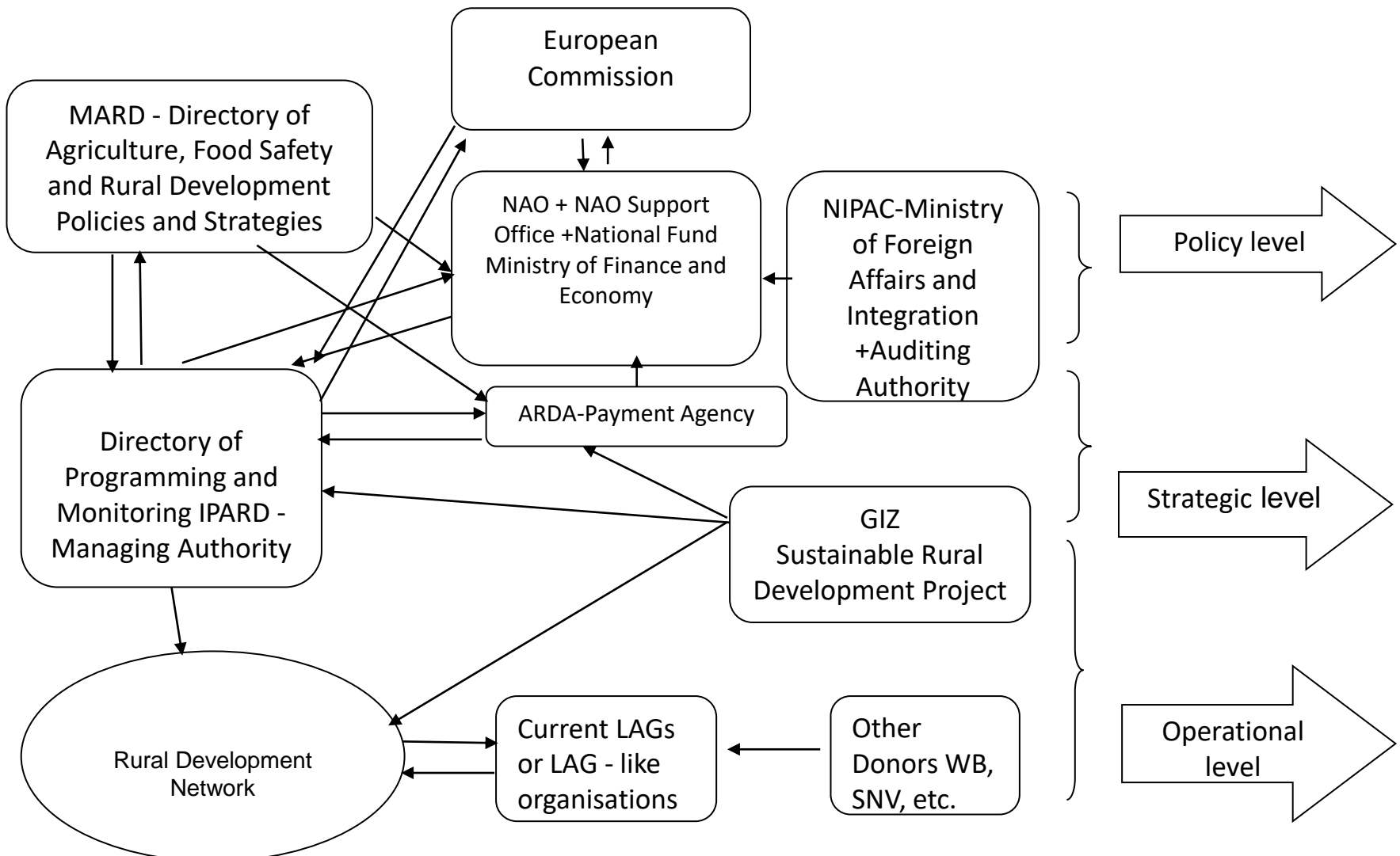
The legal settings

1. 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”.
2. Common legal acts and agreements between EU and Albania including Framework Agreement and IPARD
3. EU legal documents including regulations regarding the Instrument for Pre-Accession and other regulations concerning the LEADER approach.
4. Law ‘For non-profit organizations’, No. 8788, dated 07/05/2001 and ‘On the Registration of Non-Profit Organizations’ Law No. 8789 dated 07/05/2001 can be used for creating LAGs
5. Draft Law “ON ORGANISATION AND FUNCTIONING OF LOCAL ACTION GROUPS” (drafted by the working group set up by DCM No. 151 dated 06.04.2018)

Gaps

- The draft law for the LAGs is not yet adopted

Diagram of actors and responsibilities for preparation of LEADER



Recent initiatives

- Recently the World Bank Environment Service Project (ESP) initiated the piloting 3 LAGs (Puka, Has and Kolonje) focused on forest and pasture management (EuroPartners Development, 2019).
- Initiative on creating new or regulated LAGs are hampered by the postponement of draft law adoption
- Up to 10 LAGs will be established (covering 10% of the rural area) through the LEADER Measure of the IPARD II - the indicative allocation is EUR 2.4 million.

