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GUIDELINE

ON

VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SECOND ALBANIAN RURAL PARLIAMENT (ARP)

4-5 MARCH 2021

Scope and purpose of the guideline

This document contributes to coordinating the efforts of the organizers and supporters of ARP 2 for enabling the participation in this event of farmers and other rural stakeholders at the local level, with special focus on remote rural areas and those with limited internet access and poor technological equipment.

ARP2 2 will be organized in a hybrid format combining physical and virtual participation, in compliance with anti-COVID 19 measures. This form of combined participation will be implemented through the use of Hy-Flex technology.

Local stakeholders - farmers, youth, women, producer groups, administrative units, community groups, civil society organizations as well as any rural resident, etc. - mainly from areas with limited internet access and poor technological equipment – will be connected with the event of the second Albanian Rural Parliament through the Local Community Cells.

Few words on Hy-Flex methodology

The Hy-Flex (Hybrid Flexibility) methodology, besides its early origins, has only recently found widespread use namely in terms of facing pandemic's social distancing as well as geographical isolation implications. The word "Hybrid" expresses the combination of two participation forms which will be used during ARP2. They include both physical and virtual presence (in distance). While "Flexibility" implies that participants will be offered either the opportunity to be physically at the event (on the premises of the Agricultural University of Tirana) or to follow it online, using "local community cells" whose function will be explained below.

What are the local community cells?

Local Community Cells are enabling units for virtual participation in ARP2 using the Hy-Flex (Hybrid Flexibility) methodology. Simply put, a gathering of a small number of local stakeholders, up to 10 representatives, attending ARP2 remotely together and being an active part of its two-day program. Each Local Community Cell will be facilitated by a Coordinator.

What is the purpose of local community cells?

The establishment of Local Community Cells aims to enable and maximize the virtual participation of rural communities in ARP2 through provision of digital tools and internet access as well as anti-COVID-19 safeguarding measures. This will enable physical meetings in small groups, up to 10





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people, as the pandemic protection rules require.

The setting up of Local Community Cells relates to the need to organize Albanian Rural Parliament in the conditions of the pandemic and reflects the effort of ANRD to find innovative instruments to connect stakeholders at the local level, especially focusing on those groups that lack access to developmental and decision-making processes affecting their lives. Local community cells - or virtual participation units - will link the ARP2 platform and event to farmers and other active rural community stakeholders, and enable them to articulate their needs, interests and aspirations.

Through Local Community Cells each rural resident or representative of various interest groups will be involved in the process and will be able to express their opinion, regardless of time or place, thus being an active participant in the Rural Parliament.

Where will Local Community Cells be established?

One community cell will be established in each of the 61 municipalities of the country, and with the help of supporters and rural development activists efforts will be made to increase the numbers of local cells in local self-government administrative units.

Local Community Cell Participants?

Local community cell participants consist of all type of local rural stakeholders. A non-exhaustive list of them is as follows:

- ✓ Farmers, especially small ones;
- ✓ Young people from rural areas, students and teaching staff of high schools, university students, etc.
- ✓ Rural women, women producers' groups, various women agriculture clusters;
- ✓ Rural entrepreneurs; residents of rural areas, community groups, local CSOs; active citizens from local communities;
- ✓ Representatives of municipalities, administrative units, Agriculture Regional Departments, Agri points, extension service and other representatives from public institutions;
- ✓ Representatives of the private sector, rural entrepreneurs and startups and supporters of the rural development movement etc.
- ✓ Etc.

Who will administer the Cells?

The coordination in each cell will be carried out by an appointed Coordinator, who will enable the connection between ARP 2 and Cell participants to ensure a regular and active participation of local actors throughout the ARP 2 program.

The coordinator could be part of the staff and activists of ANRD member organizations as well as other grassroots organizations, local activists and leaders who possess the necessary communication, animation and management skills to administer cells in the respective local communities.

Standard requirements for the cells' set up





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The cell for virtual participation is a public and / or private space that has the capacity to accommodate a maximum of 10 people respecting the rules of social distancing.

