



Leader as a driver for Rural Europe: workshop for new LAGs

Workshop B: Dynamics of Implementation

Günter Salchner
LAG Ausserfern, Austria
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Connecting Rural Europe



LAG Ausserfern

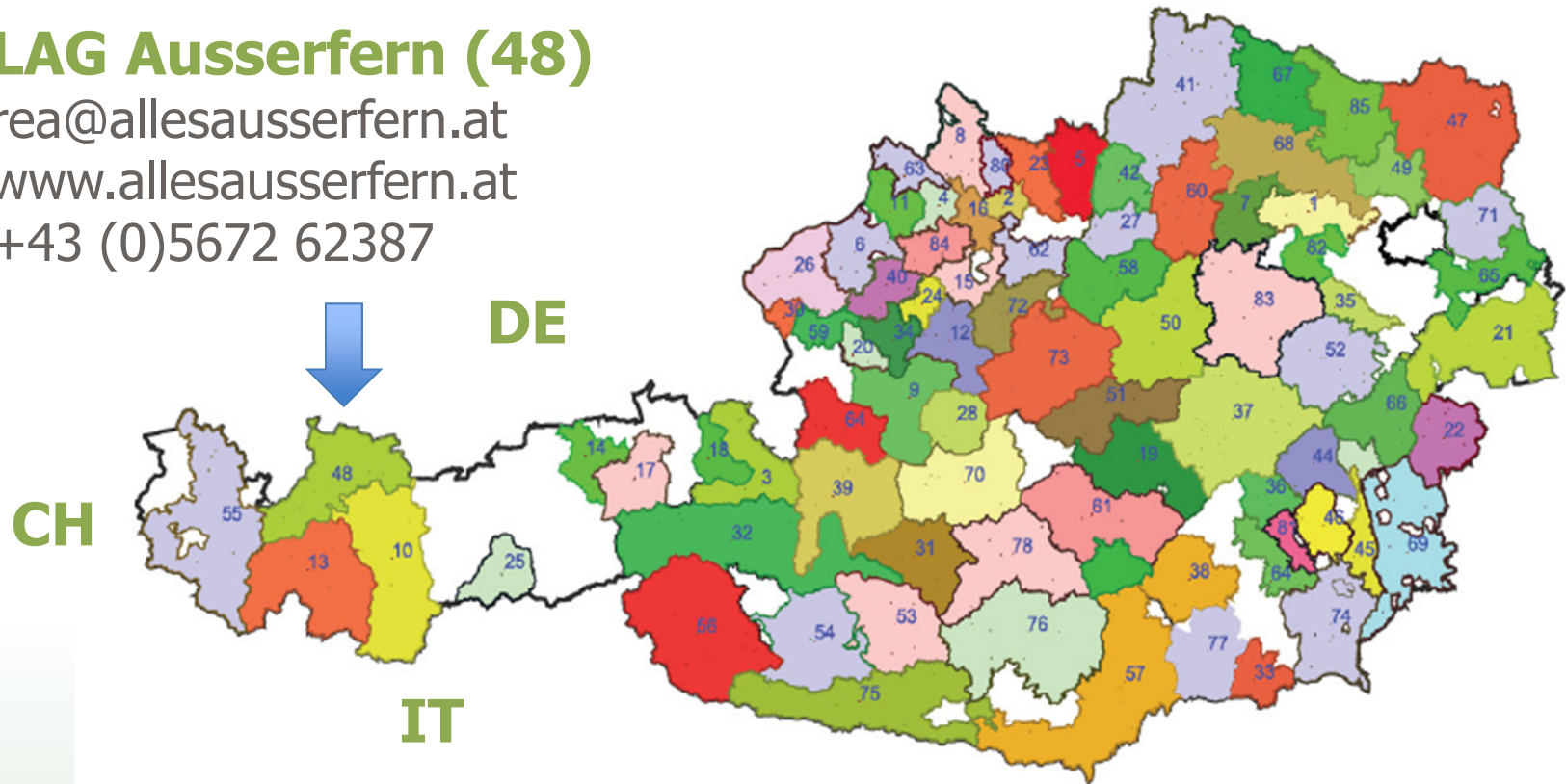
- Günter Salchner, LAG-Manager since 2001
- Non-profit organisation, 50 members
- Holistic approach in regional management
- Population of 32.000, area of 1,237 qkm, pop. density of 26 inh./qkm
- Mountainous terrain, border area to Germany





