



Rheinland-Pfalz  
MINISTERIUM FÜR  
UMWELT, LANDWIRTSCHAFT,  
ERNÄHRUNG, WEINBAU  
UND FORSTEN



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# GO FOR LEADER - HAND IN HAND

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GO FOR LEADER -  
HAND IN HAND



# FOREWORD



## Rural areas – the heart of Rhineland-Palatinate

Many people are unaware of the range and importance of the functions that rural areas fulfil. In Rhineland-Palatinate, where only about 17 per cent of the population lives in large cities of 100,000 inhabitants or more, rural districts are of particular importance.

The areas outside the urban centres are characterised by distinct natural and cultural features and have their very own charm. This charm is brought to life by the people who live and work in these areas and who identify themselves with the landscape. Rural and urban spaces are in close functional interaction with each other. Together, they form what we all consider an attractive and versatile living space. In other words: rural areas are at the heart of Rhineland-Palatinate!

## Embracing challenges

At the moment, these regions are facing social and economical changes that will have a lasting effect. It is therefore more important than ever that these areas remain preserved as spaces where people can live, work and enjoy their leisure time by promoting sustainable development. For rural areas, the government of Rhineland-Palatinate has adopted a policy that aims at developing and promoting agricultural production and forestry, diversification towards non-agricultural jobs and the integration of other regional business and value-adding activities. The European Union also emphasises the importance of integrated, cross-sector development assistance for these regions. With the LEADER approach, rural areas are offered an innovative and flexible development tool. It builds on the creativity of the local community and sees these people as the greatest capital of rural areas. This programme provides ample scope for the development of innovative ideas of individuals and groups and promotes regional networking.

## Exploring new roads – hand in hand

One key focus for the implementation of LEADER is the development of interterritorial and trans-national cooperation projects. Rural areas need partnerships of a new kind – within and across their borders. Traditional thinking patterns and ways of doing things must be overcome, while a new awareness for opportunities must be firmly established in all rural communities. This will enable us to work hand in hand towards a better future based on sustainability that offers opportunities that are currently not even thought of. LEADER believes in new alliances in rural areas and wants to tap into the resulting added value for the regional economy and society.

## Looking for partners

This brochure provides an overview of the LEADER regions in Rhineland-Palatinate, with a clear focus on their potential for interterritorial and trans-national cooperation. In these pages, you might just find the partner you have been looking for your project. Or you might be inspired by the many fresh and forward-looking ideas of the many groups so that you might want to pursue your own project – hopefully hand in hand with partners in one or more regions.

I hope you enjoy reading about our projects and proposals. May they lead to new ideas for future cooperation projects!

Ulrike Höfken  
Minister for Environment, Agriculture, Food, Wine and Forestry of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate

# FOREWORD

## LEADER provides room for initiative

Over more than a decade, the LEADER concept has been proven extremely useful in many ways and aspects. People in rural areas have become very active in their communities as soon as they were offered the opportunity to shape their own future. They show great energy and drive, develop their ideas, plan their approach and take action. People representing official and private organisations work hand in hand in local action groups.

## Crossing boundaries benefits everybody

LEADER also shows that it is beneficial for everybody to cross regional and national boundaries in order to cooperate with other communities.

## Getting to know other points of view – hand in hand

For people engaged in their rural communities, projects that have been developed and planned together with other groups offer a number of advantages over „conventional“ projects. They begin to see things in a different way, experience new work practices and learn from the experiences made in other regions, to name just a few of the benefits.

## Greater added value thanks to cooperation

In my view, interterritorial and trans-national cooperation projects between local action groups strengthen the European spirit, as groups have the opportunity to share and exchange their ideas and experiences.

## Rhineland-Palatinate - Germany - Europe – boundless diversity

On the one hand, the range of fields of action extend from energy and regional economic projects, to education, leisure activities, village renewal and town development. On the other, the regions that work hand in hand under the LEADER umbrella – be it in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany or across national borders – show a mesmerising diversity. To demonstrate this diversity, I wish to focus on eight cooperation projects that involve partners in Finland, France, Luxembourg and Austria.

On behalf of the local action groups working in these projects, I hope that this brochure will make the LEADER regions in Rhineland-Palatinate better known to the wider public and lead to new and interesting cooperation projects.

May this publication be the inspiration for many future undertakings!

Dacian Cioloș  
European Commissioner for Agriculture



# LEADER IN RHEINLAND-PALATINATE

## Embracing the future – embracing change

### Rural areas have a future

Rhineland-Palatinate is essentially a rural state dominated by agriculture and forestry. Only about 17 per cent of the population lives in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

Rural regions fulfil a number of important functions, as they do not only offer great habitats for nature, but provide a space where many people live and work. However, most rural dwellers are not even aware of the importance of their area. Given the heterogeneous structure of rural areas, they should not be simply seen as the relatively empty space around urban centres. An attractive and versatile living space is made up of both built-up areas and rural regions developing hand in hand.

It is one of the basic goals of the government of Rhineland-Palatinate to support rural regions with their distinct local character and charm, exploiting the potential of the people who live and work there. It aims at securing and further improving the life quality of rural communities. There are however many challenges, that make this not an easy task. These challenges arise from changes in agricultural production and demographics, the general globalisation of the economy, climate change and the restructuring of the energy policy in Germany, to name but a few.

However, these challenges also offer many great opportunities for rural communities. In the end, they have been, and will be the regions that determine the character of Rhineland-Palatinate. In contrast to urban centres, people in the countryside enjoy a greater quality of life, in a more

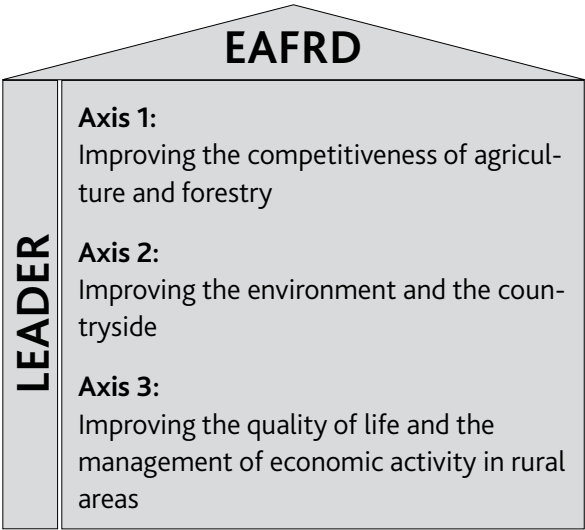
natural environment and scenic landscape. There are many endogenous development opportunities in rural regions, ranging from the diversification of the farming sector and tourism to renewable energy production over to innovative ideas of small and medium-sized enterprises. The greatest capital in these areas are the people. A number of medium-sized businesses that have become (global) market leaders and are based in rural areas are testimony to this fact. People who live in the countryside have a much closer affinity with their locality.

### European structural policy for rural areas

The European Union is committed to promoting sustainable development of rural areas. We must not forget that a large portion of the population in the 27 Member States actually lives in rural regions. With the enlargement of the EU, the share of rural areas in its overall territory of the union has actually increased.

With LEADER (from French: Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale), which is a component of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU, Rhineland-Palatinate has an instrument at hand that enables it to support innovative regional development projects in rural areas that are based on the initiative of the communities. CAP has seen comprehensive changes in 2003 and 2004. In 2007, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) was established, providing states with a financing instrument for rural development activities. The legal basis for the implementation of the second

pillar of CAP is the EAFRD regulation<sup>1)</sup> for the period 2007-2013. It defines three main goals that are to be achieved by focussing on three axes and by pursuing the holistic LEADER approach.



While the measures regarding the first two axes target certain economic sectors, the activities under the third axis focus more on specific regions. LEADER on the other hand does not follow a topical structure but is essentially a method for the support of local action groups (LAGs) that want to implement innovative, regional and holistic bottom-up measures.

EAFRD covers a broad range of sectors and measures and therefore reflects the heterogeneous structure of rural areas. For its implementation, the European Union has developed strategic guidelines for the development of rural regions. Member States have drawn up national strategy plans in line with the strategic guidelines adopted by the EU.

### PAUL – LEADER

The initiatives for which assistance is made available, the support that is provided and the funding guidelines and limits for the various sectors are laid down in rural development programmes that have been drawn up for each region. In Rhineland-Palatinate, this programme is known as PAUL

(from the German acronym for Agriculture, Environment Measures, Rural Development). Following a SWOT analysis<sup>2)</sup>, Rhineland-Palatinate has identified the following objectives with regard to assistance for rural development:

- Improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry
- Improving product quality through management systems
- Improving the environment situation, especially nature conservation, through farming and forestry use
- Safeguarding agricultural land management, including environmental protection and measures of the EC Water Framework Directive
- Preserving and maintaining the countryside
- Improving the working and living conditions in rural areas
- Creating alternative sources of income

PAUL pursues these objectives by applying the three axes or packages of measures of the EAFRD, following a method-based approach (LEADER approach). For the period until 2013, LEADER has been assigned around € 26.2m from the EAFRD (total EAFRD funding for PAUL: € 275.4m). Since its launch in 1991, the LEADER approach has been continuously developed further. LEADER I was followed by LEADER II, which led to LEADER+. Since 2007, the approach is known simply as LEADER. Since 2007, the LEADER approach has been integrated ('mainstreamed') within overall EU rural development policy. For the current period of 2007-2013, LEADER therefore is no longer a stand-alone programme focussing on model projects, but is just one element of the mainstream support provided by the European Union. The funding for LEADER now comes from within the overall financial envelopes received by each Member State from the EU under the new European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). LEADER is now fully integrated into the national

<sup>1)</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005

<sup>2)</sup> Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

and regional general rural development programmes and supports cross-sectional projects under all three objectives laid down in the EAFRD Regulation, following a bottom-up approach. With this new structure, the EU recognises the merit of the LEADER approach.

#### Four generations of LEADER

1991 - 1993: LEADER I  
1994 - 1999: LEADER II  
2000 - 2006: LEADER+  
2007 - 2013: LEADER approach

#### LEADER promotes new partnerships

Policy is generally seen as something that is dictated from the top down. In contrast, LEADER follows a bottom-up approach based on the initiative and commitment of citizens. It offers people in rural areas the opportunity to implement their own ideas and sustainable projects – devised by rural communities for rural communities. This approach can only be successful, if it provides room for new ideas, new thinking and innovative activities. In addition, it requires new partnerships between the various groups and communities and also across rural regions. In other words, people involved in LEADER projects must team up with others to work hand in hand.

The local action groups (LAGs) are at the heart of every LEADER region. They comprise the various local actors as well as the public and private sector. At least 50 per cent of the members of a LAG must represent business or social partners. Acting as the central decision-making committee at local level, the LAG chooses the development projects that it wants to pursue within its region. The composition of the LAG must reflect the local needs and cover a wide range of sectors and community groups.

#### Key features of LEADER

- Bottom-up approach
- Cooperation
- Networking
- Innovation
- Area-based local development strategies
- Involvement of local public-private partnerships (LAG)
- Integrated and multi-sectoral actions

Thanks to the bottom-up approach, LEADER enables local communities and actors to participate directly in the decision-making process about the strategy and in the selection of the priorities to be pursued in their local area. It is therefore the most important feature of LEADER. Rhineland-Palatinate has gone a step further and now also allows IRD regions to adopt the bottom-up approach. Where LAGs are established within an IRD<sup>3)</sup> region, they benefit from this special approach. There are currently eight IRD regions that have set up a LAG to take advantage of the LEADER method, and other regions have already declared their interest in establishing LAGs.

#### Overcoming parochial thinking – reaching out across regional boundaries

The networking of groups and local actors to work on joint projects – be it within the same region or between groups in different regions – plays an important role here. The holistic approach of LEADER especially promotes projects that are not confined to one region but involve actors in two or more areas. It might however be more demanding and complex to coordinate cooperation projects across regional or even national boundaries, as funding and support requirements might differ. It is therefore only natural that local actors might be hesitant to take this route.

The advantages of such cooperation projects however outweigh any perceived disadvantages. There are many additional benefits arising from networking, the development of joint projects and the pro-active involvement of local actors that strengthen the LEADER approach.

Are there any innovative and future-proof project ideas in your area that you would not be able to undertake on your own? Then consider taking on board other partners in order to expand the scope of your idea and to access additional resources as regards manpower and funding. Cooperation partners bring along their own ideas, views and perspectives, so that obstacles that might have appeared insurmountable are suddenly minor issues. The new contacts established through the cooperation project are of great value for all territories involved.

Even if you are not yet working on a cooperation project in your region, it can be extremely useful to find out what people outside your area are doing. An actor based in a neighbouring region, or even abroad, might have come up with a project or an idea that is exactly what you are looking for in your area. Why not join up to pursue the project together?

#### How does my region benefit from cooperation?

- Potential additional funding options
- Access to additional manpower and know-how
- Exchange of knowledge and expertise
- Insight into how other groups and actors think and work
- Expansion of existing network through new contacts

#### Types of cooperation

1. Interterritorial → Cooperation with (adjacent) LAGs or other rural regions within the same EU Member State
2. Trans-national → Cooperation with other rural regions inside and outside the EU

#### Who can get involved in cooperation projects?

- LEADER LAGs, in Germany and other EU Member States
- LEADER LAGs and regions pursuing a development approach that is similar to that of LEADER (e.g. IRD regions) - within and outside the EU

With this brochure, we wish to invite you to get to know the LEADER regions in Rhineland-Palatinate, to explore their special characteristics and strengths and to find out more about their local development strategies. This publication also includes information on a number of selected cooperation projects. We hope that our brochure will inspire you to set up new partnerships and cooperation projects to bring together local actors from Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany or EU Member States to pursue your common goals. By doing this, you will be able to avail of synergy effects, strengthen the value chain and help improve the quality of life of people in rural areas. In other words: we want to persuade you to become involved and to team up with other groups and people.

