



# Assessment of the application of the LEADER approach in the Republic of Serbia

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**Evidence-Based Policy Making**

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## Motivation and outline

- **Overall objective:**
  - To contribute to understanding of the current state and the barriers for effective implementation of LEADER initiative in Serbia
- **Outline:**
  - LEADER Environment in Serbia
    - LEADER in the national strategic and program documents
    - Institutional and legal settings
  - Funding
  - Conclusions and Recommendations



# LEADER ENVIRONMENT

## LEADER in the national strategic and programming documents

- **SARD** - Priority area 12 „*Improving the social structure and strengthening social capital in rural areas*“
- **NPRD** for up to 2020 - developed in 2018
- **IPARD II** - LEADER measure is planned for second package of accreditation.
  - Accreditation of the measures from the second package will be supported by EU project which is planned for the second part of the year 2017 (?)



# LEADER ENVIRONMENT

## LEADER in the national strategic and programming documents

- **Annual regulations** - the Secretariat of Agriculture, the Government of the AP Vojvodina; approved by MAEP
  - define the eligible activities, conditions and criteria for use of incentives as well as criteria for the approval of LSRD
- **Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society in the Republic of Serbia (2015-2019)**
  - Prepared but not adopted (?)
  - The overall objective is to improve the legal and institutional framework for the development of civil society and strengthen the partnership of the public administration and civil society in creating and implementing public policies



# LEADER ENVIRONMENT

## Institutional settings

- **The rural development program is managed by the MAFWM**
  - **Supporting partner institutions**
    - National council for rural development - monitoring committee,
    - National rural development network- focusing on support of local actions,
    - Agricultural extension service - promoting rural development schemes and advising beneficiaries
  - **Secretariat for Agriculture, Water management and Forestry**
    - Responsible for planning of support measures for the implementation of agricultural policy, educate and coordinate the work of local action groups on the territory of APV



# LEADER ENVIRONMENT

## Relevant actors

- **The Network for Rural Development of Serbia**
  - officially established 2010 by support of MAFWM as an umbrella association of associations active in the field of rural development of Serbia;
- **The National LEADER Network**
  - Established within EU project “Capacity building for the establishment and implementation of a LEADER initiative in the Republic of Serbia“; collaborates with more than 20 Local Action Groups
- **LAGs - not officially recognized by MAEP**
  - applying for different projects independently or as a part of networks which operate in capacity of civil society networks



# LEADER ENVIRONMENT

## Legal and regulatory requirements for the implementation of the LEADER

- **The Law on Agriculture and Rural Development**
  - provides the general framework for the policy implementation
- **The Law on Incentives in Agriculture and Rural Development**
  - Article 34 - predicts, among others, the subsidies for preparation and implementation of local Rural Development Strategies.
  - Article 40 - closely describes the incentives to support programs relating to the preparation and implementation of local rural development strategies
- **The missing parts of the regulatory framework:**
  - bylaws regulating the definition of eligibility conditions for geographical scope of possible cooperation partners or condition for establishment of LAGs



# LEADER ENVIRONMENT

## Secondary legislation related to LEADER approach

- **Secondary legislation of relevance**
  - Law on Regional Development
  - Law on local self-government
  - Law on Associations
  - Law on Public Private Partnership and concessions
  - Law on non-governmental organizations - does not exist!
- **Current LAGs operate a legal entity with two possible legal forms for local action groups:**
  - Association (CSOs);
  - A limited liability company - which operates as a non-profit business entity on the basis of declarations by a member



## FUNDING

- **The funding of LEADER like support from agricultural budget**
  - 2005-2010; mapping of regions and trainings for identified NGOs on the topics related to PLA/PRA and rural development.
  - 2013 MAEP included LEADER measure in the annual Regulation for 2014, but call for proposal was not realized
- **The budgete of APV**
  - Since 2007;
  - The subject of the support was the award of a grant for the preparation of local rural development strategies.
  - Beneficiaries of funds were so-called Partnerships for Territorial Rural Development-potential Local Action Groups, from the territory of APV
  - The total amount of funds allocated is about 85 000 EUR, a maximum amount per beneficiary of approximately EUR 8.000



