

# The LEADER approach in the context of rural Europe

Kick off meeting of the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group  
on LEADER  
9 – 10 March 2017  
Skopje

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# Overview

- LEADER as a policy instrument
- LEADER as a method
- Examples of LEADER funded projects
- Make LEADER work for South Eastern Europe



## LEADER as a policy instrument

Very soon after it has been launched (1991), LEADER has become a central element in the European policy mix for rural areas and it continues to be so.

- The Cork I declaration 1996 „Towards an integrated rural policy“ does not mention LEADER explicitly, but it is later referred to as having been inspired by LEADER.
- Cork II declaration 2016 „A better life in rural areas“:
- Building on the success of LEADER and the European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture, bottom-up and locally led initiatives should be rolled out to mobilise rural potentials.

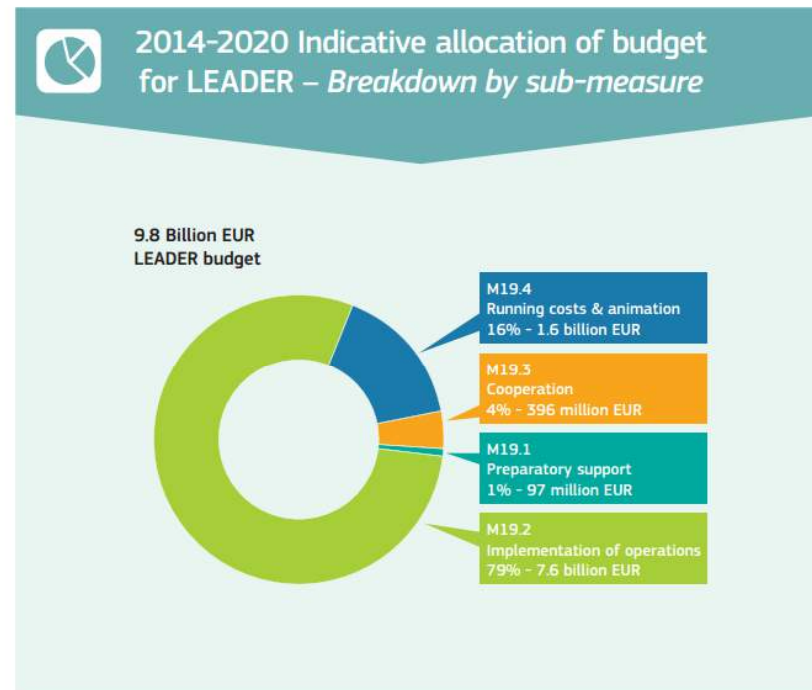
*Link to a promotional video on LEADER:*