<sup>3)</sup> Integrated Rural Development



## LEADER regions in Rhineland-Palatinate

In Rhineland-Palatinate, twelve LEADER regions were selected through a competition. Seven of these were in a position to gain first-hand experiences under LEADER+. For the current funding period, their scope and area has been partly modified and new members were taken on board while others left the scheme. Under LEADER+, around 60 trans-national and 150 interterritorial cooperation projects received funding. Most of these projects concerned the marketing of regional products, a shared cultural or historical heritage, or tourism projects.

## Our LEADER LAGs:

- |                                             |                     |                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>1. Bitburg-Prüm</b>                      | 95,959 inhabitants  | 1,626 km <sup>2</sup> | 59 people/km <sup>2</sup>  |
| <b>2. Donnersberger und Lautrer Land</b>    | 118,052 inhabitants | 881 km <sup>2</sup>   | 134 people/km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>3. Erbeskopf</b>                         | 97,735 inhabitants  | 1,123 km <sup>2</sup> | 90 people/km <sup>2</sup>  |
| <b>4. Hunsrück *</b>                        | 117,721 inhabitants | 1,307 km <sup>2</sup> | 90 people/km <sup>2</sup>  |
| <b>5. Mosel *</b>                           | 108,409 inhabitants | 862 km <sup>2</sup>   | 126 people/km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>6. Moselfranken *</b>                    | 78,918 inhabitants  | 505 km <sup>2</sup>   | 156 people/km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>7. Pfälzer Bergland</b>                  | 90,673 inhabitants  | 811 km <sup>2</sup>   | 112 people/km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>8. Pfälzerwald *</b>                     | 118,858 inhabitants | 1,149 km <sup>2</sup> | 103 people/km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>9. Rheinhessen-Zellertal</b>             | 107,076 inhabitants | 557 km <sup>2</sup>   | 192 people/km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>10. Vulkaneifel *</b>                    | 135,257 inhabitants | 1,670 km <sup>2</sup> | 81 people/km <sup>2</sup>  |
| <b>11. Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal *</b> | 69,056 inhabitants  | 496 km <sup>2</sup>   | 139 people/km <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>12. Westerwald *</b>                     | 146,001 inhabitants | 801 km <sup>2</sup>   | 182 people/km <sup>2</sup> |

\* = LAG supported under LEADER+

There are currently 244 LEADER regions in Germany. Within the EU, LEADER regions can be found everywhere from Portugal in the west to Cyprus in the east, from Malta in the south and Finland in the very north. During the period of 2000-2006, there were 1153 LAGs. Their number has increased during the current funding period to 2224<sup>4)</sup>. The European Union is becoming bigger while growing closer together. There are therefore more opportunities than ever for innovative, interterritorial and trans-national cooperation projects in rural areas.



## IRD regions in Rhineland-Palatinate

Apart from LEADER, a number of regional ideas and concepts for the development of rural areas in Rhineland-Palatinate are being supported through the „Integrated Rural Development“ approach. This scheme operates at a more conceptual level, where development opportunities are identified based on an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a region. A key feature here is the involvement of the local population in the development and implementation processes (bottom-up approach). The following specific planning and control instruments have been put in place:

- Integrated rural development concept (IRDC) and
- regional management (RM)

are generally implemented jointly by two to five collective municipalities.

The 18 IRD regions in Rhineland-Palatinate are progressing at different paces: In certain regions, IRDCs are already in place or are currently being drawn up, while others are at the regional management stage.



The IRD regions that have implemented regional management structures can set up local action groups following the LEADER principles in order to qualify for additional assistance. At the moment, eight regions in Rhineland-Palatinate have availed of this opportunity.

**Our IRD regions:**

- 1. RM Eifel-Ahr**  
(IRD process completed)
- 2. IRDC Brohtal-Vordereifel**
- 3. IRD LAG Maifeld-Pellenz**
- 4. IRD LAG Raiffeisen-Region**  
(ILE-Prozess abgeschlossen)
- 5. IRD LAG Lahn-Taunus**
- 6. IRD LAG Soonwald-Nahe**  
(IRD process completed; parts of the region now integrated into LEADER LAG Hunsrück)
- 7. RM Nordpfälzer Bergland**  
(IRD process completed; region now integrated into LEADER LAG Pfälzer Bergland)
- 8. RM Nordpfalz**  
(IRD process completed; region now integrated into LEADER LAG Donnersberger und Lautrer Land)
- 9. IRD LAG Westrich**
- 10. IRD LAG Leiningerland**
- 11. IRDC WeinGarten Vorderpfalz**  
(IRD process completed)
- 12. IRD LAG VG Deidesheim-Haßloch**
- 13. RM Südwestpfalz**
- 14. RM Bad Bergzaberner Land**  
(IRD process completed; parts of the region now now integrated into LEADER LAG Pfälzerwald)
- 15. RM Landau, Landau-Land**  
(IRD process completed)
- 16. IRD LAG Edenkoben, Herxheim, Offenbach**
- 17. RM Südpfalz**  
(IRD process completed)
- 18. RM Hochwald**  
(IRD process completed; region now integrated into LEADER LAG Erbeskopf)

<sup>4)</sup> Source: LAG database of the European Network for Rural Development: [de/local-action-groups\\_home\\_de.cfm](#); presentation „LEADER - Förderung des ländlichen Raums“ (LEADER - development support for rural areas) by Dr. Peter Kaltenegger (European Commission) held at the German LEADER meeting of Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle Ländliche Räume DVS (German Coordination Group for Rural Areas) in Bad-Schandau, 27/04/2011.

# LAG BITBURG-PRÜM

„Working – Living – Feeling good.“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Working – Living – Feeling good.“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Agricultural and forestry production and marketing</li> <li>■ Education and qualification</li> <li>■ Renewable energies</li> <li>■ Protection and development of natural heritage sites</li> <li>■ Business and job creation</li> <li>■ Mobility within the rural area</li> </ul>
<b>Registered office of LAG:</b>	LAG Bitburg-Prüm Kreisverwaltung des Eifelkreises Bitburg-Prüm Trierer Straße 1, 54634 Bitburg
<b>Contact:</b>	Maria Riemann Telephone: +49(0)6561 15351 0 riemann.maria@bitburg-pruem.de
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Dr. Joachim Streit, District Councillor
<b>Internet:</b>	www.lag-bitburg-pruem.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 1,705,000



## Who we are

The local action group (LAG) acts as a coordinating body for the implementation of the respective regional development concepts for the Bitburg-Prüm LEADER region. It brings together 30 private and public local actors who are engaged in rural development and thus has the necessary technical and regional know-how for a successful project completion.

The area of the LEADER region of Bitburg-Prüm includes the entire territory of the Bitburg-Prüm district in the Eifel mountains with seven collec-

tive municipalities as well as the town of Bitburg. It is the largest district in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate comprising 235 municipalities and extending over an area of 1,626 km<sup>2</sup>. The region is located at the heart of western Europe close to Luxembourg and Belgium, bordering the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in the east.

Our development strategy can be best summed up by our motto:

„Working – Living – Feeling good.“



Eifel mountain landscape

## What our region has to offer

The LEADER area of Bitburg-Prüm is located in a unique natural and cultural landscape. Hikers, cyclists, lovers of nature and people interested in culture come to us to relax and pursue their hobbies. We also offer lots of attractive activities for families and people who want to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Of particular interest here are our rural and ecological tourism facilities. The district of Bitburg-Prüm is well connected to the interregional cycle and hiking trail network of the Eifel region, which extends into neighbouring countries.

A highly diversified economic infrastructure based on SMEs underpins a healthy labour market. Thanks to its location close to Belgium, Luxembourg, North Rhine-Westphalia and the adjacent communities in the Palatinate, the area is predestined for participation in interterritorial and trans-national projects. Compared to other rural areas, agricultural production is still a relatively important economic activity, especially in the dairy sector. There is potential for growth and development in the fields of agriculture and tourism (especially as regards employment opportunities for women), where additional value and new jobs could be created.

With the creation of the regional brand „Eifel“, a joint initiative of various actors based in the Eifel region (some of which are operating outside the LEADER region), a first step has been taken to market regional products and services under a

common banner. Participants in this undertaking have gained lots of experience as regards the management of successful cooperation projects.

The regional economy is dominated by small and medium-sized companies. All sectors are represented in a balanced mix, and there is great expertise in renewable energies available in the region. In this area, the district tops the pole, as around 71 per cent of the power consumed in the region is generated from renewable sources.

## What we want to achieve in the near future

Our region is facing huge demographic changes, and we want to play a pro-active role in responding to these challenges with innovative solutions. A key issue here is the care for elderly people in our community. As this demographic group is growing, we want to ensure adequate medical care through a reliable network of service providers (such as hospitals, general practitioners, private clinics and care providers). Such a network requires fast internet connection, which we want to achieve through our broadband initiative. Another issue we wish to tackle is the lack of skilled workers in some of our industries. In response, we have set up an initiative for vocational guidance („Berufsorientierung im Eifelkreis Bitburg-Prüm“) where we cooperate closely with the secondary schools in our region and the vocational training centre in Bitburg.

We see great opportunities in the further development in the field of eco-tourism and rural tourism. In this area, we cooperate with the local tourist offices and the nature parks of Nordeifel and Südeifel, the German-Luxembourg Nature Park and other operators in the tourism sector.

The further expansion of renewable energies for local consumption and their valorisation, including incorporation in the tourism sector, are other future plans we have for our region.





Wind power plant

#### Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Energy efficiency initiative for the Eifel region, targeting SMEs
- Development of regional value added partnerships in the Eifel region
- Building, planning, designing – architectural design and village renewal
- Image campaign for trade and craft professions
- „Future check“ for villages
- Feasibility study for the maintenance of characteristic and sensitive grassland areas in the cultural landscape of the Eifel mountains, by means of communal grazing, based on the example of the Bitburg-Prüm district
- Parenting guide for families in the Bitburg-Prüm area
- Feasibility study for biomass energy village Bettingen

#### Possible fields of cooperation

- Expansion and further promotion of cooperation projects with LAGs in North Rhine-Westphalia, Luxembourg and Belgium
- Establishment of networks for the joint marketing of quality products from agricultural and forestry production
- Development of concepts for new value chains (innovative products, specific quality standards)
- Cooperation in the field of tourism under the umbrella of Eifel Tourismus GmbH (joint campaigns to promote hospitality sector, cultural and nature tourism)
- Promotion of rural tourism
- Use of timber as a material and for energy production

## LAG DONNERSBERGER AND LAUTRER LAND

### „Time Travel: Preserving the Past – Shaping the Future“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Time Travel: Preserving the Past – Shaping the Future“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Village, town and economic development</li> <li>■ Tourism</li> <li>■ Energy</li> </ul>
<b>Registered office of LAG:</b>	Landkreise Donnersbergkreis und Kaiserslautern c/o externe GEO / LEADER Regionalmanagement entra Falkensteiner Weg 3, 67722 Winnweiler
<b>Contact:</b>	<p>Hartwig Wolf (LAG coordinator for Donnersbergkreis district) Uhlandstraße 2, 67292 Kirchheimbolanden Telephone: +49(0)6352 710102 wolf@donnersberg.de</p> <p>Natalie Kluth (LAG coordinator for Kaiserslautern district) Fruchthallstraße 14, 67657 Kaiserslautern Telephone: +49(0)631 7105291 natalie.kluth@kaiserslautern-kreis.de</p>
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Winfried Werner, District Councillor
<b>Internet:</b>	www.donnensberger-lautrerland.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 1,950,000



#### Who we are

Our LEADER region is located in the southern part of Rhineland-Palatinate and comprises ten collective municipalities in the districts of Donnersbergkreis and Kaiserslautern. Our area is about 30 minutes by car from the urban centres of Rhine-Main and Rhine-Neckar. Our LAG includes members from a very versatile range of sectors, including hospitality, tourism, agriculture, tradi-

tional trades, country women's organisations, etc.). When choosing the members of the LAG, the previous experience of some of the actors in the field of regional cooperation was taken into account. LEADER thus enabled us to intensify our regional networking activities in order to establish a strong foundation for innovative projects.





Town wall of Kirchheimbolanden

During the previous funding period (LEADER II: 1994 – 1999), we had the opportunity to gain valuable experience in community-based projects. The already competed IRD regional management Nordpfalz has been fully integrated in our LEADER region. We also have close ties to the Service Centre for Rural Areas (DLR) Westpfalz and Pfalz Touristik e. V., and are in contact with the Planning Association of Westpfalz and other neighbouring development areas, such as IRD Südwestpfalz, IRD Westrich, LEADER Pfälzerwald, LEADER Rheinhessen-Zellertal and LEADER Pfälzer Bergland.

### What our region has to offer

Our area is a physio-geographically homogeneous region with a common history characterised by a strong regional identification of the people living here. Located in the Saar-Nahe-Bergland area, the LAG region features many small valleys and a pleasing hilly landscape ideal for low-impact tourism. Cultural and historic sites (Celts, Romans), cycle trails and hiking tourism have been identified as the main potential sources of additional income in the region. This potential is evident from the steadily increasing number of visitors to the area over the last few years.

Given the structural changes in agriculture and forestry, the local actors are particularly interested in identifying and developing new sources of income for local people (direct selling of agricultural produce, nature and landscape guides, etc.). While the city of Kaiserslautern is located outside the LEADER region, people in the area benefit from this regional centre. Its technical university, other third-level and scientific institutions provide a great pool of useful knowledge and expertise in various fields, which can be tapped for future projects and partnerships of all kind.

