

Discussion session: Better partnerships

Delivering added value in practice

Stakeholder involvement and effective LAG partnerships for the future

- active involvement, show the network is open to everybody (it's hard work!)
- different people speaking the same language - the language of LEADER
- create a common vision, align/join forces (LEADER has a unique way to do this)
- remain open to new people & new ideas so LEADER remains innovative and creative
- take a step back, listen to and trust each other
- through LEADER it's easier to create consensus on the ground (for local objectives and EU policies)
- open, balanced access and equal opportunities for participation

Multi-level governance and sustaining active and inclusive partnerships

- improve understanding among different groups
 - make sure different voices are heard
 - LAGs = bridges between the 'grassroots' level and regional, national authorities
 - creates confidence & trust among stakeholders
- create channels for connections/bottom-up communication (e.g. fishermen in Lesvos, GR)
- cross-sector approach to local development - dialogue with other Ministries about what LEADER is capable of (AT)
- working together and getting to know each other builds trust
- learning from each other, contacts with the Commission (through ENRD events)
- cross-sector approach, integration: not only at the local level
- collaboration on defining performance indicators

LEADER social capital and building resilience

- FI: farmers' union + national LEADER association tackled lack of seasonal agricultural workers
- GR: pandemic made social connections more fragile -> LEADER system switched to digital tools, showed resilience
- LEADER enabled access to more stakeholders
- AT: demand for local food products exploded during COVID - LAGs established local supply system quickly (self-service facilities)
- LEADER kept social connections alive
- things kept moving on despite feeling of 'remoteness' and fear (due to pandemic)
- LAGs benefiting from existing social ties + capacity to establish new local collaborations quickly (used to it)
- open discussion with Ministry on how LEADER can help restart tourism after COVID (AT)

Priority actions by MAs to ensure LEADER partnerships add value in the future

- GR (LAG): respect and acceptance for LEADER delivery system by local authorities
- allow enough space for local systems to evolve, respond to local needs, in the simplest possible way
- important discussion at MS level now!
- effective local partnerships require good relationship with MA and PA, balance of power
- trust in LAG partnerships
- risk of bottom-up principle being misinterpreted = LAGs controlled operationally and financially by a statutory authority - IE
- who actually controls a LAG and sets the agenda?
- concern over possible strict interpretations (audit)
- networking meetings (ENRD) helped connect theory with reality, peer learning
- FI (MA): take care of balanced composition (and regular renewal) of LAG boards
- AT (NRN): mutual understanding - LAC should also understand MA needs/functioning
- aim: easily accessible & stable LEADER system throughout a programming period - despite inevitable changes/challenges
- FI: 1/3 local authorities, 1/3 companies, 1/3 local inhabitants + max 6 yrs in a LAG board in a row
- bottom-up approach = LEADER started as a "disruptive technology"
- need for horizontal approach, more equality in the system - focus should be on the local people's needs and cooperation, and the development of the rural areas and all of the higher level support is the frame (HU)
- Good practice re' setting up LAGs (SI) will continue in next period (includes rules about partnership, decision-making processes, responsibilities of LAG's bodies, animation, etc.)
- mutual understanding MA-LAGs (helped by NRN) makes LEADER delivery system more resilient

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involvement = ownership = successful projects

involvement: active participation not only in projects, but also in other local processes (planning, discussion, etc.)

stakeholder analysis should be the basis for forming LAGs & creating LDS (HR)

Catalan LAG network: providing technical support to LAGs (esp. through cooperation projects)

helpful for dialogue with regional government

ensure good external communication to the broader public (maybe too much focus on 'internal' comms - between LAGs so far?) (ES)

FI: when LAGs lead in local networks they achieve better results

different size of LAGs across countries (DK= small LAGs)

possible shared interests and objectives - sharing funds between LEADER & Smart Villages (EE)

importance of partnerships for NRNs too (RO)

Multi-level governance and sustaining active and inclusive partnerships

role of networking

"sit on the same boat" - LAGs, MAs, NRNs, European Commission... and "row on the same direction" (FI)

shared understanding of goals, method and role of LEADER throughout the LEADER delivery chain

role of regional authorities in liaising with central gov (e.g. ES)

role of NRNs (e.g. IE) in disseminating info about what's been done so far, enable peer learning at EU scale

FI NRN facilitates discussion about implementation issues between LAGs & Provincial MAs in 3 provinces

make LEADER attractive for stakeholders, useful to achieve their goals (Catalonia)

networking is easier at local/regional level

call for LAGs' "own projects" (developed & financed by local stakeholders)

flexible & responsive LEADER system (DK)

encouraging cooperation projects

Facebook group for LAG managers in DK = help to peer-to-peer learning

human aspect - knowing people is key to build trust in a system!

LEADER is embedded in a political context, even if politically neutral - need to combine bottom-up approach with unavoidable top-down element

LEADER social capital and building resilience

LAGs were more flexible and resilient than expected - shift to digital tools... (DK)

flexibility of LAGs

going with the flow - adapting to the 'new normal' - developing new ideas

FI: LAGs' social capital made them flexible and fast to act/adapt

Catalonia: LAGs responded well, experiencing increased interest in rural areas from cities

local businesses were affected by the COVID situation

Priority actions by MAs to ensure LEADER partnerships add value in the future

importance of learning from others (MA - DK)

Catalonia: ensure funds for cooperation & umbrella/own projects by LAGs

support to LAGs at regional level (networking), not only national

Rural agenda for Catalonia: LAGs involved in its development

FI: Rural2040 and LEADER2040 (NRN)

role of LAG in the network

FI: Dynamic network analysis by LAGs

analyse local partnerships, missing knowledge & partnership & where to find that

knowledge may have to be found outside the LAG area

should be repeated in the future

belief in the LEADER method + clear framework by MAs are essential (DK)

guidance & support

bring LEADER in all aspects of NRN work

respect for knowledge that exists at the local level

clear expectations

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