Leader as a driver for Rural Europe: workshop for new LAGs

Workshop B: Dynamics of Implementation

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LAG Ausserfern

- Günter Salchner, LAG-Manager since 2001
- Non-profit organisation, 50 members
- Holistic approach in regional management
- Population of 32,000, area of 1,237 qkm, pop. density of 26 inh./qkm
- Mountainous terrain, border area to Germany
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Leader and Innovation – Important Questions

- How to develop integrated/innovative projects?
- How to involve local population?
- How to evaluate innovative project proposals?
- How to allow failure and enhance social learning?
Leader and Innovation – A First Glance

- Experts: The method itself is the innovation
- Authorities: An innovation in one LAG is not innovative in another one
- Practitioners: Mainstreaming kills innovation
- European Court of Auditors: Few LAGs could demonstrate innovation...
  (Special report on the implementation of the Leader approach for rural development)
Leader and Innovation – Definition and Characteristics

• Novelty (invention) and introduction on the market
• Inspiration vs. transpiration
• Incremental vs. revolutionary innovation
• Planned vs. emergent innovation
• Cooperation vs. competition
• Resource-based vs. market-based
• Culture matters
Leader and Innovation – The Role of Culture

Innovation Killer
Distrust & Envy
Leader and Innovation – THE LECH TRAIL
A result-oriented example

• **Novelty (invention) and introduction on the market**
  Long distance hike of 120 km along the river Lech (new product)
  Designed for non-alpine hikers (new market)
  First European quality trail (new process)
  Opening 2011/2012 (introduction on the market)

• **Inspiration vs. transpiration**
  First idea 2000, first concept 2002 and several following sub-projects,
  total investment so far appr. 1.6 MIO Euro
Leader and Innovation – THE LECH TRAIL
A Result-Oriented Example

• **Incremental vs. revolutionary innovation**
  New definition of hiking in an already tourism-intensive alpine area

• **Planned vs. emergent innovation**
  Theme was incorporated in Local Development Strategy, the product (and projects) is the result of a dynamic innovation process

• **Cooperation vs. competition**
  Core project group consists of five (competing) tourism organisations

• **Resource-based vs. market-based**
  Idea was resource-driven, product development is market-driven
Leader and Innovation – Actions and Involvement

- Innovative coordination actions
- Innovative structuring actions
- Innovative consolidating actions
- All three types of innovative actions add up to a development spiral (strategic alignment)
Leader and Innovation – Actions and Involvement
THE LECH TRAIL

• **Innovative coordination actions**
  Concept, education and training,

• **Innovative structuring actions**
  Infrastructure, marketable product, marketing communication, quality system and quality certification

• **Innovative consolidating actions**
  Distribution channels, business cooperation, merchandising, product management, quality management and controlling
Leader and Innovation – The Role of the LAG Manager

- Coordinate strategy process
- Moderate network and cooperation process
- Project management
- Provide additional knowledge (market view!)
- Open eye for emergent innovations
- Evaluate ideas and give impetus
Leader and Innovation – Important Questions

- **How to develop integrated/innovative projects?**
  Go out in the field and dig in the fertile soil of creativity and ambition

- **How to involve local population?**
  Bring “old” locals and “new” locals together
  Address their personal interest and expected profits
Leader and Innovation – Important Questions

• **How to evaluate innovative project proposals?**
  Balance between resource-based and market-based view
  Strategic alignment instead of isolated actions

• **How to allow failure and enhance social learning?**
  Use simple and quantitative indicators and organise follow-up meetings
Further Readings

- Leader Focus Groups’ results available soon on EN RD website
  http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/

- Innovation and Rural Development, Observatory Dossier NO 2, 1997

- LECH TRAIL www.lechweg.com