



European LEADER Association for Rural Development – AISBL

Finnish Presidency January 2011 – December 2012

Learning Diary

In order to enhance the learning process you are asked to keep a learning diary during the exchange.

The learning diary is not only a diary of your daily activities but a record of your own reflections on them. It contains your conclusions about how you can use the new information, knowledge or skills you have gained during the exchange in the future. Writing a learning diary will help you to pass this knowledge to your colleagues when you return back home and to apply it in your own local setting.

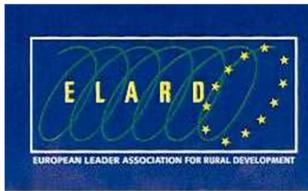
In your diary you are asked to write short descriptions of every day's activities and analyze what you can learn from these experiences. For example, when you have familiarized yourself with a new best practice project of your host LAG you should:

- a) Write description and document practical information about the project (Project title, type, duration, cost and budget, results, outputs and impacts)
- b) Find out what were the main challenges/obstacles faced during the project and what kinds of solutions were found? What were the factors that made this project successful?
- c) Try to answer the following questions: What could your own LAG learn from this project? Would this kind of project be transferable into your local area? Why?

Similarly, if your host organizes meetings for you with the local stakeholders, it is warmly recommended to carry out interviews of the people you meet in an organized manner. This means that you plan before the meeting some topics or questions you are especially interested in and document the situation afterwards in your diary. When possible, you can also take pictures and/or record videos and include these to your diary.

The diary should also include a general description of the characteristics of the host LAG and the region that you are visiting and contain the following information among other:

- How is the LEADER program organized in the target country (Paying Agency, Managing Authority, National Rural Network, LAG selection procedure etc.)?
- The overall national strategy for the development of rural areas and the main role of the Leader Axis in achieving this strategy in the target country.
- Description of the host LAG's area (geographically, culturally, historically etc.)
- Strengths and challenges in the region.
- Description of the LAG visited (partnership, structure of the LAG board, funding structure and budget etc.)



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- What is the scope of the tasks delegated to the LAGs in the target country? (e.g. - LAGs are competent only to select projects/ to select projects and pay the beneficiaries/ to both select and approve projects.)
- What is the main focus of the Local Development Strategy?
- What are the most relevant stakeholders of the LAG?
- Project selection procedure of the LAG (e.g. How is the transparency ensured? How are the possible conflicts of interest handled?)
- Monitoring and evaluation practices in the LAG

With your prior permission, ELARD will publish your learning diaries or parts of them on its website in a section dedicated to the exchange in order to give other LAGs around Europe a possibility to benefit from your experiences. The diary is written preferably in English (For the non-natives this is an excellent opportunity to practice English writing!). Once you have completed the exchange, please send your diary and the license to publish it to the email address elard@elard.eu . Please let us know if you do not wish your diary to be published on the ELARD website.