

Cooperation agreement

within the scope of the Leader approach
of the EAFRD development programme in Finland and in
the German federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate



between

Lokale Aktionsgruppe Hunsrück
[Hunsrück local action group]

c/o Regionalrat Wirtschaft Rhein-Hunsrück e.V.
Koblenzer Str. 3, 55469 Simmern
Germany

and

Lokale Aktionsgruppe Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal
[Upper Middle Rhine Valley world heritage site local action group]

c/o Verbandsgemeindeverwaltung St. Goar-Oberwesel
Rathausstraße 6
D-55430 Oberwesel
Germany

and

PoKo ry
Kauppakatu 23
FIN 35800 Mänttä
Finland

(hereinafter referred to as “partner”)

Preamble

The cooperation between the German local action groups "Hunsrück" and "Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal" [*Upper Middle Rhine Valley world heritage site*], and the Finish local action group "PoKo" serves to implement their approved regional development concepts. The cooperation will be carried out in the partners' regions in the subject areas mutually agreed. With this cooperation agreement, the partners express their willingness to work together during the European Union funding period of 2014 to 2020 within the framework of transnational projects.

§ 1

Objective of the cooperation

The object of the agreement is the implementation of transnational LEADER projects within the scope of the EAFRD development programme for the rural area of the member state of Finland and the German federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate in the EU funding period 2014 – 2020. The cooperation agreement will be concluded for the complete funding period and serves the objective of a long-term exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as the mutual realisation of projects. It is not project-related, but is rather oriented around the objectives and areas of activity defined in the regional development concepts of the regions involved.

The partners see new opportunities in the transnational cooperation, to familiarise themselves with measures that could be advantageous in their own regions and to initiate possible applications in their own areas.

The previous, successful transnational cooperation of the partners in the funding period 2007 to 2013 should also be continued within the European Union funding period 2014 to 2020.

Within the scope of two directly subsequent transnational projects, it was possible to tackle different subject fields in the previous funding period, whereby there was an exchange of experience through which various different concrete individual projects could be initiated and implemented. Building on this, existing project ideas should be driven forward and managed to the point of being ready for implementation, whilst other subject areas of interest to all parties should be discussed and concrete projects developed with the corresponding target groups.

The common measures should promote and support sustainable and future-oriented development in the partner regions. The common work should contribute to securing the economic locations and living spaces in the partner regions, with implementation of the regional development concepts.

§ 2

Subject areas of the cooperation

The following subject areas are considered the focal points of the future cooperation:

- Strengthening of rural areas as living and working environments
- Establishment of a willingness to remain amongst the young people
- Enhancing the quality of life
- Strengthening of the regional economies and the employment market

- Creation and development of regional value-adding chains
- Exchange of economic players within the rural area
- Strengthening of the regional identity
- Adaptation strategies for following the demographic shift
- Development of tourism potentials
- Sustainable mobility and securing of public services
- Cultural exchange and cooperation of creative forces
- Promotion of renewable energies and a decentralised energy supply

In order to react appropriately to coming developments within the partner regions, it is possible that further subject areas may be incorporated into the cooperation with the agreement of the partners.

Funding applications may be submitted for the subject areas listed by the respective local action groups to the respective authorising bodies responsible on the basis of this cooperation agreement. The submission of joint project applications is possible. In addition, further potential promoters should be encouraged to submit their own project suggestions and should be actively supported with their implementation.

§ 3

Roles of the project partners

(1) Leadership

Hunsrück LAG will assume leadership within the scope of this agreement. They undertake to carry out the following tasks, unless otherwise stated in the agreement:

- a. Development and updating of the cooperation agreement
- b. Organisation of meetings for the sharing of experiences between the partners
- c. Coordination of the development of the cooperative projects
(Description of the projects, determination of the respective responsibilities of the partners)
- d. Coordination of the implementation of the cooperation (checking the funding eligibility of common projects, financial implementation of the common project applications whilst taking account of the provisions of the selection processes, etc.)
- e. Support and assistance with the documentation of the disbursements made, Support and assessment (implementation reports)

The support to the individual projects will be determined between all of the partners in each instance.

(2) Exchange of information and experience

The partners will carry out a continuous exchange of information and experience, and will provide mutual support in order to achieve the stipulated objectives.

The partners agree that the respective host LAG will be responsible for the organisation and the arrangement of the programme of events, excursions and visits within their region.

(3) Funding applications

Separate respective funding applications will be prepared by the steering group for the individual transnational projects, along with the promoters of the projects and will be presented to the decision-making bodies of the partners for consultation and agreement.

In the case of common projects, the coordinated applications with concrete cost and finance plan will each be submitted to the authorities responsible by the coordinating local action group following the approval of the decision-making bodies of the local action groups involved.

