

Appendix 3: LAG Charter



The European Union
for Georgia
ENPARD: Support to Agriculture
and Rural Development



CHARTER

Akhalkalaki Local Action Group (LAG)

2017



West Cork
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Chapter 1. General Regulations

1.1 Akhalkalaki Action Group (hereinafter referred as the “LAG”) is a civic platform composed of representatives of private, civil and public sector representatives and is based on voluntary membership. The Action Group is based on the seven main principles of LEADER¹ approach: The development of the development strategy adjusted to the local context; Bottom up decisions; Involvement of private owners in the processes; Introduction of innovative oriented ideas; Integrated, multi-sectoral activities; Establish contacts; Promote Cooperation.

1.2 LAG is main decision making body and fulfills following tasks and duties:

- a) Determines the priorities of rural development based on the analysis of the municipality's capabilities and challenges. As a result of consultations with communities, it reveals local needs. Uses the current information and the national strategy for the development of local development strategy;
- b) Provides full and comprehensive information to the Akhalkalaki community on the local development strategy and broadly disseminates information in the society on all procedures of submitting the grant applications and explains these procedures;
- c) Creates transparent and non-discriminatory procedures of evaluation and selection for review and selection of sub-projects;
- d) Accepts and evaluates the sub-projects in accordance with the priorities and criteria of the local development strategy;
- e) Chooses strong sub-projects, defines the amount of financing and submits to the accountable body² for financing;
- f) Carries out local development strategy, monitors selected sub-projects and evaluates their effectiveness and benefits to the municipality.

1.3 The period of LAG activity is indefinite.

1.4 Year coincides with calendar year. It is 12 months, begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

1.5 LAG carries out its activities in accordance with Georgian legislation.

1.6 Email of the LAG: **akhalkalakilag@gmail.com**

Chapter 2. LAG membership

2.1 Membership of the LAG is voluntary and free of charge. LAG has a maximum of 30 members³.

2.2 Member of the LAG may be any physical person from Akhalkalaki private, public and civil sector;

2.3 It is not permitted to transfer the membership of the LAG to other persons or to its successor.

2.4 According to the principles of rural development, LAG is set up by at least 51% of private and civil sector representatives and a maximum of 49% from the public sector.

¹ European LEADER (French acronym) approach means that solutions on rural development issues will be done more efficient with the participation of local private, public and civil sector

² Georgian Institute of Public Affairs and Mercy Corps are Accountable Bodies for project financing during 15/11/2016-15/07/2020

³ After the number of members reaches 30, interested people can submit their contact information by LEADER coordinator. Their data will be included in the back up list and will be discussed during the rotation of the LAG members.

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2.5 The membership of LAG is terminated by death, voluntary withdrawal or exclusion of a member.

2.6 The voluntary withdrawal from the LAG membership is allowed at any time by the member's application. The outgoing member is obliged to fulfill all obligations taken towards the LAG.

2.7 Membership acceptance and is exclusion of a member is done by the General Assembly of the LAG.

2.8 2.8 The reasons for expulsion from the LAG is:

- *From the 5 meetings of the LAG failing to participate in 3 meetings constantly for an inadequate reason;*
- *Failure to fulfill its responsibilities or inadequate fulfillment;*
- *Incorrect behavior towards LAG or its member/members;*
- *Violation of the rules of the Conflict of Interest Declaration;*
- *Other reasons that the General Assembly of the LAG considers as essential.*

2.9 Due to the above mentioned reasons, the issue of exclusion of the member from the LAG and its replacement with a new member will be raised by LEADER coordinator, chairperson or vice chairpersons at the General Assembly of the LAG.

Chapter 3. LAG governing body

3.1 The highest governing body of the LAG is General Assembly, that is comprised by maximum of 30 members. At the General Assembly, each member has one vote.

3.2 The General Assembly is authorized to make any decision if the meeting is attended by 50% + 1 of the members. In case of lack of quorum, a repeated Generals Assembly meeting has to be held.

