

CHAPTER IV

The bottom-up approach

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CHAPTER IV



LEADER II dossiers

Innovation notebooks

No. 3: From strategy to action: project selection (1998)

No. 4: Assessing the added value of the LEADER approach (1999)

No. 6: Creating a territorial development strategy in the light of the LEADER experience - Part 2: Social competitiveness (2000)

No. 8: Fighting social exclusion in rural areas (2000)

Observatory dossiers

No. 3: Mainstreaming LEADER in future rural policies (1999)

Guides

Methodology guide for the analysis of local innovation needs (1996)

Training in aid of territorial development (2000)

LEADER Magazine

No. 16: Special LEADER Symposium

“Towards a new Community Initiative for rural development: 800 leaders give their views” (Winter 1997-1998)

CHAPTER IV



LEADER I dossiers

Technical dossier

Involving people in local development



Examples

“Innovative actions” factsheets

E15

M01 - M02 - M06 - M08 - M26 - M28 - M36 - M38 - M39 - M42 - M43

P53

S23 - S26

T01 - T06 - T09

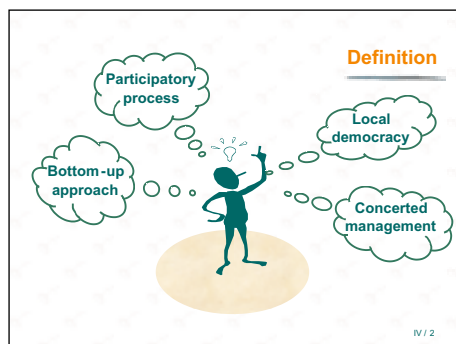


Even though, as a “Community Initiative programme”, LEADER itself originated from a “top-down” decision, it advocates a “bottom-up” rural development approach based on the expectations, ideas, projects and initiatives of local communities.

The bottom-up approach, which cannot be dissociated from the issue of engaging development players, so crucial to a quality integrated area-based approach, is one of the most novel features of the LEADER approach. The bottom-up approach has also introduced innovation into Structural Fund support.

Depending on the local context, the bottom-up approach puts issues like social cohesion, concertation and decision-making transparency onto, or back onto, the agenda. In all cases, it encourages reflection about the development and adaptation of the “animation” methods that are at the heart of the approach.

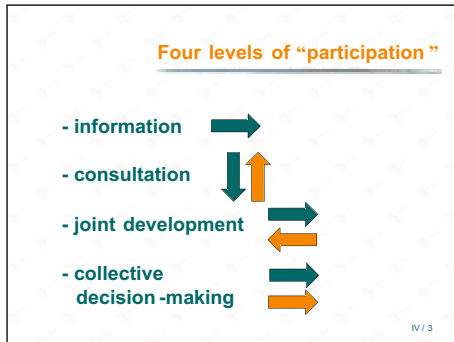
The importance accorded in LEADER I and II to expenditure on “animation”, capacity building and technical support shows how much interest there is in the bottom-up approach and reflects the changes that LEADER has introduced in the design and implementation of development programmes.



Although “**bottom up**”, “**participatory**”, “**local democracy**”, “**concerted management**” and other such approaches are not exact equivalents, they are all variants of a local concertation approach and of a collective process whereby a local community can take charge of the future of its own area.

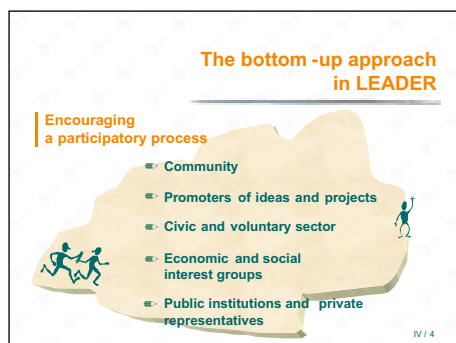
It is an approach that allows the local community and local players to express their views and to help define the development course for their area in line with their own views, expectations and plans.

