



Strengthening the Rural Pact at the national and regional level:

National Rural Pact of Czechia

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Chair of the Rural Pact Coordination Group meeting


5th Rural Pact Coordination Group meeting

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COUNTRY

 **Czechia**

This page contains examples, inspirational initiatives, and actions implemented in Czechia, which contribute to advancing the Rural Pact in the country.

The page is structured along the key elements outlined in the Policy Briefing '[Making the Rural Pact happen in Member States](#)'.

The examples and information provided below aim to inspire other EU Member States to take action, highlighting some of the relevant efforts made in the country by September 2024.

The information has been gathered by the Rural Pact Support Office national experts. It will be regularly updated with new information provided to the Rural Pact Support Office.

If you wish to share with us additional relevant initiatives, please contact us at communications@rural-pact.eu.

85%

of Czechia's territory is covered by rural areas

10.8m

Over 10.8m people live in Czechia

50%

of Czech population live in rural areas

Key actions that support the implementation of the Rural Pact in Czechia

Designated government member and dedicated services for rural issues across policies

Ministry and committee for Regional Development coordinating regional and rural policies



Forward-looking vision implemented through a holistic strategy or action plan

Rural Development Concept



Regional Development Strategy 2021+ and action plans



Smart Cities Concept for urban and rural areas



Appropriate governance systems to facilitate coordination

National Rural Pact



Governmental Committee for Regional Policy and Working Group on Rural Development



The National Rural Network to ensure coordination between LEADER LAGs and Ministry of Agriculture



Regional Councils in self-governing regions



Mechanisms to coordinate the allocation of funding and ensure synergies

National Coordination Authority



Effective rural proofing and adequate data systems

Multi-stage and multi-stakeholder impact assessment process



Structures and mechanisms to engage with rural communities

National Rural Conference



'Village of the Year' competition



National Network of Local Action Groups



Association of Towns and Municipalities



Association of Local Municipalities of the Czech Republic



Capacity building and networking support for a broad array of actors and stakeholders

Municipal Development Programme (PRO)



National Rural Network



Association for Rural Renewal



**RURAL
PACT**

1. Designated government member and dedicated services for rural issues across policies

- **Ministry and committee for Regional Development coordinating regional and rural policies**
 - ▶ The [Ministry of Regional Development](#) plays a central role in coordinating [rural issues and regional development policies](#). It oversees the management of EU Cohesion Policy Funds and implements programmes that target rural revitalisation and reduce regional disparities.
 - ▶ The Ministry manages the [National Standing Conference](#) which coordinates state and regional efforts in implementing the National Document on Territorial Dimension, the Partnership Agreement, and programmes co-financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). It ensures alignment of regional needs with funding and strategy execution. It is composed of three chambers: Regional Chamber, Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) Chamber, and Community-led Local Development (CLLD) Chamber.
 - ▶ The Czech government established the [Government Committee for Regional Policy](#) in 2023 to further address socio-economic disparities and prevent rural depopulation. This committee ensures policy coordination across ministries, evaluates regional development efforts, and facilitates collaboration between the government, regions, and communities.

2. Forward-looking vision implemented through a holistic strategy or action plan

- **Rural Development Concept**

- ▶ The [Rural Development Concept](#) establishes a unified national framework for the development of rural areas. Adopted by the government in 2020, it provides strategic guidance for managing rural development and aims to bridge gaps in strategic and systemic approaches. The Concept outlines a vision for rural areas by 2027, based on five strategic goals and seventeen specific objectives.

- **Regional Development Strategy 2021+ and action plans**

- ▶ [Regional Development Strategy 2021+](#) (RDS21+) outlines key regional development objectives over a seven-year period, in accordance with Law 248/2000 on Regional Development Support. Its primary aim is to foster dynamic, balanced, and sustainable regional growth. The RDS21+ is executed through a two-year Action Plan.
- ▶ The [2023-2024 Action Plan](#) complements the overarching strategy and addresses specific issues that require tailored solutions depending on the type of territory and its unique challenges. It also includes an evaluation of the 2021-2022 Action Plan and reaffirms the designation of state-supported regions, identified as economically and socially vulnerable areas.

- **Smart Cities Concept for urban and rural areas**

- ▶ The [Smart Cities Concept](#) was developed by the Czech Ministry of Regional Development to support the [Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2019–2030: The Country for the Future](#). It proposes new solutions and initiatives to improve quality of life, based on input from municipalities, cities, and regions. The Concept promotes **SMART solutions** for both urban and rural areas, aligning with the **Regional Development Strategy 21+**, and expands on various measures outlined in the strategy for local municipalities.