3.3 The General Assembly of the LAG makes any decision by a majority of votes, whereas at least 50% of the votes should belong to the private and civil sector.

3.4 The LAG is chaired by the chairperson who oversees the LAG's activities. In his performance, he is assisted by two vice-chairpersons.

3.5 Chairperson and vice chairpersons are selected by General Assembly from the LAG members through closed voting for 1 year term. The same person can not be elected twice at the same position.

3.6 The chairperson is a private or civil sector representative, one vice-chairperson is from a private or civil sector, and another vice-chairperson from the public sector.

3.7 The chairperson represents LAG in relations with third parties and in his absence vice chairperson from the private or civil sector represents LAG.

3.8 If the Chairperson or Vice Chairpersons of the LAG will not attend 3 meetings in succession or do not perform their duties and responsibilities properly, LEADER coordinator will raise the issue to the LAG General Assembly about releasing these people from detained positions. The final decision on the release of the person from the occupied position is made by LAG General Assembly.

Chapter 4. Project Assessment Committee

4.1 Within the LAG the most important body is the Project Assessment Committee, which will be responsible for project evaluation and recommendations in accordance with the priorities and criteria of the local development strategy.

4.2 The Project Assessment Committee does not make a final decision on the project financing, this decision is made by the General Assembly of the LAG.

4.3 The members of the Project Assessment Committee are elected by the members of the LAG from their composition.

4.4 The composition of the Project Assessment Committee may be changed from time to time by rotation, or according to the project area of the assessment project. The Project Assessment Committee shall consist of 7 members and at least 3 members must evaluate each specific application⁴.

Chapter 5. LEADER Coordinator

5.1 LEADER coordinator serves as the Secretary of Akhalkalaki LAG. It provides administrative support.

5.2 The person for the LEADER coordinator's position will be selected and employed by Accountable Body⁵.

5.3 LEADER coordinator's main duties and responsibilities:

- organize/invite and coordinate/supervise meetings of Akhalkalaki LAG;
- preparation and transfer of the minutes of the meetings for members of the LAG;
- ensure the proper correlation between the public, private and civil sector representatives of the LAG in the decision-making process;
- organizing seminars, training and study tours for LAG members;
- promotion of the LAG in dissemination of information on sub-projects application and conducting meetings;
- ensure support for applicants in preparation of applications and supporting documentation;
- create all sub-project application database;
- Together with the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the LAG, analyze and evaluate the applications of expression of interest, and ensure the acquaintance of the results to the LAG for approval or denial;
- categorize and organize sub-project applications, visit each applicant and project implementation place to receive additional information and explanations regarding project ideas;
- provide additional written information to the Project Assessment Committee about each project to be evaluated;
- determine the existence of conflict of interest during decision making and exclusion of any member of LAG related to the conflict of interest from the sub-project selection process;
- carry out and update interest registry;
- receive new applications for new membership in the LAG, provide LAG with information on the person to be excluded from the LAG and make changes if needed.

⁴ If the original members of the Project Evaluation Committee fail to meet the required level of expertise, it may be possible to invite temporary experts to join the Committee. Members of the Project Evaluation Committee will undertake training and receive assistance in order to ensure fair and transparent assessment of their applications.

⁵ LEADER coordinator will be employed within the project period 15/11/2016-15/07/2020

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Chapter 6. Accountable body

6.1 Accountable body for the project Promoting a New Rural Development Approach in Akhalkalaki during 15/11/2016-15/07/2017 is Georgian Institute of Public Affairs and Mercy Corps.

6.2 Accountable body is responsible for financing the sub-projects chosen by the LAG, employ LEADER coordinator and support the LAG in its (organizational) activities.

6.3 Accountable body has no right to make decision while selection of the sub-project.

6.4 The accountable body is responsible to oversee all procedures related to the selection of sub-projects, ensuring open, transparent and impartial conduct of the ongoing processes.

