

Project partners



ANIMATION OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS IN RURAL AREAS - MANUAL -



The project "Building of Rural Development Resources in Balkan region - No BoRDeR" is supported by:



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Korea



Project partners



ANIMATION OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS IN RURAL AREAS

- MANUAL -

The project “Building of Rural Development Resources in Balkan region - No BoRDeR” is supported by:



This manual has been produced with the assistance of the Visegrad International Fund and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic Korea. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Network for Rural Development of Serbia and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Visegrad International Fund and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic Korea.

Content

Part I Rural development	5
Chapter 1: Rural development in EU.....	7
Chapter 2: Rural development in Western Balkan	10
Part II Rural animators	15
Chapter 3: What do we mean by Animation?	17
Chapter 4: Who is animator and what is his role?.....	20
Part III Development territorial partnership	23
Chapter 5: How to start animation of partnership	25
Chapter 6: How to develop cross-sector partnership?.....	27
Part IV Rural territory – resources, management and planning	31
Chapter 7: Identification rural resources	33
Chapter 8: Methods of identification rural resources.....	36
Chapter 9: Management of rural resources	44
Chapter 10: Strategic Planning	47
References.....	55

Part I Rural development

Chapter 1: Rural development in EU

The place of rural development in EU policies

Agriculture and rural development play a special role in the European Union's policies. The European Union started in the post-war Europe of the 1950s, where a key concern was to ensure food security so that the inhabitants of Europe would not have to be hungry again. The agricultural policy was put in place to ensure sufficient food production. At the same time, it was also an instrument of integrating different Member States: the founders of Europe considered it important that food producers – farmers – have the same conditions irrespective of where their farm is located, and a common market of food products could be created.

Hence the idea arose of putting in place a common policy, called the "Common Agricultural Policy" (CAP)¹. Its key objectives, formulated in the Treaty of Rome (1957), were to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community and to assure the availability of food supplies at reasonable prices. However, with time it turned out that support to agriculture alone is not addressing the most important needs of rural areas. Improved technologies of food production and increased competition, combined with subsidies dependent on the size of production, led to a strong concentration of agricultural production, with many small farms disappearing. Young people were leaving rural areas to look for jobs in the cities, and many assets such as rural communities and their lifestyle, villages, landscapes and traditions, were beginning to disappear. The problem was no longer "how to feed the European population", but more "how to maintain the viability of rural areas". Because these assets were considered valuable by many Europeans, a change in the EU policies was introduced in the beginning of the 1990s.

Since then, the Common Agricultural Policy is no longer exclusively focused on agricultural production; rather, it sees agriculture as an important component of rural areas which are at the heart of the European identity. Rural development policy² has become the "second pillar" of the CAP (the first pillar being still focused on farms and their products).

According to a standard definition, more than 91 % of the territory of the EU is "rural", and this area is home to more than 56 % of the EU's population. Therefore, rural development is a vitally important policy area. Farming and forestry remain crucial for land use and the management of natural resources in the EU's rural areas. However, they are not sufficient any more to ensure a good standard of life to the rural populations, hence the need for economic diversification in rural communities.

Many rural areas across the EU face significant challenges. The key sectors remain farming and forestry businesses, which are struggling to remain viable in an increasingly competitive global market. The average income per head is lower in rural regions than in towns and cities, and it is difficult to develop new industries or services because of a narrower skills base. Young, educated people often prefer to find a job in a big city, and the decline in rural population often results in a reduction of public services. Rural infrastructure tends to be more expensive because of the dispersed settlement patterns. Activities aimed at protecting the rural environment often carry a financial cost.

On the other hand, the European countryside has a great deal to offer, not only in terms of raw materials (food, timber, water) but also in terms of recreational spaces and biodiversity. It can be an important element of sustainable energy production and mitigation of climate change. And many people can be attracted to live and work in rural Europe, provided that they have access to adequate services and infrastructure. Recent studies show that rural areas can be a significant source of innovation and offer solutions to issues such as social inclusion³.

A large part of rural policies are the responsibility of the European level. Not all EU countries would be able to afford the policy which is needed, and many of the issues addressed through rural development do not

¹ See for instance <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/>

² See for instance http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020/index_en.htm

³ <http://www.oecd.org/gov/regional-policy/thenewruralparadigmpoliciesandgovernance.htm>

stop at national or regional boundaries, but affect people further afield (for example, pollution or loss of biodiversity). Also, rural development policy has links to a number of other policies set at EU level. Therefore, the EU has a common rural development policy, which nonetheless places considerable control in the hands of individual Member States and regions.

The policy is funded partly from the central EU budget and partly from individual Member States' national or regional budgets. For each funding period of the EU, a certain amount of funding is allocated to the key rural development tool, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The EU legislation, agreed jointly by the European Council and the European Parliament, specifies not only how much money will be available for rural development, but also what it can be used for. However, only the general objectives and principles are set at the EU level: detailed objectives, targets and procedures for support are defined at the Member State or regional level.

Rural development 2014-2020

For the period 2014-2020, the European Union has allocated over € 95 billion for the EAFRD (for comparison, direct payments, i.e. Pillar 1 of the CAP, have a budget of approximately € 252 billion⁴). The long-term strategic objectives of the EU rural development policy in the 2014-2020 period are as follows:

- fostering the competitiveness of agriculture;
- ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action; and
- achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment.

Member States will have to build their Rural Development Programmes based upon at least four of the six common EU priorities:

1. fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
2. enhancing the viability / competitiveness of all types of agriculture, and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable forest management;
3. promoting food chain organisation, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture;
4. restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry;
5. promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift toward a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
6. promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Rural development at the local level: the Leader approach

Although the national and regional authorities play an important role in defining priorities and criteria for support from the EAFRD, it has been recognised that rural areas differ significantly, and it is very difficult to design a national or regional policy that would be able to address them all. Indeed, it is the local community that knows best what are the local problems and what can be done to solve them. Moreover, the local community has the greatest motivation to make a change – they are the ones who live in the area and would like it to be prosperous.

Recognising this, since the 1990s a new methodology of rural development is implemented in Europe. It was called “LEADER” from the French acronym “Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpement de l’Economie Rural” – links between actions for the development of rural economy. LEADER is a precisely defined methodology which involves the following seven characteristics or principles:

- **territorial approach** – means that support is addressed to the given area (micro-region, “little homeland”), not to individual operations (projects);

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-funding/budget/index_en.htm

- **bottom-up approach** – means that the development directions are not imposed from the top down, but result from the needs and ideas of the local community;
- **integrated approach** – means a difference compared to sectorial thinking, where resources are divided between various sectors (agriculture, competitiveness of businesses, social aid, environment etc.); instead, the local system is seen as a system of “communicating vessels” and only activities that look at the whole (and not at parts) can be successful;
- **partnership approach** – requires that all those who are interested should be able to take part in the decision-making about the future of their “little homeland”, both in the process of consultation and in the actual formulation and implementation of the strategy;
- **innovation** – consists of targeting support specifically to new, “courageous” initiatives, which carry with them higher risk, but also potentially greater value added for the local community;
- **decentralisation of management and funding** – means that the partnership is the real “owner” of the funds for local development, it is autonomous in its decisions (they cannot be changed or corrected by regional or local authorities), and the way from the idea to funding decision is relatively short;
- **cooperation and networking** – prevent local communities from feeling “isolated”, and strengthen the process of mutual learning between partnerships.

None of the above principles is in itself innovative, and many were implemented in practice before the LEADER approach. This approach, however, is different in that it requires all these features to be in place at the same time.

This approach was first implemented as a “Community Initiative”, i.e. an activity initiated and designed by the European Commission, as a pilot which could then be more broadly applied by Member States. There was the LEADER initiative in the years 1991-1993 and LEADER II Initiative in the period 1994-1999. The evaluation of these initiatives indicated⁵ that the approach seems to work well⁵, so it was subsequently offered to Member States to be implemented as Leader+ (2000-2006) and then as the Leader Axis of the Rural Development Programmes (2007-2013).

From the programming period 2014-2020 the Leader approach can be applied also in other EU Funds: in the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (where it was already started in 2007-2013), in the European Rural Development Fund and the European Social Fund. To indicate that this approach is no longer exclusively focused on rural areas, it is now called “Community-Led Local Development” (CLLD). However, in the rural context the name Leader can still be used.

It should be remembered that a large part of rural policies is determined by the Member States. Hence, the Leader approach is not applied in the same way across the EU (as was the case in the 1990s when it was a Community Initiative). Many Leader groups complain that the national rules are becoming over complicated and restrict the ability of the local partnerships to respond to the needs of their areas. In many cases this is true, but the situation varies across countries and there are also many good practices where innovative ways are found to support genuine local initiatives.

⁵ cf. eg. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eval/reports/leader2/index_en.htm for an ex-post evaluation of LEADER II.

Chapter 2: Rural development in Western Balkan

Serbia

More than half of Serbia's population lives in rural areas, one-fifth of its workforce is in agriculture, it has 450,000 farm holdings of less than 5 ha. So, the government has focused much effort on support to farmers. Now it is drafting new policies for rural development, aiming to diversify the rural economy and to support sub-regional partnerships based on the LEADER approach. It has consulted stakeholders; encouraged the creation of many potential Local Action Groups; and supported the creation of 16 regional associations. These associations co-founded the Network for Rural Development of Serbia, which is promoting action by rural stakeholders.

In rural development a key themes are: the severe difficulties faced by small farmers; the value of cooperatives and associations in enabling farmers and others to work together; the presence of many dynamic entrepreneurs; commercial enterprises created by women; the active role of municipalities in rural development; the potential for leadership at local level; and the low profile of national government.

In the future for more effective and efficient rural development it's necessary: the Government needs to become more visible and more effective; to establish a policy-related climate in which enterprise can flourish; to involve NGOs and businesses more fully in shaping strategies and programmes; to strengthen frontline advisory services; to link national rural development programmes more clearly to the work of municipalities; to launch soon a network of properly-funded Local Action Groups; to support the formation of cooperatives and associations; and to sustain the activity of the Network for Rural Development; to start as soon as possible with implementation IPARD II Programme for Serbia (approved in January 2015) and LEADER measure as part of IPARD II Programme. Municipalities should be more consistently active in rural development; involve stakeholders in shaping and implementing policies; and encourage initiative at village level. Rural stakeholders should respond to the growing openness of government, and should take initiative in meeting the collective needs of their sectors or their rural communities.

Macedonia

Half of the population of the former Macedonia lives in rural areas. Agriculture produces about 10% of its national GDP and its 190,000 farms, about 80 % are small family farms of average size of 1.7 ha. The government has pursued a national strategy for agriculture and rural development; has applied most of the funding in direct payments to farmers; but intends to focus more in future on environment, land management and diversifying the rural economy. Since 2009, the country has benefited from EU funds under the IPARD measure. Substantial leadership in the field of rural development is being provided by the Rural Development Network, which aims to mobilise rural communities as agents of local development and as participants in rural policy.