However, the bottom-up approach cannot be applied (nor is it applicable) systematically to all places in all circumstances. Depending on the specific cultural context of each Member State and in line with the principle of subsidiarity, the participatory process is often more of a trend or a desirable working approach than a day-to-day reality. However, there is no doubt that efforts are being made to put local communities and local development players back at the heart of the rural development process.



At each stage of a development programme, it is necessary to consider which are the most appropriate tools and methods for fostering local participation. Whether at the stage of programming, decision-making or implementation, “participation” occurs at different levels, with different people or groups and different resources that have to be set in motion at the right time. The four levels proposed below are not “sequential” but simultaneous levels that are brought into play to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the programme phase.

Levels	Tools	When?	Who?
Information	Public meetings Media and telecommuni- cation, fairs and exhibitions	Initial phase, programme implementation phases, project identification phase	The entire community, LAG partnership, project leaders, institutions, decision-makers
Consultation	Village audit, Methods of participatory analysis, training “animators”	Initial phase, development of the strategic plan	Active community groups, associations, interest groups
Joint development	Specialist working groups, “animation” of the partnership, training “animators” and local players	Launch of the projects, implementation of the programme, participatory evaluation (self-assessment)	LAG partnership, sectors concerned, interest groups
Collective decision- making	Participatory selection of projects, “animation” of the partnership	Definition of courses of action and strategies Implementation of the pro- gramme, new analysis following the participatory evaluation	LAG partnership, project leaders



The bottom-up approach is one element that makes the LEADER approach even more useful.

It aims to **encourage a process of local participation** in every aspect of development policy. The involvement of local players is sought at all levels, either through consultation or by involving them in the partnership. It is aimed at **the whole community, promoters of ideas and projects, the civic and voluntary sector, economic and social interest groups and representative public and private institutions.**

Participation is encouraged at every stage: during the definition phase, during implementation, during evaluation and the revision of the programme – either directly or through those bodies representing collective interests (professional organisations, women's groups, cultural associations, etc.)



II/8, III/6



M06, M08



Objectives

- ⇒ Involving the community = trust
- ⇒ Drawing out ideas and generating initiatives = "animation"
- ⇒ Building a consensus = conflict management
- ⇒ Delegating = local decision-making

IV / 5

The bottom-up approach at the heart of the LEADER approach has a number of objectives:

- > **To involve the local community** – Securing the active participation of the community and of economic and institutional partners and associations in the development process entails organising the circulation of information, facilitating access to training and finding suitable methods of "animation", whilst at the same time ensuring transparent decision-making procedures. In most cases this involves first and foremost **giving renewed confidence** to local communities and players not accustomed to expressing their needs, expectations or plans.
- > **To draw out ideas and generate initiatives** – Which calls for a degree of open-mindedness and acceptance of the risks associated with innovation. Fostering meetings and dialogue between people, convergence between sectors, the exchange of knowledge and complementarity between skills are all aspects that "**animation**" will seek to develop among a multitude of target groups, both present and yet to come.



M08, M38



VI/5



M02, M26, M28



Objectives

- ⇒ Involving the community = trust
- ⇒ Drawing out ideas and generating initiatives = "animation"
- ⇒ Building a consensus = conflict management
- ⇒ Delegating = local decision-making

IV / 5

- > **To build consensus** – Where participatory decision-making works effectively, it can ensure broad and fair representation of all interest groups, thereby providing an opportunity to **build consensus**, manage conflict and foster new links between sectors and groups.
- > **To delegate decision-making powers** – Adopting the bottom-up approach means delegating decision-making powers from other levels of governance **to the local level**. Participatory local decision-making allows new ideas and projects that have emerged to be managed and integrated to the full. Hence the need to implement this approach as early as possible, from the stage of analysis and drawing up the local action plan.