# History

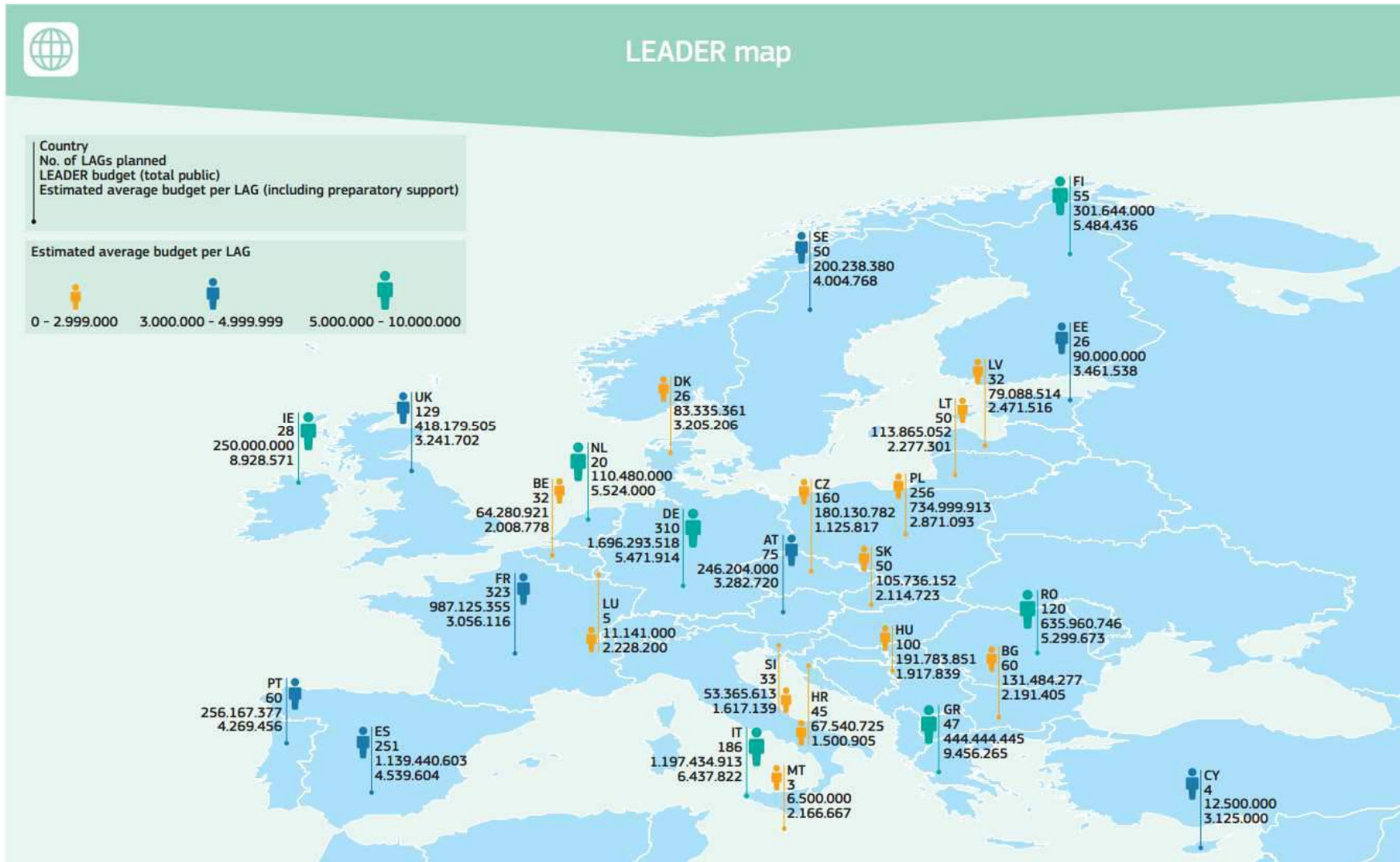
**Precursors: in the 1980ies: OECD – LEED Programme (still existing) and EU LEDA (action research and networking initiative on local economic development agencies, paid from EFRD)**

<b>LEADER 1</b>	<b>1991 – 1994</b>	<b>Community Initiative, 217 pilot areas (EU 12)</b>
<b>LEADER 2</b>	<b>1995 – 1999</b>	<b>CI, national/regional programmes (EU15)</b>
<b>LEADER +</b>	<b>2000 – 2006</b>	<b>CI, LEADER-like measures in new MS (EU15+10)</b>
<b>LEADER Axis (4) of RDP</b>	<b>2007-2013</b>	<b>Obligatory measure (5% resp. 2,5%) (EU 25+2)</b>
<b>CLLD/LEADER</b>	<b>2014-2020</b>	<b>Obligatory measure (5% / 2,5% for HR) (EU 28)</b>

# CLLD IN EAFRD



Targets to be reached by programme end	Value
No. of jobs created	46 000
Population benefitting from improved services	50 409 000

