



Assessing an improved local governance through LEADER/CLLD – Looking at the input and output of governance arrangements

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Good Practice Workshop: “Showing the added value of LEADER/CLLD through evaluation”

17-18 May 2018 Helsinki, Finland

Outline

- **Introduction:** LEADER/CLLD in four/five federal states in Germany
- **Background and needs:** Why and how to assess “improved local governance” as an added value of LEADER/CLLD?
- **Process and methods:** evaluate the input/output of local governance
 - **What** are the evaluation questions?
 - **What** is its conceptual framework?
 - **How** was it implemented?
- **Evaluation findings, and lessons learned from the findings**
- **Reflections on the evaluation approach**

Introduction

1. Experiences using this approach during two funding periods: 2007-13 & 2014-20, in Germany
2. We evaluated four federal states/ four RDP in Germany (during the funding period of 2007-2013 in five RDP, with CLLD strategies in all federal states approved in 2015)
3. Number of LAGs **2007-13 >> 2014-20**:

Hesse:	20	>>	24
Lower-Saxony:	32	>>	41
North-Rhine-Westfalia:	12	>>	28
Schleswig-Holstein:	21	>>	22
4. The level of implementation is different: altogether low share of funds spent, but sufficient number of projects approved (2017 > 1000)
5. No federal states has implemented a multi-fund approach, except for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) in coastal areas