Our LAG is particularly interested in the topic of renewable energy. In the long term, we want to achieve energy self-sufficiency by increasing the use of such energy sources. The first wind power plants were installed in our region in 1995. Our commitment to promoting the exploitation of renewable sources of energy and energy-saving measures is evident from a number of innovative pilot projects such as the „Energy Village Münchweiler“<sup>1)</sup> and numerous energy-saving concepts developed for public buildings.



Market square of Obermoschel

### What we want to achieve in the near future

For us, networking goes well beyond regional boundaries. We are most interested in pursuing projects in cooperation with neighbouring LEADER and IRD regions (for example Pfälzerwald, Rheinhessen- Zellertal, Pfälzer Bergland) as we

would like to help establish a continuous network of LEADER regions stretching from Rhenish Hesse in the north to the Palatinate Forest in the south. Existing contacts, such as those between the Tourism Association Donnersberg (DTV) and Rheinhessen Touristik GmbH provide a basis for further cooperation. One example of a successful cooperation project with neighbouring local action groups is the joint marketing campaign for the three designated hiking trails in the Pfalz region.

We want to extend our cooperation across national boundaries, following the LEADER approach of European networking. Such collaborations can take the form of exchange of knowledge or concrete cooperation projects. The topics we would be most interested in are renewable resources / energy, rural tourism and local amenities and services. We have already been exchanging information with the LAG Vulkaneifel on material flow management, providing each other with relevant studies and organising a joint excursion.

Given our achievements in the field of renewable energy, we wish to promote this topic further in the form of cooperation projects, with a view to furthering our leading position. Activities such as awareness campaigns, energy consulting services and energy-saving measures are most suitable for the expansion of networks and the exchange of information, unleashing a range of synergy effects. We intend to identify practical solutions in the energy sector that have been developed elsewhere in Europe, whereby benchmarking is of particular interest to us. Through this process, we want to develop our region further and link up with potential cooperation partners. We are however also interested in cooperation projects in other fields.

### Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Feasibility study „Energy Village Münchweiler“

- Donnersberger und Lautrer Land tourism academy: Qualification initiative for service providers in the tourism sector
- Celtic Donnersberg
- Tourism concept on opportunities in the region („Chance Tourismus“)
- Feasibility study on the optimisation of biomass utilisation for the provision of sustainable material flows
- Drafting of a „village check“ guide for sustainable residential planning in the LEADER area
- Marketing measures promoting premium hiking trails in the Palatinate



View from the Moschellandsburg

### Possible fields of cooperation

- Valorisation of natural and cultural-historic potentials through tourism
- Provision of innovative information in the tourism / cultural sector (for example through audio guides)
- Protection of the functional versatility of the rural infrastructure in our region (local amenities and services, town centre renewal)
- Energy (energy self-sufficiency, renewable energies, energy consultancy services, information campaigns, etc.)

<sup>1)</sup> Website of the project: <http://www.energiesdorf-munchweiler-alsenz.de/>



# LAG ERBESKOPF

„Natural – full of energy – on the heights“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Natural – full of energy – up to date“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tourism and leisure activities</li> <li>■ Village renewal</li> <li>■ Energy</li> <li>■ Regional products</li> </ul>
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<b>Chairperson:</b>	Michael Hülpes, Lord Mayor
<b>Internet:</b>	www.lag-erbeskopf.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 1,650,000



## Who we are

Our LAG region is located in the Hunsrück region and is part of the Saar-Lor-Lux area. It comprises seven collective municipalities, one independent municipality and an independent city. LAG Erbeskopf has been reconstituted during the current funding period. After completion of the regional management phase by the end of 2007, the IRD region of Hochwald was integrated into our LEADER region. The concepts and approaches developed as part of the regional management are to be continued and implemented under LEADER. All members of the LAG are living in the region and represent the interest of the farming community, young people, women, nature protection etc.. Together they ensure that all local interests are duly considered.

## What our region has to offer

The landscape of the Mittelgebirge in which our region is located is dominated by forests. The Erbeskopf, which is the highest mountain in Rhineland-Palatinate (818 m) is situated right at the centre of our LAG region. As this mountain is well loved by the people in the area, the LAG has adopted its name for itself. The Erbeskopf is also a great area for all sorts of leisure activities, attracting people from near and far. The most important regional industries are the timber industry and paper production. The area is also known for its gem mines and jewellery industry, both of which have a long tradition here.

The centre of the gem industry is Idar-Oberstein, known as the gemstone town, which is another

focal point of our region. The „German Gem Road“, three holiday villages and many attractive hiking trails such as the „Saar-Hunsrück-Steig“ attract many visitors to the Erbeskopf region, not least people interested in geology and precious stones.



„High-Live“ tree top adventure trail

Also within our LAG region is the Environment Campus Birkenfeld, a branch of the Trier University of Applied Sciences, which also operates a centre in Idar-Oberstein. The activities in research, teaching and development pursued by the Environment Campus Birkenfeld focus on environmental issues and renewable energies. They thus provide an attractive basis for partnerships with (local) enterprises offering high-skilled jobs and training opportunities for local people.

The topic of renewable energies is of particular interest to the LAG Erbeskopf. The Morbach Energy Park is a pilot project for the generation of energy from renewable sources and was erected on the site of a former army ordinance depot. Today, it is attracting visitors from Germany and abroad. There are however many other projects in our region aimed at exploiting and promoting wind and solar power.

## What we want to achieve in the near future

We are working towards cooperation with other LAGs at an interterritorial or trans-national level, whereby we wish to focus on the above main fields of action of our group. Such cooperation projects could for example focus on the topic of energy (energy networks, model villages, etc.), whereby the Morbach Energy Park would definitely be of interest to partners. Our LAG is in close contact to a group in Eastern Styria in Austria, which has been able to establish a number of innovative, multi-functional energy centres. In May 2011, these projects and many other interesting aspects of regional value added activities were discussed at a regional conference held in Deuselbach, one of the municipalities within the LAG Erbeskopf territory. Among the invited guests were local actors from Eastern Styria.

We think that there is great potential in the marketing of regional products, the development of village structures and the further expansion of tourism in the area. Improvements in the local infrastructure and more attractive public spaces help enhance the quality of life of all people in our LAG region. We also want to maintain and strengthen our contacts with neighbouring LAGs in the Hunsrück, Mosel, Moselfranken and St. Wendeler Land regions. We are convinced that closer links with these LAGs will lead to further cooperation projects and the fruitful exchange of information on specific topics.



Adventure playground near Ortelsbruch





Adventure playground near Ortelsbruch



„High-Live“ tree top adventure trail



„High-Live“ tree top adventure trail

#### Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Site marketing concept
- Adventure playground in forest near Ortelsbruch
- Installation of „High-Live“ tree top adventure trail on Erbeskopf mountain
- Generation contract for Heidenburg
- Grafschaft Veldenz - understanding history through games („Spielend durch die Geschichte“) (LAG Mosel)
- Image campaign for craft and trade professions (LAGs Bitburg-Prüm, Vulkaneifel, Mosel, Hunsrück)
- Feasibility study on biomass energy (LAGs Bitburg-Prüm, Vulkaneifel, Mosel, Hunsrück)
- Web launch of Hunsrück Touristik GmbH (LAG Hunsrück)

#### Possible fields of cooperation

- Renewable energies / energy networks
- Tourism (hiking tourism, energy tourism in cooperation with Morbach Energy Park; certification and further training)
- Development of regional added value
- Sustainable planning and infrastructure improvement

## LAG HUNSRÜCK

### „Hunsrück – from the middle to the centre in Rhineland-Palatinate“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Hunsrück - from the middle to the centre in Rhineland-Palatinate“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tourism</li> <li>■ Village renewal</li> <li>■ Energy</li> </ul>
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<b>Chairperson:</b>	Christian Keimer
<b>Internet:</b>	www.lag-hunsrueck.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 1,950,000



#### Who we are

Our LEADER region extends across five districts<sup>1)</sup>. More than half the area is made up of the district of Rhein-Hunsrück, where also more than half of all inhabitants of the region live. The LAG Hunsrück region is in the geographic centre of Rhineland-Palatinate. The Rhine-Main conurbation and the Rhine railway corridor can be easily reached from the Hunsrück area.

Our LAG has currently 29 members representing all key community groups and business sectors in the region. It brings together people involved in agriculture and forestry, enterprise promotion and job creation, arts and culture, geology, as well as representatives from youth and women's organisations and the voluntary sector. Our LAG has been active during the previous two funding

periods and is thus very experienced in LEADER project management. The administrative office of the LAG shares an office with Regionalrat der Wirtschaft Rhein-Hunsrück e.V., a registered voluntary organisation promoting and supporting local enterprises who has many years of experience in setting up and maintaining regional networks.



Rapeseed in bloom

<sup>1)</sup> Districts: Bad Kreuznach, Bernkastel-Wittlich, Birkenfeld, Cochem-Zell and Rhein-Hunsrück



### What our region has to offer

The Hunsrück region is part of the landscape of the Mittelgebirge well known for its diversity. It is located between the valleys of the Moselle, Rhine and Nahe. It features a relatively unspoilt rural landscape with extensive forests. Our natural space has a rich flora and fauna with many protected species and habitats. It has thus become a popular tourist destination for hikers, cyclists and horse lovers.

We are also committed to promoting the use of renewable energies. There are already numerous wind power plants in operation in our area, some of which are well-known examples of best practice (including various biogas plants, a wood chip heating unit partly funded through LEADER+ and a number of thermal treatment plants for garden waste). First steps towards establishing a network among the regional actors in the energy sector have already been taken and will be pursued further. Despite the rural nature of our region, we have seen a huge growth in the service sector over the last few years.



Landscape in the Hunsrück region

The international airport of Frankfurt-Hahn is of huge importance both for our region and neighbouring districts. It has become a key feature of our area, employs a considerable number of people and contributes greatly to the local economy (in particular services for day-trippers, including restaurants, etc.). However, the airport also poses a challenge, as we need to exploit the opportunities it has brought to the region for the benefit of the local community. During the previous LEADER funding period, we undertook a number of cooperation projects with LAGs in Rhineland-Palatinate and Thuringia in the field of tourism, energy networks and culture. We are currently involved together with LAG Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal in a trans-national cooperation with a LAG from Finland. We have already held a number of workshops to evaluate ideas for joint projects, and a number of projects in the areas of education / training, hospitality / regional product marketing and tourism have been set up. This cooperation is to be extended further in the near future.

### What we want to achieve in the near future

To expand the tourism business in our region, we wish to extend the current range of offers and facilities for visitors. We thereby want to focus on health and wellness tourism, promote the cultural heritage of our region and promote the touristic marketing of regional products. We also see great opportunities in the field of electric mobility, in particular through the expansion of the tourism infrastructure and better connections to the adjacent valleys. Cooperation in these areas would be highly desirable.

We also see a potential for cooperation projects in the area of renewable energies. In this context, we want to further develop the energy-saving measures and the opportunities for a change of use in small and medium-sized businesses. The exchange of knowledge with regions that pursue similar goals is one of the objectives of our LAG.

Thanks to Frankfurt-Hahn airport, trans-national cooperation is actually quite easy for us and partner groups. Many LEADER LAGs located outside Germany can be reached relatively quickly through the destinations served from this airport by direct route. We are here thinking in particular of regions that have a similar topography and tourism infrastructure, for example in Italy or Ireland (e.g. LAG Emilia-Romagna near Bologna or rural areas in Ireland, Scotland and Sweden). Furthermore, there are already close contacts between companies in our regions and businesses in



Harvest time

Finland and Hungary that operate in the tourism, environmental technology and renewable energy sectors. These ties could also be explored further for cooperation projects.

#### Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Women in the Hunsrück region through the centuries
- Touristic valorisation of the ruin of Hellkirch
- Study for a low-temperature district heating system for the „Auf'm Hahnacker“ estate
- Communal / senior citizens' taxi for the municipalities of Külz, Neuerkirch and Kei-delheim
- Roman Heritage Route (trans-national)
- Promotion of the „Soonwaldsteig“ hiking trail
- Cooperation workshop with LAG Mittelrhein and LAG PoKo ry (Finland)
- Pilot village competition across the LAG region

#### Possible fields of cooperation

- Health and wellness tourism
- Touristic valorisation of the cultural heritage
- (Touristic) marketing of regional products
- Renewable energies / energy networks



# LAG MOSEL

## „Mosel - the WineCultureLand“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Mosel - the WineCultureLand“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Moselle Academy</li> <li>■ Sustainable tourism</li> <li>■ Regional and cultural identity</li> <li>■ Moselle WineCultureLand</li> <li>■ Sustainable regional development</li> </ul>
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<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 2,350,000



### Who we are

The LAG Mosel covers 82 municipalities and extends over four districts. The region is a well-known wine-producing area. The LAG region extends approx. 90 km in a narrow strip along the Moselle river, which meanders for about 185 km through our LEADER region. Local actors have already been involved in regional development projects and extensive networking under LEADER II and LEADER+. The LAG established under LEADER+ formed the foundation for the activities of the current funding period. Since then, a number of new members have joined the LAG, which is not formally incorporated and relies heavily on the preparatory work carried out by topical working groups.

### What our region has to offer

Our region is dominated by the Moselle river and vineyards. The Moselle Valley with its spectacular cliffs and steep slopes separates the mountain regions of Eifel and Hunsrück.