## FUNDING

- **LEADER like activities supported by donor projects:**
  - *2008-2009 Project Strengthening Rural Social Capital and Networks (UNDP)*
    - implemented in partnership with Provincial Secretariat of Agriculture, Water Economy and Forestry of AP Vojvodina, and funded by the Government of Romania
  - *2011-2013. Project LEADER Initiative Serbia (LIS)*
    - strengthening the human, technical, organizational and financial capacities for the implementation of LEADER approach within the MAFWM;
    - 21 potential LAGs have been identified and granted
  - *From 2009 - SWG and EC, EU funded project for support to application of Area Based Development Approach*
    - tested the LEADER type initiative on cross border areas in several territories

Country/ territory	Strategic and programming framework	Regulatory framework		Government funding support	Capacity development		
		Rulebooks on selection of LAGs	Rulebooks on Local strategies		MoA	CSO Rural development networks established	LAG-like partnerships
Albania	Yes	No	No	No	No	Albanian Rural Development Network	4 LAG-like partnerships, operate as CSOs
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	At a national, but not on entity level; low progress at cantonal level	No	No	No	No	"Rural development network in BiH"	3 LAG-like partnerships operate as CSOs
Republic of Srpska	Yes	No	No	No	No	"Rural Development Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina"	3 LAG-like partnerships operate as CSOs
Kosovo*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo*	30 LAG-like partnerships are formally established
Macedonia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia	16 LAG-like partnerships operate as CSOs
Montenegro	In progress	No	No	No	No	No	still no LAG-like partnership
Serbia	Yes	In progress	In progress	Until 2013; Currently on the territory of AP Vojvodina	One person nominated to deal with LEADER	Two networks operate:  The Network for Rural Development of Serbia and the National LEADER Network (NLN).	No reliable national data on the number of active LAGs or LAG-like partnerships



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Conclusions

- **Needs:**
  - Key institutions and stakeholders lack the knowledge, procedures, rulebooks, experience and understanding to make LEADER operational in Serbia.
- **Challenges:**
  - *Institutional* – lack of staff; lack of knowledge (design and implementation)
  - *Stakeholders* - not well prepared and informed about the rules and requirements of LEADER support; lack of understanding about possibilities and core principles of LEADER philosophy
  - *Technical challenges* - the support to animators and potential LAGs to prepare partnerships along with Strategies for submissions is needed



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendations

- **Institutional set up improvements:**
  - Increase the number of staff and full fill the requirements of the accreditation process of PA respecting the work load analysis
  - TPlan the staff which will be involved in the implementation of promotional and training activities
  - Plan the training needs of the staff to be involved in the evaluation of the Strategies of LAGs and general principles and rules for the implementation of the LEADER measure



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendations

- **Policy improvements**

- To prepare all documentation and templates for implementation of the measure under the IPARD II Programme
  - rulebook for implementation of the measure will have to be elaborated in line with EU requirements

- **Empowering local stakeholders**

- the proper information about possibilities and core principles of LEADER philosophy will have to be transferred to potential stakeholder groups
- Stakeholders should be equipped with well-designed trainings on skills and rules on LEADER requirements and procedures
- strong information campaign to explain the rules and requirements is needed

Core recommendations for implementation of the LEADER Approach	To strengthen the awareness and increase the capacities of the rural population for the implementation of the LEADER Approach	To create a system providing advisory support to the existing and LAG-like partnerships	Support the creation of LAGs and the preparation of LAG strategies	Support the implementation of LDS through the established LAG-like partnerships	Support co-operation and networking between LAG-like partnerships at the national and international level
LEADER specific activities in WB countries/ territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation and distribution of promotional materials</li> <li>- Realization of promotional and informative events at the national/ regional level</li> <li>- Development of overall assessment and mapping of potential territories for establishing LAGs at the national level by considering the LEADER principle of the area-based approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening capacities of RD networks and other entities for the animation and mobilization of rural stakeholders regarding the LEADER Approach</li> <li>- Provide ongoing support to LAG-like partnerships through mentoring and coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening the capacities of the potential and existing LAG-like partnerships for developing transparent procedures among the main actors communication and decision making)</li> <li>- Training in setting up local partnerships</li> <li>- Training in acquiring skills in strategic planning</li> <li>- Training in Project Cycle Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assistance for the realization of projects derived from the LDS</li> <li>- Training for LAG managements on public procurement procedures related to the project implementation</li> <li>- Training for LAGs on financial and administrative management issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of joint projects between LAG-like partnerships at the national level</li> <li>- Provide opportunities for LAG-like partnerships to take part in transnational (TNC) co-operation projects with European partners</li> </ul>



Thank you!