It has 58 NGOs in membership; works closely with about 1,500 rural leaders; and has done much to lay the foundations for LEADER-type activity.

Macedonia were impressed by a number of key themes: fragility among rural communities, many of which appear to be caught in a vicious cycle of decline in population, employment and services; the challenges faced by the farming community, including the impact of climate change; the presence of dynamic entrepreneurs; the first steps into cooperation in farming and in the food chain; the opportunities offered by heritage and tourism; the potential for leadership by municipalities, and for

LEADER-type activity; the flexible use by entrepreneurs of many different sources of funds; and the very low take-up of IPA Rural Development (IPARD) funds.

In rural development is a strong need for integrated rural development policies, in order to address the vicious circle of weak rural economies, unemployment, out-migration, inadequate rural services and infrastructure (The 2014-2020 national strategy for agriculture and rural development was adopted). There must be clear linkage and complementarity between the policies of central government and of municipalities. The time is ripe for launching a full LEADER programme. Cooperation and networking among rural stakeholders should be supported by Government, municipalities and Local Action Groups. Access to credit and finance should be improved. There is widespread need for advisory services, training and other aspects of capacity-building: leadership in this field should come from the Government, the Rural Development Network, municipalities and Local Action Groups.

Significant steps have been taken to address major implementation issues related to the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development (**IPARD**) where, despite an increase in applications, EUR 15.6 million was returned unused to the EU budget in 2014. The administrative capacity of the Agency for Financial Support in Agriculture and Rural Development was strengthened and progress was made towards accrediting new IPARD measures. The new 2014-2020 IPARD Programme was adopted in January 2015.

Montenegro

Of Montenegro's population, 40 % lives in rural areas, agriculture produces about 10 % of its national GDP, its farming structure is dominated by over 50,000 small family farms of average size of 5 ha. The national economy is dominated by the service sector; and tourism is considered the backbone of future economic growth. The government sees the need for urgent strengthening of the farming and food sectors, in order to increase their competitiveness. Last year, the Ministry organised wide public consultation about rural policies, but was disappointed by the low response.

It supports the establishment of NGOs, including associations of producers. The Rural Development Network of Montenegro, set up in 2012, aims to promote rural development through exchange of information, ideas and best practice, it has 18 NGOs in formal membership, and links to many municipalities.

The key themes in Montenegro are: the role of dynamic entrepreneurs; the value of cooperatives and associations; the active use by farmers of information, advice and financial support from the government; the potential offered by tourism in diversifying the rural economy; the need to focus more widely on strengthening rural economies, and on sustaining rural services and infrastructure; the potential role in local development of municipalities, which however appear to be now severely constrained by the lack of finance; and the need to strengthen institutional capacities at many levels.

The Montenegro has already achieved significant things in rural development, notably in promoting competitiveness in agriculture and the food industry. But the Government and the people realise that it must continue urgently the process of developing the full institutional basis for a comprehensive approach to rural development, including a closer and fuller partnership between government and rural stakeholders.

Major elements in that institutional framework may be an updated national strategy for agriculture and rural development, supported by an IPARD 2 programme (the European Commission adopted in July the 2015-2020 programming document for IPARD II); a phased programme for introduction of the LEADER approach; the production, by municipalities or Local Action Groups, of local development strategies; shaping of a clear relationship between national and local development strategies; progressive

strengthening of the family of rural NGOs, and of the national Rural Development Network as the focal point of this family; widening of the government's extension services and active information systems; a structured basis for links between government and organisations representing rural stakeholders; and a programme of education, training and capacity building, made available to all key sectors.

Albania

In recent years, Albania's labor market has seen a dramatic shift away from agriculture and towards industry, tourism and other services. Less than half of its population now lives in rural areas. But agriculture is still a major sector, providing half of total employment and about 20 % of national GDP. The government's policy for agriculture and rural development is focused on stimulating farmers to create effective businesses and to contribute to economic growth. When preparing this policy, the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration consulted producer groups and other stakeholders.

The producer groups asked for support towards their collective activity, such as in building facilities for storage and refrigeration. The Ministry takes advice from ad hoc committees, including stakeholders. According to opinion of civil society organisation the appetite of rural stakeholders for participation is quite good in Albania. They argued strongly for the support of LEADER-type Local Action Groups (LAGs), some of which have already been created with the encouragement of NGO Quodev. LAGs can bring together people from different angles, and can help to create a culture of consensus about priorities for rural development. Local authorities in Albania are not yet experienced in local development, and LAGs could press these authorities to be active, responsive and participative.

The IPARD II Programme for Albania it's approved in July 2015 and will start with the following measures: Investments in physical assets of agricultural holdings; Investments in physical assets concerning processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products; Farm diversification and business development; Technical assistance.

It is planned to start additional measures later during the IPARD II implementation: Advisory services; Preparation and implementation of local development strategies –Leader approach; Agri-environment – climate and organic farming.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

About 60 % of the population of BiH lives in rural areas, agriculture accounts for 10 % of national GDP and most of the farm holdings are small family farms, many operating at subsistence level. The complex structure of governance means that responsibilities for agriculture and rural development are divided between the central government, the two autonomous entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska), the Brčko District, the 10 cantons in the Federation, and 142 municipalities. Linking the action of all these bodies is a coordination team, with specialist sub-groups, including a LEADER sub-group which includes 9 Local Action Groups.

This complex institutional setup is constraining the country's progress towards accession to the EU, and therefore its access to IPARD funds. However, organisations with links to rural stakeholders are finding ways to cooperate between sectors, and across internal borders. For example the REDAH development agency, set up in 2003 on the basis of the LEADER approach, is a partnership between 23 municipalities (16 in the Federation area, 7 in Republic of Srpska), 2 NGOs, 2 chambers of commerce and 3 individual companies. It is focused on regional development, cross-border cooperation, support to SMEs, and general promotion to agriculture and rural development; and is supporting the creation of Local Action Groups. The national Rural Development Network, was founded in 2014.

Development Strategy of the Agricultural Sector for 2015–2019 is adopted in June 2015 and of the Strategic plan for development of agricultural and rural areas of Republika Srpska for 2016-2020 in May. Progress is needed in establishing the necessary institutional structures that would allow the use of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD. Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet drawn up a State-level strategic plan for rural development.

Kosovo

Of Kosovo's population, over 60 % live in rural areas. Political uncertainty about the territory's status has delayed progress towards its accession to the EU, but it has received EU assistance under a sequence of programmes. Through its Rural Grant Scheme, the government has supported the modernisation of three agricultural sectors – dairy, meat and fruit and vegetable processing. The Ministry of Agriculture is preparing a rural development programme for 2014-20, focused on growth, competitiveness and environmental protection. Preparation of this programme included seminars with stakeholders to define priorities. A national conference in late 2012, with 180 stakeholder representatives, identified four main priorities – competitiveness in production of livestock and crops; agriculture and environment; vocational training; and the LEADER approach.

Two further national conferences with stakeholders have been held, and the Minister of Agriculture believes that this sequence of intensive discussions has done much to empower stakeholders.

The civil society organisations periodically organised consultation with the Ministry dialogue among stakeholders. However, there is a need to continue building trust among stakeholders, and between them, local authorities and government. Some rural communities, e.g. those in mountainous areas affected by severe out-migration, are not yet involved in stakeholder groups, and further effort is needed to involve them.

LEADER; Some potential Local Action Groups exist (about 20 LAG initiatives), but are weak and under-funded: there is a great need to build up their capacity.

Network for Rural Development in Kosovo was established in 2014 with 55 members.

Part II Rural animators

Chapter 3: What do we mean by Animation?

Rural communities all over are finding themselves in serious trouble, example budget shortfalls and unemployment. Many people feel powerless to make a difference; communities face the large scale alienation of their young people; and the groups that are supposed to be helping often are working at cross purposes. On the basis of perceived capacity of communities/groups/organizations to independently solve their problems, there is a need to develop a methodology for the animation of rural communities.

In extension work animation can:

- encourage people to act on their own initiative;
- bring people together in existing and new forms of organization to co-operate in solving problems.

Considering the following forms of animation, we have chosen to use this definition:

- 1) Animation is encouragement from outside to generate or promote motivation, interest and enthusiasm for action in one's partners;
- 2) Animation as a strategy for socio-economic development;
- 3) Animation as a means of bringing rural people into contact with the governmental institutions. The extension service helps the local people to recognize and assert their legal claims on state institutions;
- 4) Socio-cultural animation is applied in the fields of youth work, health, social welfare, housing, recreation activities and the environment: People are encouraged to take a look at their own habits and behavior, to participate in joint decisions and to implement common projects and campaigns;
- 5) Animation as organizational development is aimed at increasing the problem-solving capacity of existing groups: People working in an organization are given further training and the organizational structures are adapted to new requirements.

We could conclude the animation is encouragement from outside to generate or promote motivation, interest and enthusiasm for action in one's partner (*Figure1*).

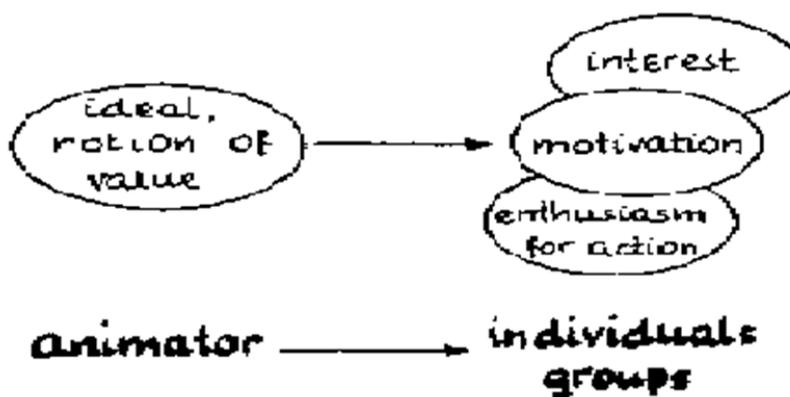


Figure 1 Relation animator and partners who participating in animation process

Animation lies in a field of tension between life and structure. Usually every community/organisation have own structure, more or less well organised, but in real actions this structure must answer on the challenges in environment and dynamism of the life. The groups during animation (supported by

animator) through bidirectional process working on the development suitable structure able to ensure desired changes related to the defined objectives and planned results (*Figure 2*)

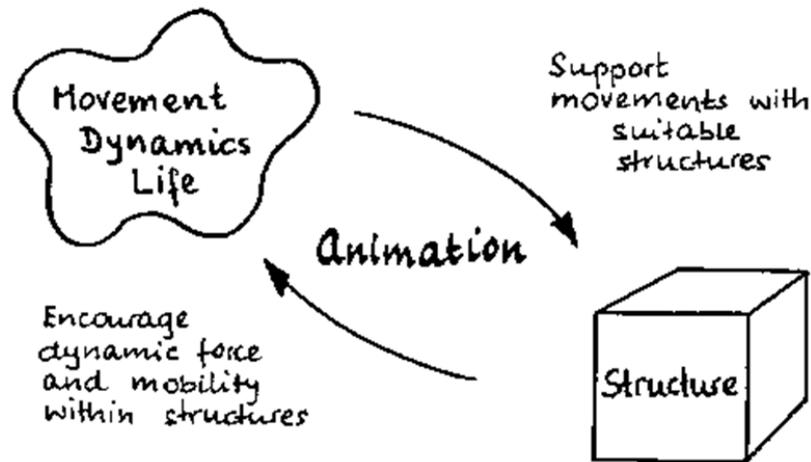


Figure 2 Relation animator and partners who participating in animation process

We distinguish between animation and the following activities, even if there is some overlapping:

- Moderating to ensure a measured, well-ordered course of events
- Organizing to build up, arrange according to plan
- Managing to guide, conduct
- Activating to canvass, incite, set in movement
- Manipulate to use, deliberately steer, influence someone against their own interests.