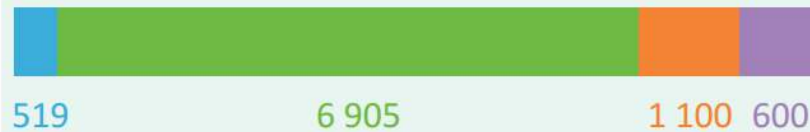




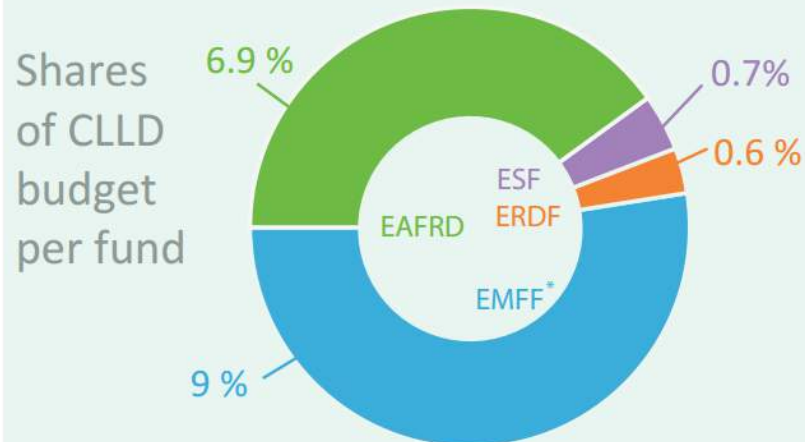


## CLLD in figures

Total CLLD budget per fund  
(EU contribution Million €)



Total CLLD across ESI funds **9 119 M€**



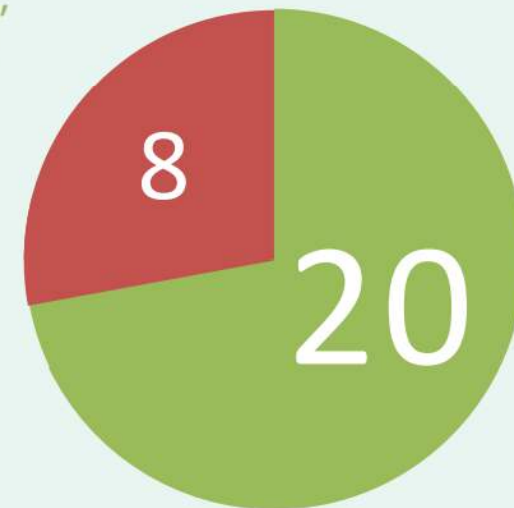
\*Data collection, control/enforcement and IMP measures aside.

## Multi-funded strategies across Europe

■ multi-funding allowed  
■ not allowed

AT, BG, CZ, DE,  
DK, ES, FI, FR,  
GR, HU, IT, LT,  
LV, PL, PT, RO,  
SE, SI, SK, UK

BE, CY,  
EE, HR,  
IE, LU,  
MT, NL



Source: Partnership Agreements and MS information.



## LEADER as a method

- The **LEADER method or approach** is defined as the combined application of the (so-called) seven LEADER principles.
- The **seven principles** are: Area-based approach, bottom-up approach, the local partnership, multi-sectoral approach, innovation, networking and territorial cooperation.







## The LEADER method...

...epitomizes a **mode of governance**, which is characterized by the combined application of the seven **LEADER features**

**Two-step selection process:**  
First the Local Action Groups are selected on the basis of their Local Development Strategy, then the LAG is empowered to fund projects according to the LDS.



## The Local Development Strategy (LDS)

The **Local Development Strategy** embodies the shared vision of the local partnership.

A good LDS is based on **local potentials** (natural, cultural, social, human, technological...), which get re-valued (put in a different context or used for a new purpose) and **re-linked** (with each other, with global knowledge and technologies, with resources from other areas...)



