

Agricultural Policy Forum 2019:
Contribution of Diversification of Economic Activities to Sustainable Rural Development in SEE
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Ohrid, North Macedonia

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***Community Led Local
Development CLLD/ LEADER
Diversity by Nature***



Ohrid - Warm thanks for being invited to participate ...
...and apologies for my absence

The birth of LEADER and a grown-up C

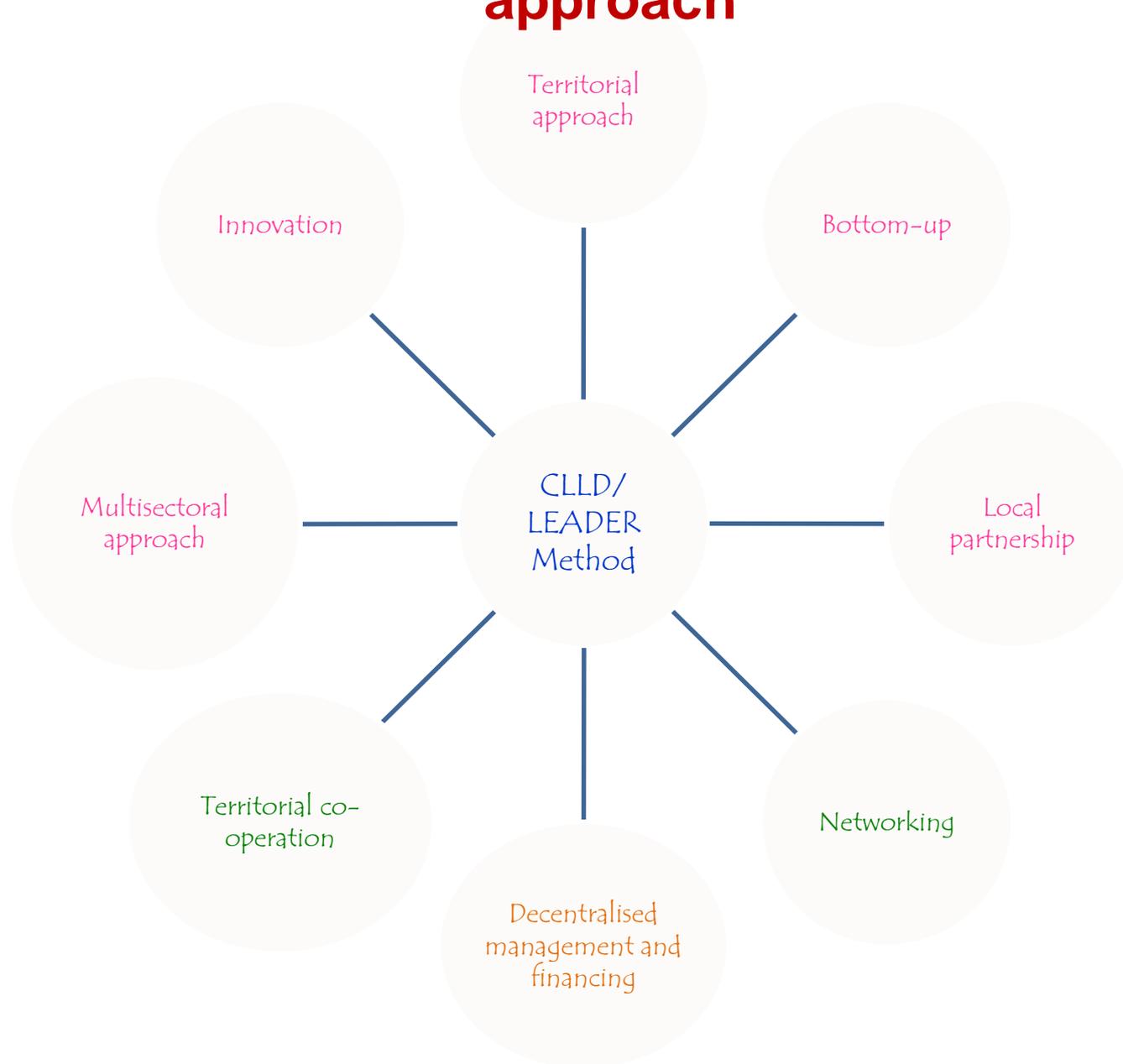
Created 1991 as a European Community Initiative (a type of instrument which ceased to exist 1999), LEADER has been conceived as a policy measure to empower local communities and people; **to strengthen self-organisation in local development.**

First (1991) applied in marginalised rural areas, later extended to all rural areas (2000) and integrated into pre-accession programmes (2004), mainstreamed into rural development programmes under the **EAFRD as an obligatory measure with min. 5% of the overall budget (2007) and finally extended – as an option – also to coastal and urban areas (2014).**

The basic design of CLLD/LEADER is threefold: One area (in the range of 10.000 to 150.000 inhabitants) – one local partnership (Local Action Group/LAG) – one Local Development Strategy/LDS stretching over one budget period (7 years)

The number of local partnerships (Local Action Groups) has gradually grown from 271 in the first period to 2.757 (funded from EAFRD as the lead fund) plus 368 (funded from EMFF as the lead fund) and 229 (funded from ERDF+ESF as the lead fund) = 3.354 LAGs working according to the CLLD / LEADER method.