Difficulties in animation work are presented in **table 1**. This three difficulties are the most common. Animators must have good abilities and practice to by to avoid the pitfalls that await him in working with a partner, and we should bear in mind that very often work with groups that first encounter, and should also bear in mind the very frequent heterogeneity of the groups they are working with. The recommendation is also that it is necessary prior to working with animators absorbent partners and their issues.

Animator must have adequate capacity and practical experience to avoid pitfalls that await him in working with partners, and we should bear in mind that very often work with groups that first encounter, but it should also be borne in mind very often heterogeneous groups with which it works . It is recommended that the animators before the start of direct work with partners, learn about their issues, specifics and characteristics of the group.

Table 1 *Difficulties in animation and possible solutions*⁶

Difficulties	Possible ways of solving them
Hierarchic structures are barriers	Tact and sensitivity are needed when dealing with the authorities.
	Break down old patterns of behaviour by using new and unfamiliar ways of working.

⁶ Figure 1 and 2 and table 1 are partly based on the material Akademie für Erwachsenenbildung Luzern: Unpublished papers on Organizational Development. AEB, Luzern.

	Let the new idea develop its own attractiveness
	Give officials a role in the work.
The animator makes enemies	Be aware of the groups that form among the participants.
	Seek and offer discussion.
The animator is forced into the role of the "Mr. Fix-it"	Do not accept the role of "doer" voluntarily.
	Clearly define your own role and do not change it without good reason.
	Consider the consequences of an action long before doing it.
	Never manage money belonging to the local population!
The planning of the activities divides the population into two opposing groups	Examine the aims of the project and redefine them.
	Find out whether total agreement is desirable /necessary.
	Try and encourage ways of uniting the population.
	Ask leaders to cool down matters and to seek agreement among everyone.
The project gives rise to political action	Either show your solidarity or create a suitable distance between you and this political action.
	Clarify your own responsibilities.

Chapter 4: Who is animator and what is his role?

The importance of animation in the work of the local partnership has already been mentioned above in Chapter 3. One of the key roles that each partnership (or Local Action Group) needs to have is a person (or, in some situations, an organisation) which plays the role of the local animator. The commitment and skills of this person are essential to make local development a success. This chapter deals with the tasks and skills of the local animator, while more information about the process of animating local partnership is presented in Chapter 5.

The term “animator” can cover a variety of tasks in the local development context. The most important ones are those of a “partnership animator” and of “project animator”. These roles are described below.

Partnership animator⁷

This role is also sometimes called “partnership broker”⁸. This is someone who is committed to the partnership process and works on partnership building in the long term. This role can be fulfilled by one of the partners who form the rural partnership, or by a person employed specifically for this purpose. An animator can be someone based in the local community or, in some cases; he/she can be external to the partnership.

The decision to use an internal or external animator will depend on the local specificity and availability of skills (if there are no animation skills readily available in the local community and the process of developing them would take too long, then an external animator may be the only option). Each solution has its advantages and disadvantages. An external animator can be more objective and neutral in relation to the local power structure. He/she can sometimes help solve conflicts or blockages between local actors by offering a fresh view of the situation. On the other hand, an internal animator will more readily recognise which of the local actors should be approached and who can be relied on to carry out certain tasks; a local animator who is permanently based in the area can also have more credibility with other actors because of having a long-term commitment to work with the partnership and a strong interest in the community benefits.

The role of the animator is essential both at the stage of setting up the partnership and later during its operation. His/her role is to make sure that all the partners from the public, private and civil society sectors want to work together and can obtain benefits from this cooperation. It should be remembered that the role of animator is not the same as the community leader – someone who can persuade others to create a vision of what the community could achieve and act on it. However, an animator will often have to work with community leaders and therefore has to be able to recognise leadership styles and skills.

It is important to remember that the role of the animator does not end with the creation of the local partnership: the partnership will continue to need an animator even after it has been established and formalised. The support of a skilled animator should therefore be provided for throughout the period of operation of the rural partnership, i.e. the whole partnership cycle (scoping, identifying, building, planning, managing, resourcing, implementing, measuring, reviewing, revising, institutionalising and moving on – see Figure 3 below).

⁷ This section is largely based on the book “Animating Local Partnership in Rural Areas – a practical guide” developed under the TEPA project (Training for European Partnership Animators).

⁸ See www.thepartneringinitiative.org

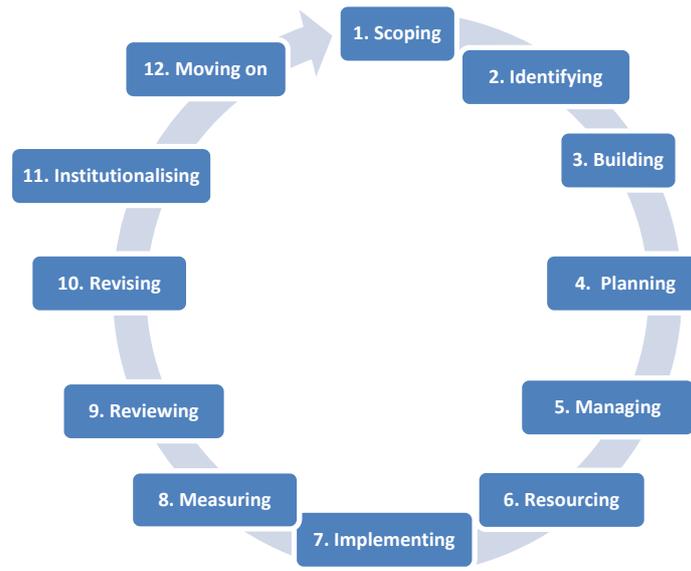


Figure 3 The partnering cycle

The role of the animator will vary depending on the stage of the partnership cycle. In the early phases, the animator will probably have to focus mainly on raising awareness, inspiring and building the capacity of the partners. When the partnership is already established, he/she may have to help the partners maintain communication, solve problems and build up new competencies. In further stages of the cycle the animator may help with tasks such as evaluation and professionalisation of the partnership.

Throughout the process, the animator must monitor and strengthen the involvement of the members of the partnership, the benefits they draw from being partners and their contributions to the benefits of the whole community.

Project animator

However, in the context of Leader and Community-Led Local Development the animator’s work is not limited to the building and maintaining the local partnership. The partnership (Local Action Group) implementing Leader/CLLD has to identify and select projects which will be supported (funded) within the local strategy. Therefore the animator must also be capable of carrying out task related to “project animation”, i.e. work with potential project promoters. He/she will have to be involved in awareness-raising and information provision to potential beneficiaries, identification of good ideas, coaching of promoters to take them from the idea to the project, and then specialist advice to help them move from “project to action”, i.e. implement the projects that are selected for support.

It is important in this context that the animator takes a proactive attitude to projects, i.e. does not rely exclusively on information and promotion about the funding possibilities, but also actively encourages certain promoters to submit project applications – to ensure that projects which have the greatest potential to achieve strategy objectives are developed and submitted. Otherwise there is a risk that the local partnership becomes an additional administrative tier or a new “window” to obtain funding. If it was the case, the local partnership would be limited in most cases to funding commonplace, limited projects lacking specificity, which could have been carried out without financial support.

The animator should not therefore constantly ask himself/herself the question: can this be a project that will move forward our strategy? Consequently, the promoters that have the potential to develop and

submit such projects should be prioritised. The animator should also keep in mind that it is not enough to have a good idea and get funding for it: the projects have to be implemented and bring the expected results! In many cases the project animators will have to make sure that adequate support is provided to project beneficiaries to make this happen.

Animator's skills

The animator's tasks described above require a number of specific skills. In some cases it may be necessary to put in place more than one animator, if the tasks and skills required turn out to be too much for one person. The necessary skills include:

- very good knowledge of the three sectors: public, private and civil society, including a good understanding of their expectations and potential contributions to the partnership, as well as of potential conflicts of interest and ways to deal with them; the animator should also be able to assess the skills of people involved in the partnership, their leadership potential and factors which affect their involvement,
- an excellent understanding of the local strategy, the process through which it has been developed, its key objectives and activities envisaged, and how the different partners can contribute or be involved in it,
- very good knowledge of local development methods and opportunities, in particular of issues related to community development, job creation and business development, diversification of local economies, sustainable development etc.
- project management skills, including resource management and evaluation, needed both to identify projects with a high potential to achieve strategic objectives, and to carry out the animator's own activities (e.g. community meetings), which should be managed in a professional way,
- a wide range of social skills, including those of a facilitator (acting as a catalyst to identify potential partners and ensure cooperation of different actors), motivator (engaging and mobilising potential partners, understanding the potential and dynamics of civic groups), supporter (capable of reaching out and involving also the most disadvantaged groups), educator (stimulating and managing active learning processes), integrator (developing community bonds and communication) etc.,
- practical skills related to such issues as organisation of meetings, moderation of workshops/discussion, methods of ensuring public participation etc.

Part III Development territorial partnership

Chapter 5: How to start animation of partnership

One of the main values of community led local development is the ability of the partnerships to get out into the community and encourage and support individuals and groups to present projects that contribute to the strategy. This community outreach activity is generally called “animation”. However, it is sometimes overlooked. If local partnerships do not do it there is a major risk that the funds are simply absorbed by the stronger local actors, who may well already be able to access other sources of funding. In the end, the local partnership can simply become a local office of a higher level administration and another link in an excessively long chain. In order to prevent this and to ensure that local partnerships have the resources to “get out on the street” to encourage innovative projects, collective projects and projects, which have harder possibility to reach the target groups, the community needs some sources to do it.

