

THE LEADER APPROACH

CO-FINANCED BY EU. EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: EUROPE INVESTING IN RURAL AREAS.



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LEADER approach: A method to achieve the objectives of the EU's rural development policy through bottom-up implementation rather than the traditional top-down approach. 'Leader' is a French acronym for 'links between rural development actions'.

Where does LEADER approach belong to? To answer this question, we must first understand how Rural Development Policy divides axes and measures.



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3 THE FOUR AXES OF THE 2007-13 RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Axis 1: measures with the objective of improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry by supporting restructuring, development and innovation.



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THE FOUR AXES OF THE 2007-13 RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

4

Axis 2: measures with the objective of improving the environment and the countryside by supporting land management.

Axis 3: measures with the objective of improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity.



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5 THE FOUR AXES OF THE 2007-13 RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Axis 4: use of the Leader approach to achieve the objectives of Axes 1–3. This aid allocated under the Leader axis relates to the implementation of local development strategies through public-private partnerships called “local action groups”.



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THE FOUR AXES OF THE 2007-13 RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

6

One of the main advantages of bottom-up approaches is that they are able to mobilize more local resources for the development process. This happens both because local actors have a better knowledge of the resource opportunities available and because they have a greater sense of ownership and commitment to the projects. Experience has shown that the bottom-up approach should not be regarded as competing with or opposed to top-down approaches from national and/or regional authorities, but instead as combining and interacting with them, in order to achieve better overall results.



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7 METHODOLOGY OF LEADER APPROACH

1. Bottom up approach
2. Area-based approach
3. Local partnership
4. Multi-sectoral integration
5. Networking
6. Innovation
7. Inter-territorial and international cooperation

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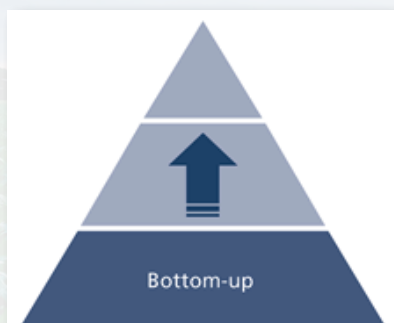
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1. BOTTOM UP APPROACH

8

The bottom-up approach means that local actors participate in decision-making about the strategy and in the selection of the priorities to be pursued in their local area. The involvement of local actors includes the population at large, economic and social interest groups and representative public and private institutions. LEADER conceives the local people as the best experts on the development of their territory. It can be seen as a participatory democracy tool supplementing the electoral parliamentary democracy.



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9 2. AREA-BASED APPROACH

An area-based approach takes a small, homogenous, socially cohesive territory, often characterised by common traditions, a local identity, a sense of belonging or common needs and expectations, as the target area for policy implementation. Having such an area as a reference facilitates the recognition of local strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities, endogenous potential and the identification of major bottlenecks for sustainable development.



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2. AREA-BASED APPROACH

10

A LEADER area must have clearly defined geographic borders, which don't have to follow the administrative borders (perhaps rather the functional ones). The area chosen must have sufficient coherence and critical mass in terms of human, financial and economic resources to support a viable local development strategy. The population must meet the critical mass criteria.



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11 3. LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

The Local Action Group (LAG) should associate public and private partners, be well-balanced and representative of the existing local interest groups, drawn from the different socio-economic sectors in the area. At the decision-making level the private partners and associations must make up at least 50% of the local partnership; Its legal form may vary from country to country but it is often a non-profit, registered organisation.



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4. MULTI-SECTORAL INTEGRATION

12

LEADER is not a sectoral development programme; the local development strategy must have a multi-sectoral rationale, integrating several sectors of activity. The actions and projects contained in local strategies should be linked and coordinated as a coherent whole.



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13 4. MULTI-SECTORAL INTEGRATION

The LAG is a melting pot of sometimes surprisingly different actors. This is often a very fruitful growing ground for innovation. The LAG must in its work be able to bring the different interests and interest groups together in a constructive manner.



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5. NETWORKING

14

The LAG is a network itself but it should also look around and cooperate with other development organisations on local, regional, national and international levels. Networking is a means of transferring good practice, of disseminating innovation and building on the lessons learned from local rural development.

Networking forges links between people, projects and rural areas and so can help overcome the isolation faced by some rural regions. It can help stimulate co-operation projects by putting LEADER groups in touch with each other.

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15 6. INNOVATION

The LAG must bring new elements and solutions to the development of its territory. In its strategy design and project selection decisions the LAG must be able to tolerate certain amount of risk – otherwise the most surprising and innovative ideas would always become disqualified.



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7. INTER-TERRITORIAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

16

Co-operation goes further than networking. It involves a Local Action Group undertaking a joint project with another LEADER group, or with a group taking a similar approach, in another region, Member State, or even a third country.

Cooperation with other regions is often the best source of innovation for the LAGs. From new viewpoints one can better see the new opportunities. In the European rural development policy LEADER has the main responsibility for transnational cooperation.

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17 7. INTER-TERRITORIAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



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LEADER APPROACH IN SLOVAKIA AND CHOPOK JUH MICRO-REGION

18

The eligible applicant – beneficiary for LEADER is a LAG, which has been selected by the Managing Authority for the implementation of the Integrated Local Development Strategy, and which has to have following legal form: civil association – in terms of the Act No. 83/1990 Coll. On Associating of Citizens.