E15



II/9-10


III/6-7

IX/2

Values at the heart
of a local project

- ⇒ Respect ideas and persons
- ⇒ Recognise the existence of diverse needs
- ⇒ Act transparently

Key word : "ANIMATION "



The bottom-up approach requires “developers” to support a number of values:

- > **To respect ideas and people** – No exchanges or joint efforts are possible where there is indifference or contempt;
- > **To recognise the existence of diverse needs** – Social and economic cohesion is one of the key elements for balanced and sustainable development. It is therefore vital to seek a balance between the needs of farmers and of other rural players, such as the tourist sector;
- > **To introduce transparency** – In the distribution of tasks, in decision-making, etc.

Calling for flexibility and pragmatism, the bottom-up approach calls for adaptations to be made to suit the different contexts, players, goals and objectives involved.

For this, the key concept is “**animation**” – in the field, in working groups and in the global approach.



M38

E15

M28, M01

Participation + collective decision-making = project ownership

Participation + collective decision-making = project ownership

Variable equation:

- ✓ as the programme develops
- ✓ depending on the context:
 - low-key or conflictual = engagement rationale
 - organisation = structural approach



IV / 7

The bottom-up approach is based on the above **equation**. In order for the local community to truly take control of the development project, it must be fully involved in the process and must be included in some way in the decision-making process, in a way that:

1° Evolves as the programme develops

- > During the **analysis** phase, the bottom-up approach calls for **awareness-raising** (through information) and **engagement** in order to analyse the rural area's strengths and weaknesses and to identify needs and expectations (using methods of participatory analysis). This stage targets the entire community, plus the active groups.
- > During the phase of **planning** the strategic choices of the programme, the bottom-up approach calls for the participation of various interest groups (by setting up ad hoc working groups).



M06, M28, M39

M26, M42, T01,
T09

Participation + collective decision-making = project ownership

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Variable equation:

- ✓ as the programme develops
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IV / 7

2° **Is tailored to suit the context** – The initial local context will determine a multitude of different forms of engagement. In this respect, it is important to distinguish between:

- > Contexts that require a partnership founded on an **engagement rationale** – where the aim is, for instance, to reconcile conflicting parties, remedy certain shortcomings in institutions, refocus local energies on the rural area, etc.
- > Contexts that require a partnership founded on a **structural approach** – where institutions are strong, there are long-standing partnership practices, etc. The main aim in this case is to link the different institutional functions and sectors of intervention.



S23

Participation + collective decision-making = project ownership

Participation + collective decision-making = project ownership

Variable equation:

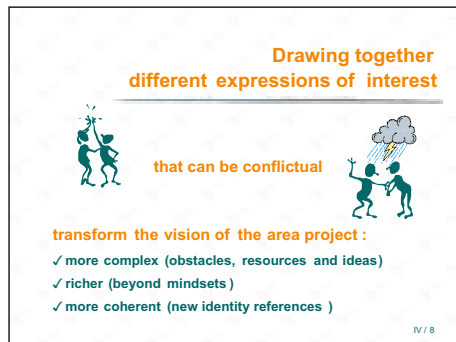
- ✓ as the programme develops
- ✓ depending on the context:
 - low-key or conflictual = engagement rationale
 - organisation = structural approach



IV / 7

Whatever the case may be, it is possible to engage the community and local players only:

- > If they feel that they have “something to gain” from the process.
- > If they quickly see tangible improvements in the quality of life in the area.
- > If the approach takes into account all of the problems as a whole, instead of concentrating solely on the difficulties of certain community groups or sectors of activity.
- > If it extends the community-engagement principle further than the stage of the area-based analysis (organising the circulation of information, exchange situation, monitoring of project results, etc.)
- > If the partnership has a spin-off effect, leads to the development of the local action group and/or to the emergence of new forms of organisation and collective learning processes.



Combining the diverse, **or even conflicting**, interests of the different players involved in the development process **transforms the vision of the “area project”**.