Animation activities:

- Information campaigns – events, meetings, conferences, face to face appointments, discussions, leaflets, websites, social media, newsletters, press, notice boards, radio, television
- Exchanges with stakeholders, community groups and potential project promoters to generate ideas and build trust and confidence
- Support for community organisations and the creation or strengthening of community structures - Promotion and support for the preparation of projects and applications
- Post-start-up project support,
- Reflection of animation, communication and evaluation of the support and animation.

These animation functions can be carried out directly by the staff employed by the partnership or contracted out to external personnel or by volunteers. Experience has shown that most partnerships require at least two members of staff or volunteers to carry out these functions – a qualified manager and a person to deal with administration. However, this depends on the existing level of territorial organisation and whether partnerships can team up with or draw on the resources of other agencies and partnerships. Leading organization (for example Leader Local action group) in countries where rural areas have few other organisations need to give more attention to animation and capacity-building.

Step by step how to create functional partnership and animate the area

- Get to know area a local curiosity
- Analyse the potential target groups, which can contribute to regional development
- Analyse the environment in the chosen target groups
- Analyse of potential stakeholders
- Address potential stakeholders (it is necessary to address strong partners and also the weak partners to gain balance)
- Book an appointment and explain to stakeholders added value of cooperation with other entities, both within the field, sector as well as across sectors, fields and spheres
- Gaining the trust of a stakeholders and explaining the benefits of partnership to stakeholders
- Organize a joint meeting of partners in the field, sector
- Organize joint meeting across the fields, sectors

- To form a platform or platforms that will solve their problems, assigned issue in mutual cooperation with a projection at the local level
- Organize regular meetings of partners
- Outcomes of joint meetings must be reflected in the regional / local development strategy, or directly in the implementation of projects or actions
- Gain feedback to the partnership work and help with improving the partnership cooperation and procedures
- Facilitate the regrouping of partnership, if necessary

Differences in animation method according to the sector

We need different approaches of work to be successful in working in various sectors. The public sector is characterized by a stereotype, low flexibility and is not appropriate to apply innovations and modern technologies very quickly (meeting in the web interface, Skype, Facebook). It is also a sector where in a rural setting is not necessary qualification to obtain the function, but just voters and political will is enough. Thus they create a very diverse group in terms of education and skills and it is therefore necessary to public sector officials approach very individually and in many cases very slowly. But on the other hand, it is a sector that if you get them to cooperate, which often take a long time, you have long term partners.

Access to the private sector, by contrast, is characterized by the fact that you have to be very well prepared for meetings and it is possible to use web environment (Facebook, Twitter, websites, conference calls, etc.). It is advisable to negotiate a meeting in advance. It is appropriate to deal with themes and time very effectively. It is a sector that is able to start cooperation very quickly, but on the contrary very quickly to stop cooperating. It is necessary to regularly build cooperation with public sector representatives to reach long term cooperation. Here we have again the differences between the various spheres of the private sector and among the more advanced rank as IT, engineering, manufacturing, conversely, for example, agriculture, forestry enterprises, mechanics or food producers. They often come with advances come quite late. The private sector often cooperates on local development with a vision of their own benefit (positioning visibility, financial benefits, establishment of new contacts, etc.).

The non-profit sector is the most specific sector, where often reigns enthusiasm and great support local actions, products and organizations. Representatives of NGOs bring to the meetings and gatherings enthusiasm and ideas, but sometimes they are cut off from practical implementation, so we need to direct them. It is a sector that keeps pace in technology and communication with entrepreneurs, but still manages to do things unselfishly without self-interest and they often offer their own volunteer work. The non-profit sector does not have lack of flexibility. The biggest problem of the non-profit sector is finances and it is therefore necessary to think about this in mutual partnership and cooperation. Representatives of the non-profit sector are very good partners for long-term cooperation and initiative often emerge from these organizations.

Main realms of interventions of animation in local/regional development:

1. Local development goals, intentions, projects and activities
2. The local development strategy (strategy of community led local development)
3. Coordination tasks, the organisational development of the local partnership and the administrative tasks related with support programmes
4. The territory as a space of interaction, coordination, comprehensive perception and identification

Reflections on those realms above, we have got three well-confirmed lessons learned:

- Local development requires purposeful partnership, which realises itself as a coordinated action of voluntary partners and professional (employed or contracted) agents.
- To ensure successful meetings, the involved stakeholders have to take care for a balanced perception and accomplishment of operational, strategic, organisational and symbolic tasks.
- In all the main issues voluntary participation and professional management play a crucial role and should be ensured by adequate organisational arrangements.

Chapter 6: How to develop cross-sector partnership?

The partnership concept is first and foremost a local form of organization, that will influence the institutional and political balance of the area. This form of organization is encouraged by delegating to the local level a large proportion of the work of defining and managing action programmes.

The regional/local partnership is expected to:

- unite all the prime movers in the area around a joint intentions, projects
- allow all groups of players, including the most marginalised, to express their views
- take a wider view of the local resources, making the partnership more receptive to innovative ideas
- ensure strong links between actions and integrate distinct sector approaches in order to bring them into closer synergy
- stay closer to information, news, local reality
- manage in a flexible manner

The creation of local partnership involves a wide diversity of players who in many cases were not previously accustomed to work together. A broad representation of local interests within the group of partners opens up global and multi-sectorial prospects, facilitating the diversification of the local economy.

Apart from mounting joint economic actions, the local partnership also represents a desire to construct or reconstruct a social link, or even to seek an identity for the area.

In the area as a whole the partnership should result in the formation of a complex network of relations and support groups that makes it possible to take into account and exploit all of the area's potential and to enhance support measures.

This can only be achieved over time. Establishing a partnership is increasingly becoming a necessity and prerequisite for inducing processes of change and development that are beyond the reach of an isolated development player, alike an institution.

Under local partnership there is the expression of a group of players (public and private) established in a variety of different forms which, due to their legitimacy, their knowledge of the field, their involvement in networks and the recognition they enjoy, are capable of organising and managing a collective approach. The LEADER partnership has had to demonstrate that it has the legitimacy to manage public funds, irrespective of its composition and legal form.

A local partnership can take a wide variety of forms, depending on:

- type and number of partners;
- the backdrop to the partnership's creation and the individuals or corporate entities that instigated it;
- the objectives assigned to the partnership;

- the socio-economic culture of the area concerned (legal and administrative system, current regulations, role of the public authorities, institutional practices, civic participation, etc.).

A partnership is created by establishing new relationships between diverse parties. It is a long-term process, with intense collective interludes, some formal aspects and other fairly informal ones. As a general rule, the components of a partnership are as follows:

- A network of contacts – A partnership is founded on the establishment of contacts between players from clearly identified local circles (local authorities, groups of entrepreneurs, diverse associations, etc.) These partners do not therefore represent individual interests, but shared ones. Due to the presence of such partners, the local partnership is enhanced with wider networks of contacts. In practice, however, at the outset a partnership is sometimes only a rudimentary structure of local players to manage a programme, strategy or to cope with problems seen as serious for the area. Gradually, the partnership will evolve by incorporating other development players and/or prompting other forms of local organisation.
- Contractually-agreed cooperation – In order to be lasting and act consistently, a partnership must adhere to certain operating rules. More often than not, this association of players, whether temporary or permanent, is established contractually, which reinforces transparency within the group, its credibility to outsiders and the effectiveness of the approach as a whole. However, the partnership’s composition is not fixed once and for all but instead evolves in line with needs and opportunities. The possibility of including new partners at any time reinforces the programme’s credibility and foundation.
- A climate of trust – The creation of a climate of trust between the partners is a prerequisite for the smooth running of the partnership, as well as an on-going challenge that must be met. Depending on the context, economic developments, cultures, population movements, etc., past achievements can quickly be undermined and the very basis of collective efforts can be called into question.
- Administrative and organisational ability – Effective organisation and management are factors in the success of the local partnership. Transparent decision-making and regular information to the community foster trust. The partnership must also be structured. At the start, the ranking and distribution of tasks between the partners do not have to be very specific but, as the local development project evolves, they must be refined. The separation of duties and powers is a guarantee of the proper working of “local democracy”, the cornerstone of a dynamic partnership. In practice it has to be clearly defined who is responsible for proposing, deciding, implementing and financing.
- Variable geometry – Depending on the origin of its instigators, coupled with other factors, groups create a specific and tailored partnership for themselves. Sometimes the partnership is forced to open up to partners from different backgrounds, leading to the development or even modification of the objectives and content of the action. Ultimately it is possible to achieve a “variable geometry” partnership based on a variety of different concerns:
 - usefulness (in achieving the stated objectives);
 - benefit (of the expected results);
 - effectiveness (necessary for the success of the planned actions);
 - motivation (required for taking charge of projects);
 - adaptation (to the changes imposed by a long-term approach).

According to the bottom-up approach to development, “being a partner” means:

- To take part (joining in, rallying around a cause, participating in a process, helping with development, etc.)
- To become involved (making choices, assuming responsibilities, have in mind, that the work will be especially others and regional development, etc.)
- To take a stand (committing oneself and others, preparing an opinions, intentions, projects, publicly stating and defending the opinion, intentions and projects, seek a common path, attempting to seek innovation, etc.)
- To convey (communicating, disseminating, exchanging information, viewpoints, etc.) A partnership in rural development area is a group of players that have chosen to commit themselves to furthering local development. Beyond the objective of leading a collective project, the reason of entry of a partnership is its ability to transform social relations, attitudes and behaviour and to act as an innovation tool for managing intentions and projects.

No single group should have majority control of a local development partnership, in the partnership is very important balanced partnership among the local actors (public, private, NGO partnership and also within a sector).

Valuable participative mapping techniques have been developed in community planning. An example is Planning For Real in which a large scale base map of the area is copied and put on a table. The map can then be enhanced, either with simple models of key buildings or with photographs of the locality. The map is used as a discussion tool for participants allowing them to explore issues in the existing built environment and also how the area might develop and change in the future. The value of Planning for Real is not in the map itself but in the discussions that take place around it. The technique can be used as a framework for finding out what people in the community want to change, what are their needs. There are now digital methods for mapping assets in a local community. Social media applications are being developed that help communities to crowd source this type of information. Smart phones with cameras and GPS allow instant uploads of data, photos, interviews and other media to create a genuine community map.

How does partnership work in LEADER/CLLD (community led local development)?