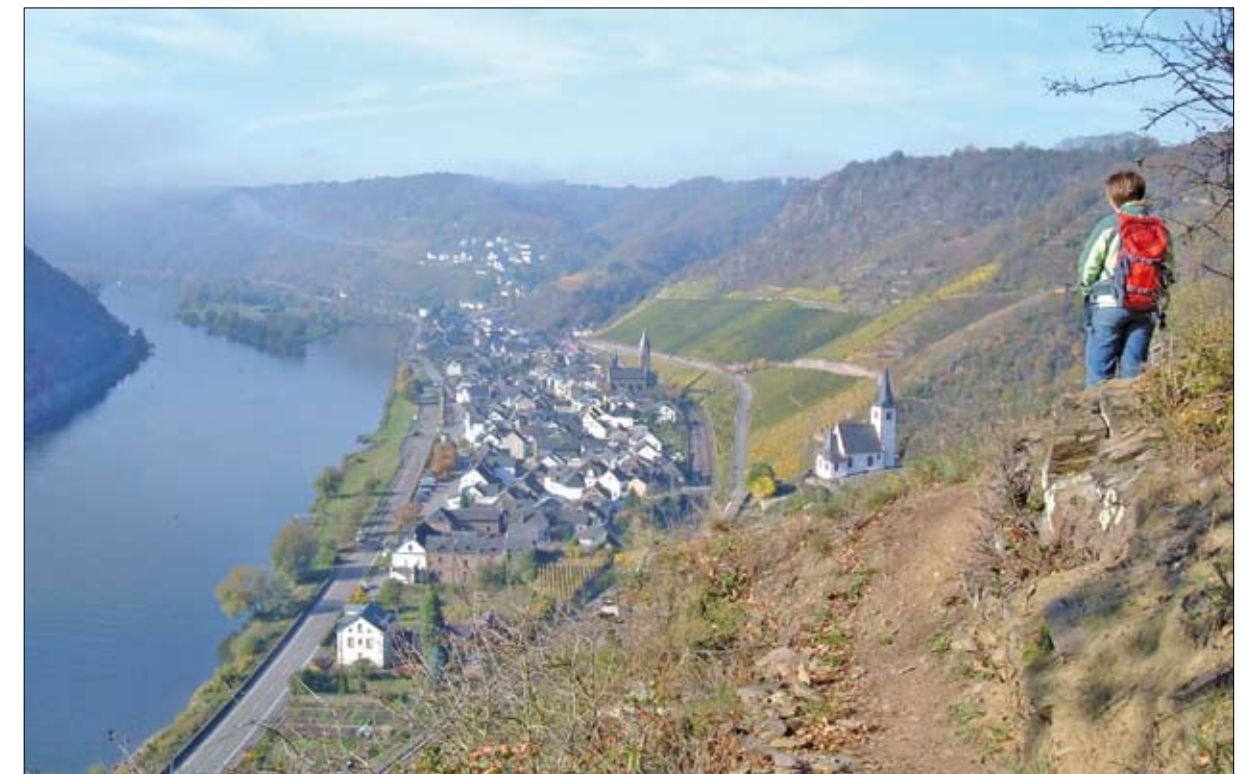
Wine production and tourism are thus obviously the two main topics of our LAG. The white Riesling wine grown here is known and loved all over the world. The landscape dominated by vineyards, with its traditional villages with good hotels and restaurants and many leisure facilities (hiking, cycling, water sports, etc.) attract many visitors to our region. The local actors from the various industries and organisations along the Moselle have established close ties. This network provides a sound foundation for the successful implemen-

tation of projects and facilitates the exchange of knowledge. Cooperation projects are of particular importance for the group. In the past, a number of such projects were undertaken in cooperation with other LAGs in Germany and abroad. Many of these projects were initiated and mainly driven by the LAG Mosel. We therefore have gained extensive experience in the organisation and management of cooperation projects, which can sometimes be quite time-consuming. - Cooperation is however always worth the effort!

The launch of the regional Mosel brand and the „Mosel.Erlebnis.Route“ adventure trail – two cooperation projects undertaken with the LAG Moselfranken – are just two examples of successful projects that have brought positive changes to the entire region. Other similar projects are currently being pursued. Our LAG was also the driving force behind the tourism route network known as the „Roman Heritage Route“. This transnational cooperation project was undertaken together with a number of LAGs in Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland and Luxembourg.

### What we want to achieve in the near future

We want to continue our success with cooperation projects by developing other partnership activities. Our focus is thereby on viticulture and tourism. We are however also interested in other topics such as landscape preservation (for example by restoring vineyards on waste land), the conversion of vacant historic buildings for new purposes and renewable energy (energy audits, implementation of energy-saving measures in public and private buildings, etc.). There might even be issues out there of which we are not yet aware and that would be ideally tackled through cooperation projects. When it comes to potential partners, we are of course thinking of our „LEADER neighbours“ (Vulkaneifel, Mosel, Erbeskopf, Hunsrück, etc.), and of other, similar structured LAGs outside Rhineland-Palatinate or even abroad. In addition to the above cooperation projects that have already been completed, we are currently in contact with LAGs in Luxembourg, Austria and Spain.



Steep slopes along the Weinwetterweg hiking trail

Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Mosel regional brand (introduction and implementation)
- „Roman Heritage Route“ network of tourism routes
- Grafschaft Veldenz - understanding history through games („Spielend durch die Geschichte“)
- „Würzlaysteig“ inter-communal topical hiking trail, „Tatzelwurm“ culture trail, „Burgen“ trout trail, „Felsen, Fässer, Fachwerk“ culture trail
- Marketing of Moselle-Saar premium hiking trail
- Water travel route „Wasserwanderroute Mosel“ 2011-2014
- Performance of one-man comic play „Römischer Schankwirt“ („Rufus ante portas“)
- „Mosel.Erlebnis.Route“ adventure trail

Possible fields of cooperation

- Viticulture
- Culture and landscape tourism
- Landscape preservation
- Regional construction / conversion of historic buildings
- Energy (energy audits, energy-saving concepts)



Autumn in the Moselle Valley

# LAG MOSELFANKEN

„Nature-Culture-Europe,  
the region within the border triangle Germany-France-Luxembourg“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Nature-culture-Europe, the region within the border triangle Germany-France-Luxembourg“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Lovely villages and towns</li><li>■ Europe at its best</li><li>■ Living history</li><li>■ Living landscape - to protect and enjoy</li></ul>
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<b>Chairperson:</b>	Leo Lauer, Lord Mayor
<b>Internet:</b>	www.lag-moselfranken.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 1,350,000



Who we are

The LEADER region of Moselfranken is located along the western border of Rhineland-Palatinate. It includes 39 villages and towns that form the collective municipalities of Saarburg, Konz and Trier-Land. The area is situated right at the heart of Europe adjacent to Luxembourg and not far from the French border. Our LAG was established in 2002 during the LEADER+ period (2000-2006). At the moment, 25 local actors from various areas of life and business sectors are represented.

What our region has to offer

The close proximity to Luxembourg, Saarland and France has greatly influenced culture and life in our region. We do not only share a history and dialect with our neighbours but also do business across country borders, with people commuting in both directions to work. The close proximity to and business ties with Luxembourg have resulted in an increase in population, as many people choose to work in Luxembourg and live in Moselfranken. People in our area tend to speak French and are highly aware of the history they share with neighbouring regions. The fact that the three European countries Germany, France and Luxembourg meet at the border triangle makes our region unique, not least as a tourist destination.



Our landscape is shaped by the four rivers Moselle, Saar, Sauer and Kyll and is very varied with large forests, tillage, vineyards, orchards and meadows. As there is little heavy industry in the area, the air quality is good and the landscape is mainly unspoilt. The Moselfranken region offers great opportunities for culture and cycling tourism. Viticulture is a major source of income. The slate cliffs of the Saar valley are renowned for their excellent Riesling wines. The soil above the muschelkalk strata along the Upper Moselle is ideal for the production of dry Pinot Noir wines. This is also where the Elbling grape is grown, used for the production of an excellent, though very rare German wine.

Cooperation with other regions, in particular with neighbouring areas, is one of the priorities of the LAG. The network thereby does not only include other LEADER regions in Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland, but extends to adjacent areas in neighbouring countries. Our LAG is dedicated to the idea of a peaceful and united Europe. Together with the Mosel LEADER region, we are working on a regional Mosel brand<sup>1)</sup>. We are also involved in a number of trans-national projects where we have made great progress to date. One such project is „Terroir Moselle“<sup>2)</sup> where we cooperate with LAGs

in Luxembourg and France. Another example is the talent pool for the Trier region („Talent-schmiede Trier-Land“) undertaken together with a LAG in Luxembourg.

#### What we want to achieve in the near future

Our local development strategy focuses on three topics, namely boosting the income in the region from agriculture and viticulture, promoting sustainable tourism and ensuring that our villages and communities are prepared to tackle the challenges that the future might bring. To make the area more attractive for people who might wish to settle here – in particular highly qualified workers – we want to enhance the educational, care and leisure facilities in the region.

Other objectives have been defined in relation to the interregional and trans-national tourism infrastructure and the linking of such facilities. Our general goal is the further development and promotion of our LEADER region as a truly European living area at the point where the three countries of Germany, Luxembourg and France meet.

#### Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Publication of an eco guide for the collective municipality of Saarburg
- Conversion by flowers - competition entry for state garden show 2014 taking place on the former military area of a French army barracks
- Mirror images 2010 to 2012
- 20,000 years – 20,000 steps: Ayl landscape trail
- Terroir Moselle - 1 river, 3 countries, 1001 wines
- Talent pool for Trier region, in cooperation with LAG Miselerland (LUX)
- „Roman Heritage Route“ network of tourism routes
- Water travel route Moselle
- „Mosel.Erlebnis.Route“ adventure trail
- Regional Moselle brand
- Hospitality academy
- Public garden for all senses designed for people suffering from dementia
- Field trials for truffle production

#### Possible fields of cooperation

- Sustainable tourism focusing on culture and nature
- Trans-national and interregional networking of tourism infrastructure
- Promotion of hospitality industry and retail trade, structural improvements for small and medium-sized enterprises
- Expansion of interregional educational, care and leisure facilities
- Renewable energy / climate protection



Vineyards in the Moselle Valley



Traditional village on the Moselle

<sup>1)</sup> Regional Mosel brand

<sup>2)</sup> Cooperation projects with LAGs Mosel, Miselerland (LUX), Pays Terres de Lorraine (FRA) and others for the promotion of the regional image and the marketing of wines produced in the Moselle Valley

# LAG PFÄLZER BERGLAND

## „Protection and valorisation of the cultural landscape of the Palatinate Uplands“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Protection and valorisation of the cultural landscape of the Palatinate Uplands“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Economic development</li> <li>■ Living quality in rural areas</li> <li>■ Tourism, recreational facilities and cultural activities</li> <li>■ Agriculture and forestry</li> <li>■ Environmental protection and renewable energies</li> </ul>
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<b>Chairperson:</b>	Dr. Winfried Hirschberger, District Councillor
<b>Internet:</b>	<a href="http://www.landkreis-kusel.de/index.php?id=65">www.landkreis-kusel.de/index.php?id=65</a>
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 1,650,000



### Who we are

The area covered by LAG Pfälzer Bergland is located in the very south-west of Rhineland-Palatinate, at the border to Saarland. It includes 127 municipalities and parts of the districts of Kusel, Birkenfeld and Bad Kreuznach. The LAG was able to gain some experience in project work under LEADER I and II. Under LEADER+, we were unfortunately not selected as a designated region. We are therefore delighted to have been included again for the current funding period, which gives our region again the opportunity to benefit from the regional development approach of LEADER.

### What our region has to offer

Our region is part of the Palatinate Uplands landscape and is dominated by mountains covered in forests, wet meadows along rivers and brooks and large sections of cultivated land. This relatively unspoilt cultural landscape is a key asset for sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism and recreational activities. The collective municipalities in our LAG area have for many years been involved in the tourism business, co-operating under an umbrella organisation. Thanks to the large forests, which are bound to expand further as more and more farm land is laid fallow, we see great opportunities for a forestry industry that focuses on sustainable cultivation and high-quality products.

Important sources of income for the region are the military training grounds in Baumholder and the NATO air base of Ramstein, where several thousand US and German troops are stationed.

In the field of renewable energies, a biomass energy master plan has been drawn up in 2008 and we are currently in the process of evaluating the potential yields.

Under LEADER I and LEADER II, we have been able to establish many contacts to other LAGs in Germany and abroad, and the resulting exchange of information and knowledge has been extremely valuable. Some of these contacts are still alive today. We met with representative of LAG St. Wendeler Land (Saarland) to discuss the joint marketing of regional timber products. At the moment, we are involved in the interterritorial cooperation projects for the promotion of premium hiking trails in the Pfalz region.

### What we want to achieve in the near future

We are particularly interested in establishing partnerships with other regions to work on the further development and networking of rural tourism (hiking rails, accommodation). We also wish to cooperate with others in the marketing of regional products (crafts and hospitality sector) and in the field of renewable energies. Innovative utilisation concepts that focus on climate protection and renewable resources are seen as two areas where new jobs can be created, boosting the regional economy.

In order to make regional service providers and operators in the hospitality industry more competitive, we are now expanding the broadband network in our area. We have already taken steps to discuss these issues with other LAGs. The broadband initiative for the Palatinate Uplands<sup>1)</sup> is currently being implemented.

We see the protection of our cultural landscape as an important objective. To this end, we want

to help farmers and foresters to find alternative sources of income. As these two groups are the main guardians of our landscape, their livelihood must be secured. We are also very keen to cooperate with other groups in the creation of training and further educational facilities, particularly for young people and for women. Of equal interest are projects that help communities in developing their local communications and supply infrastructure.