It allows for a **richer, more complex and coherent interpretation** of the new framework of reference represented by the area project:

- > **Richer**, because recognition of the diverse viewpoints makes it possible to get away from “clichéd” ways of thinking handed down from generation to generation and attitudes of “what just is not done” that have led to the time-honoured caution of most rural areas.
- > **More complex**, because it reveals existing obstacles that are so characteristic of community groups whose opinions are not taken sufficiently into account. It reveals the existence of hitherto disregarded human resources and innovative ideas.
- > **More coherent**, because the expression of differences, or even diverging points of view, though annoying at first due to the latent conflict to which they may lead, is essential for the creation of new identity references. It is through action, through the development of a collective project that it becomes possible to overcome the conflict arising from these first encounters and to develop initial views.



III/4,8



M08, P53, T09

M36

T06

**Some tips to
“animate” the area**

- Create meeting places
- Manage conflicts
- Encourage links between sectors and groups
- Decentralise responsibilities
- Enhance the professionalism of communication

... which requires resources :

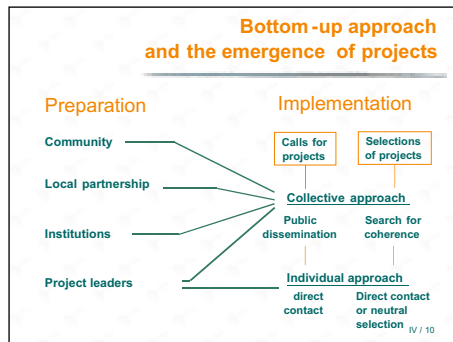
professionalise the function of the development agent

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“Animation” activities are a strategic component of the bottom-up approach. Local action groups have fully understood this and have invested time and money in “animation” activities. The **job of “development agent” has developed and become a profession.** In the programmes, there have been significant intangible investments to complement Structural Fund investments.

LEADER has explored numerous **avenues** for putting the bottom-up approach into operation:

- > **Creating meeting places** (organisation of events, public meetings, village audits, training courses, etc.)
- > **Managing conflict** (encouraging conflicting views to be expressed, initiating negotiations or even arranging mediation, etc.)
- > **Encouraging links between sectors and groups** (thematic meetings, organising visits, discussions, etc.)
- > **Decentralising responsibilities**, whilst bearing in mind that true power sharing has to be approved by those who have the power in the first place. As a result, formal management of the local partnership very often remains under the control of certain types of “dominant” partner, usually the public authorities.
- > **Enhancing the professionalism of communication** (targeted and interactive use of means of communication, fairs, exhibitions, etc.)



The bottom-up approach is at the heart of the emergence of initiatives and projects. “Animation” plays a decisive role in this.

There are two coexisting phases of “animation” that mutually influence one another:

- > A **preparation** phase (study, analysis and communication of the “strategic course of action”) – this phase targets the whole **community**, in particular its most dynamic members, as well as the members of the **local partnership, institutions and potential project leaders**.
- > An **implementation** phase (calls for and selection of project proposals) – in this case “animation” operates at two levels:
 - **Collective** – The call for project proposals is the subject of wide **public dissemination**, and **coherence** with strategic priorities is a major selection criterion.
 - **Individual** – Support and guidance for each project leader. **Direct contacts** with potential project leaders is the rule in this case. Applicants are provided with customised support and guidance in putting together their applications. The local group can help project leaders to financially engineer their projects.



M01, M02, M28,
S23, S26

Bottom-up approach and the selection of projects	
Classic approach	Bottom-up approach
Criteria designers and applicants are separated	Potential beneficiaries participate in the design of criteria
Same conditions	Different criteria
Precise criteria	Broad criteria that stimulate reflection
Undifferentiated dissemination	Pro-active approach
Dossiers written in administrative language	Simplified dossiers
Selection of projects by a team of experts	Involvement of beneficiaries in the selection of projects

IV / 11

For many LAGs, the project selection process relies partially on new, sometimes complex procedures that very often differ from the more classic procedures. It is possible to compare these new and classic approaches in line with their:

- > adaptation to the specific characteristics of each rural area;
- > coherence with strategic objectives;
- > optimisation of the effects of selection in terms of local dynamics.






The table on the following page illustrates the advantages and limitations of each formula.