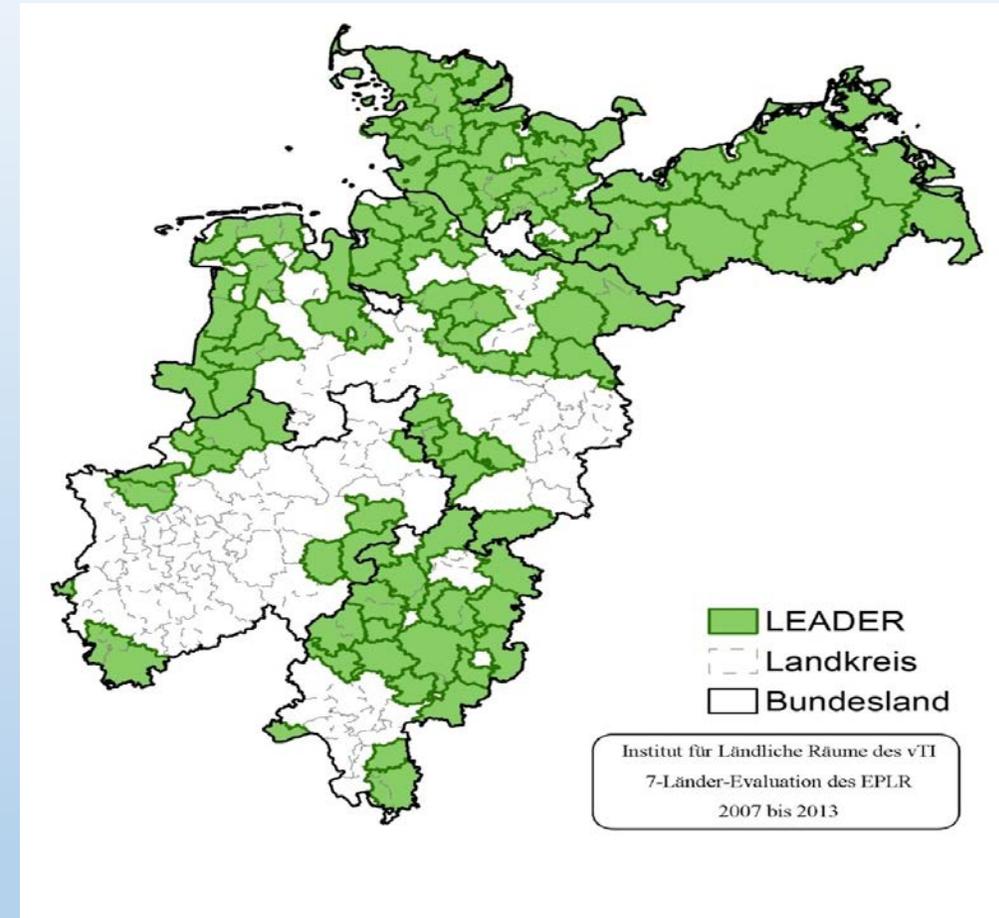


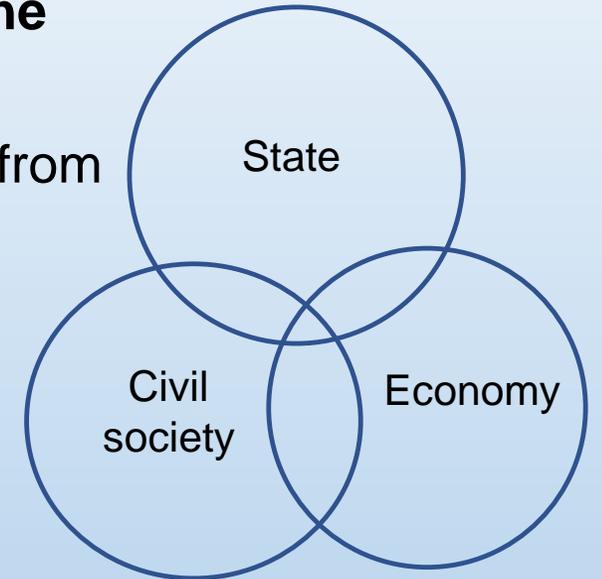
Figure 1 LAGs in examined federal states 2017-2013: Hesse, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine-Westfalia, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Background and needs

- Our work is **part of RDP-evaluation**, complying with evaluation duties of federal states, in addition to **cooperation with LAGs for the use of self-assessment results**;
- **How** have these needs planned to be addressed?
 - RDP evaluation plan (based on EU-requirements and detailed concept for single federal states)
 - External evaluation: assignment till 2024
 - Report for single RDP, in addition a report for LEADER (for all four states)
 - Based on experiences from 2007-2013, new evaluation guidelines
- **Stage of assessment:** for 2014-20:
 - First LAG-survey completed (2017/2018) → first results obtained, but analysis still ongoing, LAGs got results for self-assessment
 - Next (main) report: **2019**

The evaluation approach

- Evaluation question: **What is the contribution of LEADER to improve the local governance?**
- Improving local governance is understood as better cooperation of actors from public sector/state, economy and civil society;
- **Key elements of definition:** network cooperation, three actor groups, voluntary commitment;
- Two aspects of local governance matter...
 - ... **on the input-side:** type and structure of participation, gender representation (really bottom-up?)
 - ... **on the output-side:** contributions to cooperation and rural development (is it useful?)



The evaluation approach

- To detect the added value of LEADER/CLLD, it is crucial to get the estimations of LAG-members divided by state/public public sector, economy and civil society;
- Link to self-assessment of the CLLD strategy/ the LAGs
 - LAGs get results from LAG-survey (12 pages)
 - Especially open-ended questions (restriction for statistical examinations: 10 to 25 answers per LAG)

Evaluation elements to assess improved local governance

Table 1: Additional indicators used to improve the quantitative analysis

Judgment Criteria	Additional Result Indicator
<p><u>Input side</u> Participation in the decision-making processes has increased by including wider parts of the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants in the events to set up the strategy • Number of working/projects groups enhanced from LAG • Number of members in the LAGs
Gender balance in decision-making has increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of males/females in decision-making bodies of LAGs
Functionality of the LAG as an local governance arrangement was established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of satisfaction of LAG-members (devided by public/state, economy, civil society) as concern a) decision-making b) content of decisions • Willingness for further commitment (= not to use the exit-option of a voluntary commitment)
<p><u>Output side</u> Cooperation attitude and cooperation of LAG-members has increased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimations of LAG-members (development over time) as concern: a) better cooperation beyond administrative borders, b) understanding other views • Share of projects with cooperation from different groups
Quality of projects (in sense of an added-value) was increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of projects with voluntary commitment in project implementation • Share of projects with a focus on the whole region (instead of single municipalities)
Support of different groups n the LAG-area was increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimations of LAG-members about support of different groups of actors (state, economy, civil society)

The evaluation approach

1. Main data source is the **LAG-survey**;
2. General data directly from **LAG-managers** (Monitoring 2016 and 2019, every year 2009 to 2013)

Table 2: Indicators & data sources

Indicator	Unit of measurement	Data source
Satisfaction with decision-making	Likert-scale (6 levels)	LAG-survey (2017)
Estimation about support from different groups	Likert-scale (6 levels)	LAG-survey (2017)
Share of male/females in the decision making bodies of LAGs	%	Monitoring from LAG-managers (2016)
Number of working and projects groups	Number / average per LAG	Monitoring from LAG-managers (2016)
Share of projects with voluntary commitment in project implementation	%	Beneficiaries-survey (2018)

Table 3: Steps to implement the LAG-survey

Step	Description	Who does what
1. Conceptualising the approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapting the EU Common Evaluation Questions to the RDP context by developing complementary questions & create additional indicators - Development of questions (different types: open-ended ,for key-indicators mainly: 6 level Likert-type-scale) - Timing of survey (agreement with LAG-managers) - Choose type of survey: online-tool, written, we used both options (Online: Lime-Survey) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MA, external evaluators, working group (external evaluators, LAG-managers, authorities)
2. Collecting data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carrying out the survey in every LAG (participants: all LAG-members, so also beneficiaries have been included, LAG-managers NOT, they will get an own survey) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External evaluators - LAG-managers support with reminders/ advertising
3. Analysing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply statistical techniques for key-indicators at RDP level to examine differences in the level of satisfaction between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) different kind/type of actors within the LAGs b) different LAGs with different regional settings c) different time periods (i.e. LAG surveys in 2009, 2013, 2017) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External evaluators
4. Discussing and disseminating of findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-assessment: arrange meetings with LAG members to discuss options for improvements at LAG-level - RDP evaluation: Include findings in reports to estimate contributions to local governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RDP level: external evaluators - LAG level: LAG manager