## Local partnership

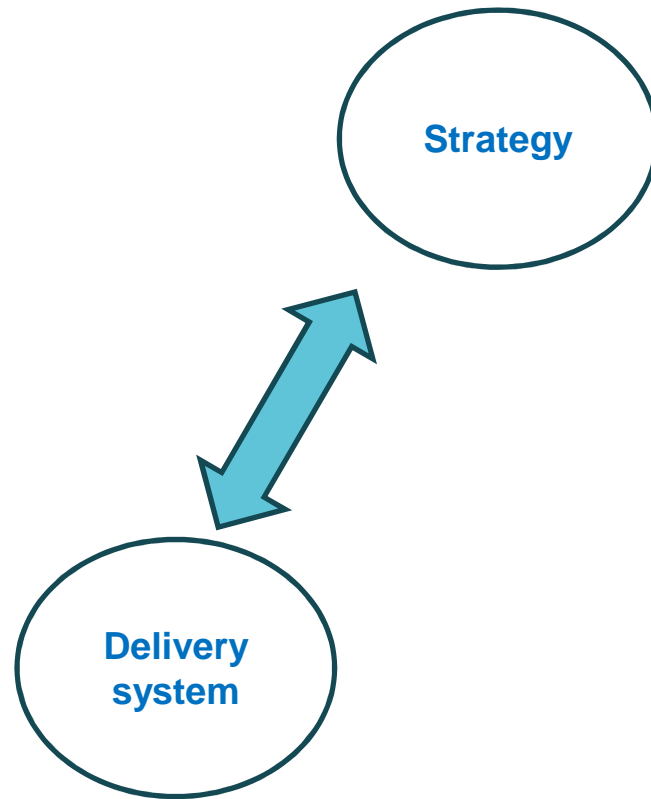
**The local partnership (the Local Action Group) is the heart of LEADER implementation.**

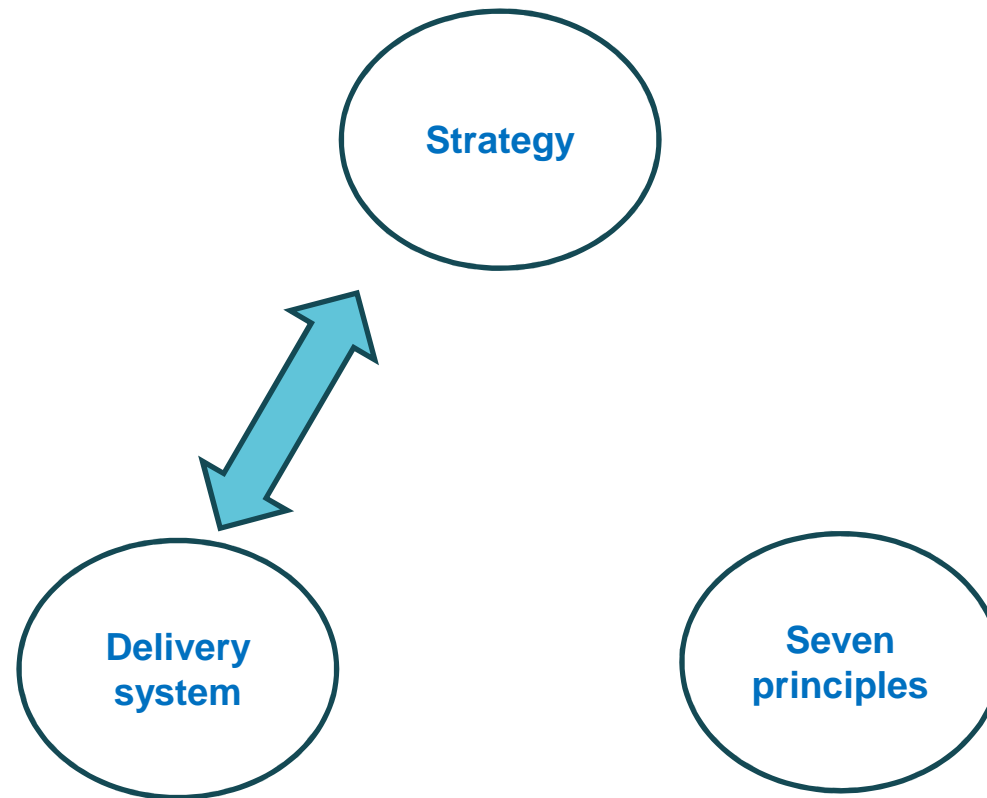
- **Diversity first: The local partnership should reflect the diversity of local people and groups. „Monocultural“ groups underperform.**
- **The steering structures and processes are THE key intervention: Not only the achieved outputs (projects), but the way these activities are achieved, how decisions are made and how responsibilities are shared among stakeholders is one of the most powerful agents of change – or failure....**
- **Legitimacy by output: In a „deliberative democracy“ the democratic legitimacy is missing. Who entitles these guys to speak or act for the whole area? This question can only be answered by referring to**
  - **the beneficial outcomes**
  - **the excellence of processes**