The LEADER method relies on a concept of rural development based on establishing links between citizens, activities and rural areas. Setting up a local partnership, known in LEADER as a “local action group (LAG)” allows this concept to be put into practical application:

- By harnessing the differing and complementary resources of the public sector, the private sector and the NGO, civic and voluntary sector.
- By uniting local players around joint intentions, projects and common, cross-sectoral actions, in order to achieve the critical mass or threshold needed to improve the area’s economic competitiveness.
- By envisaging development through a multisectoral approach, stemming from negotiations and consultations between the players concerned.

The platforms, which are set for solving common development issues in the region, which are in the interest of stakeholders, we call multi-stakeholder platform or multi-stakeholder issue platform. Multi-stakeholder issue platform should be in place for each of a main goals, to convene diverse stakeholders and to support alignment with (and link to) platforms of LAG or other organization. It is local government or NGO that are the primary "duty bearers" for their region’s development, and they must take leadership and ownership of it, particularly on matters of public affairs and regional development. The most fundamental requirement for successful cross-sector partnerships is that they form part of a coherent whole within an overall, local/regional development plan – and not form a series of one-off,

unrelated projects. Multi-sector collaborations should be embedded in development planning at the local/regional level.

Cross-sector partnership (between regional/local government, business, civil society and NGO) is getting higher importance, thanks to its gained results. Within cross-sector partnerships, partners will typically leverage their respective core knowledge, skills, resources and assets in such a way as to create solutions which none of the partners could have developed on its own. For example, local governments might provide technical, policy and regulatory expertise; businesses their product and/or service development, delivery competencies, and value chains; civic and civil society organisations their understanding of, relationship with and access to local communities. It is common view that the important potential offered by the scaling up of cross-sector partnerships will not be realised unless it is underpinned by strategy or leading partners. Although business are increasingly viewed, by itself and others, as a development actor (in addition to its critical role as an economic actor), it is still a relative newcomer to this space. Contribution and responsibilities of all three partners (local/regional government, civil society, NGO and business) within cross-sector partnerships, its main focus is on the issues raised by business's participation. For meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, perhaps of most interest is the potential innovation that business can bring to address hitherto seemingly intractable challenges. Cross-sector partnerships are one of the primary methods through which such innovation is expected to be created and delivered.

Principles of multi-sector (cross-sector) platform cooperation: i) Ownership of development priorities by local NGOs or local government; ii) Focus on results; iii) Inclusive development partnerships; iv) Transparency and accountability to each other; v) Alignment of 'donor' (Ministry, EU, Region, businesses...) support with local communities priorities; vi) Harmonisation of 'donors' actions to avoid duplication of actions or duplication of supported issues

In some regions already exist a variety of different platforms or networks. Some with a single-issue focus, some only for business, some for strategies, etc. In order to avoid further proliferation of platforms at the regional/local level, it is suggested that retooling an existing platform (to create this proposed new multi-stakeholder platform for new goals) should be considered where possible. For example, donor coordination platforms exist in many regions whose mandate could be broadened to include civil society and business.

A key factor for cross sector partnership is accountability. Major driver for improving accountability is the need to address the current low level of trust between different sectors of society. Low trust constrains the uptake of cross sector partnerships. When trust is low, risks are perceived to be higher, and organisations are less likely to collaborate.

Three modalities of accountability are critical for cross-sector partnerships to flourish:

- the internal accountability within a cross-sector partnership (i.e. between partners)
- the external accountability of the cross-sector partnership, to citizens, donors and other stakeholders
- the individual accountability of each partner.

Part IV Rural territory – resources, management and planning

Chapter 7: Identification rural resources

Choosing the right types, sizes and shapes of areas notes the importance of 'Coherence' in stating "The territory should also form a coherent unit in geographical, economic and social terms, taking into account the nature of the strategy. As a result, the area may not coincide with national administrative boundaries" and go on to caution against a solely top down approach to designating the LAG area. The state designated areas are often artificially stated and can create rigid and artificial areas, which do not build organically on local linkages." Its preference is for "a balance between the top down and bottom up approaches" which takes account of the 'physical or geographical coherence of the area', the 'area's cultural identity and common social issues' and 'concentrations of economic activities'.

The LAG territory should characterize:

- social links among people,
- cultural identity,
- geographically homogeneous area,
- market links,
- business connectivity,
- transport connectivity,
- jobs availability in the area,
- links to services (public sector: education, health, social services, etc. and private sector services).

In all cases, however, enlarging the area needs to be handled with care. Most of the pressures will drive areas to become larger but this should not be at the expense of losing a sense of local identity and real community involvement.

The main criteria by which it is advisable to choose territory

- **Size.** Firstly, the area should be large enough to 'offer sufficient critical mass in terms of human, financial and economic resources to support a viable development strategy', but, secondly, 'it shall also be sufficiently small in order to allow local interaction.' This has been interpreted to mean that the population be not less than 10 000 and not more than 150 000 inhabitants. In duly justified cases, in particular, where an area is sparsely populated or in densely populated areas, these limits may be lowered or increased respectively. In a rural LAG shouldn't be part of the LAG town, which exceeds 25 000 inhabitants.
- **Coherence.** The territory should also form a coherent unit in geographical, economic and social terms, taking into account the nature of the strategy. However, areas that are coherent from a physical point of view, like an estuary or mountain range, may not be the right shape or size for dealing with challenges concerning the labour market or the problems facing certain clusters of economic activity (i.e. if the focus is primarily on rural-urban relations, the area should probably include both rural and urban and/or peri-urban areas, etc.). As a result the area may not coincide with national administrative boundaries. In some cases, the area of intervention may not be geographically continuous (isolated fishing communities along an estuary, or the Roma neighbourhoods in a particular conurbation). This means that Member States and/or regions can identify the types of areas where they want to apply regional development, CLLD but it is generally better to leave the definition of precise boundaries up to the local level. In some cases, at least it may also be necessary to contemplate various forms of cooperation between different

and sometimes overlapping local territories. CLLD can in fact be used for a far wider range of territories than is often supposed. For example, in cities the most obvious type of intervention is in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. But it can also be used in industrial, cultural, science or central districts. It can be used in single neighbourhoods or in several neighbourhoods facing a similar problem; in small towns and cities and their surrounding rural areas; for the peri-urban areas of large cities or for a functional labour market area.

Organization of resources

In the process of planning and regular working in LAG or other organization we need to consider all parts of the regional development process in organization, in particular the overall timeline and the data and information requirements. Resourcing requirements to consider include human resources (skills and administrative capacity), data resources and financial resources. In some cases it may also be necessary to consider any specific IT needs. Allowance also needs to be made for the resourcing of any capacity building activities foreseen. Organization should operate in the territory big enough to find sufficient resources to build and implement regional development strategy.

Financial

The organization needs to plan for the financial costs of implementing the proposed programme or agreed regional development activities. Specific elements which need to be covered include:

- The costs of animation, contact meetings, organization body meetings, training, regional analysis, case studies etc.
- The costs of materials, facilities, communications, support, expenses, facilitation etc.
- Any costs associated with data collection and management including any data purchase or specific IT provision.
- The costs incurred in any staff, capacity building for staff, LAG members and contractors.
- Any dissemination costs e.g. an event or publication.
- Any allowance to cover travel costs

Organizations should also consider the sources of resources, what other national or regional funds could contribute to the budget, what support does the MA propose etc. Consideration should also be given to what other sources of support may be available from within the LAG or the territory.

Human

In mapping the human resources and skills required and available organizations can identify the capacity building needed. The operation of the organization can be conducted by own staff or by external contractors. The key is consideration for the skills and knowledge related to the regional development process and its parts. Even when you rent external contractors, you need to have sufficient competent staff available to support the contractors. The staff needs to take account of any peaks in workload this may cause. This consideration applies to all the tasks and work, which you plan in the organization. In planning capacity building activities in relation to management and support organization need to identify the needs across the proposed programme of activity or regional development activity. In particular you need to consider what are the lessons learned from previous experience, what are the training needs and how are these to be addressed? The identification of sources of support is important; this may include help from stakeholder or organization members. Organization could also consider collaborating to identify and address common needs. This may take the form of training events, guidance and support materials, mentoring and other forms of exchange or knowledge transfer.

Territory resources

Regional Development supports the development of territory resources, the so-called external sources and to manage the development of the external resources needs internal resources (human resources, information, financial resources). Internal resources are sources of the organization. It is always necessary to map resources and assess their potential, then we can only begin to work with the resources and exploit them, or thanks to the resources appraise that territory.

Among external territorial resources we can include, for example:

- Institutional resources - in terms of institutions that we need to work with the territory. These institutions, for example, approve procedures and work. Give guidance on how to proceed in certain processes, or directly supervise and administer the territory.
- Natural resources - for example, we include natural wealth (protected areas, elements), natural resources (mineral resources). With these resources we can bring to the area, for example, tourism, or we can build on these resources employment or we can built upon the mineral resources manufacturing.
- Cultural resources - especially in the cultural heritage of our ancestors, which gives us the possibility of popularisation and development of services linked to cultural heritage. Or it is a mere conservation and preservation for future generations, this analysis must evaluate sources.
- Financial resources - in terms of resources of the region, which should be taken into account in the preparation of regional development strategies and help implement development projects in the region. Due to the efficiency of resource utilization it is very useful in preparing and implementing development strategies and projects involve multiple partners and sectors and thus prefer the implementation of integrated projects.
- Human resources - we need to find enough stakeholders with the sufficient ability to plan and realize regional development strategy.

Chapter 8: Methods of identification rural resources

Adequately identification the resources at the disposal of the territory and rural communities is key importance for the sustainable development of rural areas. How the overall capital of one area and communities are combination of different resources (human, natural, cultural and historically heritage, tradition, economic activities areas...), analysis of existing resources is often very complicated. We encounter the frequent situation that the identification of resources is often based on existing statistics, which is on one side limited (in some countries such as Serbia, is very difficult to come up with relevant information at the village level), and on the other hand we should not forget the importance of local experience about community resources that exist, as well as their knowledge in the use of resources. Milestones is even more complicated if you have a situation where non-existent appropriate statistical and/or any other relevant measured data, which prevents the creation of correct conclusions and formulation of options for solution or the use of existing resources. If you get up and come to such data, weak communication with local communities, traditionalism as a barrier can restrain the initiatives and downplayed the effectiveness of the activities undertaken in the preparation of specific projects and programs.

To avoid these problems, as well as purely quantitative approach to the analysis of the current situation in a particular environment and in order to incorporate the **vision of the local population**, was introduced and developed new research approach Rapid Rural Assessment (RRA), on the basis of these methodologies developed something later developed and **Participatory Rural Appraise - PRA** methodological approach, derived from the RRA methodology.