3. Appropriate governance systems to facilitate coordination

- **National Rural Pact**
 - ▶ The Ministry of Regional Development launched the [National Rural Pact for Czechia](#) in 2022. Its mission is to involve all rural development practitioners in the country in order to enable structured dialogue and cooperation that can help achieve the country's five rural development goals, as set out in its [Rural Development Concept](#).
- **Governmental Committee for Regional Policy and Working Group on Rural Development**
 - ▶ The [Governmental Committee for Regional Policy](#) oversees the governance and coordination of rural affairs. It ensures coherence in policymaking through both horizontal coordination between ministries and vertical coordination across national, regional, and local levels. It is also tasked with introducing a Territorial Impact Assessment into the development of regulations and legislation to strengthen the consideration of territorial impacts in policymaking.
 - ▶ Further collaboration takes place through the National Standing Conference, particularly within the Regional and Community-led Local Development (CLLD) chambers, where key issues are discussed among national, sectoral, and regional stakeholders. The CLLD chamber effectively communicates across silos through an informal CLLD platform where representatives of all involved sectors and the National Network of Local Action Groups (LAGs) meet monthly to address key issues and enhance coordination.
 - ▶ Additionally, the Ministry of Regional Development convenes the [Work Group on Rural Development](#) quarterly, bringing together representatives from government offices, academia, and regional partners to ensure consistent and integrated approaches to rural development.

3. Appropriate governance systems to facilitate coordination

- **The National Rural Network to ensure coordination between LEADER LAGs and Ministry of Agriculture**
 - ▶ [The Ministry of Agriculture](#) supports LAGs and various stakeholders to stimulate rural activity and improve the quality of life. This coordination is facilitated primarily through the [National Rural Network](#) which serves as a communication platform for the CAP Strategic Plan 2023–2027.
 - ▶ The National Rural Network operates under a [2023-2027 Action Plan](#), focusing on networking, capacity building, and dissemination of best practices. The network also aligns its activities with the objectives of the [long-term vision for the EU's rural areas](#) (LTVRA), ensuring synergy across different policy goals.
 - ▶ The Ministry of Agriculture is the managing authority of this network and has established a coordination group composed of various ministry units, and a broader Coordination Unit that includes partners beyond the ministry and the State Agricultural Intervention Fund (SZIF) as a paying agency.
 - ▶ Additionally, regional networks link rural development stakeholders within the country's 13 administrative regions and Prague, with the regional branches of the paying agency acting as secretariats.
- **Regional Councils in self-governing regions**
 - ▶ [Self-governing regions](#) in the Czechia promote rural development through regional incentives and policies. These regions are responsible for implementing policies that address the specific needs of rural areas and work in alignment with national strategies and EU programmes.
 - ▶ The Regional Development Strategy 21+ guides their efforts, promoting sustainable and balanced growth in both urban and rural communities. Through regional councils, regions engage with local municipalities and rural stakeholders to ensure that development initiatives reflect local priorities. They also manage the distribution of national and EU funds to support rural infrastructure, economic development, and social services.

And more...

4. Mechanisms to coordinate the allocation of funding and ensure synergies

- **National Coordination Authority**

5. Effective rural proofing and adequate data systems

- Multi-stage and multi-stakeholder **impact assessment** process

6. Structures and mechanisms to engage with rural communities

- **National Rural Conference**
- **'Village of the Year' competition**
- **National Network of Local Action Groups**
- **Association of Towns and Municipalities**
- **Association of Local Municipalities of the Czech Republic**

7. Capacity building and networking support for a broad array of actors and stakeholders:

- **Municipal Development Programme (PRO)**
- **National Rural Network**
- **Association for Rural Renewal**

Rural Pact in CZ: CLLD Conference



LAGs are important actors in building **resilient, competitive, and sustainable communities**—communities with wellbeing—and through their activities, they contribute to balancing living conditions *everywhere* in the Czech Republic (which is in line with the goals of **cohesion policy** and is key to **regional development** in the Czech Republic).

LAGs are key actors in implementing **social inclusion agendas** in small municipalities and remote areas, and they serve as **knowledge-based entities and Innovation brokers**. It is important to strengthen both the horizontal and the vertical flow of information and scaling of Innovations.

Rural Pact in CZ: CLLD Conference



The **multi-sectoral** nature of LAGs and their **synergistic effects** lead to **greater efficiency** in the use of resources—which is especially important given that funding will be more limited.

This is made possible thanks to the **multi-fund financing of CLLD**—continuation in the 2028+ programming period is **essential**, as it represents good practice for the EU. (*Czech Republic as a flagship in multifund CLLD is fully ready to share the good practice, advocate, and cooperate on the preparations.*)

Moreover, the **integrated approach** should become a **fundamental** principle, automatically applied in the implementation of cohesion policy.

Konference CLLD - www.esfcr.cz



Thank you!

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