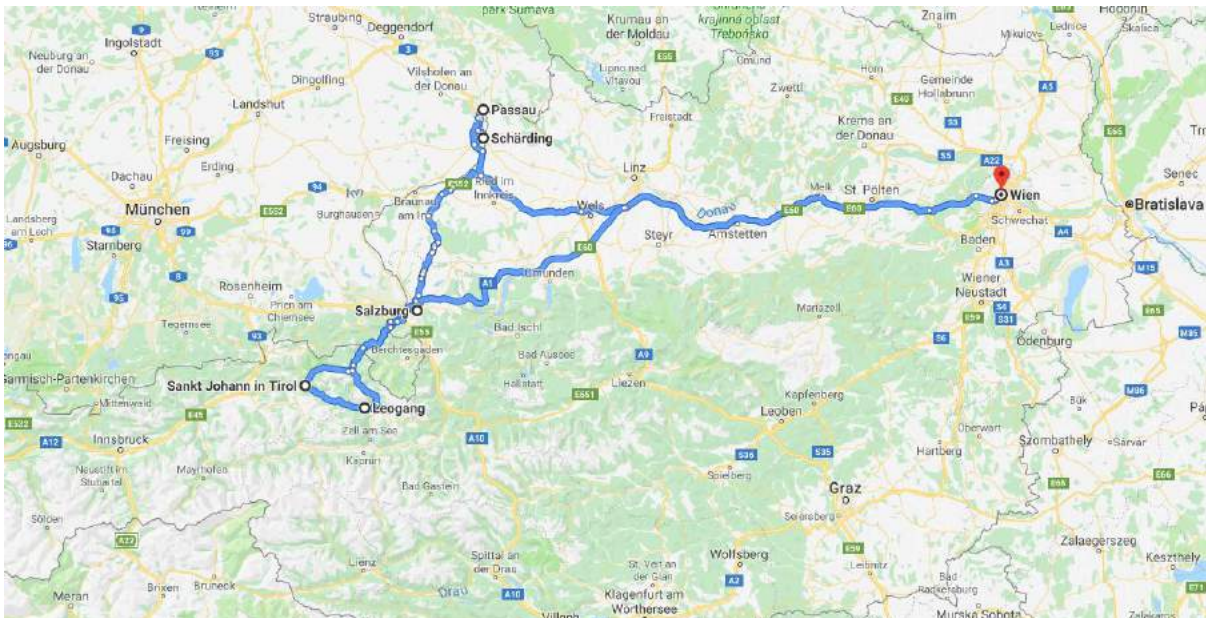




Exposure visit

Successful implementation of the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) and LEADER Approach

July 7th – 13th 2019, Austria



Background information

The project „Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)” jointly implemented by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH organized the exposure visit in Austria for the purpose of exchanging experiences and good practices related to **the successful implementation of the Community Led Local Development (CLLD)** and **LEADER Approach**.

Objective

The objective of the exposure visit was to transfer European experience regarding the formulation, planning, implementation, organization, financing and monitoring of CLLD/ LEADER approaches and operations of LAGs structure to representatives from the relevant public authorities, civil society and business sector from the SEE countries.

The **major goals** of the exposure visit are:

- Familiarization with the policy, legal, institutional setup, coordination among relevant authorities and the links between the civil, business and public sector for territorial development implementing CLLD/ LEADER approach;
- Transfer of European experiences regarding the policy design, implementation of the CLLD/LEADER approach in respect to its establishment, functioning and financing;
- Transfer of European experience in respect to structure and functioning of LAGs and roles of LAG structures;
- Transfer of examples of successful models of mutual understanding and cooperation among the stakeholders, regional actions and projects related to CLLD/LEADER from the visiting areas;
- Presentation of examples and success stories on integrated value chain approach (agro-food & tourism), branding of products and regions, as well as innovation and digitalization for rural development;
- Presentation of examples and success stories on advocacy activities & campaigns and ways to expand the successful models of cooperation on local/regional/ national level and cross-border (transnational) level;
- Transfer of positive examples for cross – border (transnational) partnership cooperation and application of joint actions, projects and relevant events.

The exposure visit in Austria for exchange of experiences and good practices related to CLLD/LEADER was organized for participants from South-East European countries, representatives of Ministries of agriculture, Rural Development Networks (RDNs), Local Action Groups (LAGs) and Area Based Development Stakeholder Groups (SHGs).

