



## **Focus Group 2: Preserving the innovative character of Leader**

Leader Subcommittee, 12 November 2010, Brussels

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## Members of the group

- Germany and the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium-Flanders, Ireland, Czech Republic, Hungary, France, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Poland and Slovenia.



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**Innovation is a crucial aspect of  
LEADER**





"Your proposal is innovative. Unfortunately, we won't be able to use it because we've never tried something like this before."

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to use it because we've never  
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## Innovation

- Different definitions at all different levels and Memberstates
- Some examples of definitions: new methods, new products, new policy, new service, new process, new involvement, new combinations, new collaborations new.....







## At EU level

- Mainstreaming leader approach → no intention to limit the innovative character, but to use the innovative process approach in all standard measures as well
- **Recommendation:** It should be possible to take projects into account without having to dissect them into different aspects corresponding to different measures of the programme.



**Recommendation:** The financing regulations which also apply to Leader must also be seriously considered in terms of whether or not their character is appropriate for the specificities of the Leader approach.





## At RDP level

- Sometimes RDP'S try to define what is "Innovative"  
But: Every definition on the abstract level of the RDP have the risk to create artificial bottlenecks, especially if descriptions seems to be a "closed shop"
- The selection criteria for innovation...
  - should make it possible to select more complex projects
  - should be decided at the relevant level
  - should not be too precise







*"I'll be happy to give you innovative thinking. What are the guidelines?"*

**I'll be happy to give you  
innovative thinking.  
What are the guidelines?**



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## At RDP level

The participants of FG2 were of the unanimous opinion that given the specificity of the bottom-up approach, LAGs should be involved in setting criteria for definitions of innovation in the framework of the local strategy and not at the RDP level.



## At RDP level

It is recommended that both public and private funding be considered as co-financing options. Because public co-funding is not always available and depends on policy.

And: Avoid the necessity for LAGs to search for the national co-financing for each project.





## At LAG level

Innovative projects inherently pose some risk which can have specific consequences in terms of project selection:

- In terms of eligibility projects may not be selected because they do not offer any guarantee that they will be implemented soundly and/or achieve all the expected results;
- In terms of identifying potential co-financing, potential backers may tend to have the same reluctance as the Leader assessment bodies.







## At LAG level

The rather abstract definition of innovation in the local context (e.g. new types of projects, categories of beneficiaries, new economic activities, demonstration projects with an experimental character which claim being transferable) could be more focused.

This is the only feasible way to ensure that innovation is recognised as a valuable eligibility criterion when a project proposal is being assessed.

Recommendation: Still focus on adding value for the strategy (avoid use of the term innovation in an inflationary way)





## LAG Level

In some rural areas, there is a lack of new ideas or an innovative approach generally. Information, training, exchanges, mentoring and external technical assistance with more 'proactive' areas/actors could be useful to boost the innovative spirit required.



## General

The FG 2 recommends a close collaboration between project promoters, LAGs as decision making bodies and the authorities dealing with the administration of the EAFRD, already during the project preparation.







## Innovative projects: examples

- In local cultural heritage and recourse; new alternative uses of old buildings (Germany, Flanders, The Netherlands)
- Renewable energy and climate (Ireland, Flanders)
- In the field of services to the population (Germany)
- New technologies (Poland, Flanders)
- Education and the social sector (the Netherlands, Germany)
- Agriculture and the livability of the countryside
- New combinations of sectors and new partnerships are crucial







## LAG South East Drenthe Project Regional Mixed Farm

- An example of how LEADER can contribute to a better agricultural sector





## Regional farming; combine feed and milk production in the region

- Feed producers: decline of income because of new upcoming EU regulations on sugar and starch (potatoes)
- Dairy farms want to grow, but can not afford to buy new land because of the prices per ha

### **Solution**

- The Feed producers grow the feed for the dairy farms
- New income for the feed producers, dairy farms can grow without buying new land.