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19 LEADER APPROACH IN SLOVAKIA AND CHOPOK JUH MICRO-REGION



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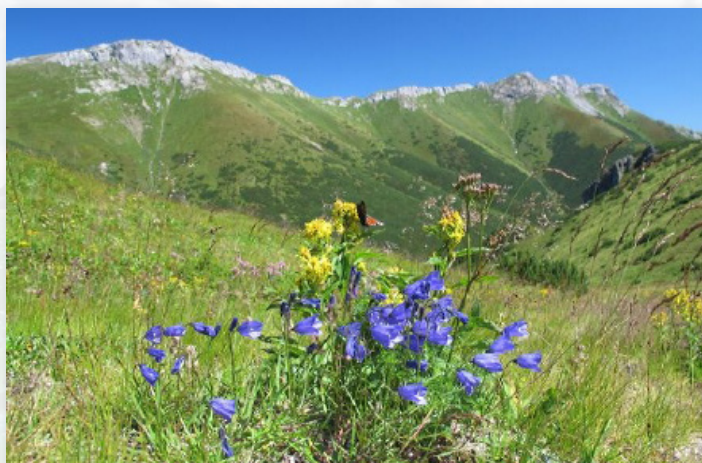
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LEADER APPROACH IN SLOVAKIA AND CHOPOK JUH MICRO-REGION

20

The final beneficiaries of project implementation within the Integrated Local Development Strategies (who submit projects) is defined in the individual LAG strategies in accordance with the defined beneficiaries of aid in the Axis 3 - measuresW of the Rural Development Programme SR (e.g. beneficiaries may be municipalities, civil associations, etc.).



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21 MEASURES WITHIN LOCAL ACTION GROUP

Measure 4.1 – Implementation of Integrated Local Development Strategy

Measure 4.2 – Implementation of Cooperation Projects

Measure 4.3 – Running the Local Action Group

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1. LAG Committee - General assembly in case of LAG Chopokjuh
2. LAG Executive Board in case of LAG Chopokjuh

On the level of the decision-making there must be at least 50% representatives of the private sector including civil and non-profit sectors and maximum 50% representatives of the public sector. LAG Executive Board sets up LAG management office with aim to administrate public funds and manage LAG. Thisbe done by LAG manager, administrative employee and accountant.

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23 STRUCTURE OF LAG IN SLOVAKIA

3. LAG Selection Commission

On the level of the decision-making must be at least 50 % representatives of the private sector including civil and non-profit sectors and maximum 50 % representatives of the public sector. Selection Commission evaluates and selects individual projects according to obligatory criteria and optional criteria defined by individual LAG and MA Guidelines. These criteria, as well as the composition of the selection commission, have to be included in the strategy.



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4. Monitoring Committee

Reviews progress made towards achieving targets of the strategy and monitors the quality of strategy and projects implementation.



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25 STRUCTURE OF LAG IN SLOVAKIA

5. Statutory body – LAG Chairman

Represents LAG, signs agreements, Protocols for applications selection and other documents to be submitted to MA.

6. Control body - Revision Commission in case of LAG Chopokjuh

Controls the economy of LAG and controls the compliance with internal regulations and Articles.

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Since LEADER was launched in 1991 by the European Commission as a Community Initiative, the LEADER local development approach has been providing rural communities in the EU with a method for involving local partners in shaping the future development of their area.



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27 NEW LEADER?

The LEADER approach has attracted a high level of interest within the EU and far beyond, not only in rural but also in urban and coastal areas. While LEADER receives full support from EU institutions and all related stakeholders, it was acknowledged that LEADER has not fulfilled its full potential to comprehensively integrate local needs and solutions into Local Development Strategies (LDS).



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Therefore in order to allow local territories better take multi-sectoral needs into account, it is proposed that in future LEADER under the EAFRD will provide the possibility of implementing multi-fund LDS supported by other EU funds.



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29 NEW LEADER?

In this multi-fund context, the LEADER approach will be referred to as „Community-Led Local Development“ (CLLD). For 2014 to 2020 CLLD (LEADER) will remain a mandatory part of the Rural Development Programmes funded by the EAFRD and a possible option under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). In order to ensure coherence of integrated LDS and actions, common rules are to be applied for these funds under the „Common Strategic Framework“.

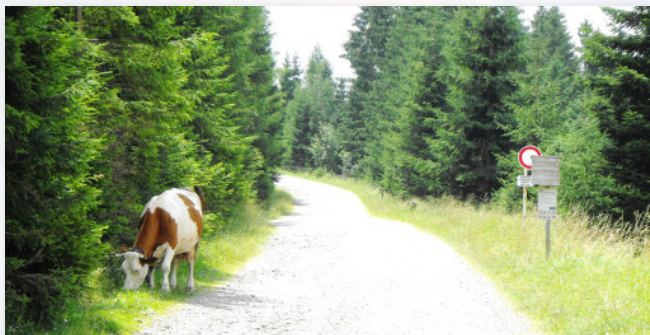


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35 PHOTOGRAPHS

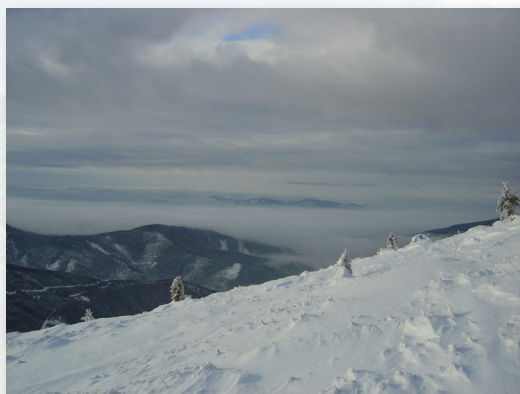


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39 PROJECT INFORMATION

Project: Tourism and LEADER Knowledge Exchange Between Croatia and Slovak Republic.

This project is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Slovak Republic state budget.

The project is implemented through the Rural Development Programme of Slovak Republic 2007-2013, Measure 4.2 – Implementation of cooperation projects.



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