Findings and lessons learned – Input

Table 4: Indicator “Number of working and projects groups”

Federal state	Nbr of LAGs	LAGs with working groups	Nbr of groups	Avg of active groups per LAG	Open to public
HE	24	22	103	4,1	44%
NI	41	33	122	2,9	27%
NW	28	19	54	1,8	59%
SH	22	20	73	2,7	60%

Source: own data (Monitoring of LAG-structures 2017)

Findings:

- Although there are no clearly defined duties for wider participation, there is a wider participation of local stakeholders in working groups
- In LAGs: dominance of the “usual suspects” of participation (i.e. male, academic, over 40) – so the LAG-compositions show a lack of underprivileged groups and shortfalls in gender balance

Table 5: Indicator “Gender representation in LAGs”

Federal state	Share of females 2007+	2014 +	Settings for application 2014+
NI	28%	29%	There should be an equal representation
SH	21%	24%	There should be an equal representation
HE	19%	22%	There should be an equal representation
NRW	20%	40%	There was a new 30% minimum quorum for all LAGs

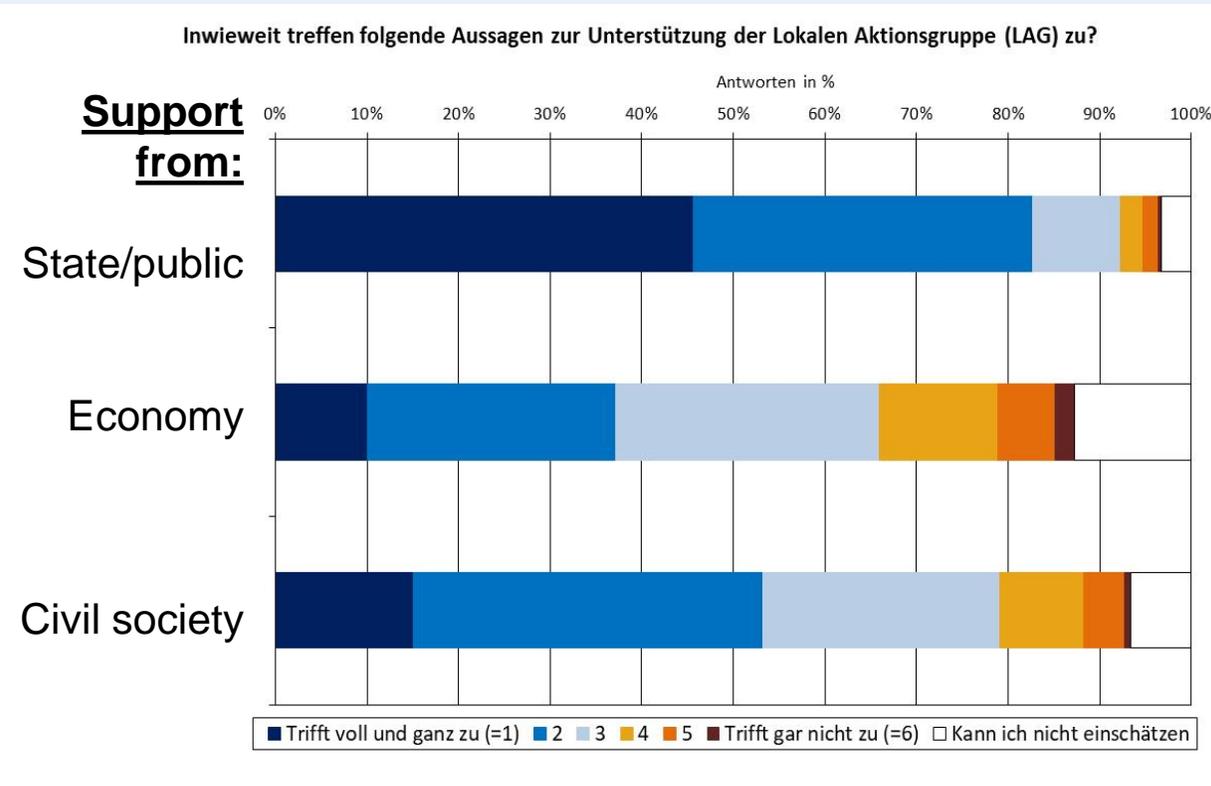
Source: own data (Monitoring of LAG-structures 2012 & 2017)