(4) Procedure for funding applications:

- a. If the project impacts multiple EAFRD development programmes, the partners involved will submit their own funding applications for the respective project to the authorities responsible for the respective EAFRD development programme and will take on the conception and implementation of the cooperative project.
- b. If the project does not involve all partners, the funding application can be coordinated and submitted to the responsible authorities by one of the partners with the agreement of the leading local action group.
- c. In the area of an EAFRD development programme, the partners involved can submit an application requesting the funds be transferred by the EAFRD administrative authorities from the EAFRD fund tied to their EAFRD ceiling for implementing the cooperation to a local action group leading the project. They will then take on the conception and implementation of the cooperative project.

If funds from the funding programme for local rural development (FLLE) are employed in a project by the Rhineland-Palatinate LAG, then the provision shall apply accordingly.

- d. In the event of funding applications being submitted, the partners will check alternative financial options, in particular in the area of the responsibilities of the European Union, and will support the promoters of the project with the application.

(5) Accompanying cooperative projects

For accompanying cooperative measures that do not extend beyond the region, which represent the agreed objectives and conditions, separate respective funding applications will be prepared by the steering group with the promoters of the measures and presented for consultation, and shall be deliberated and decided upon by the decision-making body of the respective LAG. The agreed applications with concrete cost and finance plan will then be submitted to the authorities responsible by the LAG involved. The measures will be documented in the overall presentation of the outcome of the cooperation.

§ 4

Working language and law to be applied

The working language is English.

This agreement is subject to German law.

Disputes between the parties that relate to the interpretation or application of this agreement and that cannot be amicably resolved shall be presented to the court responsible in Germany.

§ 5 Steering group

A steering group will be appointed, comprising the regional managers of the aforementioned local action groups, for the development and implementation of the cooperation process. If required, further members can be nominated and called up.

§ 6 Financial scope of the cooperation

At the start of the cooperation, the leading local action group will submit an indicative finance plan to the EAFRD administrative authorities responsible, containing information on the projects planned at the time of the conclusion of the agreement, separated into accompanying projects and concrete cooperation projects. This overview must be updated when required and in particular in the event of new projects being implemented.

The distribution list for the individual projects will be determined based on the subject matter and content. With the submission of the funding application, the result of the selection decision will be passed on by the lead LAG to the responsible bodies. The proportions for the individual local action groups are to be shown separately in the aforementioned indicative finance plan. The same applies to the potential use of FLE funding.

§ 7 Confidentiality

In connection with the handling of the intended projects, the partners shall make technical, financial and/or other information, materials or data accessible to one another, which are available in written, verbal or any other form, electronically or in any other manner, and which are considered as confidential and legally protected. The partners are agreed that the confidential information passed on shall be used exclusively according to the scope and extent required by the type and manner of concrete contact established or the business relationship. Any other use requires the written agreement of the other partner.

The following data shall be considered non-confidential:

- Data that was lawfully and without any confidentiality obligations in their possession before the disclosure to the other partners
- Data that has been published without any action on their part or that has become generally known without any fault on their part
- Data that has been transmitted to the recipient party after the conclusion of the memorandum of understanding by one or more third parties lawfully and without any confidentiality obligations, so without the recipient partner breaking this agreement
- Data that has been released to the other partner in writing by the disclosing partner
- Data that has been made accessible to a third party without corresponding obligations and restrictions on the part of the disclosing partner.

§ 8
Final provisions

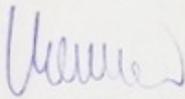
Earlier verbal or written agreements between the partners with regard to the subject matter of this memorandum of understanding shall become invalid when this comes into force. The EAFRD administrative authorities regionally responsible for the local action groups involved will receive the cooperation agreement for approval.

§ 9
Contact details and legal introduction

The contact details for the partners involved are listed in the annex. The cooperation agreement will come into force with the signing by the representatives of the partners, as well as the confirmation by the EAFRD administrative authorities.

For the Hunsrück LAG

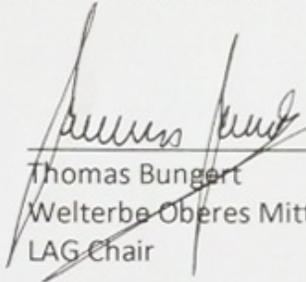
Simmern, (dated)



Christian Keimer
Hunsrück LAG Chair

**For the Welterbe
Oberes Mittelrheintal LAG**

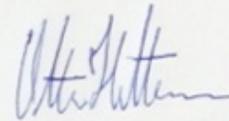
Oberwesel, (dated)



Thomas Bungert
Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal
LAG Chair

For Poko ry

Mänttä, (dated)



Otto Huttunen
Poko ry Chair

Annex contact details:

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