Formulation PRA methodology was created as a reaction to the limitations of RRA methodological approach, and while the goal of the RRA was to extract information, mainly on the basis of a single communication, PRA is designed so that multiple monitors observations and interests of the analyzed subject, i.e. representatives of the local community. PRA workshops (conferences) are usually led by a team of several skilled trainers and lasted an average of three to six days. One of the most important principles of PRA methodology was clearly and impartially, providing insight into the results of analyses, decisions and plans of the local community during public meetings. PRA methodology strongly supported communication with local people, based on their needs and reflect the positive interaction of local collectives and the research team, as well as innovative thinking, especially in the subject of analysis. During prolonged use, PRA methodology was found to be able to achieve capacities of the local population to independently analyze their own life circumstances, opportunities and problems to make decisions on necessary changes. PRA moderators time are increasingly accepted role of a student, or someone who is actively involved in the learning process. Thus PRA upgraded and designed the methodology that focused on the ability of local people to independently plan and conduct activities, as opposed to the RBA, which locals treat as a source of information. Due to the fact that the PRA methodology and found to researchers, ie. Moderators are involved in the learning process, there is an evolutionary jump in participatory methodologies act of introducing interactive process - mutual learning.

The above process has led the 90-ies of the last century to the development of this methodology of **Participatory Learning and Action - PLA**. PLA methodology applicable to the whole family mentioned participatory approach. Its main feature is based on the focus on activity phase of the process, ie. moment when the local community carries out its activities, achieving Agreed aims and objectives. Although the participatory methodology were originally applied in developing countries and in the framework of rural communities, over time, because of its considerable effectiveness, started

implementing in all types of communities: rural, peri-urban and urban areas. Although it was basically intended to be used in the areas of agriculture, environment and natural resources, application of PLA methodology has spread to other sectors, such as gender equality, health sector (food, reducing infant mortality ...), etc. PLA methodology is now considered an adjuvant that allows and encourages sustainable local development and ensures the initiation of dialogue between all participants of a society based on **bottom - up approach**.

The key principles on which the PLA methodology is based are as follows:

- 1) The methodology and systematic learning: the focus is on comprehensive education of all participants;
- 2) Multi-perspective: the main goal is to find differences instead of simplifying complexity, precisely because the communities are not homogeneous, comparable. For example, the difference may be reflected in the status, socio-economic and political position, as well as attitudes and perspectives. Identifying the various actors and members of society involves identification and inequality in roles, access to and control of resources and assets, in deciding levels, relationships and the type of power they have some members of the community;
- 3) The process of learning together: everyone is included and it is understood that the complexity of the world can be clarified only by observation and group interaction;
- 4) Specific context: the approach is flexible enough to be newly appointed as adequate conditions and actors;
- 5) The moderators of experts and decision-makers: the methodology is focused on the transformation of existing activities to improve the environment of the local community;
- 6) Readiness for change: the process of joint analysis and discussion help define the changes that should contribute to the improvement and at the same time motivate community members to take responsibility in the implementation of changes.

The highest value and a means of the PLA methodology (as said a name of methodology) is participation or involvement.

PLA methodology does not mean the mechanical application technique, ie. method, but refers to a process that involves conversation, activities, analysis and change. If one keeps in mind that the goal aimed at sustainable development, there is a need to find a way for the promotion and implementation of interactive, participatory models that do not arise from the more common passive, consultative and incentive methods. In order to better understand the meaning of participation, below is principally explained seven types of participatory approaches:

- 1) Passive participation: the community members tell what will happen or what has already happened;
- 2) Participation of gathering information: members of the community participate in responding to the questions researchers over the given questionnaires or similar "closed and comprehensive" approach;
- 3) Advisory participation: attitudes of community members representing the external, ie. external listeners/experts. Experts professionally define problems and solutions and, where necessary, modify responses, coordinating them with the attitudes of the local community;
- 4) Participation for the sake of material incentives: community members participate in "facilitating"/ provision of resources, such as availability of labor which is, in turn, provides food, money or material incentives. Participants do not have a role in making decisions when prolonging activities after the end of incentives;

5) Functional participation: community members participate in the formation of groups in order to achieve pre-set objectives within the existing project. Such participation takes place after making some major, major decision. Institutions usually dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become independent;

6) Interactive participation: community members participate in joint analysis, which leads to the creation of action plans and the formation of new local institutions or strengthening existing ones. Group decision-making of local importance, so that members of the community, become a decision-making, while maintaining the existing supra or customs;

7) Self-mobilization: community members participate so they take initiatives independent of external institutions to change the system itself. They develop contacts with external organizations as appropriate in relation to certain resources or advice but retain control over the use of assistance received.

Application of the PLA methodology; To do this identification card local communities using PLA/PRA methodology, it is necessary to use general and specific PRA funds. She used to be with members of the community to systematically and comprehensively analyze their situation. Every single asset highlights the different aspects of the community life: Agricultural, Economic, Socio-cultural.

This means we get useful information by actively participating in a conversation with members of the community. There are many instruments used in the implementation of PLA / PRA methodology and adapt it to the field and the situation in which it is administered. Some of these drugs are different folders (mobile, social, focus resources, health facilities, households ...), time line, time trends, seasonal calendars, calendar diseases, diagrams (radar diagrams, process), categorization according to the standard of living, income.

Application of PRA funds, as well as analysis of the results of this application are carried out during the discussion with members of the community who, with the support of PLA / PRA facilitator, should have all the information received to connect in a whole that appropriately describes their situation.

The application of PLA/PRA methodology consists of two phases:

- 1) analysis of the situation in the community;
- 2) planning to improve conditions in the community.

Analysis of the situation; Situation analysis is the first stage in the process, because community members actively participate in the analysis of their situation, and based on it make the right and timely decisions regarding the improvement of the current situation in the community.

Presentation of the situation in the village is administered as a first in a series of funds for situational analysis (PRA) was that to gain insight into how the locals see their situation, that problems and potential are considered important, and provides a general framework for the implementation of other PRA funds.

This tool is implemented as follows: PLA/PRA moderators - it is desirable that it be in a group of three to four (different sexes and different professions) - scheduled plenum to which were invited all members of the community: villagers, representatives of various associations (farmers, herders , women, minorities, vulnerable groups, pensioners, businessmen). Meeting moderating two PLA/PRA facilitators (preferably to be of different sexes). Stages meeting/Plenum are: Foreword (up to 10 -15 minutes); representation - it is mandatory that the PLA/PRA moderators present themselves and explain from which institutions come; explanation of the purpose of the meeting/plenum - or goal coming into the local community/village and the purpose of the meeting, with no mention conducting research or any implementation of PLA/PRA methodology, as this may cause residents in the resistance; an explanation

of how the work and giving timelines present - it is necessary to explain to participants of the meeting that in the first 30 - 45 minutes of work, noting that it is highly desirable that all participate in the discussion and share their views on the potential and problems of their towns/villages. PLA/PRA moderator/who are advised to first initiate discussion about the potentials, then the issues to discussion was fruitful; the main part of the meeting/plenum (30-45 minutes); elaboration of themes - community members with PLA/PRA moderators start a discussion aimed situational analysis, as a step in the development process, primarily by identifying the potential and problems of the community; **Visualization** - during the plenary session every potential problem or a note taker of certain securities (the most rewarding papers are in two different colors, A5 format, or to divide A4 format), which will then be setting up/ pasting a large sheet of paper (board, wall) which was previously divided into two parts, two columns (resources - problems) and how the villagers identify specific problems and potentials, so you will know them and ask.

After the realization of the plenary session, it starting phase for creating the option, as the most important means of PLA/PRA methodology, which is applied in the planning stage.

Together with the local population on the basis of identified problems by using PRA media presentations of the situation in the village and categorized according to their ability to participate in solving these problems:

- 1) OURSELVES - a problem that residents have been able to resolve themselves;
- 2) OURSELVES WITH THE HELP OF OTHERS - all the problems listed in this category are those whose resolution locals can participate in part, by entering their own funds (pooling or individual), but they need additional support, primarily financial;
- 3) ONLY WITH THE HELP OF OTHERS - villagers themselves can not solve the problems in the local community, but also believe that this can only be done by a local government or state (competent ministries).

Specific methods of PLA methodology is also used in working with local communities.

From specific funds use: 1) the timeline; 2) Map of resources; 3) Seasonal calendar; 4) Categorization of the source of income; 5) Categorization of the highest standard of living.

Timeline as a PRA tool, allows us to gain insight into the past of the village. Includes information we illuminate: economic, socio-cultural, agricultural system of the village.

All the changes that have occurred in these systems in the past it will be registered, with the same time points to the causes of the current situation (positive and negative sides).

Agent is administered in a small group (2-3) composed of senior members of the local community.

Map of Resources; Folder resources we gain insight into how community members see their potential, the resources, which are able to exploit them in order to improve living conditions and how they are developed certain sectors of agricultural production which has a village.

It's implementing in a small group (2-3) younger residents. It is recommended that folder draw the villagers themselves and make their own mark on her resources. Example Map of resources is given in Figure 4.