## Gaols of the project

- Closed regional cycle system
- No minerals import
- Less depended on import of concentrated feed and EU legislation
- Establishing a Cow estate and a Feed Estate
- Make it attractive to be a farmer again!
- Support in the area by local inhabitants



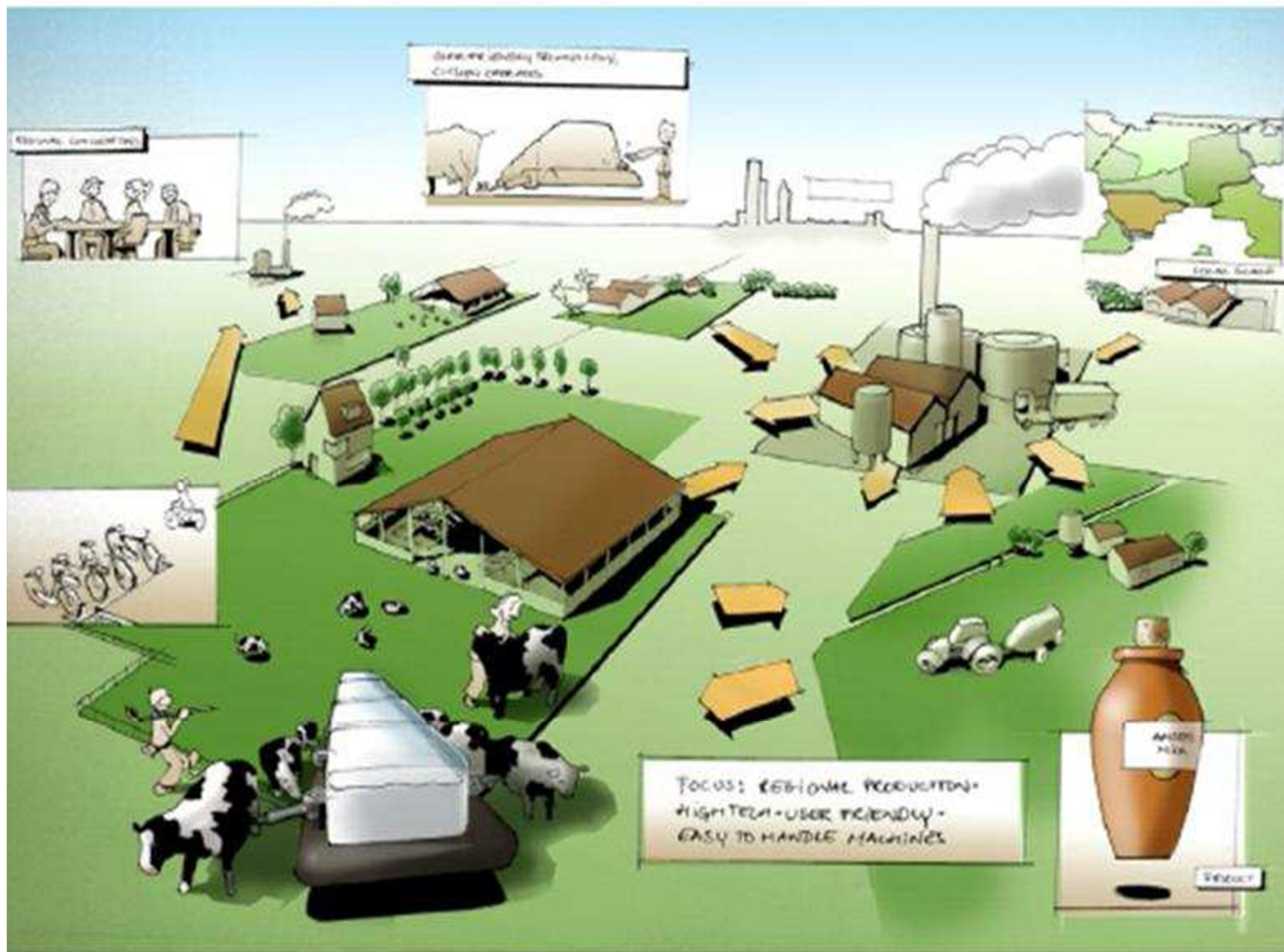


## Activities

- Coaching trajectory with 11 entrepreneurs (farmers)
- Making a business plan (with involved care, energy and cooperation) in cooperation with education institute.
- End result: sustainable cooperation between dairy farms and feed producers.
- Development of central manure processing system.
- Concrete realization of: Cow Estate and Feed Estate
- **Involved:** municipality, farmers, university, inhabitants, area organizations