## The Added Value of LEADER

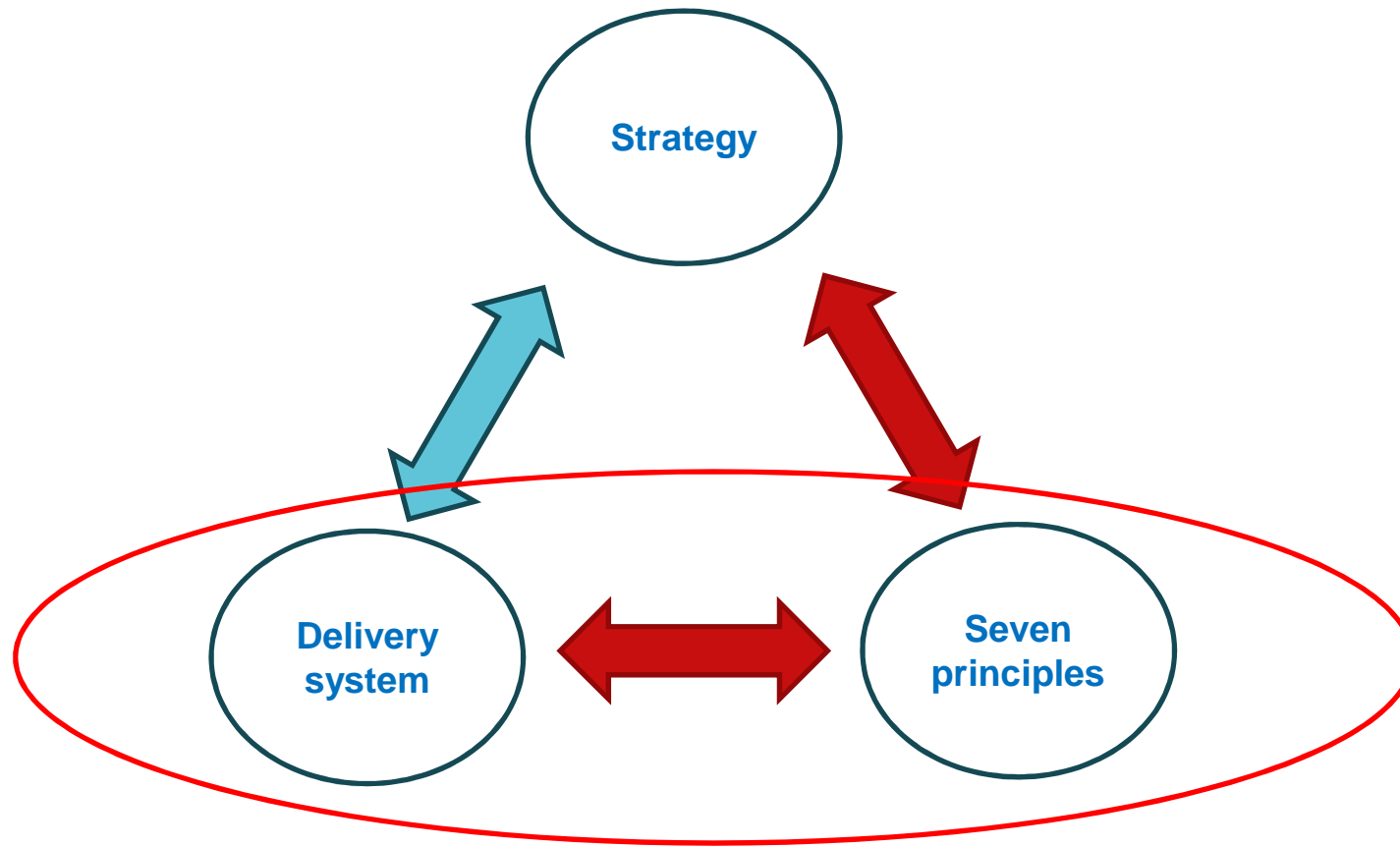
The **added value of LEADER/CLLD** are benefits obtained through the proper implementation of CLLD method above benefits which can be achieved with the same types of intervention but without applying the method. Added value is usually generated as increased social capital, improved governance and enhanced results and impacts of the intervention.

