

SWG  
LEADER

# Assessment of the application of the LEADER approach in the Western Balkan Countries

February – December 2017

39<sup>th</sup> SWG Assembly Session, 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> September  
Zagreb, Croatia

# Objectives

- Overall objective:
  - To improve understanding of the current state and the barriers for effective implementation of LEADER initiative
- Specific objectives:
  - To present the current state of LEADER in country / territory in WB from the perspective of:
    - *cross-country comparative analysis of the policy, regulatory and institutional framework;*
    - *To assess the available funds from public sources and donors;*
    - *Review practical activities already undertaken to identify good practice from previous actions and initiatives and lessons learned;*
  - To draw conclusions by generalizing from the findings on the specific national needs, challenges and constrains

# Methodology

- **Desk research** was used to collect existing secondary data and information on LEADER initiatives in project countries
- **Interviews with identified resource person** were carried out in order to obtain primary data and to ensure that all relevant information was covered
- **Case studies** used to illustrate the diversity of institutions, policy approaches, types of partnerships and practices related to LEADER in WB countries and experiences gained by *policy* makers, experts and stakeholders.

# Involved parties

- **SWG** – identified the experts and coordinate the activities of the study requested based on the expressed needs of the SWG member institutions
- **GIZ** – financial support and international backstopping
- **5 national experts** from the entire WB region - prepared national reports
- **2 regional experts** - coordinating the national experts, preparing the national reports on Macedonia and Serbia and the regional report
- **1 international expert** – backstopping and advising

# Main Meetings

## of the REAWG and core team

- **Kick-off meeting** – March, Skopje, Macedonia
- **First interim meeting** – June, Andrevlje, Serbia
- **Second interim meeting** – September, Zagreb, Croatia
- **Final presentation of results and policy recommendations** – APF October 2017
- **Dissemination and publication of the assessment policy recommendations** - end of 2017

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# Achieved Results (in draft version)

- Assessment of the situation related to application of LEADER in the WB Countries
- National country reports
- National policy recommendations
- Outline of the regional report
- Draft Regional policy recommendations

# General Recommendations

## Recommendations for institutional set up improvements

Government institutions at all levels should continue to work on development of

- Institutional – weak structures on the field
- strategic (multiannual programming documents , incl. IPARD are not developed/adopted in all countries)
- regulatory framework for introduction of LEADER (Kosovo\*)
- Strengthening human capacities of relevant institutions
  - Engage enlarged number of staff from relevant ministries and Paying Agency
  - The staff of ministries and other stakeholders (municipalities, CSOs, business sector) need more tailor made trainings
  - The staff of the Managing Authority and the Paying Agency will have to be trained to implement that measure
  - Specialized information campaigns and seminars for representatives of local self-governments should be prepared.

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

# General Recommendations

## Recommendations for policy improvements

- LEADER measures are planned but not implemented - measure fishes should be finalized
  - it is important to re- check the existing ones and to elaborate the missing ones
- Local development policies should be implemented with a bottom-up decision-making process allowing for better connection and coordination of diverse rural actors
- Development of secondary legislation is needed i.e. rulebooks and regulations on Local Action Groups encompassing guidelines on establishment, role, functioning and accreditation of LAGs including start-up toolkits for development of Local Development Strategy (LDS) for potential LAG constituents



# General Recommendations

## Recommendations for empowering local stakeholders

- Awareness raising campaigns needed - diverse models of networking of various local stakeholders (public, civil and business)
- Exchange of information and transfer of best international practices from EU LAGs.
- Capacity building and training should be supplemented with the design and execution of a broad public awareness campaign for the general population.
- Donor support to be better coordinated