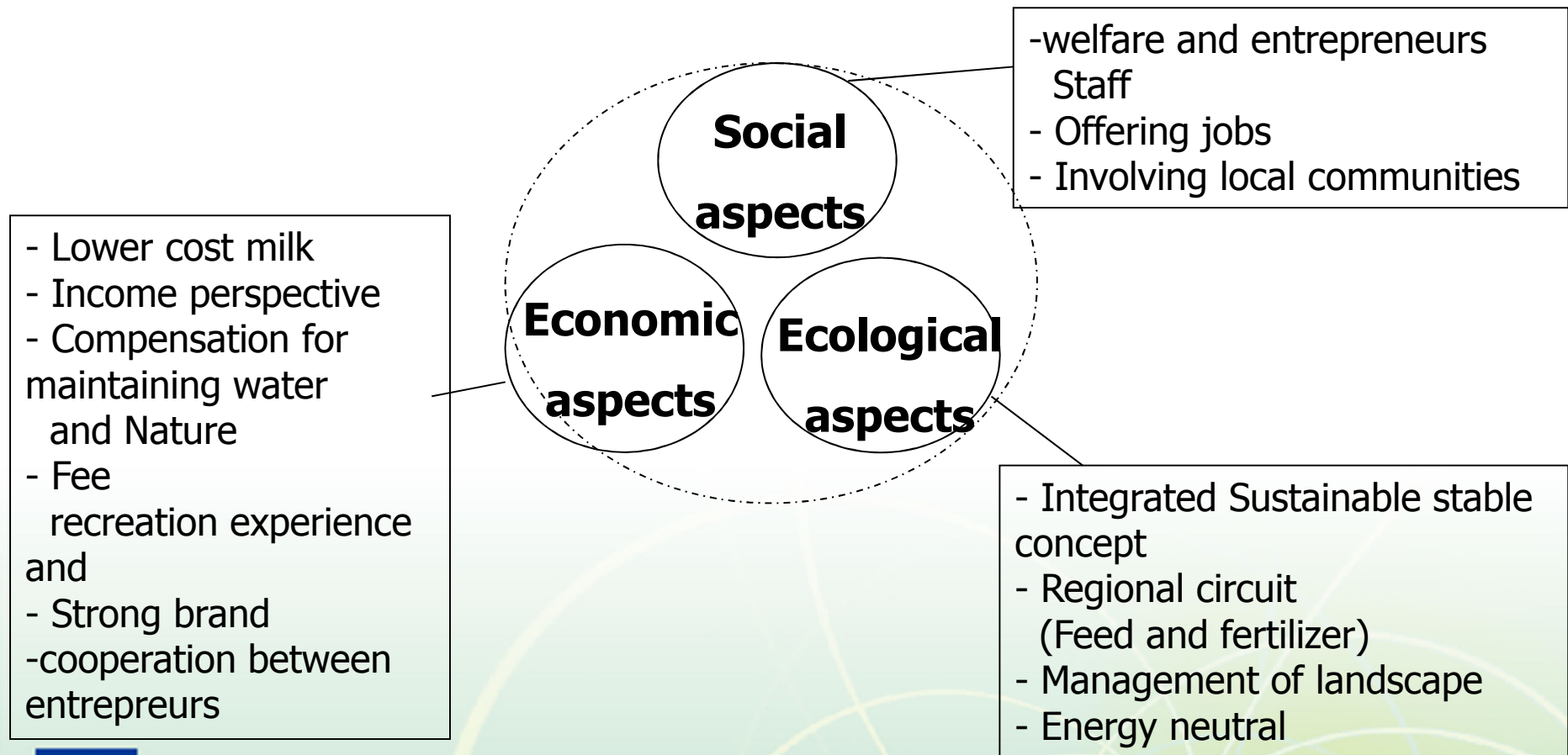








## Cow Estate; 4 dairy farm together on 1 farm





## More information on the Regional Mixed Farm project

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Thank you for your attention



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