M43

“Classic” approach versus the “bottom-up” approach

	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Concerns to which it may respond</i>	<i>Possible drawbacks</i>
<i>More “classic” approach</i>	Separation between criteria designers and applicants	To avoid interference	Lessens engagement
<i>“Bottom-up” approach</i>	Potential beneficiaries participate in defining the criteria	To foster participation and ensure the quality of selected projects	Slows down the process
<i>More “classic” approach</i>	Same conditions for all applicants	To guarantee equality between potential applicants	Accentuates imbalances
<i>“Bottom-up” approach</i>	Introduction of differentiated criteria	To reduce local and/or social imbalances	Projects not so attractive in terms of short-term economic effects
<i>More “classic” approach</i>	Relatively limited and precise criteria	To avoid ambiguities and possible dispute	Limits “trawling” for ideas
<i>“Bottom-up” approach</i>	Broad criteria that stimulate debate	To encourage greater openness to new ideas	Slower preparation process

	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Concerns to which it may respond</i>	<i>Possible drawbacks</i>
<p><i>More "classic" approach</i></p>  <p><i>"Bottom-up" approach</i></p>	<p>Undifferentiated dissemination</p>	<p>To treat all proposals on an equal footing</p>	<p>Does not target the desired beneficiaries</p>
<p><i>More "classic" approach</i></p>  <p><i>"Bottom-up" approach</i></p>	<p>Complementary forms of distribution</p> <p>Proactive approach</p>	<p>To include more disadvantaged groups</p>	<p>Projects not so attractive in terms of short-term economic effects</p>
<p><i>More "classic" approach</i></p>  <p><i>"Bottom-up" approach</i></p>	<p>Exhaustive application dossiers, sometimes in complex administrative language</p>	<p>To have available all of the elements needed for selection</p>	<p>Discourages beneficiaries, especially smaller ones</p>
<p><i>More "classic" approach</i></p>  <p><i>"Bottom-up" approach</i></p>	<p>Simplified application dossier</p> <p>Importance given to the oral element</p>	<p>To engage support</p>	<p>More difficult to select and follow up applications</p>
<p><i>More "classic" approach</i></p>  <p><i>"Bottom-up" approach</i></p>	<p>Project selection by an ad hoc group of independent experts</p>	<p>To make a totally independent selection</p>	<p>Can lead to standardised projects</p>
	<p>Potential beneficiaries participate in project selection</p>	<p>To encourage consensus, common references and social cohesion</p>	<p>Risk of dispersing funding over a large number of beneficiaries</p> <p>Risk of insufficient transparency for non-beneficiaries</p>

Looking ahead

- ⇒ How should active groups be identified?
- ⇒ How:
 - ✓ - could consultation be encouraged or improved?
 - ✓ - could collective decision-making be encouraged or improved?
- ⇒ How should conflict management be approached?
- ⇒ What are the strong points and obstacles?

IV / 12

- > Which community groups are active in local initiatives?
 1. Farmers
 2. Non-farming professionals
 3. Other working residents
 4. Non-working residents
 5. Local political representatives
 6. Environmental associations
 7. Cultural associations
 8. Women's associations
 9. Young people
 10. Other
- > Who has participated in, or could participate in, a consultation on the LEADER programme?
- > How is it possible to encourage or improve:
 1. Consultation with the different groups?
 2. Collective decision-making with the groups concerned?
- > What methods of "animation" and participatory decision-making have been devised or used?
- > How is conflict expressed and how is it managed?

Looking ahead

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IV / 12

- > What results are expected in the area from a bottom-up development approach?
 1. More clearly identified local problems and needs
 2. Better organisation of development players
 3. Better understanding of local decisions by the community
 4. Greater acceptance of local decisions by the higher authorities
 5. Stimulation of ideas and projects
 6. Demonstrative effect(s) for other development programmes
 7. Other

- > What are the strong points and obstacles to the bottom-up approach in the area? How can the effectiveness of the approach be improved?