The eight principles of the CLLD/LEADER approach



CLLD & LEADER method embodies three opportu

- **CLLD / LEADER provides a context for social innovation.** Following the definition of social innovation as stated in the EU Horizon2020 research project SIMRA (Social innovation in marginalised rural areas) 'social innovation' must be seen as tied to the idea of common well-being - in contrast to 'innovation' in general - which does not necessarily imply sustainable and socially inclusive outcomes).
- **CLLD / LEADER builds upon the uniqueness of places and regions** and on economical and social **diversity** as a cross-cutting principle – among scales, regions, communities and people.
- **CLLD / LEADER is a flexible and fine-grained funding instrument.** There is no other European funding instrument fostering micro and small scale investments and still being strategic in character.

Which are the success factors of CLLD / LEADER

- **CLLD / LEADER projects trigger more private engagement and investments (in terms of money but also of voluntary engagement)** than other funding instruments because the method favours projects better tailored to people's needs.
- **CLLD / LEADER projects enjoy higher acceptance and are more extensively used by the population (participatory approach)**
- **CLLD / LEADER projects imply less deadweight or displacement effects** than ,conventional' funding instruments, as the local partnerships show a lot more responsibility & scrutiny in spending the limited budget (usually 1 to 7 MEUR over seven years, including up to 25% for information, animation and education activities and permanent staff for management and administration).

What makes CLLD / LEADER work?

- **The LAG as the local hub:** In the ideal case the local partnership simultaneously serves as a local networking unit, a platform for discussion and negotiation processes, as the **owner** of the local development strategy (LDS), an observatory for local development and the last resort address for project promoters who have no other option left to get support for realising their innovative ideas, on the last mile'.
- It is generally acknowledged among evaluators that the positive impacts of CLLD/LEADER are mainly triggered by its **capacity to improve the social capital in the local area AND in the multi-level governance.**

How successful is CLLD / LEADER in reality?

The described features show positive results – but there could still be much better ones if....

- **the CLLD/LEADER principles were mindfully implemented** by all programme administrations and Local Action Groups (particularly the cross-cutting principle of decentralised management and financing),
- the LAGs put the same emphasis on **sensitization/animation activities** as for project promotion in the narrow sense,
- the **inter-regional/transnational networking and co-operation activities** were actively promoted and continued to get support from European, national and regional administrations,
- **funding streams for local development were customised and bundled** (where ever they come from: EAFRD, Cohesion Funds, Pre-accession funds, multi-lateral, national and regional schemes) into a ‚LEADERized approach‘ managed by one regional or national authority and implemented by the local partnerships.

CLLD / LEADER 2021 - 2027

The drafts for the new regulations (EAFRD, Cohesion Funds) let expect that CLLD/LEADER will be continued much in the same way as it used to be in 2014-2020.

The according **IPARD measure** will probably follow this line.

At the same time, emphasis on co-operation measures (European Innovation Partnerships), value chain approaches, local circular economy or ,smart villages' appears to get strengthened which might lead to the wrong conclusion that CLLD/LEADER had lost importance: In reality, **CLLD/LEADER would be an excellent vehicle to promote all these strategies (in the very sense of the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030).**



CLLD - Supporting a local sense of place in Europe

The example of my home place

Pellworm Island, North Friesland, Germany



Integration - All funds in one boat for partnership

EU Funds for Agriculture, Rural, Social, Fisheries can be used for CLLD/LEADER programmes and projects



Heritage and local identity: building upon local advantages

Local development partnerships (cooperation) against global headwind (competition) may win



Sustainable & social innovation - technology goes along with people & nature

Renewable energy and farming within a National Park and Biosphere Reserve. Limits in size and investments in wind turbines by local inhabitants only to keep locally added value and respect landscape features



Local action groups - mobilising creativity

Bottom-up: Education and capacity building at local level reveal competences and talents for planning and implementation



Rural future: Rural youth at the core of mobilisation

Depopulation of rural areas can only be stopped if the rural and neo-rural youth feels being at the steering wheel and not on the back seat



Resilience: Towards climate change proof infrastructure

We do face major challenges like climate change and loss of resources. We need to think much ahead in terms of future infrastructure, building and economic resilience.



Networking: Light- tower projects sharing success stories

Networking across Europe is essential to disseminate good practices in farming, renewable energies, sustainable and educative tourism and local branding.



Area based development of farming & breeding

Research for agriculture, environmental protection, nutrition and public health needs strong and trustful ties between universities, farmers, entrepreneurs and local people.



The value of local resources: Good food and fibre

Ohrid has what we are missing...



Reeds & Straw: Local material for local construction

Reeds growing in lakes and canals is an excellent CO2 absorber, very insulating roofing material, good housing for insects, superfood for birds..

Our draining system has made reeds rare, so we import it from Hungary...



CLLD for Happiness - It gives local people a kick!

Bhutan strives for happiness as an indicator for well-being of their people . North Macedonia and the entire Western Balkans could teach Europe how to make people happy with social and sustainable rural development