

‘Innovation in the LEADER delivery chain’ – a summary based on the LEADER Innovation PWG discussions and meetings

Dissemination ‘tool’ prepared by the ENRD Contact Point on behalf of the PWG for use by RDP authorities, Rural Network Support Units and Local Action Groups

Disclaimer: This presentation has been prepared based on the working document of the same title and it is a summary of information collected during various discussions and meetings supported by the ENRD on innovation in LEADER before February 2018. The contents of the presentation do not represent the official position of DG AGRI and do not replace relevant EU or national level regulations or guidance.

The importance of LEADER innovation

- Innovation = essential and integral element of the LEADER approach in delivering local solutions
- LAG's local strategies address 'innovative elements in the local context'
- Important to consider
 - The project level
 - The local action group level
 - In the LEADER delivery chain
 - In the Local Action Group's connections to other stakeholders

Definitions and context

- LEADER contributes directly to Priority 6 “Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development” and Focus Area 6B “Fostering local development” and also to other RD Priorities through secondary contributions
- The **only** regulatory definition: “..community-led local development shall be: ...(d) designed taking into consideration local needs and potential, and shall include innovative features in the local context” (Art. 32 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013)



‘LEADER Innovation’ should be assessed in reference to the specific local contexts of the Local Development Strategies

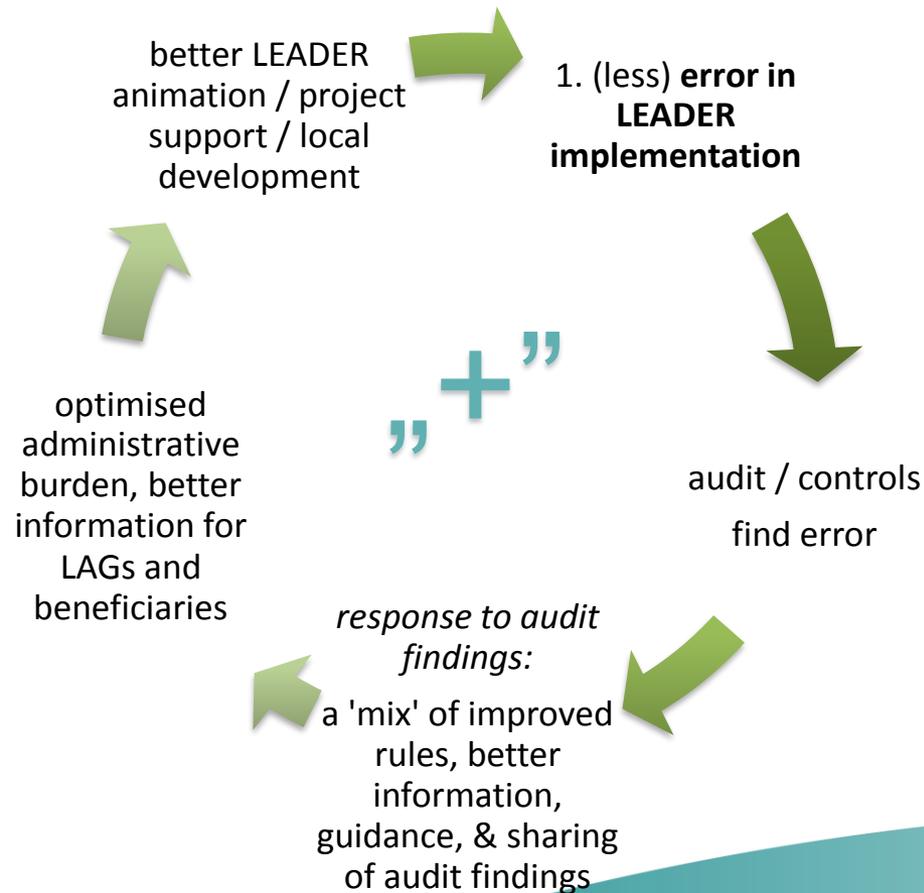
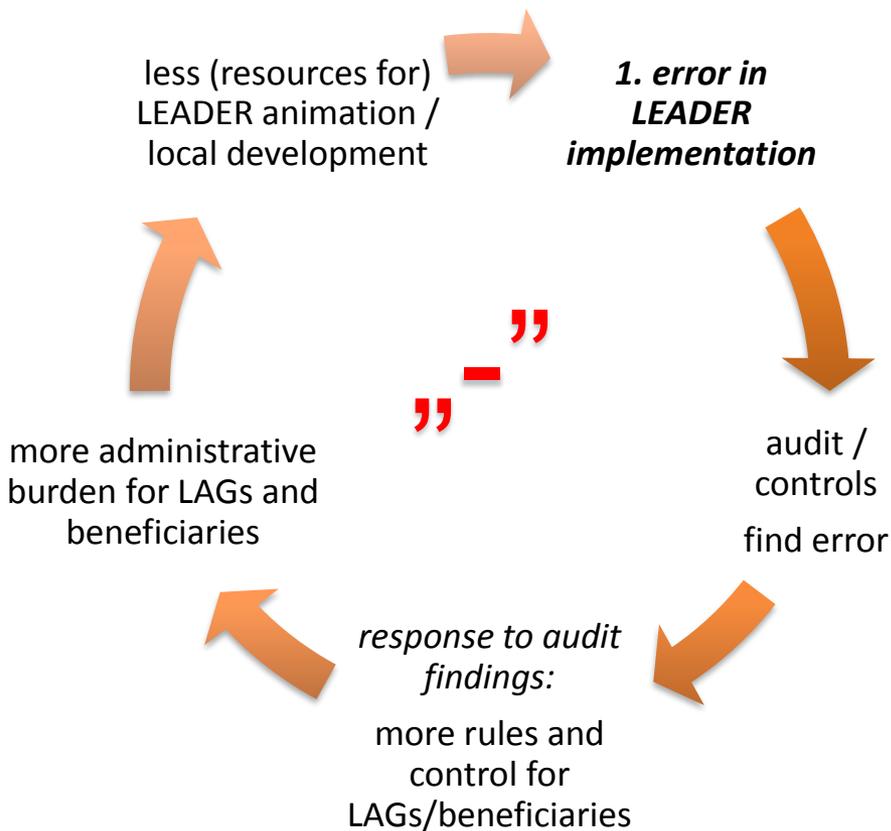
Contextual factors affecting LEADER innovation

- Key local factors include LAG capacities and resources for fostering innovation and the ‘quality’ of the partnership
- Key external factors
 - the LAG’s ability to communicate and coordinate with other actors in the LEADER delivery chain
 - Relevant rules and procedures introduced for LEADER at EU, regional/Member State level
- The capacities and attitudes of relevant actors in the LEADER delivery chain are also important (trust, risk aversion and other factors have a role!)

Controls and attitudes

- There are no LEADER *innovation-specific* control requirements in the relevant EU regulations
- Stakeholders attitude to knowledge and innovation can
 - ‘block’ (‘we already know this’),
 - or ‘facilitate’ (‘let us find out more and experiment’) LEADER innovation
- Solid knowledge of context and relevant regulations – essential!
- Important non-regulatory factors determining LEADER innovation are ‘fear’ and ‘trust’
 - Less trust leads to more risk-aversion in the LEADER delivery chain, ‘over-regulation’ at all levels, less innovation
 - Building trust leads to finding new solutions at local and other levels, builds more innovation, better LEADER, better local development

Two possible 'feedback loops'



MAKING LEADER INNOVATION WORK IN THE LAG

1

Innovation ‘voucher’ (LAG Keskipiste, Finland)

First introduced in 2010 to support youth, communities, and SMEs to develop innovative projects/approaches with a small – 500-1000 Euro – grant. A very simple application process and short ‘turnaround’ time – funds paid one month after the application – enabled 320 youth initiatives, 60 SMEs, and 90 community projects to access this form of support.

2

“SMART” LEADER (TAGUS LAG, Spain)

‘SMART’ LEADER has six elements: Selection of comparative advantages, Specialisation profile, Smart+ governance model, Action plan, Innovation ecosystem, Evaluation and monitoring. The ‘SMART+’ governance model applied by the Tagus LAG involves local and regional representatives of the knowledge sector in strategic decisions of the LAG. Based on the recognition that rural innovation does not emerge spontaneously and that it requires an active innovation facilitation role from the LAG, the LDS becomes a ‘smart specialisation strategy’.

3

Social innovation (LAG Pohjoisin Lappi, Finland)

In a LAG territory double the size of Belgium and with a population density of 0.6 inhabitants/km², an innovative ‘model’ for providing social services allows people to find employment in social services for senior citizens and families with small children through a local co-operative that brings together ‘customers’, municipalities, and professionals. The co-operative employs 26 part-time and one full-time staff – providing services in 11 villages.

MAKING LEADER INNOVATION WORK IN THE DELIVERY CHAIN

1

Quality management process (Finland, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries)

The first procedural and quality manual was written by one LAG with the aim of ‘recording’ all accumulated knowledge in the LAG – now this has become common practice among LAGs in Finland. As a next stage, with NRN support the LAGs started ‘peer to peer’ audit processes – the MA/PA also got involved by supporting the preparation of a manual for the auditing process. The first round of audit visits was expected to take place in April 2018.

2

Cooperation between MA-PA-LAG (the Netherlands)

“Making the best of it” and understanding the benefits of LEADER are the underlying principles of improvements in the LEADER delivery chain in the province of Overijssel. Face to face meetings, field trips to projects, joint ‘start up’ meetings, a helpdesk operated by the MA are all ingredients of the ‘investment’ in good relations and better LEADER implementation.

3

From “us versus them” to “we” (Denmark)

Improvements in the LEADER delivery system since 2014 have been based on the principle to see LAGs, Managing Authority, and National Rural Network as “we”. Better coordination includes involving the LAGs in developing guidelines for applications or templates for reporting on LAG running costs, as well as MA/NRN representatives attending the meetings of the informal group of LAGs.

MAKING LEADER INNOVATION WORK – KEY INGREDIENTS OF A RECIPE (?)

**Shared understanding of what is LEADER
Innovation and why it is important**

**Conscious effort from all to build trust,
cooperate, coordinate**

**Acceptance of diversity of local contexts
(LDSs) that define it**

**Understanding the benefits of LEADER
innovation**

**‘Local innovation culture’ and ‘innovation
animator’ within the LAG**

**Adequate level of resources for animation
at LAG level**

**Knowledge of relevant rules and local
context**

**Capacity building – learning from audit
findings and networking at all levels
(including EU level)**

Useful info on LEADER

LEADER/CLLD: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en)

LEADER Cooperation: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/cooperation_en

LEADER Innovation: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/leader-innovation_en

Contact the ENRD at contact@enrd.eu