



A Credible EU Perspective for the Western Balkans

How does the LEADER approach help pre-accession countries in their reform process to EU?

Presentation for the **PREPARE** Webinar

Improving perspectives for the implementation of the LEADER approach in the Western Balkans

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Robert Lukesch

ÖAR

Good reasons for EU engagement in standing up for LEADER in South-East Europe

- CLLD/LEADER has proven to work in all types of rural areas, from the most disfavoured to most affluent ones; moreover, there is a growing stock of good practice examples in urban and coastal areas.
- If you want to overcome fragmentation, start from small scale!
- The Covid19 crisis has cast a sudden shadow on monopolistic globalisation: Resilient local and regional economies matter!
- Resilience rests on three principles:
 - **Diversity** (of structures, actors, solutions...)
 - **Modularity** (multiple scales linked together by networks featuring a mix of strong and weak ties)
 - **Reflexivity** (strategic approaches continuously revised by short feedback cycles, including a broad range of perspectives)
- Prototypical: The food sector! → *Farm2Fork*
- Productive sectors are paramount; never rely on tourism alone!
- Life satisfaction and trust in the world are seedbeds for cooperation and peace.
- Adopting LEADER is easier if all countries do it together.

Therefore

Project: Standing Up for LEADER

- Promoted and implemented by the SWG RRD.
- Funded by GIZ in the framework of the Regional TA Project SEDRA (Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in SEE)
- International experts: Robert Lukesch (ÖAR) and Hannes Lorenzen
- Regional expert: Petar Gjorgjevski (BRDN)



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Standing up for LEADER

Strategic policy advice and process management to boost capacities to implement Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) and LEADER in Southeast Europe

Objectives

- Policy advice and process management to boost capacities to implement CLLD/LEADER in Southeast Europe
- Harnessing and further developing the potential built up in LEADER and strengthening the capacities of national decision-makers to implement the structures and delivery mechanisms for the LEADER measure (IPARD II and IPA III)

**7 national experts (including 1 regional expert)
2 international experts**



**The process is guided by the
Regional Expert Advisory Group (REAWG) on LEADER**

Actions



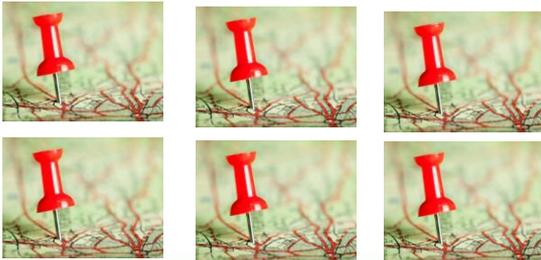
**Stakeholder
interviews/consultations at
national / entity level
(done in spring 2020)**



**Draft national road maps
(summer 2020)**



**National subject-matter dialogues
(fall 2020)**



**National road
maps**



Regional
synthesis

**High-level
conference
(spring 2021)**



**Policy
paper**

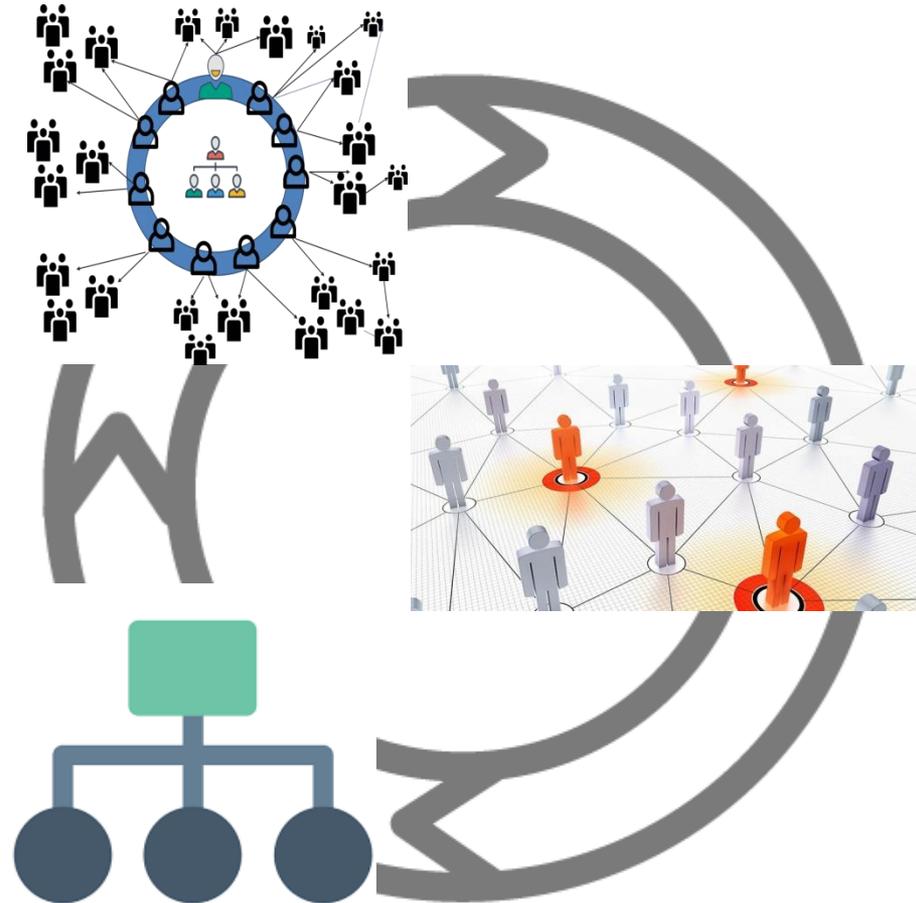
How will the LEADER approach be enhanced?

- Boosting the capacities at three levels
 - Responsible authorities at national / entity level
 - Intermediary rural development networks
 - Local action groups and similar groupings
- The draft road maps show the liveliness of the structures and activities at either level
- They also shows the trigger points where action is needed and nudges seem effective

All countries, all levels

Examples for actions

- Local Action Groups: Capacity building, contacts with peers in SEE, EU and beyond
- Rural networks and intermediary agencies: Gatherings, conferences, communication, capacity building
- Authorities: IPARD, national support schemes





Reality can be beaten with
enough imagination.

Mark Twain