SWOT Analysis

| | Capacities/Competences | Society | |
|------------|---|---|--|
| | Competence and organization development | Development of cooperation systems | Development of enabling frameworks |
| Strengths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High number of competent people in intermediary agencies Increased experience at Local Government Units (LGUs) New LAGs are established (with support of WB and SNV) and better supported in terms of governance. A major part of LAG like organization has the capacity to easily transform into the LAG, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil Society organization's more prone to networks. Albanian Network for Rural Development and a dozen of previously created LAG like organizations create basis for cooperation. MARD started the design of Measure 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISARD 2014-2020 provides proper basis for LEADER Development IPARD measure is a favorable environment given the role Law on NPOs is available and easy to adopt for creation of LAGs |
| Weaknesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a low number but very competent people in the MARD Capacity building at LAGs like organization is useless due to migration. No constant financing for LAG like maintenance. The number of NGOs although is high (1800) is not present in peripheral areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business community is not prepared Majority of former networking structures are not (formally) existing Public Chambers of Commerce are partly functional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current financing schemes given from MARD or LGUs do not provide any funding for local initiatives Capacity building at local level is still limited. The Municipalities have yet not a clear understanding of the CLLD/LEADER |

SWOT Analysis

| | Capacities/Competences | Society | |
|---------------|--|---|--|
| | Competence ad organization development | Development of cooperation systems | Development of enabling frameworks |
| Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARD and Payment Agency resources are strengthened IPARD II measure on capacity building is expected to bring Measure 9 on capacity building and Measure 5 on LEADER The integrated Rural Development Program +100 There is an increasing awareness at civil society organizations on the LAG | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strengthening of Municipalities governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a high willingness of Donor project to establish and support CLLD/LEADER initiatives Plenty of potential areas/products and social capital hot-spots to enable further development into CLLD/LEADER. Promising legal base is the draft law on LAG and Law No. 139/2015 on Local Self-Government and Law on Concessions and Public and Private Partnerships. |
| Threats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPARD measures relevant to LAG creation may need time to be implemented. The high migration from rural areas depletes the available human resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vertical cooperation is weak. There is a decreasing trust on participatory approach. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal motivation of agricultural and rural development policies are yet motivated into increasing competitiveness. This priority does not consider CLLS/LEADER. |

Priorities for developing LEADER system

| | Respective priorities set by the stakeholders for developing the LEADER system at three levels |
|--|--|
| ...by public authorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare the legal base and send for approval within 2020• Prepare budgeting for promotion activities to be carried during year 2021• Prepare training materials for capacity building activities on LEADER development |
| ...by networks and intermediary agents | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare Measure 5 Draft within 2020• Draft Capacity Building Programme for Potential LAGs• Draft Terms of Reference for Capacity Building• Create terms of work for ARDA and Evaluation Committee• Determine the rules for funding (budgeting, disbursement, control) and monitoring and evaluation• The manual for assessing compliance and eligibility• Define with MARD approval the members of Evaluation Committee• Open of the call for proposals• Prepare process of selection for the LAGs |
| ...by LAGs and local actors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare project proposals for studying LAG potentials at regional level• Send project proposals to EU and other donors for capacity building activities• Advocate and participate to meetings for Measure 5 consultation |

Road Map

| Processes | Action | Responsible actors | Output | Date |
|-----------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.1 | Draft LAW preparation, circulation to other Ministries and adoption at Parliament | DAFSRDPS | Law in the official Gazette | Within September 2020 |
| 1.2 | Plan budgetary expenditures for LAG awareness raising campaign | DAFSRDPS | Budget plan | Within April 2021 |
| 1.3 | Finalize the preparation of training sessions | DAFSRDPS | Training materials | Within December 2021 |
| 1.4 | Prepare the IPARD Measure 5 for consultation and communication and Entrusted Budget Implementation Task | DPM IPARD | Done | End of June 2020 |
| 1.5 | Prepare and send for certification to DG Agri the Measure 5 package | DPM IPARD through NAO | Measure 5 final version | First quarter of 2021 |
| 1.6 | Audit of capacities, memorandum of understanding between MA and PA | DG Agri | Report | May 2021 |
| 1.7 | Updating of Financial Agreement | DG Agri | Financial agreement updated | September 2021 |

Road Map

| Process | Action | Responsible actor | Output | Date |
|---------|--|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1.8 | Draft Capacity Building Programme for Potential LAGs | DPM IPARD | Capacity Building Program package | December 2020 |
| 2.1 | Draft Terms of Reference for Capacity Building to Prepare for Implementing LEADER Measure in Albania | DPM IPARD | Terms of reference | December 2020 |
| 2.2 | Create terms of work for ARDA and Evaluation Committee | DPM IPARD | Terms of work | December 2020 |
| 2.3 | Determine the rules for funding (budgeting, disbursement, control) and monitoring and evaluation | DPM IPARD | Rules for funding final draft | December 2020 |
| 2.4 | The manual for assessing compliance and eligibility | ARDA | Manual | December 2020 |

Road Map

| | Action | Responsible actors | Output | Date |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 3.1 | Animation, awareness rising and promotional activities | DPMIPARD | Awareness raising campaign start | Jan. 2021 - June 2021 |
| 3.2. | Open call for recognition of LAG | ARDA | Date of call for proposal made public in the ARDA website | September 2021 |
| 3.3 | Training of potential LAG Staff | ARDA | Training materials | Nov. 2021 |
| 3.4 | Preparation of Local Development Strategies for each LAG | ARDA through subcontracted services | Subcontracting entities | November 2021 |
| 3.5 | LAGs recognition (formerly created) and approval of relevant LCD strategies | DPMIPARD and ARDA | LAG list made public at ARDA website | December 2021 |
| 3.6 | Grant disbursement to selected LAGs | ARDA | Grant disbursement made public at ARDA website | January 2022 |
| 3.7 | Memorandum of understanding of LAGs and ARDA for implementation and self-monitoring | ARDA | Memorandum of understanding at ARDA website | January 2022 |

Conclusions

- MARD has been making efforts to revise the overall policy framework
- The overall aim of this assignment is to facilitate the process of setting up structures and delivery mechanisms for the LEADER measure
- This report is a synthesis of a collaborative work carried
- It serves as a to-do list for all the stakeholders in Albania in implementing CLLD/LEADER



Thank you for your attention!

Supported by:

