Rural development : guidelines for the the Community LEADER+ initiative

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PURPOSE : laying down guidelines for the Community Initiative for Rural Development (Leader+). CONTENT : the new initiative will complement the "mainstream" programmes by promoting integrated schemes created by active partnerships operating at the local level. The aim of LEADER+ is to encourage and support rural actors in thinking about the longer term potential of their area. It seeks to encourage the implementation of integrated, high quality, original strategies for sustainable development designed to encourage experimenting with new ways of enhancing the natural and cultural heritage, reinforcing the economic environment, in order to contribute to job creation and improving the organisational abilities of their community. LEADER+ will be structured around three actions : - action 1: support for integrated territorial rural development strategies of a pilot nature based on the bottom-up approach and horizontal partnerships; - action 2: support for cooperation between rural territories; - action 3: networking between all rural areas in the European Union, whether or not they are beneficiaries under LEADER+, and all rural development actors. Unlike LEADER I and LEADER II, all rural areas will be eligible under LEADER+. However, a limited number of areas will benefit from Community financial support under actions 1 and 2 after an open and rigorous selection procedure. The total contribution of the EAGGF Guidance Section for the period 2000-06 will be EUR 2020 million at 1999 prices.