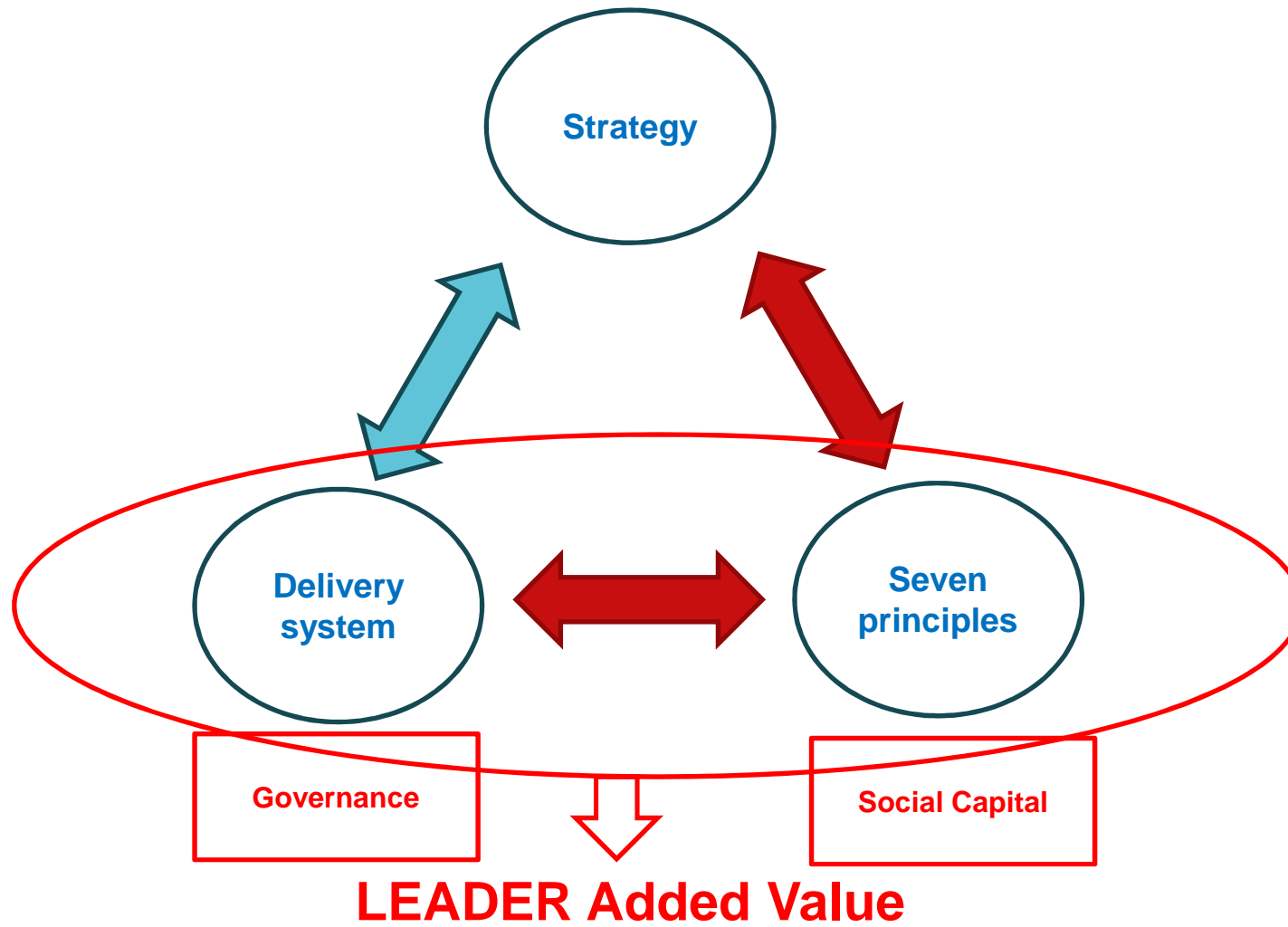


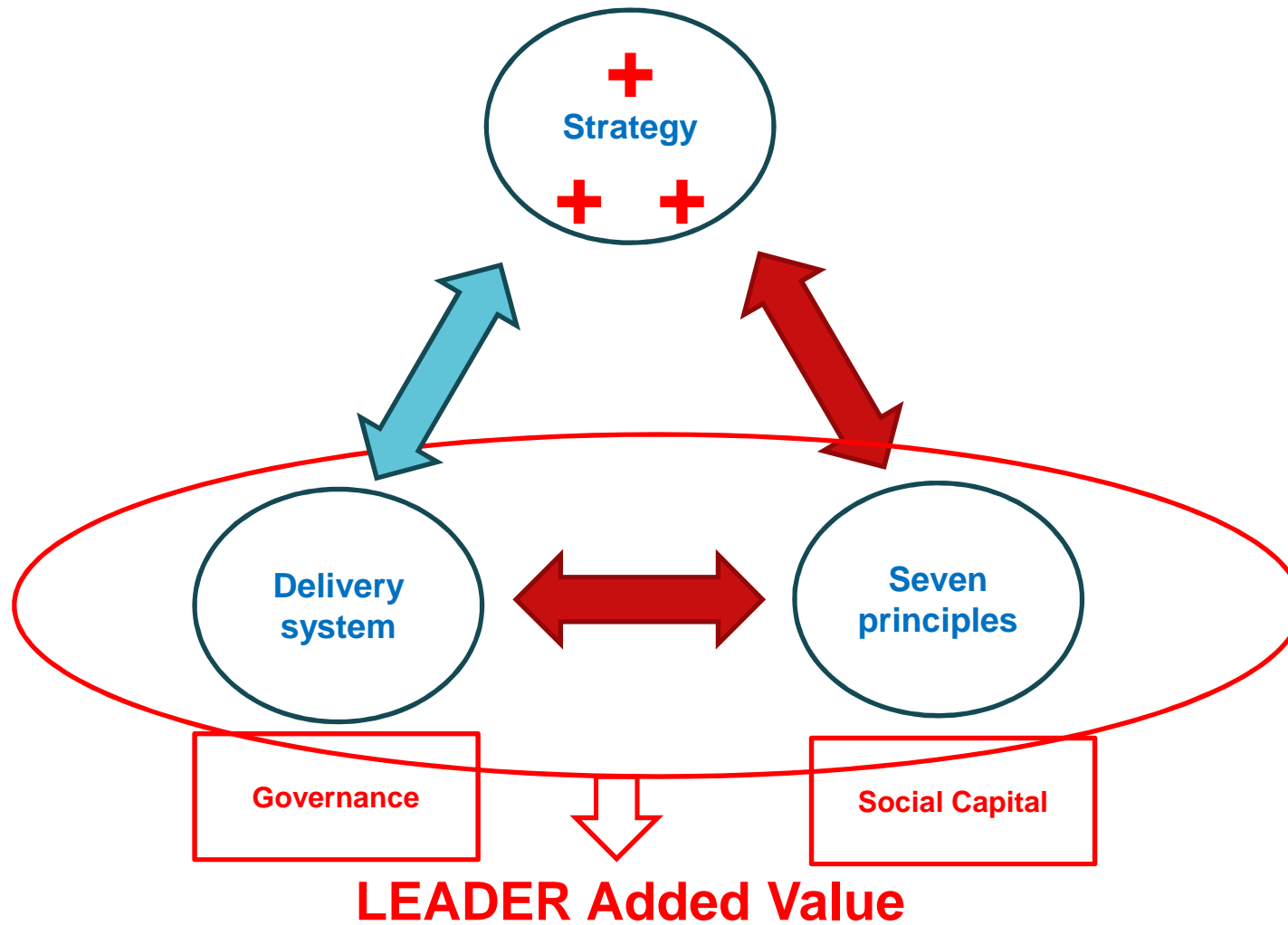










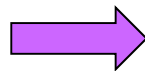




# Examples

- Local value chains, marketing and branding
- Landscape preservation and sustainable use
- Eco-tourism concepts and projects with links to culture, education, local products
- Social innovation, solutions for child and elderly care co-created by private-civil society-public initiatives
- Broad future search processes („open innovation“)
- Local eco-mobility
- Zero carbon emission strategies
- Smart LEADER to boost creative local industries and MSME cooperation (Tagus area, Spain)
- Re-use of disabled infrastructures, buildings
- Integration of immigrants
- ....