Organizers

SEDRA Project

In September 2018 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development approved the realization of a 3-years regional programme with the title "Support to economic diversification of rural areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)". The project is jointly implemented by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

The project aims at strengthening the institutional capacities of selected stakeholders in Southeast Europe for supporting EU-compliant economic diversification in rural areas.

The project contributes to improvement of the technical, methodological and implementation capacities for evidence-based rural development policies for economic diversification, facilitates community-led area based development, as well as, value chain development.

The project contributes to the economic diversification of rural areas, thus positively affecting the life choices of the rural population, investing in sustainable business models.

GIZ

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a German federal enterprise which offer workable, sustainable and effective solutions in political, economic and social change processes.

GIZ is a service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work, dedicated to shaping a future worth living around the world. GIZ has over 50 years of experience in a wide variety of areas, including economic development and employment promotion, energy and the environment, and peace and security.

GIZ as an organization active in more than 120 countries worldwide believe that only by combining social responsibility, ecological balance, political participation and economic capability will current and future generations be able to lead secure and dignified lives.

More information on: <https://www.giz.de>

SWG RRD

The "SWG RRD" stands for Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe and is an International Intergovernmental Organization, consisted of governmental institutions responsible for rural development in respective countries and territories. Its managing and coordinative body is the SWG Head Office/Secretariat, based in Skopje, Macedonia.

The SWG, as a platform for networking and regional co- operation, has been established in 2005 and is founded based on a common wish to establish an organization for sustainable rural development in SEE. As an organization the SWG RRD is a non-political body, acting in a spirit of friendship and good neighborliness and enhances mutual respect and confidence, dialogue and cooperation among the Member Institutions.

In general, the SWG is working to empower and promote sustainable principles on rural development, through networking and permanent cooperation between all stakeholders of rural development in SEE region.

More information on: <http://seerural.org/>

Local organizer of the exposure visit: LAG Regional Management regio3

The LAG was founded in May 1996 and was one of the first LAGs in Austria after Austria became a member of the EU in 1995. More than 200 LEADER projects and more than 70 projects in other funds were managed by the LAG since then. The LAG started with 4 municipalities and around 8.000 inhabitants and now there are 13 municipalities and 43.000 people in the LAG. The LAG regio3 is also very active in national and transnational cooperation. Main topics of the LAG are: tourism, economy and job market, culture and natural heritage as well as social welfare and climate and energy.

The manager Stefan Niedermoser is active in the LAG since 2006 and has therefore a big knowledge of CLLD/LEADER. He is also the founder and chairman of the Austrian LEADER-forum, a voluntary association of all 77 LAGs in Austria.

More information on: www.regio3.at

Short description of the visits prepared by the inputs from participants of the exposure visit

July 7th

Arrivals of the participants in Vienna.

July 8th

From the hotel the group took a walk through the city-park of Vienna and the tour-guide Stefan Niedermoser presented some facts and figures about Vienna and Austria in general.

After the short walk the group was welcomed by the Austrian Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism.

Following the presentations in the attachment of the report, Mr. Gschnell, Mr. Fischer and Mr. Stadler presented the agriculture in Austria in general, the Austrian programme for Rural Development, the Austrian Network for Rural Development and the LEADER approach in Austria.

All presentations are part of the report.

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After the presentations the tour lead the group on the way to the province of upper Austria and the the hotel "Das Schärding" in the baroque town of Schärding. The group was welcomed by the former LAG-Manager Thomas Müller and the chairman of the LAG Alois Selker.

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Alois Selker: office@sauwald-pramtal.at

Before dinner there was a guided tour through the old town of Schärding and via the river Inn. The common dinner with some words from the LAG chairman was in the local restaurant "Bumsn".

July 9th

The group visited a few locations in the Schärding district with positive examples of the rural development projects that could be replicates in other countries as follows:

1. The Waste Disposal Site in Schärding – The group had an opportunity to learn how the waste disposal and recycling is organized in Austria and especially in the Upper Austria Region. There are 180 waste recycling sites in Upper Austria. The household collects the waste by themselves and bring it to the disposal sites. The waste is put in different containers according to its material and possibility to be recycled. There is a very high recycling rate and only 3% of the total waste in Upper Austria is not recycled. The site works three days a week.
After collecting, the waste is sold to companies that sells it further to the industry. The recycling system in Upper Austria was established in 1984 and people are very much aware of its importance. Additionally, due to the fact that the recycled waste is sold, the local community makes money out of it and therefore, the price for the garbage collection per household is only around 120 EUR. The more people recycle, the more they can sell back to the industrie and the lower the price for garbage collecting in the own household gets. The main goal of this system is to reduce the quantity of waste as much as possible. When people bring their waste, they do not have to pay any extra money. It is free of charge for households, but companies have to pay. Many school children come to the waste disposal site where they learn about the recycling and they influence their parents to be more aware about importance of reducing the quantity of waste. This is not a LEADER project but it is was very useful for us to see and it could be implemented through LEADER.
2. Baumkronenweg – walking through the tops of trees
This LEADER project reflects a real bottom-up approach. The idea came from the local people and the project was put in the Local Development Strategy of the LAG. However, the politicians didn't believe in this project and neither did the consultant who was hired to assist in its realization. Anyway, a local farmer expressed his interest to build this construction on his farm. The project was started in 2004. In June 2005 the first stage of the project was completed. It was financed through LEADER 60% and the value of the first stage was 900.000 EUR. The project was very successful, and the number of tourists was much higher than expected. All the profit had to be reinvested since the project was implemented by non-profit organization. The owner of the farm himself, built the restaurant and after that even the hotel on the top of the trees.
It is a unique experience and therefore it is very famous and brings a lot of people in this area that was originally not the tourist area.
3. Engelhartzell – The group visited the old Trapist Monastery and the LEADER project that was implemented on the land that originally belonged to the monastery. It is

a small nature park with a model of the rivers Inn and Danube and their confluence. It has an educational character for the kids because they learn how the floods happen and what people can do to prevent them. The park has an important educational character. Besides that, at the same location an aquarium was built through INTERREG program with Germany.

4. Panorama view – It is a LEADER project and it is important for tourism development. It is 25 km long and has 9 points with excellent view on the value of the Danube river. There are also some restaurants that were built along the road. That is especially important for cycling.
5. Apple juice producers – A family farm that produces apple juice, apple cider and mos was visited. The family overtook the farm in 2002. At the beginning they were producing milk. Afterwards, they changed the production. In 2006 they started with the apple production, first for themselves and afterwards for selling. They invested in the machines and got support from LEADER in amount of 35%. The investment was around 70.000 EUR. They also implemented the branding project (Sauwald Apple Juice) for which they were also supported by LEADER 35 %. The first year the family produced 2.000 liters of apple juice. Last year, they had to process 170.000 tones of apples.

Images of the day:







July 10th

Transfer from the town Schäßing to the city of Salzburg– during the travel, reflection of 2 days visits. First day on Vienna – Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism, rural development now is part of this Ministry.

Austria started more than 20 years ago with the implementation of the LEADER approach. At the beginning there were lot's of challenges during the implementation of LEADER. Now in Austria a lot of successful projects were implemented through LAGs in the past 20 years since 1996.

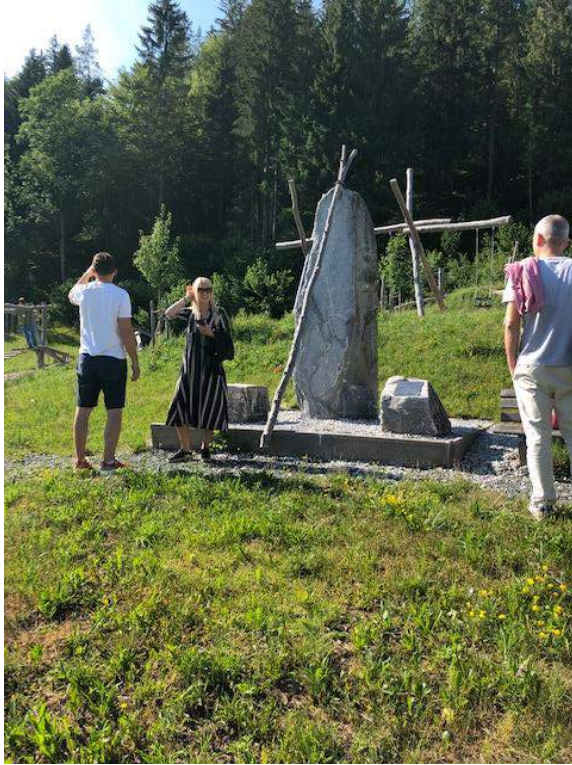
Leader is becoming more and more important in Austria, the LAG managers are usually young people average age 35-40 dominate from women.

