



LEADER 2013 event: Building bridges for the future

Brussels, 17-18th April 2013

SHOWCASING LEADER SESSION: Local Development Strategy Implementation and Evaluation

SUMMARY



Funded by the



SHOWCASING LEADER: LDS Implementation and Evaluation

I. Background:

The showcasing session on Local Development Strategy implementation and evaluation was conducted during Day 1 from 17:30 to 18:30, April, 17th at the LEADER event 2013. It was built upon examples and cases proposed by participants and prepared prior to the event on the theme. The information presented here is based on the information prepared and presented from participants

The session comprised of six case studies from Finland, Poland, Austria, Sweden, and Germany.

1. LEADER and rural entrepreneurs: How LAGs can support small rural enterprises in internationalization, **presented by Paivi Hagman, LAG Kehittamisyhdistys Kalakukko ry, Finland**
2. Local small loan scheme for NGO's / LAG governance and management, **presented by Dawid Skotnicki, LAG Stowarzyszenie "Partnerstwo dla Krajny i Pałuk", Poland**
3. Austrian National Indicator Framework for self-assessing LAG Performance, **presented by Michael Fischer, National Rural Network, Austria**
4. Points to consider when planning for better projects, **presented by Barbro Fischerstrom, LAG LEADER BERGSLAGEN, Sweden**
5. Regional networking of LAGs as a way to better communication and integration, **presented by Witold Magryś, LAG Spichlerz Gornego Slaska, Poland**
6. Self- evaluation tool for LAGs, **presented by Anke Wehmeyer, National Rural Network, Germany**

II. Key points made from the hosts of the cases

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1. LEADER and rural entrepreneurs: HOW LAGs can support small rural enterprises in internationalization, Finland

- LEADER funding has been a well determined way to support and promote small scale entrepreneurship in rural areas. In LAG Aktiivinen Pohjois-Satakunta ry's (www.aktiivinen.fi) area have been implemented over 100 projects by small rural enterprises (1st or 2nd in Finland in quantity of projects) up to now during the period 2007-2013. The total quantity of LAGs projects result approximately 275 for the moment in this programming period being the 1st in Finland as quantity and also in many of these other projects are considered the overall development impacts also for the enterprises). The Leader funding has made possible to create some world level innovations which without the funding/help of Leader hadn't been implemented.
- A specific case was presented - Case Eumer – on how LEADER funding made possible the business start up of two young brothers and turning their passion of fishing to profitable work! More on the start up of the fishing centre leads to world level innovation on spin tube fishing articles see at <http://eumer.onlinetuote.fi/>
- The Case study of the Mind Spa Relaxing Drink which became a world level success invented by a teenager of Kankaanpää. For more see <http://www.mindspadrink.fi/>
- LAGs are giving all types of assistance to small scale rural enterprises - enabling and encouraging rural entrepreneurship. LAGs could easily support them in enhancing their markets in to international ones since many of them lack resources
- LEADER support projects has been an excellent tool to encourage people living in rural areas to develop/start the entrepreneurship activity.
- For more information contact juha.vanhapaasto@kankaanpaa.fi, krista.antila@kankaanpaa.fi and view: <http://www.aktiivinen.fi>; <http://www.kalakukkory.fi>

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2. Local small loan scheme for NGO's / LAG governance and management", Poland

- The project is a case study for alternative financial tools on how small NGOs can access funding to implement projects through a loan scheme set up by regional helping NGOs to bridge the access to LAG budget.
- It aimed to create a Local solution for problems of the small NGO with access to the LEADER budget
- It created a debate to find financial solution for small NGOs. It started in the second year of the implementation of LEADER 2007-13 in Nakło County.
- As a result NGOs from the Krajana & Pałuki LAG area received access to LEADER small grants in a few simple steps:
 - The NGO from the LAG area have to prepare successful project to the LAG.
 - After acceptance from the regional implementing body (Marshal Office) – the NGO can apply for the loan to the County small grants scheme
 - One organisation can receive one grant at the time of the value from 10 000 to 20 000 PLN (up to 5 000 euro)
 - The period to pay back the loan is very important – 1 month after receiving payment from the Marschal Office and no longer than 24 months.
 - For **contact**: partnerstwo.naklo@wp.pl

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3. Austrian National Indicator Framework for self-assessing LAG Performance, Austria, ÖAR Regionalberatung GmbH

- Tool developed for self-reflections of LAGs and ranking their work
- The „balanced scorecard“ model is mainly known from the economies as a strategic steering instrument. The structure of indicators reflects: Results and impacts, Resources (quality and availability of resources necessary for implementing the strategy), Implementation processes (quality of structures and processes for sound implementation of the strategy), Learning and development (quality of internal development processes that enhance capabilities)
- These four categories are furnished with a set of indicators, that verbally describe different stages of performance/development. The LAG chooses the description that represent their current status most appropriately and is thereby able to reflect the own progress.
- Especially in combination with regional quality circles (as social processes), this indicator framework provides a sound instrument for self-reflecting the common Leader-work. Due to the holistic focus, not only results and impacts are measured but also structural and capacity elements are taken into consideration.
- For further contact Michael Fischer, NRN Austria