### Excerpt of projects completed to date

- GLAN boating tourism, concept study
- Redesign of Potzberg Wildlife Park to eliminate access barriers
- Farm golfing
- Bicycle hire scheme „Regio-Rad Pfälzer Bergland“
- Opening of historic beer cellars to the public
- Show cheese factory in Herchweiler
- Demographic study of the Palatinate Uplands
- Archery park in Hinsweiler
- Tourist guide training
- Promotional campaign for premium hiking trails in the Palatinate



Potzberg Wildlife Park

<sup>1)</sup> While the initial concept was developed through LEADER, this initiative is being part-funded from Federal and state budgets through the programme for the provision of broadband internet access in rural areas.





Premium hiking trail in the Palatinate

#### Possible fields of cooperation

- Further development and networking of tourism amenities and activities
- Regional touristic marketing
- Renewable energy (renewable resources, decentralised energy generation)
- Strengthening of competitiveness of regional micro-enterprises
- Establishment of training and further education courses for young people and women
- Promotion of the local infrastructure for communication and supply with goods and services



Potzberg Wildlife Park

## LAG PFÄLZERWALD

### „Living in and with the Biosphere Palatinate Forest“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Living in and with the Biosphere Palatinate Forest“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Forest and cultural landscape</li> <li>■ Tourism and leisure activities</li> <li>■ Energy</li> </ul>
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<b>Chairperson:</b>	Hans Jörg Duppré, District Councillor
<b>Internet:</b>	<a href="http://www.leader-pfaelzerwald.de">www.leader-pfaelzerwald.de</a>
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 1,950,000



#### Who we are

Located in the south of Rhineland-Palatinate, the LEADER region of the Palatinate Forest includes more or less all municipalities located in the Palatinate Forest Nature Park, which are part of the districts of Südwestpfalz, Kaiserslautern, Bad Dürkheim and Südliche Weinstrasse. The implementation of the local development strategy lies in the hands of the association of the nature park incorporated as „Bündnis Ländlicher Raum im Naturpark Pfälzerwald e. V“. The board of management of this association forms the LAG.

Under the motto of „Living in and with the Biosphere Palatinate Forest“, our local development strategy builds on the importance of the Palatinate Forest as a natural space and the many functions it has for the region. The nature park is obviously the dominant feature in our area and the focal point for local communities.

#### What our region has to offer

The landscape of the LAG Pfälzerwald region, which is located entirely inside the boundaries of the Palatine Forest Nature Park, is very homogeneous. The Palatinate Forest is the largest woodland in Germany. In 1993, it became a designated UNESCO Biosphere Reserve together with the woods of Vosges du Nord and is definitely a unique selling point for our region. The importance of the Palatinate Forest extends far beyond its boundaries, as the woodland serves many functions. On the one hand, it protects the soil, the climate and the groundwater and acts as a nature reserve. On the other, it has become a prime tourism destination and offers great resources for agriculture, forestry and the energy sector.

Tourists who visit the area are primarily interested in outdoor activities such as horse riding, mountain biking, hiking and climbing, and there is huge potential for growth in this area.

Along the main hiking trails, tourists can stay in well-equipped camping grounds, holiday homes, etc.. As regards renewable energies, we see additional potential for growth in the use of wood and geothermal energy. In the area of the LAG Pfälzerwald first experiences on projects for fuel timber plantations exist (poplar, willow, black alder, black locust).

We consider interterritorial and trans-national cooperation projects as indispensable elements for the further development of our region. We therefore are in close contact with the neighbouring LEADER area of Donnersberger und Lautrer Land and adjoining IRD regions.

As regards the topic of identity / partnership that is incorporated into the integrated development

strategy, the LAG is committed to the establishment of partnerships with our French neighbours. Apart from networking for the exchange of knowledge and information, we are particularly interested in undertaking shared projects. During the LEADER+ period, we successfully cooperated with the LAG Müllerthal in Luxembourg, working together on the improvement of touristic opportunities for women in the rural area.

We are currently in the process of implementing the marketing measures for the premium hiking trails in the Palatinate region where we work together with two LEADER LAGs and one IRD group.

**What we want to achieve in the near future**

The existing contacts to neighbouring LEADER and IRD regions and to groups outside Germany (e.g. LAG Müllerthal (LUX), LAG Vosges du Nord (FRA)) form the basis for future projects and col-



Beaver school packs from „Biber-Rucksackschule Rhineland-Palatinate“

laboration. Possible topics for future projects are for example direct marketing initiatives, the cross-regional expansion of cycling and hiking trails, training courses for local activists and the use of audio-guides at cultural heritage and tourist sites.

We are however open to other proposals that stretch beyond the boundaries of our region and hope to be inspired by the ideas of other LAGs all over Europe.

**Excerpt of projects completed to date**

- Moosabltal Music and Leisure Centre
- Valorisation of Heidelberg through tourism
- Geiswiese biosphere adventure camp
- Promotional activities for Teufelstisch Hinterwidenthal adventure park
- Marketing campaign for Palatinate premium hiking trails
- Palatinate Forest lambing initiative
- Orchard meadows walk and village exploration trail
- Meeting point and square in Schweigen-Rechtenbach
- Beaver school packs of „Biber-Rucksackschule Rheinland-Pfalz“

**Possible fields of cooperation**

- Adventure-oriented active tourism, health and wellness tourism
- Expansion of interregional cycling and hiking trail network
- Regional marketing (e.g. direct marketing)
- Training courses for local activists in rural areas
- Use of wood as renewable source of energy



Palatinate Forest lamb initiative



# LAG RHEINHESSEN-ZELLERTAL

## „Sharing our WineCultureLand“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Sharing our WineCultureLand“
<b>Fields of action:</b> (excerpt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Wine experience</li><li>■ Training, advice and networking for local activists</li><li>■ Tourism development</li><li>■ Regional and cross-regional marketing</li><li>■ Regional products</li><li>■ Climate change</li></ul>
<b>Registered office of LAG:</b>	Kreisverwaltung Alzey-Worms Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 36, 55232 Alzey
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<b>Chairperson:</b>	Ernst Walter Görrisch, District Councillor
<b>Internet:</b>	www.rheinhausen-zellertal.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding</b>	€ 1,750,000



### Who we are

The area of LAG Rheinhausen-Zellertal is located in the south-east of Rhineland-Palatinate and incorporates the rural heartland of Rhenish Hesse and the Palatinate part of the Zeller valley. Our region is thus located in the plain of the Upper Rhine so that its topography differs significantly from that of the other LEADER areas in Rhineland-Palatinate. While these are hilly landscapes with many forests, our region is nearly entirely covered in vineyards.

Our LAG was reconstituted for the current funding period and now includes 32 members of which 18 form the board of management. The LAG brings together representatives of the public and private sector, with many members being directly involved in the wine-growing and marketing business. The group is therefore very interested in developing wine tourism for our area.

### What our region has to offer

Viticulture is without doubt the most characteristic feature of our region, as Rhenish Hesse is actually the largest wine-growing area in Germany, producing quality wines and featuring a large number of innovative wineries. The soil and climate conditions with predominantly mild and dry weather are particularly favourable for wine production. The landscape dominated by vineyards that have been cultured over centuries needs to be preserved and developed further.

While we have seen steady increase in the tourism sector that is closely linked to the wine culture, there is still significant potential for further growth. Our region is easily accessible from a number of urban centres (Rhine-Main conurbation, airports of Frankfurt and Frankfurt-Hahn). The population has been stable with many people commuting out of the area to work.

The key objectives laid down in our development strategy are the further expansion and promotion of events and venues related to wine-growing in order to attract more tourists. To discuss and exchange ideas for such concepts, we have established contact with the LEADER LAG Weinviertel in Austria. We also met with representatives of LAG Donnersberger und Lautrer Land and LAG Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal for initial informal talks. Rhenish Hesse is to become part of a region stretching from the south to the north that promotes itself through joint initiatives in the field of tourism and viticulture.

In our area, we are working on a professional marketing approach that targets both local people and visitors from outside the region. In addition, we consider training of regional actors very important (in particular in the area of wine production, hospitality, tourist accommodation and culture).

### What we want to achieve in the near future

We want to make our LEADER region one of the leading wine tourism destinations in Germany. For this purpose, we wish to cooperate with other LEADER groups in Germany and abroad. We are therefore looking for partners that are also focused on wine tourism and that operate in a similar climate zone and under comparable socio-economic conditions. Topics that we would like to discuss and explore are wine and gourmet cuisine or wine routes and trails.

We would also be interested in cooperating with LEADER LAGs from southern Europe, be it Italy (South Tyrol, Tuscany), France, Spain or Portugal. As we are experiencing a trend towards warmer and drier weather in Rhenish Hesse, it would be interesting to study wine-growing regions with a similar climate in order to develop a model for future wine production opportunities. We participate in a pan-European benchmarking project and are therefore always interested to learn from best-practice examples in wine tourism. Our members would be very interested in visiting other regions or organise joint conferences.



Morning fog over vineyards in Rhenish Hesse

We are of course also open to proposals for interterritorial or trans-national cooperation that tackle one of our cross-sectional objectives (e.g. empowering women and young people, improvement of broadband infrastructure, protection of the environment, efficient energy management).

Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Training and qualification in wine and fine foods
- Feasibility study „Wine Experience Oppenheim“
- Market analysis for „Wine Experience Region Rhenish Hesse – Prickling Wine Store Wissberg“
- Hiking trail „Küstenweg Rheinhessische Schweiz“

- Tourism concept for the Zeller valley
- Photography project „A Region in Transition“
- Preservation of historic substrate

Possible fields of cooperation

- Viticulture and tourism → Wine experience and tasting events
- (Touristic) valorisation of vineyard landscape
- Regional marketing
- Exchange of information on different wine-growing methods
- Exchange of best-practice experiences in the wine tourism sector



View of Oppenheim

# LAG VULKANEIFEL

„Living, working and relaxing where nature is exciting“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Living, working and relaxing where nature is exciting“
<b>Fields of action:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Preservation and further development of the characteristic features of the Vulkaneifel</li> <li>■ Creation of sustainable jobs in the Vulkaneifel</li> <li>■ Development of sustainable living spaces in the Vulkaneifel</li> </ul>
<b>Registered office of LAG:</b>	Kreisverwaltung Vulkaneifel Mainzer Straße 25, 54550 Daun
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<b>Chairperson:</b>	Dr. Sabine Theunert
<b>Internet:</b>	www.leader-vulkaneifel.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 2,950,000



## Who we are

The region of LAG Vulkaneifel is located in the north-west of Rhineland-Palatinate and includes 195 municipalities in three districts (Bernkastel-Wittlich, Cochem-Zell and Vulkaneifel). The area is situated at the heart of the Eifel region. In the north, it borders Belgium and North Rhine-Westphalia. To the south, it is straddled by the mountain ranges of the eastern and southern Eifel mountain ranges and the Moselle mountains. Our LAG was established in 2006 and includes members that have gained extensive experience under LEADER I, II and LEADER+. Thanks to the pro-active participation of actors and large parts of the local community, we have been able to implement a number of projects in the past. We are proud of our achievements and wish to continue our work during the current funding period.

## What our region has to offer

The area of LAG Vulkaneifel is known as the land of volcanoes and volcanic lakes. It includes a wealth of geological features that are unique to Europe, with more than 360 extinct volcanoes and highly versatile geotopes and natural habitats. This unique selling point is particularly relevant for recreational activities and tourism focussing on nature, geology and wellness. The Vulkaneifel region offers many thermal and mineral springs whose water is sold locally and outside the area.

The local economy is dominated by medium-sized enterprises<sup>1)</sup> and three innovation centres. The health sector has become of ever greater importance for the regional development. In this field we have successfully completed a number of

1) Trade and crafts, timber industry, marketing of mineral wells and water, mining, etc..



projects, including the establishment of a centre of excellence and an online network on health and wellness facilities in the Vulkaneifel area. The large forests in our region are a great source of timber, be it for construction and other products or heating purposes, and our LAG has also pursued projects in this area.

Cooperation and the exchange of knowledge through networks are very important for our region. Together with the LAG Bitburg-Prüm, we have for example been the driving force behind a promotional campaign for the „EifelArt“ cultural platform. With the same partner, we carried out an awareness campaign for small and medium-sized companies under the name of „Energieeffizienz Initiative Eifel“. We are currently working together with the LAG Donnersberger und Lautrer Land on a feasibility study regarding energy logistics in the Vulkaneifel region including a number of excursions to the regions of the two LAGs. We have teamed up with the LAG Bitburg-Prüm and LAG Eifel (North Rhine-Westphalia) to develop and improve the regional value chains in the Eifel area.

What we want to achieve in the near future

As a founding member of the European Geoparks Network, we are always in close contact with other LAGs in Germany and other countries in Europe. Given the geological nature of our region with its volcanic history, we would be interested to cooperate with other regions that have a similar topology. Other projects in connection with the existing network between the nature centres in the triangle between Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg known as „Dreiländereck“ or border triangle. The health sector in our region should be developed further, and we see again potential for cooperation projects here.

We would also like to work together with other regions in Germany and further afield in the area of renewable energies and in particular in the innovative and sustainable development of villages and towns with regard to the ongoing demographic changes (internal development, local amenities and services, new forms of living). In the near future, we intend to concentrate on the topic of barrier-free / low-barrier villages<sup>2)</sup> and are currently looking for partners in other European countries with which we can share our experiences.



Relaxing at the Meerfelder Maar

<sup>2)</sup> This concerns all aspects of village life, including work, tourism, living, recreation and leisure activities.

