



Biography of speakers

Workshop B on Implementing Local Development Strategies

Jean-Michel Courades, Policy Officer, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development at the European Commission

Jean-Michel Courades is working in the unit responsible for the European Network for Rural Development. He is an expert in rural development policy with a special focus on local development (Leader). He has also been active in other EU policy areas (health and safety, food labelling, cultural cooperation and environmental protection). Before joining the European Commission in 1987, Mr. Courades was head of the "Community Development" unit at the City of Lyon (France). Mr. Courades holds a Bachelor's degree in political science from the Institute of Political Studies of Strasbourg and a postgraduate degree in European Studies from the College of Europe (Brugge).



John Grieve, Rural Development Expert, Founding Director in The Rural Development Company, United Kingdom

John Grieve is a founding Director in The Rural Development Company a specialist consultancy practice based in rural Angus in eastern Scotland. John has hands on knowledge of rural community development work, a former hill shepherd and farms manager he worked as the Angus Glens Development Officer and was the Leader II Manager for Upland Tayside prior to entering consultancy.



John is an expert in the development, application and evaluation of Rural Development policy and practice he has extensive experience throughout UK and elsewhere in Europe. He has extensive highly specialist experience of local development approaches and in particular the LEADER approach and of the mainstreaming of the territorial development method in the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme. He contributed extensively to the former Leader+ contact points work and was a senior member of the core team of the UK Leader+ network. John has led many Leader evaluations and was a core team member in the EU ex post evaluation of Leader+, he led the European Evaluation Networks work on evaluating Leader and quality of life measures.

More recently he has been heavily involved in the roll out of the method to fisheries communities through his involvement in FARNET, the European Fisheries Areas Network where he is part of the core team. He is currently acting as the ENRD expert supporting the work of LEADER Focus Group 4.





Petri Rinne, LAG Manager, Joutsenten Reitti Local Action Group, Finland, FG4 Member

Since 2001, Petri Rinne has worked as the Manager of the Joutsenten Reitti LAG in South-West Finland, and was the first to introduce the LEADER approach to this area both in terms of programme design and implementation. Creativity and internationalisation are the two focus points of his work.



Aside with his work he has been consulting in LEADER method dissemination in most of the New Member States, Balkan area as well as Russia, Mozambique and the Republic of South Africa. Together with an OECD colleague, Mr Philip Wade, he has published a LEADER Dissemination Guide Book in 2008. Currently he also presides ELARD, European Leader Association for Rural Development, based in Brussels and bringing together the interests of more than 700 LAGs from 20 European countries.

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Judit Rácz, LAG manager, Felső-Homokhátság Local Action Group, Hungary, FG4 Member

Judit Rácz graduated in Communication and Culture Management (BA) at the Zsigmond Király University of Budapest and currently studying Communication and Media Studies (MA) at the same university.

Since 2009, she is a LAG manager of the Felső-Homokhátság Local Action Group, in the center of Hungary. The association was founded by 38 participants in 2007, the size of the territory of the LAG is 700 km², with 13 communities, and 52 000 citizens. Before that she worked at a different Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), as a community organiser, local news editor and journalist, event and culture coordinator. Besides being a LAG manager, she is a member of three other NGOs, and she is helping many others. She works as a volunteer in more campaigns, which are dealing with the establishment of local environmental protection, advocacy, equality and social security. She possesses civil community views, and believes that the coordination of our actions is based on common knowledge. This knowledge, which is based on common agreement, can be transformed into a common action.



Dr. Sabine Weizenegger, LAG manager, LAG Regionalentwicklung Oberallgäu, Germany, FG4 member



Sabine did her studies in Geography at Trier University, and completed her PhD at Institute for Economic Geography at University Munich.

She has done a research in Africa (Benin, Kenya).

Her fields of competence are: actor oriented management, protected areas, cultural landscapes, participative methods, tourism, developing countries and international cooperation and Africa.

Since 2003, she has been working as a LAG manager of the Leader Action Group Regionalentwicklung Oberallgäu.

She has experienced three local development concepts in LEADER+ and LEADER in ELER 2007-13 (that became necessary because of enlargement of LAG). In addition, the region went through a process of branding the region which implicated more workshops for finding topics and objectives that stand behind this brand "Allgäu". She is an active member of Focus Group 4 on Better Local Development Strategies.

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Deirdre Kelly, Managing Authority, Axis 3 and 4, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, Ireland, FG4 Member

Deirdre Kelly is an Administrative Officer with the EU Rural Development section of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in Ireland. The department is the managing authority for Axes 3&4 of the Rural Development Programme in Ireland in co-operation with the overall managing authority the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food who implement Axis 1&2.

Her work involves support for the Local Action Groups in Ireland who deliver Axis 3 measures using the Axis 4(LEADER) approach. Almost all of the tasks relating to the delivery of these Axes in Ireland are delegated to the Local Action Groups and as such a large part of the work of the section in the Department involves monitoring compliance with EU regulations. The section also provides support on other aspects of the RDP including the eligibility of projects. She works at national level on post 2013 issues and is also a member of the LEADER Sub Committee at EU level and has participated in two focus groups of this committee. She is currently participating in the focus group looking at Local Development Strategies.





Ryan Howard, LAG Manager, South & East Cork Area Development (SECAD), Ireland, FG4 Member



Ryan Howard has been a LAG Manager for over 15 years. He started his career in the private sector working as a Production Supervisor with Food Companies in Ireland, Saudi Arabia, the USA and UK. His main passion is Rural and Community Development and today he is the leader of a team of 21 people working in South & East Cork Area Development – known as ‘SECAD’ based on the south coast of Ireland. SECAD has evolved over the past fifteen years from a position of working with only one co-financed programme (the LEADER II Programme in 1996) to the present day which sees SECAD delivering a Global or Multi-Funded Programme of Activities in areas such as Rural Development, Social Inclusion, Social Employment and Community Transport. Their story is similar to other LAGs in Ireland. SECAD are concerned about the viability of rural areas and views the delivery of supports from the RDP and other funds through the LEADER Approach as a vital element in underpinning the vibrancy of rural Europe. However there is some concern about the future viability of the LEADER Approach itself. This concern has led Ryan (on behalf of SECAD and other LAGs in Ireland) into supporting positive discussions and reviews at local, national and European levels with the aim of restoring/protecting some of the key values and principles of the LEADER Approach. He is an active member of the Irish Network of Local Action Groups (Irish Local Development Network) and is a member of Focus Group 4 on Better Local Development Strategies.