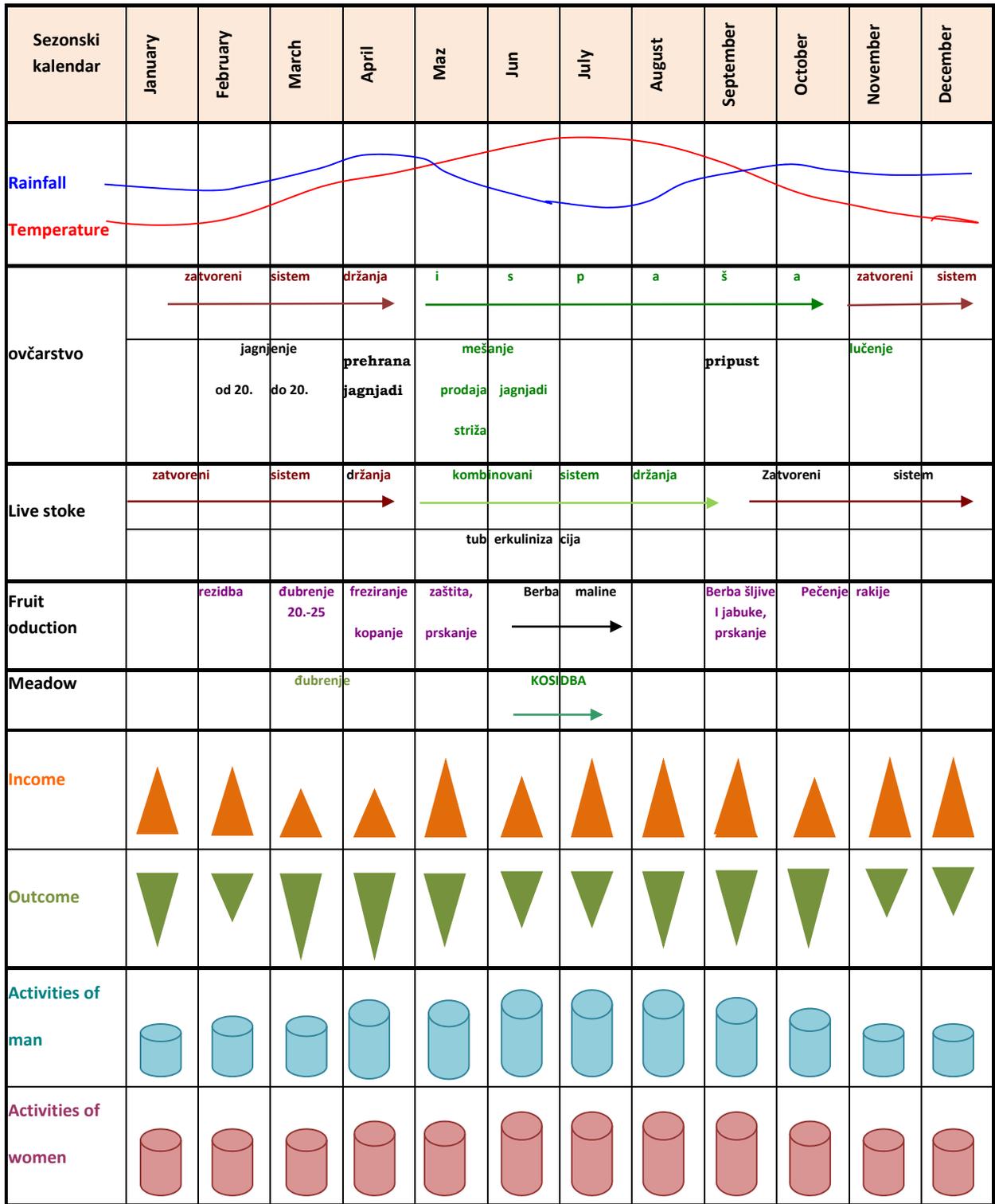


Figure 5 Seasonal calendar

Table 2 Categorization according to the sources of income

AGRICULTURE INCOMES		NON-AGRICULTURE INCOMES	
1	Livestock selling (calf, piglets) 60 %	1	Pension 40%
2	Seling chees and kajmak 60%	2	Sallary 20%
3	Vegetable selling 60 %	3	Agriculture pansions 30%
4	Brandy selling 40%	4	Seasonal filed work 20%

Table 3 Categorization according to the standard of living

HOUSEHOLD ABOVE AVERAGE (5 %)	AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD (65 %)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wages and / or pension tractor motokultivator Increased number of auxiliary machines sufficient manpower, seasonal provides services of machinery Average 5 cattle and more an average of 5 hectares of meadows and pastures revenues from the sale of milk and cheese orchards on about 0.5 hectares an average of 2 ha of arable land greenhouse for their own needs with small market surpluses a brandy with small market surpluses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> salaries or pensions or walk-behind tractor Basic attachments (obsolete) sufficient manpower an average of 2.3 head of cattle and / or sheep 5-10 an average of 2 ha of meadows and pastures milk production and cheese with small market surplus orchards on 0.25 hectares an average of 0.75 ha of arable land greenhouse for their own needs a brandy with small market surpluses
HOUSEHOLD BELOW AVERAGE (10 %)	ELDERLY HOUSEHOLD (15 %)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without mechanization Members are going to seasonal work Average 2 heads of cattle and / or sheep 2-3 an average of 1 ha of meadows and pastures production of milk and cheese for their own needs individual fruit trees an average of 0.5 ha of arable land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pensions moto-cultivator Lack of workforce Average 1 cow Average 2-3 sheep give the land under lease milk production and cheese only for own needs
WEEKEND HOUSEHOLD (5 %)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landless (up to 5 acres) Without mechanization occasionally stay 	

Based on data collected to prepare the report and recommended the following report structure:

- **Homepage;**

- **Summary:** The appropriate length; it is necessary to provide a complete overview of key information; it should be informative, not described; indirect tone; as related prose.
- **Content:** should be precise and clearly formulated; specific parts of the report should be numbered; it needs to be complete; it is recommended that contains a list of illustrations (if applicable).
- **Introduction:** it is necessary to link the topic with wider exposure of the text; it is necessary to provide relevant background information; describes the purpose of the report; it is necessary to suggest the scope of the report; contains an explanation of the format of certain parts of the report and the reason for such an arrangement.
- **The main part of the report consists of the following components:** A) Description of PLA / PRA methodologies; B) The results of PRA funds (presentation of the situation in the country; timeline - visualization, map resources; seasonal calendar; categorization according to sources; categorization according to standard of living, creating opportunities/ options for improvement; C) ID card Community (agri-economic system and socio- cultural system); D) Report of the survey (if applicable and if the organization or institution requires. PLA / PRA does not take a poll as a means PRA).

Also other tools and methods for identification rural resources existing, as SWOT analysis, official statistic, preparation studies by own or outside expert. We recommend to combine all available tools and methods and that is a way to ensure high quality of information, but always we must have in mind relation to have balance between own capacities and objectives in community development.

Chapter 9: Management of rural resources

One of the crucial issue in rural development is management of rural resources and last decade provide huge changes in development principals. Sustainable development is key framework in community development, including rural communities. One may say that neither the continuous increase in the number of regulations and documents referring to sustainable development nor the frequent use of the word sustainable in the media have substantially contributed to the understanding of this complex development pattern.

What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development is not just a duty. It offers a unifying and coordinating framework to ensure effective and efficient delivery of council services and provides a mechanism to integrate other strategies.

Sustainable development is about:

- Working together;
- Changing Behaviour;
- Providing Leadership;
- Sharing Good Practice;
- Living Sustainably;
- Empowering and Engaging People.

A sustainable society is distinguished by a system of governance that focuses on mainstreaming and balancing social, economic and environmental progress to ensure sound management and efficient use of natural resources.

In each of three elements community must provide changes between “classic” development approach (as characteristic of the period to '90 years of the twentieth century) and sustainable development approach:

- **Economic;** An economically sustainable system must be able to produce goods and services on a continuing basis, to maintain manageable levels of government and external debt, and to avoid extreme sectoral imbalances which damage agricultural or industrial production.
- **Environmental;** An environmentally sustainable system must maintain a stable resource base, avoiding over-exploitation of renewable resource systems or environmental sink functions, and depleting non-renewable resources only to the extent that investment is made in adequate substitutes. This includes maintenance of biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and other ecosystem functions not ordinarily classed as economic resources.
- **Social;** A socially sustainable system must achieve distributional equity, adequate provision of social services including.

At the base of sustainable development is the need for community to sustain itself by enabling people to develop skills, knowledge, innovation and creativity, while at the same time protecting natural resources, as well as safeguarding health, so that future generations are not compromised by the decisions and actions we make. This is why it is so important that sustainable development is not thought of as solely an environmental initiative.

As most important for rural communities and his development is to strategic planning his development and ensure implementation his strategies on the sustainable way.

We singled out the following **principles** of sustainable development as relevant for rural community development:

1. Integration of Environmental and Economic Decisions

- Economic decisions should adequately reflect environmental, human health and social effects.
- Environmental and health initiatives should adequately take into account economic, human health and social consequences.

2. Stewardship

- The economy, environment, human health and social well-being should be managed for the equal benefit of present and future generations.
- Rural communities are caretakers of the economy, the environment, human health and social well-being for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Today's decisions are to be balanced with tomorrow's effects.

3. Shared Responsibility and Understanding

- Rural communities should acknowledge responsibility for sustaining the economy, the environment, human health and social well-being, with each being accountable for decisions and actions in a spirit of partnership and open cooperation.
- Rural communities share a common economic, physical and social environment.
- Rural communities should understand and respect differing economic and social views, values, traditions and aspirations.
- Rural communities should consider the aspirations, needs and views of the people of the various geographical regions and ethnic groups in Manitoba, including Aboriginal peoples, to facilitate equitable management of Manitoba's common resources.

4. Prevention

Rural communities should anticipate, and prevent or mitigate, significant adverse economic, environmental, human health and social effects of decisions and actions, having particular careful regard to decisions whose impacts are not entirely certain but which, on reasonable and well-informed grounds, appear to pose serious threats to the economy, the environment, human health and social well-being.

5. Conservation and Enhancement

Rural community should:

- maintain the ecological processes, biological diversity and life-support systems of the environment;
- harvest renewable resources on a sustainable yield basis;
- make wise and efficient use of renewable and non-renewable resources;
- enhance the long-term productive capability, quality and capacity of natural ecosystems.

6. Rehabilitation and Reclamation

Rural communities should:

- endeavour to repair damage to or degradation of the environment; and
- consider the need for rehabilitation and reclamation in future decisions and actions.

7. Global Responsibility

Rural communities should think globally when acting locally, recognizing that there is economic, ecological and social interdependence among provinces and nations, and working cooperatively, within Canada and internationally, to integrate economic, environmental, human health and social factors in decision making while developing comprehensive and equitable solutions to problems.

Rural communities have ensure sustainable management of existed resources and we recommend to work on establishing framework and implementation mechanisms through strategic planning (see Chapter 10) based on the following guideline:

1. Efficient Use of Resources – which means:

- encouraging and facilitating development and application of systems for proper resource pricing, demand management and resource allocation together with incentives to encourage efficient use of resources; and
- employing full-cost accounting to provide better information for decision makers.

2. Public Participation – which means:

- establishing forums which encourage and provide opportunity for consultation and meaningful participation in decision making processes by Rural communities;
- endeavouring to provide due process, prior notification and appropriate and timely redress for those adversely affected by decisions and actions;
- striving to achieve consensus amongst citizens with regard to decisions affecting them.

3. Access to Information – which means:

- encouraging and facilitating the improvement and refinement of economic, environmental, human health and social information;
- promoting the opportunity for equal and timely access to information by all Rural communities.

4. Integrated Decision-Making and Planning – which means: encouraging and facilitating decision making and planning processes that are efficient, timely, accountable and cross-sectoral and which incorporate an inter-generational perspective of future needs and consequences.

5. Waste Minimization and Substitution – which means

- encouraging and promoting the development and use of substitutes for scarce resources where such substitutes are both environmentally sound and economically viable;
- reducing, reusing, recycling and recovering the products of society.

6. Research and Innovation – which means: encouraging and assisting the researching, development, application and sharing of knowledge and technologies which further our economic, environmental, human health and social well-being.

Principals and guidelines for planning and implementation of sustainable development in rural communities provide framework, but it's very important to have in mind LEADER principals and real interest of rural inhabitants.

Chapter 10: Strategic Planning

Contemporary planning of socio-economic development

Strategic planning is a method of development planning of a given locality, which assumes a medium or long-term perspective and takes into account the broader social, economic and spatial context. It is the basic tool of sustainable development of rural areas.