Excerpt of projects completed to date

- WEGE project for successful change management in rural communities
- Wellness region Vulkaneifel: centre of excellence and online network
- Sustainable geo-tourism in the Vulkaneifel area (product analysis, quality products, networks)
- Increasing awareness of local community for the need of pro-active site management
- Feasibility study by Energie GmbH Vulkaneifel
- Conception and development of a centre of excellence (health sector)
- Feasibility study for the utilisation of biomass
- Regional value chains
- Energy efficiency initiative for the Eifel region, targeting SMEs
- Conversion of a former farm building into four holiday apartments

Possible fields of cooperation

- Exploitation of the unique selling point of volcanic geology
- Development of tourism / recreational activities focussing on nature, geology and wellness
- Further development of regional health sector
- Renewable energies (timber, biomass) and use of timber as a building material
- Innovative village renewal with regard to demographic change
- Exchange of information on the topic of barrier-free villages and towns (living, working, leisure activities, tourism)



Volcanic lake of Meerfelder Maar



# LAG WELTERBE OBERES MITTEL RheINTAL

## „Quality of life along the Upper Middle Rhine“

<b>Motto:</b>	„Quality of life along the Upper Middle Rhine“
<b>Fields of action:</b> (excerpt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Space for adventure and recreation</li> <li>■ Economy and education</li> <li>■ Regional culture and identity</li> <li>■ Living together in the Middle Rhine region</li> </ul>
<b>Registered office of LAG:</b>	Verbandsgemeindeverwaltung St. Goar Oberwesel Rathausstraße 6, 55430 Oberwesel
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<b>Chairperson:</b>	Thomas Bungert, Lord Mayor
<b>Internet:</b>	www.lag-welterbe.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 1,440,000



### Who we are

The 47 municipalities and eight cities covered by our LAG are located in the centre west of Rhineland-Palatinate. The core area is mainly situated in the Upper Middle Rhine Valley and includes a large section of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre of the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. The region forms part of the landscape of Upper Middle Rhine Valley, Rheinhunsrück and Mittelrheintanus. Under the name of „Mittelrhein“, our LAG was already active during the LEADER+ programme, although its composition has slightly changed. For the continuation of the success of previous work during the current funding period, cooperation will play a key role.

### What our region has to offer

The unique cultural landscape of our region, which was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 2002, is dominated by vineyards (on often very steep slopes), large forests, numerous castles, small unspoilt villages and attractive cities. This mainly man-made landscape with terraces and high plains has developed over time and follows the course of the Rhine. It has remained largely unspoilt and there is very little industry.

The UNESCO World Heritage status is no doubt the most unique selling point of our area. Our economy is based on viticulture and tourism,

which have also shaped our history. Other characteristic features of our region are its great biodiversity, many well-preserved heritage sites and monuments and a well-maintained and extensive network of hiking trails including the „Rheinsteig“ and the „Rhein-Burgen-Weg“.

The wines produced in our area are of the highest quality and known worldwide. Our restaurants and hotels have a long tradition and delight our guests with local cuisine. The mild and dry climate of the area is in sharp contrast to that of the adjacent mountain regions of the Mittelgebirge and gives the slopes along the Rhine a distinct Mediterranean flair. The region is blessed with many well-established regional organisations, a thriving community sector and activists that are dedicated to developing their area. People living here identify themselves strongly with the region. There are already several renewable energy plants utilising geothermal heat and timber fuel.

Our LAG also includes members from neighbouring LAGs in Rhineland-Palatinate and a group from Hesse<sup>1)</sup>. The strong personal ties across regional boundaries enable us to promote the exchange of information and to encourage new thinking. We recently met with representatives of the LAG Wachau Dunkelsteinerwald in Austria to discuss examples of best practice. We joined the LAG Hunsrück in meeting members of the LAG PoKo ry from Finland for a fruitful exchange of information<sup>2)</sup>. We have also established contact with the LAG Mallorca Rural and LAG Integral in Murcia (Spain). Every year, we participate in co-operation projects with the LAG Lokalna Grupa Działania Przymierze Jeziorsko and the LAG Grupa Działania Brynica to nie granica from Poland, and with the RAG Saale-Holzland from Thuringia.



Historic presbytery garden in Boppard-Hirzenach

<sup>1)</sup> Hunsrück, Rheinhessen-Zellertal and Rheingau.  
<sup>2)</sup> On topics such as tourism, sustainable village development, renewable energies, etc..



What we want to achieve in the near future

At an international LEADER conference in 2007<sup>3)</sup>, we had the opportunity to discuss our different experiences and to draw up project ideas focussing primarily on climate change and its consequences for agricultural production and the wine-producing sector. A number of southern regions actually have similar landscapes and economic structures as ours. We are of course always interested to hear from groups in other regions with a view to collaborate. Other international meetings are currently being planned.

For future cooperation projects, we would be particularly interested in working together in the following areas: Protection of cultural landscapes by means of traditional cultivation (viticulture); new joint approaches for the promotion of tourism and the strengthening of the regional profile through marketing. We could for example envisage a project in relation to the Upper German-Rhaetian Limes, cooperating with a LAG in Hesse in order to link these two UNESCO World Heritage sites.

We are however open to all ideas from other groups.

Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Development of historic presbytery garden in Boppard-Hirzenach for visitors
- Audio-visual time travel through the Upper Middle Rhine Valley
- Access to early Christian baptismal font in the church of St. Severus in Boppard
- "Rheinpartie" – light and projection festival in the UNESCO World Heritage area of the Upper Middle Rhine Valley
- Examples of best practice – exchange of information and experiences with LAG Wachau Dunkelsteinerwald (Austria)



Audio-visual time travel through the Upper Middle Rhine Valley

- Project study – development planning of Rhine embankment in Oberwesel
- Touristic valorisation of the gate tower of Schönbürg Castle, Oberwesel
- Establishment of a wine shop and drafting of vine charter for the Middle Rhine region
- Management of vacant properties in Oberwesel

Possible fields of cooperation

- Further expansion and linking of projects in the field of tourism and viticulture
- Health and wellness tourism
- Preservation of the cultural landscape and heritage
- Arts and culture projects

<sup>3)</sup> Also present were representatives of LAGs based in Thuringia, Spain, Austria and Hungary.

LAG WESTERWALD

„Living in the Westerwald – hand in hand with nature into the future!“

<b>Leitbild:</b>	„Living in the Westerwald – hand in hand with nature into the future“
<b>Fields of action:</b> (excerpt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Promotion of sustainable farming and forestry businesses</li><li>■ Protection and preservation of historic elements of the cultural landscape</li><li>■ Ecological education and a creation of greater awareness for environmental issues</li><li>■ Support for start-up businesses</li><li>■ Sustainable village renewal</li><li>■ Regional communication and further training</li></ul>
<b>Registered office of LAG:</b>	Kreisverwaltung des Westerwaldkreises Peter-Altmeier-Platz 1, 56410 Montabaur
<b>Contact:</b>	Arno Schürg (LAG Manager) Telephone: +49(0)2602 124 426 / 5-13 arno.schuerg@westerwaldkreis.de
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Achim Schwickert, District Councillor
<b>Internet:</b>	www.leader-westerwald.de
<b>Potential EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 2,250,000



Who we are

The area of LAG Westerwald is situated in the north-eastern corner of Rhineland-Palatinate. It forms part of the Rhine Massif and borders on North Rhine-Westphalia and Hesse. There are altogether 164 municipalities in the LAG area, which extends over the districts of Westerwald and Altenkirchen. After a number of successful projects under LEADER+, the LAG region has been significantly extended under the new LEADER scheme. In order to involve a broad spectrum of local actors, the LAG was reconstituted with more members in 2008.

What our region has to offer

The region of the LAG Westerwald is characterised by extensive forests, grassland and meadows and a relatively large number of protected nature reserves. These and other features of our nature and landscape, such as the Westerwald Lake Plateau make our region an ideal destination for tourism and recreational activities, which needs further development.

The local economy is characterised by a broad range of trade and service companies. Due to the special geology of our area, the mining of basalt, clay and trachyte has a long tradition here.



The Stöffelpark<sup>1)</sup> showcasing an interesting combination of industry, geology and nature focusing on basalt mining and machining and fossils is another unique selling point of the region. The area is connected to the neighbouring urban centres through the ICE railway network.

We are committed to increasing the share of renewable energy in the regional energy mix. We are currently pursuing a number of ideas for the extension of a decentralised power supply system, using biomass from regional agricultural and forestry businesses. The Environment Campus Birkenfeld has already carried out a most valuable study on the potential of energy generated from biomass.

At the moment, we are in the process of implementing a concept for the revitalisation and renovation of village centres developed as part of the interterritorial cooperation project „Leben im Dorf“ (village life). This project is a cooperation with the LAG Süd-WestAlb in Baden-Württemberg.

#### What we want to achieve in the near future

Through the work of the European House Bad Marienberg, an international education centre for non-formal education, our area has a long tradition of European cooperation projects. The activities of the European House could form the basis for other interterritorial or trans-national projects. We are also very interested to work in projects that focus on the retention and further development of the local supply and services infrastructure and would like to ensure the future availability of local social amenities. The exchange of information and knowledge with other regional groups regarding innovative approaches for local self-help projects (village renewal, activities for all generations) would not only be interesting but also important for the future of our area.

Other topics for cooperation projects with other LAGs might include sustainable direct and regional marketing and ideas for the future use of the military training grounds in Daaden.

We look forward to getting in contact with other LEADER and IRD regions and are open to any other project ideas that might result from such exchanges.



Camping site in Weiherhof



Landscapes in the Westerwald

<sup>1)</sup> A project, promoted during the LEADER+ funding period.

#### Excerpt of projects completed to date

- Strategy and communication proposal „Village life – at the heart of the community“ (study and implementation)
- Study on the management of vacant buildings and accessibility in the city of Selters
- Concept for the calculation and documentation of energy consumption data in municipal buildings
- Monastic trail Marienstatt (topical hiking trail)
- Parking area for hikers in Dickendorf
- Tourism service initiative Irmtraut – study on the exploitation of the potential for tourism

#### Possible fields of cooperation

- Recreational amenities, nature and geo tourism
- Nature and landscape preservation
- Innovative projects for local self-help (supply and service infrastructure, village renewal, activities for all generations)
- Establishment of decentralised power and heat supply network (with focus on biomass energy)
- Sustainable direct and regional marketing
- Creation of jobs to reduce the level of outward commuting



Hikers in the Westerwald



# LEADER COOPERATION PROJECTS

## Shaping the future together – crossing boundaries hand in hand

„The whole is more than the sum of its parts“  
(Aristotle)

Collective exchange of information and experiences, strengthening regional networks through close personal contacts, shared development of solutions and joint realisation of projects – these activities are at the core of the LEADER approach. Apart from forming strong regional groups, LEADER wants actors in different rural areas to stand together. Getting to know what is happening outside the local area – be it in adjacent regions or across state borders – tends to be extremely valuable for all parties involved.

Together, hand in hand, actors are stronger. By pooling knowledge and ideas, they expand their horizon beyond their local regions. By working together, groups inspire each other, come up with novel ideas and learn to look at their own region and concerns with new eyes. Many projects only make sense if they are tackled at a cross-regional level. In addition, cooperation might provide access to additional funding and helps expand existing networks.

### Who dares wins!

To set a cooperation project in motion, groups must be committed to the approach from the very outset. A detailed evaluation of their own region and its strengths and weaknesses enables groups to identify the topics for possible cooperation projects. In many cases, groups thereby realise that they already have some prior expe-

rience or information (from studies) in specific fields. In a second step, the actors must assess how their regions can benefit from a cooperation project. These tasks are best performed by a dedicated working group of the LAG focussing on cooperation, which assists the LAG manager in his or her work. When the topic for cooperation has been identified, the group must start to look for one or more suitable partner.

„Cooperation is always beneficial, as it enables groups to see the bigger picture, learn from the experience of others and think outside the box. On the other hand, it also ensures that groups do not spend their energy at reinventing the wheel. And most importantly: Good cooperation results in a win-win situation for all project partners!“



Thomas Miller,  
Lord Mayor of  
Rosenfeld, member of the  
LEADER-LAG SüdWestAlb  
(Baden-  
Württemberg)

### Looking for partners

Establishing good personal contacts is essential, especially at the beginning. Your LAG might choose to actively search for partners, or to respond to requests from other regions. Existing contacts to neighbouring groups or LAGs further afield are often the starting point for cooperation projects. The internet is an invaluable source of information in this regard<sup>1)</sup>.

Many partners have found each other at (inter)regional or national events (for example events organised by the organisations that coordinate activities in rural areas such as Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle Ländliche Räume (DVS)). Initial, well-organised meetings are the first step towards successful cooperation projects.

### The steps towards cooperation

- Selection of suitable and relevant topics for cooperation projects
- Establishment of a „cooperation working group“ to reduce the workload for the LAG management
- Definition of the objectives of the envisaged cooperation
- Identification of suitable partners
- Search for partners (internet, events, existing contacts)
- Organisation of first joint meeting
- Definition of organisational structure and administrative framework
- Who resumes overall responsibility for the project?
- Cooperation agreement

Last but not least, the groups must define the administrative and organisational framework of the cooperation project. In this context, the groups must take into account the different statutory frameworks and funding requirements. In addition, the partners need to agree on financial contributions, clarify the tasks and assign the responsibilities. One of the cooperating LEADER LAG must assume overall control of the cooperation project. The groups must subsequently enter into a cooperation contract or agreement that forms the basis for all further activities. This document defines the objective of the cooperation and regulates all details for the future collaboration.

Valuable information on such agreements can be found on the website of the European Network for Rural Development ENRD of the European Commission. Apart from useful information and data regarding rural development in EU Member States, it also contains a cooperation database where LEADER LAG from all over Europe have registered their ideas for cooperation projects with a view of finding partners. Another great source of information is the „Guide to interterritorial and trans-national cooperation“ published by the DVS. This guide can be downloaded or ordered from the DVS website.

On the following pages, we want to show you how cooperation projects of LEADER LAGs from Rhineland-Palatinate have helped change the future of rural communities.

<sup>1)</sup> For links to the websites, please see last page of this brochure.