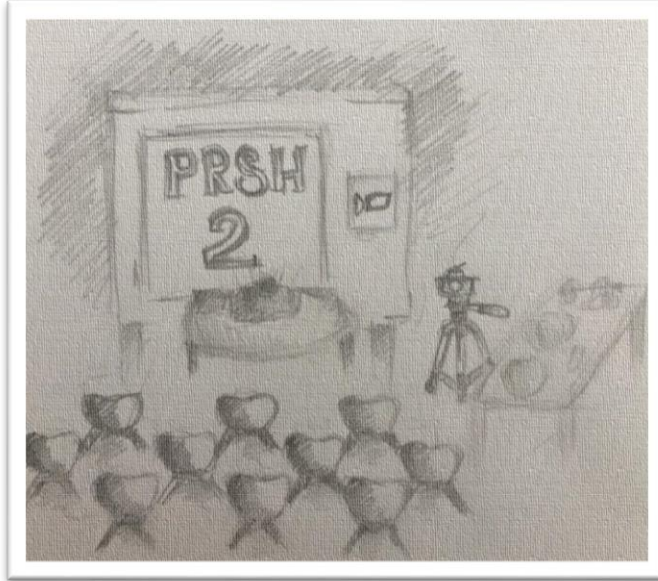


Fig 1: Sketch of a Local Community Cell

This space will be used to ensure during two days the live broadcast of ARP 2. A library, training room, NGO office, coffee bar, community center, mini-cinema, youth center, municipal council meeting office, administrative unit office, school, etc. can be used as space for the cell.

The space must be equipped with ten or more chairs, one laptop and projector and stable internet connection as well as visibility elements of ARP2.

To all participants in the cell during their ARP2 attendance will be offered coffee, tea, water and light lunch in accordance with the event's program.

Responsibilities of the Local Community Cell Coordinator for Virtual Participation in ARP2

The Coordinator (facilitator) will be selected by ANRD in consultation with its member organizations and other local partners. The selected coordinator will have the following responsibilities:

- ✓ Participate in the online orientation session that will be organized by the Albanian Network for Rural Development in the last week of February 2021.
- ✓ Be physically present in the cell for virtual participation during the two days of the ARP2 event (4-5 March 2021) in accordance with the activity schedule.
- ✓ Provide the hall with a laptop, camera and functional microphone as well as projector equipment.
- ✓ Be responsible for the space management in accordance with the rules of social distancing, providing masks and hand sanitizers for all participants.
- ✓ Ensure continuous attendance by local actors, a maximum of 10 and a minimum of 4 people present in the room at the same time, during the two days of the activity.
- ✓ Coordinate the arrival of participants distributing them equally along the different sessions of ARP 2, guaranteeing a stable participation in the cell so that it is never empty or exceeds the limit required in accordance with the rules of protection by Covid-19.
- ✓ Strive to ensure full participation (maximum 10 people) especially in small group talks during the two rounds envisaged in the ARP2 program.
- ✓ Ensure the provision of coffee, water, tea and lunch for participants during break times according to the ARP2 program.
- ✓ Encourage the audience in the cell to be active and contributing by asking questions, sharing



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- concerns, needs and experiences, in a unified way through the cell coordinator.
- ✓ Register all participants and report their attendance list to ANRD.
- ✓ Promote ARP 2 and establish its visibility elements according to ANRD guidelines.

Ensuring anti-COVID security by Local Community Cell Coordinators for Virtual Participation in ARP2

Event organizers will conduct a short joint online training on managing the anti-COVID19 security situation for all the local coordinators. They will be explained in detail the responsibilities of ensuring anti-COVID19 safeguarding measures in terms of distances and maximum number of participants indoors, emphasizing that for no reason should these rules be violated. In cases where the number of participants is beyond the norms of safeguarding measures, in addition to guaranteeing the measures mentioned above, the Coordinator should also:

- ✓ Take measures not only to personally equip the participants with masks and disinfectants but also to never show up without the protective equipment.
- ✓ Ensure the presence inside the cell of a maximum of 10 people by personally taking care of the replacement of persons who have been present inside for a long time, with newly arrived ones. This process will be based on mutual understanding and in case of its lack/conflict the newly arrived persons will not be allowed to stay in the premises where the maximum number of attendees is exceeded.
- ✓ In accordance with the program of the event try to guarantee the participation of all interested parties, considering and keeping as high priority the issues of security and anti-COVID protection 19.

Duration

The cell for virtual participation will remain open and will welcome participants throughout the dates 4-5 March 2021, from 09:00 - 16:00 (day I) and from 09:00 - 13:00 (day II).

Promotions

Cell participants, individually and in groups, are encouraged to take photos for posting on social media using the hashtag # RuralAlbania!

For more information please contact: info@anrd.al

