



Added Value of Networking

Success Story

Success Story title	<i>The Conference "LEADER approach after 2013 and new challenges for the development of rural areas of Europe"</i>		
Theme	<i>Network communications; Knowledge exchange</i>		
NRN	<i>Poland</i>	Coordinators	<i>Silesian Union of Municipalities and Districts, Regional Government of Śląskie Voivodship, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, NSU</i>
Partners	<i>The European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD), Polish NRN, Polish Rural Forum (FAOW), Polish Academy of Sciences Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development, Regional Office of Silesia in Brussels, The Stanisław Hadyna "Śląsk" Song and Dance Ensemble, SILESIA LEADER NETWORK, ENRD CP</i>		
Period	<i>3-5th October 2011</i>	Resources	<i>120.000 euro</i>
Geo-location	<i>Koszęcin (Śląskie Voivodship)</i>		
Beneficiaries	<i>Representatives of: LAGs, rural NGOs and networks, officials and decision-makers at local, regional, national and EU levels</i>		

Background

The first period of practical implementation of the LEADER approach in the UE during the 2007-2013 programming period brought many national debates on its positive results and main issues. There was a common belief of the great importance of the LEADER approach in addressing challenges facing European rural areas, in animating local communities, creating jobs, providing value added and innovation in rural areas. Most countries agreed that the delivery mechanisms and administrative framework need to be further improved and streamlined in the context of obtaining the full potential of the LEADER approach. The same issues were noticed and widely discussed in Poland, a country with the highest number of LAGs in the EU. Second half of the year 2011 was not only a time of Polish Presidency of the European Union Council but also an important period of shaping the rural development policy for the new programming period 2014-2020 at the European level. All these reasons created an opportunity to involve a wide range of LEADER stakeholders (LAGs and their networks as well as decision-makers at the UE, national and regional levels) into a broad debate on the future of the LEADER approach.

Main activities

Within the Action Plan of the NRN 2010-2011 an event in Koszęcin was organised. It consisted of plenary sessions, panel discussions, working groups, as well as site visits and cultural programme. The main focus in the plenary sessions and panel discussions was on the experiences in applying the LEADER approach in Europe and creating of added value and innovation. Participants focused on what worked well, what did not work and what could be done better in the near future, and in the next programming period. Working groups dealt with best practices, management of LAG during the transition period, improvements of LDS and the future of TNC projects. The visit in surrounding rural area demonstrated rich heritage of Silesia Region (successful projects in the rural space, showcasing traditional professions of blacksmithing, smelting iron ore, folk crafts, historical tales associated with the region and the activities of the LAG Spichlerz Górnośląska)





Main results/benefits

The conference brought together approximately 150 participants from over 20 European countries and showed a wide variety of experiences and points of view on the implementation of the LEADER approach, as well as a shared commitment to strengthening and improvement of this approach in the future. The participants were convinced that rural areas in Europe need a clearer recognition of the value added of Leader and a wider application of the Leader approach, and an improved application of the Leader method in practice. Adopted by the participants the final document of the conference was published and sent to decision makers at the European and national level.

Contribution of the NSU

Main financial contribution to organization of the event

Contribution of the coordinators and partners

- Silesian Union of Municipalities and Districts – initiator and substantive coordination of the event, organizer of preparatory workshop in Brussels
- Regional Government of Śląskie Voivodship – technical organization and logistic during whole event
- Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development, NSU – contacts with managing authorities, hosting officials and international experts
- ELARD – substantive support and assistance in promoting the conference abroad
- Polish Rural Forum – substantive assistance during the preparation of the conference (meeting in the country, preparatory workshop in Brussels, co-operation with the organizers in developing the conference program), as well as during the Conference (in parts of the plenary and workshop)
- SILESIA LEADER NETWORK – LAGs exhibition from the region of Silesia, Poland
- Regional Office of Silesia in Brussels – technical assistance in preparatory workshop in Brussels
- The Stanisław Hadyna “Śląsk” Song and Dance Ensemble – cultural programme within the framework of the Conference
- ENRD CP – technical support

Success factors

- Bringing together many LEADER actors in concerted process representing different points of views on LEADER implementation from many European countries
- Good and long-term cooperation between main organizers and partners representing different sectors (public and non-governmental)
- Adequate division of organizational tasks to the specific of each organization

Additional information

Most of the conference materials and outputs are available on the website www.leaderafter2013.eu