4. Points to consider when planning for better projects, Sweden

- We have to go from 'projects' to 'processes' when using LEADER funding. Projects tend to be too narrow - it is better to think in terms of starting processes for local development
- There are 7 points to consider when developing a project that can be considered also for LDS
 - 1) Don't do what everyone else does - consider your own circumstances

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- 2) Perform projects for the right reason, not because there is money. Money will eventually end.
- 3) Establish strategies, goals, your workings and results firmly
- 4) Thing 'process' which is strategic, rather than 'project', which is operative
- 5) Form reasonable expectations for i.e. employment numbers as results of projects
- 6) Take care of your results!
- 7) Consider holistic perspective; dare to select, but also to deselect

- For more information, contact Ms Barbro FISCHERSTRÖM, LAG Manager Leader Bergslagen, info@leaderbergslagen.se

5. Regional networking of LAGs as a way to better communication and integration, presented by Witold Magryś, LAG Spichlerz Gornego Slaska, Poland

- An example of how good cooperation between LAGs associated in the SILESIAN LEADER NETWORK, the Managing Authority and its LEADER consulting body named LEADER Thematic Group by National Rural Network, influences on better communication and implementation of local development strategies in whole Silesia Region. It has balanced the top down and bottom up approach.
- SLN was established in February 2007 as a cooperation platform for LAGs at Silesian Union of Municipalities and Districts – the biggest regional voluntary association of municipalities and districts in Poland. The network has informal structure of 15 associated LAGs – all of LAGs, which exist in Silesia Region (southern part of Poland).
- SLN main functions: advocacy for LAGs by representing them in the LEADER Approach Thematic Group by National Rural Network and the Polish Network of LAGs. SLN also transfers of good practices between participants and develops cooperation with the Regional Office of

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Nation Rural Network and the other regional LAGs networks. The most important part of its activities during last 2 years is participation in the LEADER regulatory consultation process in Poland and passing information about upcoming changes between MA and LAGs. This kind of consultation is also used in the context of preparation to the next programming period 2014-2020 where MA collects demands and ideas from regional networks and presents them back as a draft proposals asking for feedback from LAGs (it does not mean that MA accepts all expectations of LAGs or that this draft proposal are well welcomed by LAGs- it only shows the mechanism).

- Communication via networks is possible it should be done through these networks. This is not only the best, and the fastest way of sharing information but also contributes to the integration and cooperation between LAGs.
- Contact person: Witold Magrys, wmagrys@silesia.org.pl

6. Self- evaluation tool for LAGs, presented by Anke Wehmeyer, *National Rural Network, Germany*

- The development of a self-evaluation-tool for Local Action Groups by the German NRN in cooperation with evaluation experts and LAG-managements. The tool will be introduced in the guidelines for LAGs in the next programming period and can be used from each LAG individually adapted.
- Monitoring and evaluation became more important also for LAGs in order to prepare and implemented targeted interventions. To observe achievements of LAGs, the self-evaluation tool shall be applied in collaboration of LAGs with the MAS and experts. The self-evaluation tool is flexible and starts with monitoring for beginners, continues with measuring the progress for more advanced users and finally offers the focus check for professional self-evaluators.

- Contact person: Stefan Kaemper and Anke Wehmeyer, dvs@ble.de
- For more information see http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/enrd_assets/pdf/leader-event-2013/leader-event-showcasing/6_DE_Self_evaluation_tool_for_LAGs.pdf

III. General lessons learnt from the case studies identified during the showcasing session

- A. To implement local development strategies in LEADER approach successfully, several tools shall be employed:
- **Coordination and communication tools** - informal networks, NGOs, groups which facilitate linkages and exchange of information, collaboration and cooperation among various actors in and out of LAG area in project preparation and implementation, and the consultation between LAGs, NRN and MAs,
 - **Financial tools**, enabling beneficiaries, which lack funds to pre-finance projects, to take part in the strategy implementation
 - **Self-evaluation tools**, so that LAG members can understand if the strategy interventions are following the objectives and what is actually achieved with the strategy.
- B. The active participation and **cooperation of various actors** present in the LAG territory, at national/regional level is important **in developing these tools**:
- Managing authorities, which administrate funds and provide information
 - National rural networks, but also informal networks, NGOs and groups, which can help to create and implement various tools
 - Public bodies, such as municipalities district and regional administration, which can facilitate pre-financing, information exchange etc.
 - Local action groups, which are responsible for successful implementation of local strategies and evaluation of their achievements,

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- Beneficiaries of local development strategies, which can proactively search for various tools or to help to develop them via active consultation process,
- Experts , which can help LAGs in accessing various tools and/or establishing tools of their own.