The group stopped for a short visit in Salzburg, the third biggest city of Austria with a very long history. Main points were the old-town and the castle Salzburg, one of the biggest castles in Europe. After visiting the birth house of Wolfgang A. Mozart the study-visit headed on to the LAG in the province of Kitzbühel in Tyrol/Austria

In the LAG regio³ the group visited some small LEADER projects. There was a nature play-ground for children and adults, walking and biking paths and also some cultural projects where old buildings and famous houses in the region were marked and described. In the evening the group visited a cultural events at the lake "Pillersee "with traditional music and dance.

Impressions of the day:





July 11th

The group had the opportunity to visit many projects implemented in regio³ Region and the surrounding. The old Alpine town of Kitzbuhel is part of the LAG since 2014. The town is specific for the colorful look of the houses and that is a result of the decision of the town council not to allow two neighbouring houses to have the same colour. The town is famous as spot and cultural center of the region. Many sports events happen here such as: ski competitions, the World cup in Triathlon and Biathlon, tennis tournaments and so on. With support of LEADER the town and the area was labeled as a sport center in the region.



One of the projects funded by LEADER, which the group got introduced to, was the fun park for children established to help them improve their mountain biking skills on the pump track. Here the host shared some additional information concerning the education system in the country.

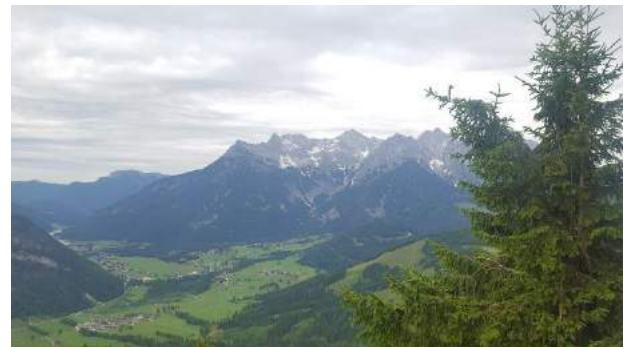
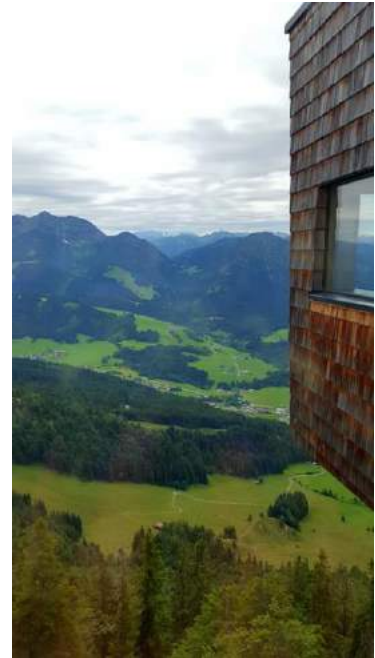
As part of the national sustainability 2050 agenda, 40 plug-in stations were installed in the LAG territory. Within the LAG around 3.5% of the cars are electric compared to 1.1% at the whole territory of the country. To encourage people to use electric cars, the country gives subsidies and induces taxes on motor power.

Additionally, 120% of the electricity comes out of water by using circular micro hydropower system set up on mountain streams. The LAG also works on reducing the energy consumption and it is expected to decrease up to 40% in upcoming years.

The last stop was the LEADER-project Jakobskreuz, built on the top of the mountain on St. Jakob's pilgrimage path. Built in 2014 in a period of only 3 months, it became a real attraction for tourists and supported the development of tourism in the region. This project was started in 2007 but was many times postponed due to conflicts among the different parties regarding its building. On the top of each mountain in Tyrol there is a cross, but Jakobskreuz is no ordinary cross – it is a monument of the region of Tirol from where you can see as far as the landscape is spreading. The monument, however, is not only surrounded with mesmerizing landscapes, but it features a Flower and Photo Path, where tourists can walk up to a peak to take a picture and learn about the local flora on their

way there from the educative boards installed next to the flowers and plants typical for this alpine region

Images of the day:



July 12th

The group inspected the regional farmers market in St. Johann in Tirol and after that the study tour went to the LAG office of the tour guide Stefan Niedermoser.

In the LAG office the LAG structure, LAG principles and more information on LEADER and CLLD was presented and discussed.

The presentation can be found in the attachment of the report.

After lunch in the "Saliterhof" the transfer back to Vienna took place. Reflection, and Q&A session in the bus to open questions.

July 13th

Departure of the participants