6.5 If the accountable body identifies any kind of withdrawal from agreed procedures or any conflicts of interest, it has the right to refuse to sign the agreement with the applicant and not finance the sub-project.

6.6 Once the contract is signed with the applicant, the accountable body is responsible for the procurement of all approved items listed in the proposal for sub-grant application, or for any kind of construction or rehabilitation work which should be implemented within the project.

6.7 The accountable body together with LAG will monitor the sub-project and evaluate the project results.

Chapter 7. Project Assessment and Selection

7.1 For each project the Project Assessment Committee provides the LAG General Assembly with evaluation and recommendations.

7.2 LAG conducts General Assembly on the project submitted by the Committee and approves or denies it with the majority of the votes.

7.3 If the members of LAG find it difficult to make decision based on the recommendations of the Project Assessment Committee, they may ask for a meeting with the applicant and afterwards make a final decision.

7.4 After decision making by the LAG, the LEADER coordinator submits the project proposals for the final review to the accountable body.

Chapter 8. Conflict of interests and privacy

8.1 Each LAG member signs Conflict of Interest Declaration (Annex N 1).

8.2 Each LAG member registers its interest (if any) towards each project to be funded, while doing so each member declares its interest in regards to employment, business and membership in union, institution or organization (including voluntary work for charities).

8.3 LEADER Coordinator carries on the registry of interests.

8.4 Each LAG member is responsible to ensure that that their personal interest does not affect their functions and duties as a LAG member, the sub-project evaluation and selection process and decision making.

8.5 In case of conflict of interest a member leaves any discussion and loses the right to vote.

8.6 LAG members shall keep confidentially all the information and documentation related to the sub-project while exercising their rights and duties.

8.7 LAG member has no the right to receive gifts and gifts from the third person or to offer them to others if this threatens or damages its impartial decision in the LAG.

8.8 In case of any doubt regarding the issue in paragraph 8.7, LAG member should consult with LEADER Coordinator.

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Chapter 9. Property of the LAG

9.1 LAG will receive ownership of the property given to it in the frame of the project (if any) with using right, if it will be registered as a legal entity at the Public Registry according to current legislation by the end of the project.

Chapter 10. Review of complaints

10.1 LEADER Coordinator receives, reviews and makes decisions on complaints. LEADER Coordinator shall answer each received claim in reasonable time.

10.2 If the complaint is directed towards the "LEADER" coordinator or if the author of the complaint is not satisfied by the coordinator's answer to his complaint, the complaint will be forwarded to the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs for review and decision.

Chapter 11. Changes and amendments to the charter

11.1 Changes and amendments to this Charter shall be carried out at the General Assembly of the LAG with no less than 2/3 of votes. In this case the balance between private, civil (50%) and public sector representatives should also be kept.

Chapter 12. Signature of the LAG members:

Name of the member	Personal number	Signature
1. Mikheil Megdesyan		
2. Grachia Movsesyan		
3. Avetik Tonakanyan		
4. Maksim Giloyan		
5. Tamaz Karapetyan		
6. Valiko Qespoyan		
7. Teresa Chivchiyan		
8. Pargev Iordanyan		
9. Shoghik Raisyan		
10. Ramaz Gogoladze		
11. Nairi Iritsiani		

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12. Ovik Giloyan		
13. Khatuna Belijanashvili		
14. Valera Stelmashiov		
15. Enok Babajanyan		
16. Kimik Iuzbashiyan		
17. Apetnak Zardanyan		
18. Ovik Muradyan		
19. Rafael Karoyan		
20. Leila Muradyan		
21. Razmik Manukyan		
22. Surik Karapetyan		
23. Egizar Agajanyan		
24. Vaghashak Shakhbekyan		
25. Arutiun Akopyan		
26. Shushan Shirinyan		
27. Makhare Matsukatov		
28. Dali Aghdgomeladze		
29. Mikheil Kolikidin		
30. Misak Albertyan		