Follow up actions:

- For participation in working groups: no rules needed (but recommendation at EU-level to set a 10-person-minimum for LAGs)
- For gender representation: one federal state react with a quorum ... with good results

Findings and lessons learned – Output

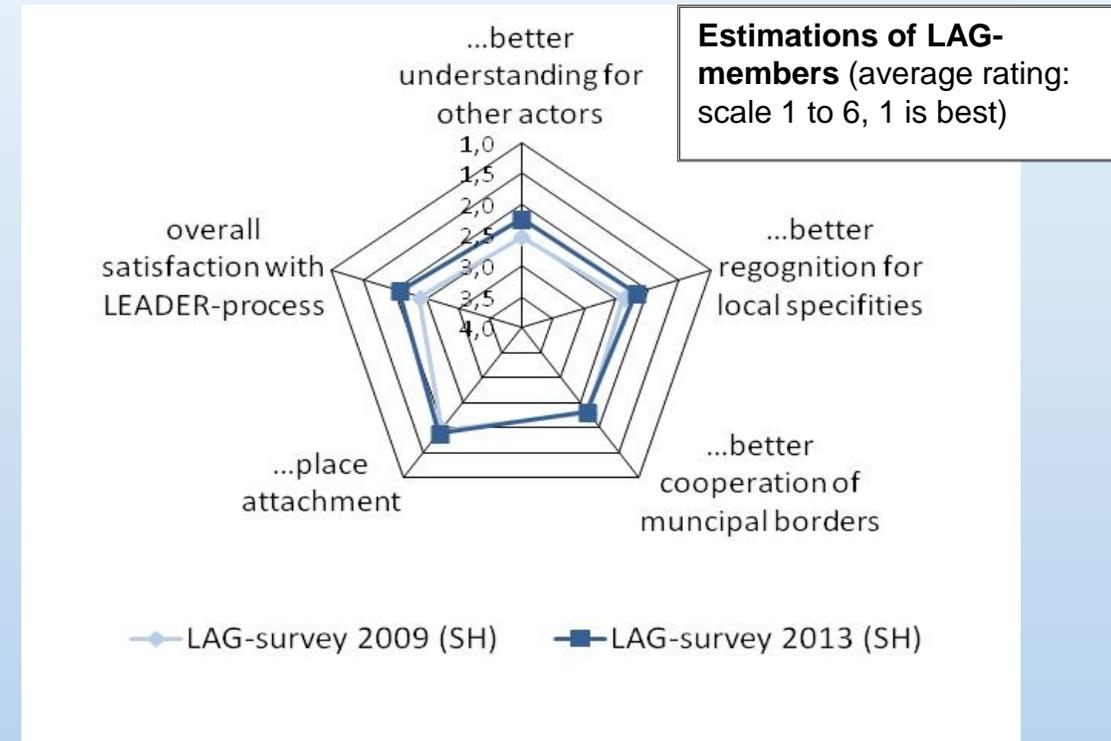
Graph 1: Indicator “Increased support from different groups”



<< strong support < > weak support >>

Source: own data, LAG-survey 2017, n=899

Graph 2: Indicators “Increased cooperation in the region”



Source: own data, LAG-survey 2009, LAG-survey 2013 (federal state: SH), n=325

Findings/Follow up actions:

- Confirmation: added value to improve local governance in general was achieved
- But rethink the role of economy, carefully monitor a possible dominance of public sector (consequence: change of co-financing rules)
- Reduce bureaucracy/narrow funding conditions to strengthen non-public actors!

Reflections on the evaluation approach

- **Limits:** with a LAG-survey it is possible to analyse an “inside”-view (= judge the functionality of the governance-arrangements), but only limited how these governance-arrangements are working together with actors, who are not part of these arrangements
- **Challenge for implementing such surveys:** cooperation with LAGs is crucial for reply rate, and for acceptance by LAG-managements you need **early** coordination (timing of survey, questions)
 - results should be useable for self-assessment (*to LAGs it is not possible to give results divided in single groups of actors (numbers get to low), but open questions are even more interesting for self-evaluation*)
- **The LAG-surveys (all three 2009, 2013, 2017) worked well, but it is quite an effort:** in principle it can be used in other Member States (even possible to use our results for key indicators as a base for comparisons)
- **The approach is able to show an added value of LEADER:** fine for local governance at RDP level, and such LAG-surveys also delivers results for aspects of social capital

Thank you

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Further information:

<https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/173061> (conference paper about input/output aspects of improved governance)

<https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/149409/2/10-1228-pollerman.pdf> (article about LEADER-evaluation 2007-13)

www.eler-evaluierung.de (information about RDP-evaluation, but only in *German*)