LAG Ausserfern (48)

rea@allessausserfern.at
www.allessausserfern.at
+43 (0)5672 62387





Leader and Innovation – Important Questions

- How to develop integrated/innovative projects?
- How to involve local population?
- How to evaluate innovative project proposals?
- How to allow failure and enhance social learning?





Leader and Innovation – A First Glance

- Experts: The method itself is the innovation
- Authorities: An innovation in one LAG is not innovative in another one
- Practitioners: Mainstreaming kills innovation
- European Court of Auditors: Few LAGs could demonstrate innovation...
(Special report on the implementation of the Leader approach for rural development)





Leader and Innovation – Definition and Characteristics

- Novelty (invention) and introduction on the market
- Inspiration vs. transpiration
- Incremental vs. revolutionary innovation
- Planned vs. emergent innovation
- Cooperation vs. competition
- Resource-based vs. market-based
- Culture matters





Leader and Innovation – The Role of Culture

Innovation Killer Distrust & Envy





Leader and Innovation – THE LECH TRAIL A result-oriented example

- **Novelty (invention) and introduction on the market**
Long distance hike of 120 km along the river Lech (new product)
Designed for non-alpine hikers (new market)
First European quality trail (new process)
Opening 2011/2012 (introduction on the market)
- **Inspiration vs. transpiration**
First idea 2000, first concept 2002 and several following sub-projects,
total investment so far appr. 1.6 MIO Euro





Leader and Innovation – THE LECH TRAIL A Result-Oriented Example

- **Incremental vs. revolutionary innovation**
New definition of hiking in an already tourism-intensive alpine area
- **Planned vs. emergent innovation**
Theme was incorporated in Local Development Strategy, the product (and projects) is the result of a dynamic innovation process
- **Cooperation vs. competition**
Core project group consists of five (competing) tourism organisations
- **Resource-based vs. market-based**
Idea was resource-driven, product development is market-driven





Leader and Innovation – Actions and Involvement

- Innovative coordination actions
- Innovative structuring actions
- Innovative consolidating actions
- All three types of innovative actions add up to a development spiral (strategic alignment)





Leader and Innovation – Actions and Involvement THE LECH TRAIL

- **Innovative coordination actions**
Concept, education and training,
- **Innovative structuring actions**
Infrastructure, marketable product, marketing communication,
quality system and quality certification
- **Innovative consolidating actions**
Distribution channels, business cooperation, merchandising, product
management, quality management and controlling





Leader and Innovation – The Role of the LAG Manager

- Coordinate strategy process
- Moderate network and cooperation process
- Project management
- Provide additional knowledge (market view!)
- Open eye for emergent innovations
- Evaluate ideas and give impetus





Leader and Innovation – Important Questions

- **How to develop integrated/innovative projects?**
Go out in the field and dig in the fertile soil of creativity and ambition
- **How to involve local population?**
Bring “old” locals and “new” locals together
Address their personal interest and expected profits





Leader and Innovation – Important Questions

- **How to evaluate innovative project proposals?**
Balance between resource-based and market-based view
Strategic alignment instead of isolated actions
- **How to allow failure and enhance social learning?**
Use simple and quantitative indicators and organise follow-up meetings





Further Readings

- Leader Focus Groups' results available soon on EN RD website
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>
- Innovation and Rural Development, Observatory Dossier NO 2, 1997
<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leader2/rural-en/biblio/index.htm>
- LECH TRAIL www.lechweg.com