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY INITIATIVE FOR SMES IN THE EIFEL REGION

## Sustainable energy management for small and medium-sized enterprises (interterritorial project)

<b>Name of project:</b>	Energy efficiency initiative for small and medium-sized enterprises in the Eifel region (Energieeffizienz Initiative Eifel für KMU)
<b>Field(s) of action:</b>	Energy
<b>Coordinator LAG:</b>	LAG Bitburg-Prüm
<b>Cooperating LAG:</b>	LAG Vulkaneifel
<b>Organisation responsible for local programme:</b>	Strukturfördergesellschaft Bitburg-Prüm mbH
<b>Status:</b>	completed
<b>Total costs:</b>	€ 98,770
<b>EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 23,250

### Starting position

The sustainable generation and use of energy are among the key challenges of our time. This applies in particular to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of rural economies. While there are many ways by which energy can be saved, energy demand optimisation is making slow progress. Businesses often do not have the time, resources and know-how to implement energy-saving measures. For these reasons, the LAG Bitburg-Prüm and LAG Vulkaneifel decided to support local companies in optimising their energy demand and in identifying further energy-saving measures.

### Goals & project activities

The energy demands and the company-specific potentials for energy savings of 125 SMEs in various industries were assessed by means of a survey carried out in the three cooperating districts<sup>1)</sup>. The survey focussed on electricity, oil and gas. The subsequent analysis of the data revealed that outdated heating systems, insufficient building insulation and high heat loss from machinery were the main issues to be tackled.

Following this analysis, the businesses were offered support in the form of an energy consultation service that focussed on their specific needs. Energy consultants estimated that the annual energy consumption of the companies that participated in the survey could be reduced by up to 20 per cent through suitable renovation and upgrading work.

<sup>1)</sup> Districts of Eifelkreis Bitburg-Prüm, Vulkaneifel and Bernkastel-Wittlich.

Many of the participating businesses have begun implementing the proposed measures, while others have availed of an initial consultation. In general, SMEs showed great interest in the topic of energy efficiency and appreciated the consultation service.

This project might serve as a model as it strengthens the local economy by making rural businesses more competitive. The project was supported by the Institute of Energy Efficient Systems at the Trier University of Applied Sciences. The final report with detailed information on the project is available on the internet for download<sup>2)</sup>.

### Positive outcomes

- Creation of greater awareness within companies and the general public for the importance of energy efficiency
- Reduction of overheads and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Improved competitiveness of SMEs in rural areas
- Creation and protection of jobs
- Establishment of a cross-sector network and exchange of knowledge on the protection of resources in companies (SMEs, promotion of trade and industry, cooperation with research institutes and public administration)



Energy consultation for SMEs

<sup>2)</sup> [www.sbp-online.de/nextshopcms/cmspdf.asp?id=91](http://www.sbp-online.de/nextshopcms/cmspdf.asp?id=91)



# IMAGE CAMPAIGN FOR CRAFT AND TRADE PROFESSIONS

Promoting local crafts and trades among young people – career options and qualifications with great prospects (interterritorial project)

Name of project:	Image campaign for craft and trade professions (Imageaktion „Ausbildung Handwerk“)
Field(s) of action:	Vocational training / rural economy
Coordinator LAG:	LAG Bitburg-Prüm
Cooperating LAGs:	LAG Erbeskopf, LAG Hunsrück, LAG Mosel, LAG Vulkaneifel
Organisation responsible for local programme:	Kreishandwerkerschaft Mosel-Eifel-Hunsrück Region (MEHR) (craftsmen's guild)
Status:	in progress
Total costs:	€ 99,000
EAFRD funding:	€ 54,450

## Starting position

In rural areas, more people are working in the crafts and trade sector than in any other industry. The range of qualifications is vast and varied. However, the number of apprentices in these fields have continuously dropped over the last few years. Many companies are already experiencing a shortage of qualified workers and cannot find young people who would be interested in an apprenticeship. This will have huge implications for the future of these crafts and trades. Young people who are about to decide on their careers generally see the crafts and trade sector as little attractive. To counter this trend and to improve the image of the sector, the LAGs Bitburg-Prüm, Erbeskopf, Hunsrück, Mosel and Vulkaneifel have teamed up for an image campaign for craft and trade professions.

## Goals & project activities

The project aims at recruiting young people for apprenticeships in the crafts and trades sectors, enhancing the quality of training, increasing the number of training opportunities and reducing the drop-out rate. Through these goals, the actors want to ensure that local businesses can find the skilled workers they need in their locality. School leavers, parents and the general public are being informed of the opportunities that apprenticeships in crafts and trades offer young people. On the one hand, the dual training system is explained in more detail. On the other, the excellent career prospects of qualified workers are outlined. At the moment, numerous actions are being planned and coordinated.

They include:

- Creation of the website [www.myhandwerk.info](http://www.myhandwerk.info) covering a broad range of topics (job descriptions, earning figures, apprenticeship listing
- Shared platform for trainees, trainers and applicants, etc.)
- Advertisements and information brochures on crafts and trade professions, with list of companies offering training places
- Partnerships between schools and businesses: close cooperation with secondary schools (master craftsmen in the classroom, visits to companies, participation in parents' association and career guidance events, etc.)

As this cooperation project in the field of education and vocational training is aimed at young people, it is bound to have a significant impact on the future development of rural regions. It encourages the next generation to seek opportunities in their native region and helps secure jobs.

## Positive outcomes

- Recruitment of qualified young workers, securing the future of local crafts and trades
- Making craft and trade professions more attractive to school leavers
- Improving the image of the industry and its training opportunities
- Creating a greater awareness for the importance of the crafts and trade sector in rural areas



Apprentices learning from the master

# COOPERATION WORKSHOPS OF THE LAGS POKO RY (FINLAND), WELTERBE OBERES MITTELRHEINTAL AND HUNSRÜCK

Overcoming geographical and language barriers – LEADER without bounds (trans-national project)

Name of project:	Cooperation workshops of the LAGs PoKo ry (Finland), Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal and Hunsrück (Kooperationsworkshops der LAG PoKo ry (FI), Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal und Hunsrück)
Field(s) of action:	Various
Coordinator LAG:	LAG Hunsrück
Cooperating LAGs:	LAG PoKo ry (Finland), LAG Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal
Organisation responsible for local programme:	LAG Hunsrück
Status:	in progress
Total costs:	€ 12,000
EAFRD funding:	€ 6,600

### Starting position

The LAGs Hunsrück, Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal and PoKo ry (Finland) are of the view that geographical or language barriers should not prevent groups from collaborating with each other. On the contrary – regions that might differ from each other in many aspects but share certain structures and concerns should be able to benefit from each other's experience and knowledge. LAG PoKo ry, which covers an area north of Tampere is a sparsely populated rural region. With around

800 lakes, the area is however predestined for tourism. The local economy is heavily dependent on the timber and paper industry and a number of smaller service companies. The good flight connections between Frankfurt-Hahn and Tampere make it relatively easy for the LAG representatives in Germany and Finland to meet each other. In March 2009, the groups met for the first time to discuss their ideas. In May 2010, they signed a cooperation agreement.



Cooperation meeting with representatives of the LAG PoKo ry (Finland)

### Goals & project activities

The workshops enable participants to share their knowledge, ideas and experiences with a view to developing innovative ideas for projects that are of benefit to all participating regions. The jointly defined fields of action cover a wide range of topics, from tourism to sustainable village renewal to the strengthening of the local economy and renewable energy sources.

At the moment, the following actions are being implemented or planned:

- English language project for students, sharing information on their school day, culture and customs, country, family, hobbies, etc. known as „FIN-GER-MAIL“
- Student exchange between vocational colleges in Simmern and the Finnish partner region

- FINGERFOOD brings together the local specialities of the participating regions, for example combining Finnish food with German wine from the Middle Rhine region.
- In June 2011, a Finnish producer took part in the „à la région“ gourmet festival at Kastellaun Castle. Women from Hunsrück served their special Hunsrück sausage and cake at a regional market in Finland.
- Employment of a trainee from Finland at the LAG offices in Germany, assisting the LAG in all tasks in connection with the cooperation, and in particular with the project evaluation

The LAGs also set up the bilingual German-Finnish website [www.fin-ger-net.eu](http://www.fin-ger-net.eu), providing more information on the projects and the partner regions.





Workshops of local actors from two countries



#### Positive outcomes

- Utilisation of synergy effects thanks to trans-national exchange of knowledge and information
- Conception and implementation of innovative projects with benefits for all participating areas
- Establishment of network of rural regions and actors across European countries
- Improved promotion of regional tourism amenities

„LEADER-ohjelma mahdollistaa konkreettisen yhteistyön toimintaryhmien välillä. On mielenkiintoista nähdä, kuinka yhteistyö rakentuu eri teemojen ympärille. Mukana olevat ihmiset tutustuvat toisiinsa ja toteuttavat yhdessä ideoitaan. Tämän LEADER-projektin yhteydessä voidaan myös etsiä yhdessä ratkaisuja näitä yhteistyöalueita koskeviin ongelmiin ja tukea alueiden kestäväää kehitystä. Suomen ja Saksan toimintaryhmien välinen yhteistyöprojekti tuo yhteen aktiivisia ihmisiä molemmista maista ja toivottavasti heidän yhteistyönsä jatkuu vielä pitkään!”

„LEADER facilitates the cooperation of local action groups in specific projects. It is very interesting to track the progress of the collaborations under the various topics. The participants get to know each other, present

their ideas and work on implementing them together. This LEADER project provides the space for groups to find new solutions for problems that affect both partner regions, enabling them to work towards a better and sustainable future. This project of local action groups in Finland and Germany has brought local activists involved in community projects together and I hope that this collaboration will continue into the future.”



Tiia Leppikorpi,  
Finnish trainee at the LEADER  
offices of LAG Hunsrück



## ROMAN HERITAGE ROUTE

Bringing ancient history and culture to life – ten regions, one goal  
(trans-national project)

<b>Name of project:</b>	Roman Heritage Route (Straßen der Römer)
<b>Field(s) of action:</b>	Tourism
<b>Coordinator LAG:</b>	LAG Mosel
<b>Cooperating LAGs:</b>	LAG Bitburg-Prüm, LAG Hunsrück, LAG Moselfranken, LAG Vulkaneifel, LAG Eifel (North Rhine-Westphalia), LAG Der Selfkant (North Rhine-Westphalia), LAG St. Wendeler Land (Saarland), LAG Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau (Saarland), LAG Miselerland (Luxembourg)
<b>Organisation responsible for approved actions:</b>	Mosellandtouristik GmbH
<b>Status:</b>	in progress
<b>Total costs:</b>	€ 595,122
<b>EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 142,799



#### Starting position

The regions of Moselle-Saar, Hunsrück, Eifel, the Moselle Valley in Luxembourg and adjacent parts of Saarland have a rich Roman heritage. Many artefacts and remains of the Roman road network have been exposed and attract many visitors. Under LEADER+, the above LAGs joined together to exploit the tourism potential of the Roman heritage of the region, which was a centre of Roman life and trade in Germany. The idea of promoting the remains of the Roman roads to attract tourists to the area is now being continued and expanded further under LEADER.

#### Goals & project activities

For the above regions, the LEADER programme is the ideal tool for this undertaking. The project aims at giving visitors an insight into life in Roman times with related activities and experiences. Ten LAGs from Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland and Luxembourg have teamed up for this undertaking, whereby the LAG Mosel acts as the coordinating group.

The envisaged goals and actions were laid down in a LEADER cooperation agreement and include the establishment of a network for further exchange of information, measures to promote rural tourism, the protection of the natural and cultural heritage in the regions and the improvement of the regional value chains.

- Already approved actions that are currently in progress:
- Joint communication and promotional measures to increase the awareness for the rich Roman heritage among local people and outside the project area (inward and outward marketing)
  - „Rufus ante Portas“ – comic one-man play (“Römischer Schankwirt”) about the trials and tribulations of a Roman wine merchant (additional LEADER project developed in conjunction with the above cooperation project; for details, see [www.rufus-ante-portas.de](http://www.rufus-ante-portas.de))

For more information on the Roman Heritage Route, visit [www.strassen-der-roemer.eu](http://www.strassen-der-roemer.eu). On this website, people can book short breaks and plan their hiking routes. They also find a wealth of information on the cultural sights and activities in the area, regional cuisine and regional products (e.g. wine).



Roman Heritage Route

- Positive outcomes
- Creation of a unique cultural and historic selling point through regional and trans-national communication and marketing
  - Preservation of the cultural heritage
  - Promotion of regional tourism, and improvement of quality standards in the tourism sector
  - Creation of a network of cultural sights and tourism amenities and development of the tourism infrastructure
  - Development and promotion of activities targeting specific groups (e.g. children, adolescents, senior citizens, etc.)



# TERROIR MOSELLE - 1 RIVER, 3 COUNTRIES, 1001 WINES

**Boundless pleasure – wines from the heart of Europe (trans-national project)**

<b>Name of project:</b>	Terroir Moselle (Terroir Moselle)
<b>Field(s) of action:</b>	Viticulture and tourism
<b>Coordinator LAG:</b>	LAG Moselfranken (responsible for preparation and coordination in Rhineland-Palatinate)  LAG Miselerland (Luxembourg) (responsible for implementation)
<b>Cooperating LAGs:</b>	LAG Mosel, LAG Pays Terres de Lorraine (France)
<b>Organisation responsible for local programme:</b>	District administration of Trier-Saarburg
<b>Status:</b>	in progress
<b>Total costs:</b>	€ 20,000 (preparation), € 128,000 (implementation)
<b>EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 10,000 (preparation), € 61,215 (implementation)



## Starting position

The Moselle is closely associated with wine. Moselle wines are renowned for their excellent quality and held in high esteem all over the world. The Moselle Valley with its vineyards extends through Germany, Luxembourg and France. Until now, there was no trans-national strategy in place for the marketing of Moselle wines. This is about to change, thanks to an innovative LEADER cooperation project that has been initiated by LAG Moselfranken, LAG Mosel, LAG Miselerland (Luxembourg) and LAG Pays Terres de Lorraine (France).

