



European Network for  
Rural Development

# Extending LEADER Innovation

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# “Innovation distinguishes between a LEADER and a follower”

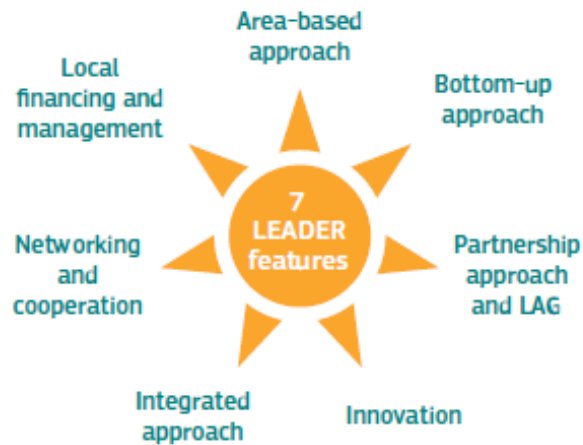
*Steve Jobs*



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# In the beginning LEADER was the innovation!

(where I started)



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# LEADER Innovation

- Innovation remains integral to LEADER in an evolving context
- Distinctive: meeting local needs, initiate and respond to change, developing new solutions, using local know how and resources
- Place specific potentials
- Different from but complementary to EIP and OGs  
Agricultural focus
- Fit with H2020, RIS3, AKIS?
- A big part of LEADER's added value



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# The Added Value

‘LEADER is intended to be an innovative approach’ -  
‘LAGs can add value by doing something different to  
other programmes’ (ECA)

*But:*

- ‘LAGs could provide little evidence of innovation’ and ‘financed projects that were little different’.
- ‘Strategies contain few specific commitments to innovation’ (ECA)
- ‘not clearly defined’ leads to plusses and minuses (Focus Group 2)
- ‘a description of the innovative features of the strategy’ (CPR Art 33c)
- Being part of the method, ‘the blend’ is still the difference – but don’t be complacent!



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# Holy Grail or Poisoned Chalice?

- Important, but an irritant or an inhibitor?
- Interpretation is subjective and inconsistent
- Community importance is unclear
- May have been hindered by some regulations?
- May have been hindered by interpretation?
- Challenged by risk averse partners and match funders
- How can we monitor and evaluate?
- Squeezed between eligibility and success requirements
- No real evidence of LAGs trying to drive innovation
- Constrains mainstreaming potential (induced aversion).



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“Entrepreneurs are simply those who understand that there is little difference between obstacle and opportunity and are able to turn both to their advantage”

*Niccolo Machiavelli*



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# Why is extending LEADER innovation important now?

- Rural innovation is a more developed and populated field
- Progressive shift of focus, rural as part of the whole
- ‘Rural and agricultural policies must interact with the wider context of national and regional strategies and work in complementarity and coherence with other policies’.
- ‘Building on the success of LEADER and EIP, bottom-up and locally led initiatives should be rolled out to mobilise rural potentials’.
- ‘Promote and permit innovation, allow innovation by allowing failure.’
- LEADER needs to up its game, make a distinctive contribution in this period (and for the next) - to the Cork ambition, rural development and rural innovation ecosystem.
- Must look outside our box, ‘see ourselves as others see us’



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# Making it Happen

- Innovation: a dynamic process, not passive.
- Entrepreneurial, enable, cultivate, capitalise .
- Demands a planned approach, design the potential in, links to animation.
- At PA, RDP, LDS and project level.
- Not inward looking, a rural innovation ecosystem.
- Effective intermediaries, reaches where others cannot.
- Transferable, LAG to LAG, scale up e.g. in RDP, EIP link, fund to fund, mainstream etc.
- Examples here today, many more.



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“If you do the same things,  
over  
and  
over,  
you’ll probably get the  
same outcomes!”

*Charles W Fluharty RUPRI*



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# Objectives

- Strengthen and improve innovation in LEADER at local, regional, national and EU levels, extending its scope and raising ambitions
- Recognising the wider potential and links
- LEADER as an enabler of rural innovation
- Capability and expectation to make the links and connections, the interface
- Taking it further, a practitioner working group to improve implementation, effectiveness and strengthen links?
- Lets get to work!!



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# Thank you for your attention!

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