**Austrian Leader  
project database**



[https://www.zukunftsraumland.at/index.php?filter%5Blanguage\\_id%5D=de&filter%5Bkeyword%5D=&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=11&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=12&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=14&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=15&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=16&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=13&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=46&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=47&filter%5Bkeyword\\_id%5D%5B%5D=48&inc=project](https://www.zukunftsraumland.at/index.php?filter%5Blanguage_id%5D=de&filter%5Bkeyword%5D=&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=11&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=12&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=14&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=15&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=16&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=13&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=46&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=47&filter%5Bkeyword_id%5D%5B%5D=48&inc=project)



## Make LEADER work for South East Europe

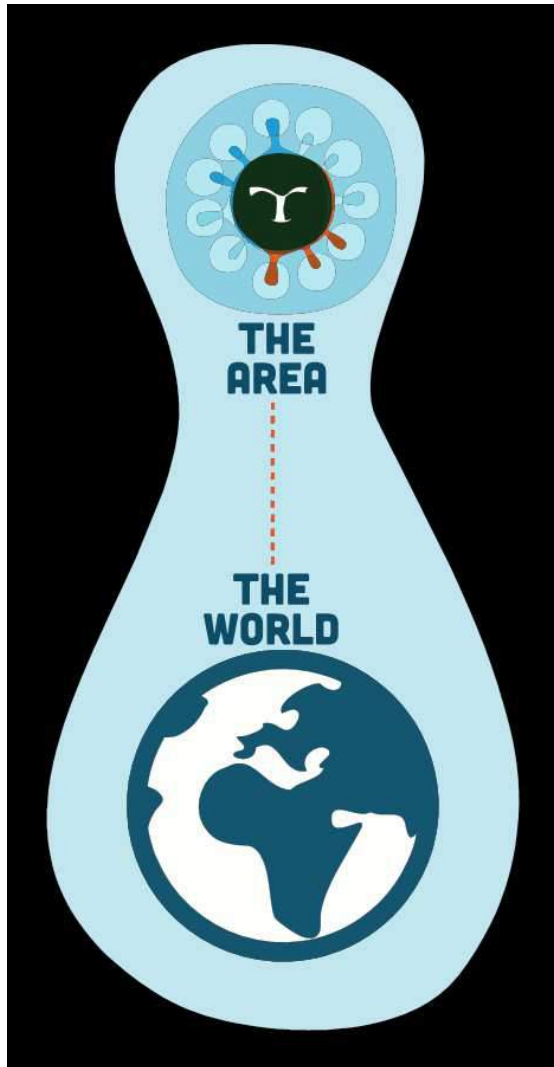
- LEADER rests on two pillars: **a functioning local governance** and a **lively local civil society**.
- Also in the absence or weakness of one pillar it is possible to create added value.
- If both are dwindling, LEADER is **NOT** an option. It can neither replace democratic governance nor self-organising action; it is neither charitable nor statist.
- The local “elite” (stakeholders) has a decisive role. It basically has to tolerate that more and new people get access to resources (the force of reason should always be a little stronger than the power of greed).
- **Finally there are also shortcomings in the EU-wide implementation which should not be copied: Overly complex, bureaucracy-laden delivery systems which tend to suffocate innovation. However there are a lot of positive examples for CLLD implementation worthwhile looking at: Sweden, Tyrol (Austria)...**

## Make LEADER work for South East Europe

- There is huge potential in SEE for LEADER.
- The rural areas are abundant in resources (natural, human, cultural, culinary...).
- There are LAGs and LEADER-like measures in operation.
- LEADER has the potential to support people believing in the future of their area, to envision themselves and their communities being part of that prosperous future.







# Thank you!

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