

NATIONAL GATHERING OF LOCAL ACTION GROUPS AND POTENTIAL LAGS

The LEADER approach in Albania:

How can we turn IPARD III support into the key instrument for the successful nationwide implementation of the Leader approach?

Tirana, 23 September 2021, 10:30 - 13:00

The Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) in close cooperation with the IPARD Managing Authority in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development organizes the National Gathering of the Leader LAGs and potential LAGs with the intention of giving a new impetus to the implementation of this approach after long awaiting for a national undertaking toward Leader approach implementation in the rural communities of our country.

This gathering supports and promotes the Leader like initiatives undertaken by development actors in Albania since the early 2000s, mapped out jointly by the event's organizers and identified in the Policy Document *['The Dynamics of Implementation of the Leader approach and its way forward in Albania'](#)*. These initiatives as well as the partnership structures established through inclusive and bottom-up processes, whether passive or active, are important in creating the necessary environment for the implementation of the Leader approach. These initiatives and other ones including research work, capacity building, networking and advocacy for Leader etc., have paved the way for launching a national undertaking toward the Leader approach implementation in Albania.

The critical mass of trained human resources, equipped with the basic knowledge and skills to engage in Leader type initiatives, networking spaces and exchange of experiences on Leader provided in the last five years by ANRD, striking examples of local leadership to encourage the animation processes in some rural areas, but above all the downward spiral of rural areas and the IPARD III support for Leader measure create an irreplaceable momentum to give the implementation of the Leader approach a new impetus and open a new era toward the real revival of rural life and economy.

This activity is organized in the frame of the project *"Support to BRDN in institutional development to Revive Rural Communities in the Western Balkan"*, financially supported by We Effect.

Programme

- 10:30** **Opening and welcoming remarks**
*Albanian Network for Rural Development
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
European Union Delegation to Albania*
- 10:35** **Presentation: Brief overview on the dynamics of the implementation of the Leader approach in Albania:** initiatives, territories and partnership structures
Evelina Azizaj, National Coordinator of ANRD
- 10:45** **Interactive session:** Voices from the grassroots: Stories of Leader-like initiatives and Leader LAGs in Albania (2 rounds from 15 minutes).
Participants are asked to choose two of the concrete Leader-like cases they want to know better and exchange the case between rounds.

Eight concrete cases of Leader-like initiatives and Leader LAGs are presented in the tables located in the four corners of the hall. The representatives of each case will present and answer the questions of the participants on the LAG he/she represents not longer than 7 minutes. In addition to presentations, the representatives are encouraged to share with participants promotional materials (leaflets, strategies, photo albums, videos, etc.) about the community, the LAG, and the initiatives carried out, etc.
- 11:15** **Presentation: What does IPARD III offer for the implementation of the Leader approach? What about the IPARD II Technical Assistance measure? The responsible entities and their respective role with regard to Leader measure implementation?**

Grigor Gjeci, Head of Managing Authority, IPARD Program, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- 11:30** **Q&A**
- 11:45** **Need assessment session: Rapid assessment of the needs of local stakeholders on Leader approach. Knowledge, capacities and skills: current situation and priorities**

Working group 1: Leader approach, partnership building, local action groups

Working group 2: Participatory local strategic planning; generating and managing local actions/projects/initiatives

12:45 **Concluding session: Short presentation of working groups as per the assessment themes**

13:00 Buffet