## Goals & project activities

Moselle wine growers from Germany, Luxembourg and France have teamed up to pursue a comprehensive, trans-national project aimed at promoting their products and improving the image of wines from the region. With a joint marketing strategy that includes many activities for tourists, the Moselle wines are promoted as a truly European product. „Grown at the heart of Europe“ will hopefully become a unique selling point for further marketing efforts.

With „Terroir Moselle“, the wine producers in the cooperating regions want to position their products as unique quality wines that stand out in a global market dominated by bland, industrially produced wines.



The project however also covers topics that are associated with wine growing such as the protection of nature and landscape, viticulture and oenology, as well as culture and heritage. The project is thus characterised by its comprehensive approach and commitment to sustainability. It is expected that the undertaking will also have a positive effect on other regional industries, such as the hotel and restaurant sector and tourism in general. The project has already attracted great interest from all over Europe, and „Terroir Moselle“ has been chosen as the „Project of the Month“ for July 2011 by the European Network for Rural Development. For more information on partners, wine growing areas, etc., visit the multilingual website [www.terroirmoselle.eu](http://www.terroirmoselle.eu).

„Le projet Terroir Moselle permet de faire le trait d'union entre les acteurs des filières viti-vinicoles de Toul à Coblence avec de nombreuses rencontres enrichissantes. A travers cette coopération LEADER, nous pouvons faire la promotion du terroir de chaque région viticole avec ses atouts touristiques, économiques et culturels, avec ses panoplies de vins et de paysages.“

„Our project has brought together wine growers and producers from Toul to Koblenz. Thanks to this LEADER cooperation, we are now in a position to start marketing the produce of the various wine-growing areas in our region under a joint brand name. In the process, we will also promote our regions as tourist destinations, help support local business and create greater awareness of the rich cultural heritage in our valley. Last but not least, we will be able to make our cultural landscape and produce better known.“



Peggy Dangelser,  
Project Manager of the LEADER Region Pays Terres de Lorraine (France)



Positive outcomes

- Promotion of wines produced in the Moselle Valley
- Branding of Moselle wines as products with a strong European identity
- Exploitation of this European identity as a unique selling point for Moselle wines
- Development of joint wine tourism concepts and marketing strategies aimed at target groups in all three countries represented in the project group
- Integration of associated topics (e.g. landscape preservation, culture and heritage)



LAG representatives meet in Trier, Germany

# MARKETING CAMPAIGN FOR PALATINATE PREMIUM HIKING TRAILS

## New paths through the Palatinate (interterritorial – in cooperation with IRD region)

<b>Name of project:</b>	Marketing campaign for Palatinate premium hiking trails (Marketingmaßnahmen Premiumwanderwege Pfalz)
<b>Field(s) of action:</b>	Tourism and leisure activities
<b>Coordinator LAG:</b>	LAG Pfälzerwald
<b>Cooperating LAGs:</b>	LAG Donnersberger und Lautrer Land LAG Pfälzer Bergland ILE-LAG Deidesheim-Hassloch
<b>Organisation responsible for local programme:</b>	Pfalz Touristik e. V.
<b>Status:</b>	in progress
<b>Total costs:</b>	€ 174,200
<b>EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 93,284

### Starting position

As part of the initiative of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate to promote hiking, three special premium hiking trails, called „Pfälzer Höhenweg“, „Pfälzer Waldpfad“ and „Pfälzer Weisteig“ were opened in 2010. They stretch over 406 kilometres through the most beautiful landscapes of the Palatinate. Around 321 kilometres of these premium trails lead through a LEADER area and an IRD region. Following the motto „together we are stronger“, the LEADER groups of Pfälzerwald, Donnersberger and Lautrer Land and Pfälzer Bergland and the IRD region Deidesheim-Hassloch decided to promote these premium trails in a joint effort.

### Goals & project activities

The number of hikers visiting the area and average number of days tourists spent in the region are to be increased through innovative and well coordinated marketing initiatives. Potential day tourists and other visitors are provided with information on the three premium hiking trails and other cultural sights and tourist amenities in the area. The main events and actions of this cooperation project are:

- Joint opening event
- Website<sup>1)</sup> containing comprehensive information on the region and its amenities, maps of the trails, information on accessibility by public transport, catering and accommodation, etc.

<sup>1)</sup> [www.pfaelzer-wanderwege.de](http://www.pfaelzer-wanderwege.de)

- Creation of a joint brochure, a magazine for hikers and hiking maps with detailed information on the three premium trails

The cooperation project aims at making the area better known among the hiking community and at increasing the income from tourism in the region. It is a good example for the successful co-operation between LEADER LAGs and an IRD local action group.

#### Positive outcomes

- Increased awareness of the tourism region along the three premium hiking trails through to joint marketing of the facilities
- Increase in the number of visitors, with a view of establishing long-term relationships with returning guests
- Bringing hikers together by guiding them to the trails
- Boosting income from tourism in the local economy by making use of synergy effects



Landscapes along the premium hiking trails in the Palatinate



## LEARNING FROM OTHERS

### Exchange of best-practice-ideas between the World Heritage LEADER regions of Wachau-Dunkelsteinerwald and Oberes Mittelrheintal (trans-national project)

Different countries, different ideas – bringing World Heritage areas together

<b>Name of project:</b>	Learning from others (Lernen von Anderen) Exchange of best-practice-ideas between the World Heritage LEADER regions of Wachau-Dunkelsteinerwald and Oberes Mittelrheintal
<b>Field(s) of action:</b>	Various
<b>Coordinator LAG:</b>	LAG Wachau-Dunkelsteinerwald (Austria)
<b>Cooperating LAG:</b>	LAG Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal
<b>Organisation responsible for local programme:</b>	LAG Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal
<b>Status:</b>	completed
<b>Total costs:</b>	€ 6,000
<b>EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 4,500

#### Starting position

The Austrian LAG Wachau-Dunkelsteinerwald and LAG Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal in Rhineland-Palatinate are not only both located in UNESCO World Heritage Centres but are also very similar as regards topology and landscape. Both regions are characterised by extensive vineyards, and wine production has a long tradition in both Wachau-Dunkelsteinerwald and the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. Representatives of the two LAGs first met during the LEADER+ programme. During the current funding period, they have been extending their contacts and exchanges to form a partnership for the sharing of information and knowledge.

#### Goals & project activities

During the initial meetings of the LAG members held in Germany and in Austria, the local actors had the opportunity to get to know the partner region. At an early point in the cooperation project, both parties therefore had a good idea of the special characteristics and strengths of the partner region. Based on this knowledge, the topics and fields in which the LEADER regions could learn most from each other were identified. The groups subsequently chose to pursue the following main topics:

- Strengthening the local economy and labour market
- Networking and regional cooperation
- Regional culture and identity



The following specific issues were being explored further:

- Improvement of the quality of wine marketing and development of new marketing strategies aimed at tourists interested in wine making and tasting
- Possible joint research projects in the field of climate change, affecting both regions in a similar way
- Use of monorack tracks (Swiss patent) for tourists
- Development of professional marketing strategies for climbing routes and hiking trails

Thanks to this cooperation project under LEADER, both LAGs have been able to avail of opportunities in their regions that they had previously not been aware of. Following the success story of the „Rheinsteig“ hiking trail, the cooperation with the LAG in Rhineland-Palatinate has enabled the LAG in Austria to develop and market the „Wachausteig“ in their own region. On the other hand, the LAG in Germany took up the idea behind „VINEA Wachau“ marketing initiative and is working on a wine charter for products from the Middle Rhine region. Both LAGs want to continue learning from each other and with each other, as this has proven a valuable way towards improved regional development in their respective World Heritage Centres.



Members of the LAG Wachau-Dunkelsteinerwald visiting the Middle Rhine region

Positive outcomes

- Intensive exchange of knowledge and information in the fields of viticulture, tourism, regional economy, culture and landscape preservation
- Utilisation of synergy effects by pooling knowledge
- Optimisation of solutions and identification of new, innovative ideas for regional development
- Establishment of lasting networks of rural areas across national borders

„We soon discovered that our regions are facing very similar problems and challenges. The exchange of information on best practice projects has been extremely valuable for us.“



Thomas Bungert,  
Lord Mayor of Oberwesel and chairperson  
of the LAG Welterbe Oberes Mittelrheintal



„The World Heritage regions of Upper Middle Rhine Valley and Wachau have been working together since 2004. As part of our cooperation project, we were able to learn a lot about the establishment and promotion of the „Rheinsteig“ trail, which was extremely useful for the development of our own hiking trail known as „Welterbesteig Wachau“. It has become one of the great successes of the LEADER programme in our region.“



Michael Schimek,  
Managing Director of the  
LEADER LAG Wachau-Dunkelsteinerwald



# VILLAGE LIFE

## Community activities for the preservation of attractive and thriving village centres (interterritorial cooperation)

<b>Name of project:</b>	Village Life (Leben im Dorf)
<b>Field(s) of action:</b>	Sustainable village and town development
<b>Coordinator LAG:</b>	LAG Westerwald
<b>Cooperating LAGs:</b>	LAG SüdWestAlb (Baden-Württemberg)
<b>Organisation responsible for local programme:</b>	Verbandsgemeinde Westerbург
<b>Status:</b>	completed
<b>Total costs:</b>	€ 37,725
<b>EAFRD funding:</b>	€ 15,125

### Starting position

Over many decades, rural villages and towns have seen great changes, mainly due to young people leaving the area, ageing of the rural population and new houses being built on the outskirts of villages. As a consequence, more and more buildings in the village centres are now vacant. In the long term, this will make the villages less attractive, with little activity in the centre. Not all members of the public are yet aware of these trends and their negative impact on the local community. As a result, there are many treasures and interesting buildings hiding in very quiet village centres. The cooperation project of the LAG Westerwald and LAG SüdWestAlb (Baden-Württemberg) aims at discovering these special properties, marketing them professionally and making local people aware of what they have in their villages.

### Goals & project activities

In the communities in both regions, a professional management system for the vacant buildings and sites has been developed in cooperation between the two partner LAGs. The targeted marketing of vacant buildings and sites in the centre of villages and the awareness campaign targeting local communities to promote the construction of new houses in built-up areas were at the heart of the project. Special care was taken to involve all actors (the local community, regional (real estate) businesses and the district administration) in this undertaking. The project was divided into the following modules:

- Inventory
- Survey among local population
- Marketing plan
- Awareness campaign
- Controlling and project monitoring

This LEADER cooperation has made a valuable contribution to a more sustainable development that is tailor-made for the regions and will make our villages more attractive as living spaces. At the same time, it has led to a new way of looking at our village life and opportunities for a good quality of life, especially among the local population.

„Thanks to the interterritorial cooperation project on vacant buildings and sites in the collective community of Westerburg and the town of Rosenfeld, we were able to start a process for the sustainable and community-focussed development of our villages, which was greatly helped by the exchange of ideas and knowledge across regional boundaries.“



Markus Münch,  
Managing Director of the  
LEADER LAG SüdWestAlb  
(Baden-Württemberg)



#### Positive outcomes

- Development of a professional system for the management of vacant buildings and sites for optimised marketing of these properties
- Greater awareness among the local population for the need of village renewal
- Inclusion of and networking with all relevant local actors (community, regional (real estate) businesses and district administration)
- Improved inward development of rural municipalities



Formal signing of the cooperation agreement

## DO YOU FEEL INSPIRED? THEN GO FOR LEADER!

We hope that this brochure has given you a good idea of what cooperation projects under LEADER are all about. As you can see, there is a huge diversity of ideas out there.

You now know more about the various LEADER regions in Rhineland-Palatinate and have been given an insight into some of the cooperation projects that have been undertaken or are in the process of implementation. Our LAGs have been working hand in hand with other LEADER groups and / or IRD regions in Germany and abroad in order to bring their projects and initiatives to a successful conclusion.

We would be delighted if the one or other undertaking has inspired you to develop your own ideas.

And we would be truly pleased, if your own idea would become a reality through implementation of a cooperation project!

There are many ways in which such projects can be undertaken – be it between LEADER regions or at least one LEADER group and one or more IRD regions. The partners might thereby be located within one country or in different countries.

All it takes is vision and a little courage to approach things hand in hand with another group from another area, be it near or far. In the end, you will benefit from a win-win situation for all parties involved. Our selection of cooperation projects has hopefully shown you that it can be done!

#### Would you like to find out more?

- Websites of State of Rhineland-Palatinate  
[www.eler-paul.rlp.de](http://www.eler-paul.rlp.de)  
[www.impulsregionen.rlp.de](http://www.impulsregionen.rlp.de)
- Websites of LEADER LAGs: see portraits of individual LAGs
- Website of the Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle Ländliche Räume (DVS):  
[www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/kooperation](http://www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/kooperation)
- Website of the European Network for Rural Development of the European Commission:  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/de/home-page\\_de.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/de/home-page_de.cfm)
- Cooperation database of the European Network for Rural Development of the European Commission:  
[http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/cooperation-platform/leader-cooperation-offers/de/leader-cooperation-offers\\_de.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/cooperation-platform/leader-cooperation-offers/de/leader-cooperation-offers_de.cfm)
- Website of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (although Germany is not a member of the association, the site contains lots of valuable information):  
<http://www.elard.eu/>



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with contributions by Ms Julia Werner (MSc Geography) and the twelve LEADER LAGs in Rhineland-Palatinate

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