

## **SUMMARY**

Preparatory meeting of the transnational cooperation project “**Air traffic and logistics development between the EU rural areas and China**”, which was held on 20–21 March 2019 in Tartu, Estonia.

Participants: representatives of cooperation partners from Estonia (Tartu), Sweden (Halmstad), Finland (Seinäjoki), Slovenia (Maribor), Italy (Pisticci) and China.

The main topics of the meeting were:

1. Presentation of the project and its main aims and activities;
2. Introduction of the project partners from Europe and China, and their expectations to the project;
3. Visiting project partners in the Tartu area – Tartu Airport, Estonian Aviation Academy, Tartu Science Park and Tartu University;
4. Defining the main aims and activities for further collaboration between partners to be included into the Memorandum of Understanding;
5. Discussion on the further action plan and timeline of transnational cooperation project, approval of the next steps by project partners.

Meeting material, presentations and other information shared by partners is available here <http://www.tas.ee/development/air-traffic-and-logistics-development-between-the-eu-rural-areas-and-china/>

## **Results of the discussions:**

According to the mapping of the project partners’ needs and expectations, the transnational LEADER cooperation project is expected to include the following activities:

- **Negotiations at local, state and European level and with Chinese partners:**
  - o Building a local level network of partners in each partner country (local action group, municipality, airport, aviation college, university, business incubator, etc.);
  - o Running negotiations with governmental authorities – presenting project ideas and activities on a national level;
  - o Increasing the understanding of project partners in Europe and in China – mapping their potential and challenges.
  - o Finding cooperation possibilities between partners and building links between different types of institutions and stakeholders.
- **Establishment of European secondary airports network:**
  - o Negotiations with potential new partners (e.g. Germany, Austria, Poland, France, Mediterranean area, Moldova);
  - o Exchanging information, good practice and challenges between airports;
  - o Preparatory activities for implementing different types of pilot projects related to aviation, logistics, robotics, airport developments, etc.

Testing cargo handling, different types of technological solutions, etc. (piloting actions to be carried out in the framework of additional projects).

- **Feasibility study of the airport network operations and routes, mapping of investment needs:**
  - Drafting the specification of the feasibility study in collaboration with universities and aviation academies, and business sector partners;
  - Carrying out a feasibility study of the airport network operations and routes;
  - Input collection for long-term strategic plans and the development visions of partner airports;
  - Drafting a vision of future cargo airport 2030.
- **EU-China aviation training consortium establishment:**
  - Mapping of the possibilities and aviation training capacities of partners;
  - Developing relations with Chinese authorities and carrying out negotiations for approved training certification on the Chinese side;
  - Establishment of the EU-China training consortium;
  - Study visit organisation for Chinese authorities;
  - Preparatory activities for implementing pilot projects related to training (piloting actions to be carried out in the framework of additional projects).
- **Business platforms development for SMEs in Europe and China:**
  - Setting up a business platform to bring European and Chinese SMEs together;
  - Study visit of European SMEs to China;
  - Facilitating business dialogue between SMEs and an exchange of information and contacts.
- **Cargo and passenger routes development between European airport network and with China:**
  - Preparatory activities for opening seasonal charter flights between European airports.
- **Rural tourism development:**
  - Joint rural destinations platform development – [www.visiteurope.com](http://www.visiteurope.com), [www.visitruraleurope.com](http://www.visitruraleurope.com);
  - Promoting rural destinations in partner countries of the airport network.

### **Budgetary issues**

The estimated budget of the TNC LEADER project joint activities is expected to be about €300 000 shared between partners. Depending on the number of partners, each country is expected to contribute approximately €40 000–50 000. Each partner can add their own activities and allocate additional budget, if required.

Potential costs are related to the hosting of meetings in partner countries in Europe, travel expenses in Europe and China, the feasibility study, SMEs study visit in China, project management costs and expert costs.

**Next steps and timeline**

1) Project consortium building – negotiations in and with partner countries. Finding additional partners, preferably in Germany, Poland and the Mediterranean area, if required. Continuation of negotiations in progress.	March–June
2) Drafting and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The draft version will be sent in April for partners’ consultation.	March–June
3) Developing the LEADER cooperation project Work Packages with a plan of activities and budget with partner countries.	April–June <i>Zoom meeting in April</i>
4) Consortium meeting to agree on MOU and LEADER TNC project plan and budget.	June <i>Partners meeting in June in Italy</i>
5) Starting with LEADER cooperation project activities in October–November 2019. Kick-off meeting in Slovenia.	October–November

**Upcoming partners’ meetings:**

- o Zoom meeting in April – LEADER TNC project holders’ meeting to discuss the action plan, budget and cooperation agreement. Doodle poll will be sent to find an appropriate date for the meeting;
- o Consortium meeting on **17–20 June** in Basilicata, Italy – more information will be sent by the Italian partner;
- o Kick-off meeting in Slovenia in November – to be agreed at the partners’ meeting in June.

*Summary compiled by Kristiina Tammets, CEO of Tartu County Development Association*