

# The mystic of LEADER ...how to explain it simple

Thomas Müller  
Consultant | LAG Manager  
PROJECTS4 Müller-Murauer OG (Company)  
LAG Sauwald and LAG Wels-Land (A)  
[www.thomasmueller.at](http://www.thomasmueller.at)  
[www.sauwald.at](http://www.sauwald.at)  
[www.lewel.at](http://www.lewel.at)

# WHEN the EU would be a state...

- The LAG would be...
  - The smallest unit in the context of the EU
  - Family of the EU
  - The EU can't care for each community. When communities are inter-connecting and operating under a common strategy, the LEADER-Family is born.



# Top Down is...

- Adding salt ...
  - Too much or too less is not optimal for taste
  - A lot of salt is needed to melt ice but when spring comes, no more salt is needed
  - Salt can be „white gold“, but salt desserts kill all live and innovation.



## Bottom Up is...

- The people you have to bring up
- The natural resources and cultural heritage
- The regional subsidiarity process
- The spirit and identity of an area
- The local actors



## The LAG is...

- The family of the EU – rural development
- The core of regional governance
- The steering unit for regional-based innovation
- The think-tank for smart development



# Prejudices...

- Example: LEADER is a program for farmers, business does not profit from it
  - Answer: Only prepaid invoices get funding – Invoices always come from business-economy, so LEADER-money goes 100% to business.



## Some more arguments...

- Politicians are very important in making the right decisions in „enabeling“ LEADER
- ...are not responsible for the results
- ...have to communicate LEADER to the community members as „...we opened the door for you, you have to go through...“



## Some more arguments...

- Why are politicians, journalists etc. so successful when criticising the EU?
  - David fighting against Goliath - is always the hero...
  - It's very easy to be a regional hero when you protest against something far away...







## Tell simple stories about projects and processes:

- Example Tree-Top-Walk-Way:
  - Idea created in a CLLD/LEADER Workshop
  - Top down failed: Politicians liked to realise it – this was not possible
  - Bottom Up started: Local Farmer grabbed the idea and liked to realise it
  - Experts said: NO
  - LAG said: YES – THIS IS LEADER!
  - Success with 200.000 Visitors a year





## Tell simple stories about projects and processes:

- Example „Forsthaus Freinberg“ – Bottom UP:
  - Municipality bought an old „cultural heritage“ house
  - Workshops about the usage
  - Expectations: LEADER-Manager should realise most!
  - But he cheated and did nothing than protecting the bottom-up approach
  - This made people angry, initiative „against“ LEADER was built and volunteers started renovating the house and organising events
  - Bottom Up was confirmed immediately and this initiative got LEADER-Funding as a legal body for the emerging project
  - Now they all know about LEADER and are very happy about it...



## What is a LEADER-Project?

- A finalised investment with a visible LEADER-Sign at the wall?
- A regional development-process, started moving within the LEADER-Program?
- A recognisable positive step of development?
- Increasing regional identity under name of LEADER?



# Many thanks for your attention!

- Book about „LEADER for dummies“ expected in August 2014
- More than 50% of the Austrians are living in LEADER-Areas – There is not one book in public book-shops with which you get LEADER explained in a simple way with lot of examples
- Send me your stories: [mueller@projects4.info](mailto:mueller@projects4.info)
- Humor, Jokes required!