Why is strategic planning of key importance?

Firstly: experience proves that every action, supposed to produce an expected result, requires a plan. The more complex is the action, the more it needs planning.

Secondly: needs are **always** bigger than possibilities of meeting them, which is a widely known as 'the phenomenon of a short blanket'.

Definitions of strategic planning

Strategic planning is an **organization's process** of defining its **strategy**, or direction, and making **decisions** on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. It may also extend to control mechanisms for guiding the implementation of the strategy. Strategic planning became prominent in corporations during the 1960s and remains an important aspect of **strategic management**. It is executed by strategic planners or **strategists**, who involve many parties and research sources in their analysis of the organization and its relationship to the environment in which it competes.^[1]

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_planning

A systematic process of envisioning a desired future, and translating this vision into broadly defined goals or objectives and a sequence of steps to achieve them.

In contrast to long-term planning (which begins with the current status and lays down a path to meet estimated future needs), strategic planning begins with the desired-end and works backward to the current status.

At every stage of long-range planning the planner asks, "What must be done here to reach the next (higher) stage?" At every stage of strategic-planning the planner asks, "What must be done at the previous (lower) stage to reach here?"

Also, in contrast to tactical planning (which focuses at achieving narrowly defined interim objectives with predetermined means), strategic planning looks at the wider picture and is flexible in choice of its means.

Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/>

The overall objective of local development activities is to improve the quality of life of local community. Problems, which the community faces on its path to reach this objective, include:

- insufficient – in relation to needs - financial and human resources (both in quantitative and, often underestimated, qualitative dimension),
- necessity of choosing between two categories of needs: urgent and important, in the above stated context of limited resources for meeting them,
- necessity of simultaneous consideration of two time horizons: 1/ meeting in the best possible manner current needs, 2/ forecasting the future needs and potential and adjusting the community attitudes and institutional and financial framework in a way enabling meeting those needs.

Strategic planning helps to limit a negative impact of these problems on socio-economic development of particular community/area. In order to do that it requires a series of specific actions aiming at:

- estimating of development potential of the community/area
- definition of inhabitants' needs and hierarchisation of those needs,
- estimating of the community/area resources,
- assigning a proper value to important needs, which often loose out to the urgent ones, which hampers the development process of the area,
- definition of future opportunities and threats and working out a position towards them.

According to P. Vaesken, theoretician of local development, the proces should:

- be based on valorisation of local resources,
- be implemented for the common benefits,
- be implemented in democratic manner,
- be based on partnership principle – it should foster a change from relations based on power to those based on complementarity.

According to Vaesken's „development triangle”, development consists of three basic factors: people, resources and ideas).

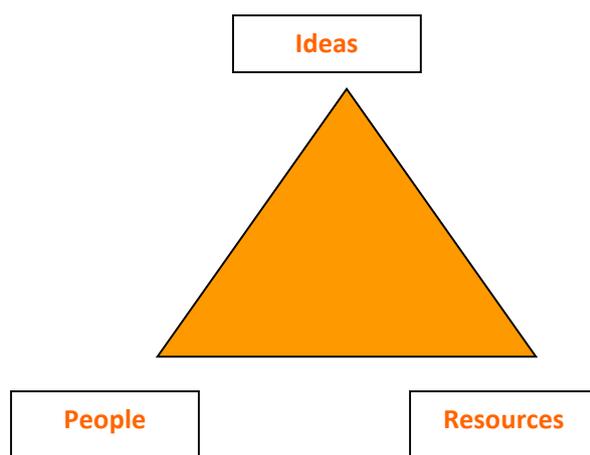


Figure 6 'Development triangle' by P. Vaesken

A strategy of development of an area is an instrument, which defines all these elements. It also hierarchies ideas, in form of strategic and operational development objectives, which can be translated into operational programs enabling of those objectives. It defines medium or long term objectives of the development process, while it does not describe in detailed manner measures and tools.

A strategy of development is a document which comes out of knowledge of the given area, identifies its resources and aims at maximisation of results of development activities based on internal and external resources. The planning process resulting in elaboration of the development strategy consists of a series of steps, which should provide answer to the basic question concerning the most relevant and effective directions of development.

Development strategy is a baseline for quality decision-making on development activities in the area and a tool for effective and sustainable cooperation within it. It leads to coordination of activities inside the area concerned and produces a synergy effect.

Many communities all over the world have realised the importance of having a quality strategy as a basis for achievement of their development goals. Communities which have not yet learned to use this tool will not be effectively using their potential for development, losing out to those who have.

A contemporary development strategy should serve the principle of sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development is not so new any more, but its practice is still relatively limited in the world. The first one to use the term was the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway. In its 1987 report titled "Our common future" it described sustainable development as a process **aiming at meeting development aspirations of the present generation in a way which enables achievement of similar aspirations of future generations**. Contemporarily sustainable development is understood as environmentally and socially sound economic development taking into consideration individuals' needs (such as health, education, personal development) and quality of social relations (democracy, civic society), as well as preserving the Earth's resources for future generations.

The above means that a strategy of sustainable development should be elaborated in a participatory way, involving all the interested individuals and entities of the concerned areas.

The principle of sustainability has become a cornerstone of European Union's development policy expressed in ***Europe 2020 a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth document***.

Contemporary strategy of development should also be an integrated one:

1) it should address:

- various domains: economy, society, ecology (thematic integration),
- activities and plans of neighbouring units (horizontal territorial integration),
- activities and plans of superior administrative units (vertical territorial integration).

2) it should involve various sectors of the society: administration, entrepreneurs, civil society and social groups, individual citizens (social integration).

It is clear that the concept of the integrated strategy follows the principle of sustainable development.

Organisation of the strategic planning process⁹

The people responsible for the strategic planning process should be aware, that the key to effective plan is the process, not the product. The development of a given area will be more a result of the social change caused by the planning process (such as increased knowledge, level of motivation, change of attitudes, improved relationships, intensified cooperation) than by the document of the strategy - the 'product' of this process.

Effective management of the strategic planning process will require:

- awareness of the responsible persons that the whole process is not for them, but for the local community,
- permanent confrontation of the present situation with the potential one, and maintaining sensitivity towards the signals from outside (interactive approach to the planning process),

⁹ Sections 10.2 and 10.3 are partly based on the book "Animating Local Partnership in Rural Areas - a practical guide" developed under the TEPA project (Training for European Partnership Animators).

- bringing together “top-down” thinking with “bottom-up” one about what should be done, how it should be done and who should do it (integrative character of the planning process),
- recognition that the planning process is continuous and permanent in character, because the changing local situation and changes in the outside environment require permanent evaluation and modification of all accepted plans.

Like in management of any activity a precise division of tasks and definition of responsibilities for each stage of work and each task are a must. The most common practice is the following:

a) external consultants and facilitators are responsible for:

- preparation of work structure at each stage,
- editing the final version of documents,
- carrying out workshops and plenary sessions.

b) the local working group is responsible for:

- collecting underlying data,
- carrying out workshops at municipality and village levels,
- participation in all strategic workshops.

However a different division is possible, too, as long as it is clear and accepted by all the parties.

The main feature of the strategic planning process, following the principle of sustainability, is its participative nature. Nowadays this fact is widely recognized in all types of organisations or communities. They are aware that strategic planning will lead to better results when it involves not only all those who can contribute to the development process, but also those who will be affected by it. This is even more true in case of designing a development strategy of a rural area as these areas have more scarce resources and, often, more conservative, mistrustful population. A strategy prepared by a narrow group of experts or local politicians is likely to be ignored by those members of the community, who could take the ownership of it and, as a result, contribute to its implementation.

Hence, before starting a systematic planning process, it is important to animate the rural territory and its residents, so that rural actors can be identified for the collaborative work on the design of the strategy (see chapters 4 and 5). Widest possible range local actors should be involved in the process from the beginning, in order to make the plan richer, more realistic and to be sufficiently motivated to participate in its implementation. Local politicians should be made aware that extension of the elaborating group is more an opportunity than a threat for them as they see it in some cases.

As it requires an involvement of the local community the importance and need for strategic planning should be well explained to it. People should know why they are to offer their time and intellectual contribution to the process, without a guarantee that each individual input will be visible in the strategic document being a result of it.

Simplicity of the process should be assured, so that people with various educational backgrounds, practical experiences and positions within the community can understand it and feel comfortable as a part of it. Sophisticated language and jargon should be avoided. All participants should not only be given a chance to speak out, but listening to their opinions should be a basic principle. Local people are seen as experts for local environment, although one has to remember that they often have their own point of view, which often should be confronted with an outsider’s one.

This means that external experts, while contributing to the planning process, should not dominate it. They should rather act as “facilitators” of the process, than its leaders. They also bring in external know-how and relevant experience of other communities.

There are a number of risks related to participative, interactive way of planning a development process. The most important of them is related to an enthusiasm, more likely to build up than in case of use of other methods. It leads to the risk of disappointment of participants, being at the same time potential implementators, if the time gap between planning and implementation phases is too big. If such gap is likely to happen the participants should be made aware of that during the planning process.

Another risk may be associated with potential domination of external experts, unable to accept a slower pace of the process with participation of non-professionals. This risk can be avoided by selecting experts who, in addition to development planning expertise, have also experience in the participative method of planning.

One more risk may be a development of a conflict situation. In such a case a rescue should come from an experienced moderator, who can resolve it by using proper arguments, objective information and data combined with smooth facilitation.

The proper direction and coordination of the strategic planning process is the key element of success. It means that skills of the institution/group which leads the strategy development process are of a key importance, too. The leader of the process should be able to perform the following functions:

- initiating, which involves bringing ideas to the table,
- organising – managing the process of strategy development, organisation of work, division of tasks and allocating responsibilities, inviting experts or moderators to help in the research or workshops,
- integrating – it should ensure good relationships between participants of the process of strategy development,
- mediating – helping to achieve consensus, conflict resolution, ensuring balance between interests of different groups,
- deciding – defining priorities, making final decisions in matters where other methods to achieve consensus fail.

Creating a culture of work of all the process participants, based on such values as cooperation, partnership, priority of common interest over the interests of individual partners is of utmost importance.

Another pre-requisite for success is finding a leader – a person with charisma, good standing, vision and enthusiasm, someone who can convince others about the vision and motivate them to the hard work of strategy development.

A stakeholder analysis should be the first step leading to making the strategy development process a common one. The identified stakeholders would constitute a core group of the process' participants. Through proper information campaign it should be extended with all the interested members of the concerned community, willing to be directly involved in the work.

It should both target, formal organisations and informal groups, as well as individuals with leadership and authority in the local community.

The Content of a Strategy of Development Document

The outcome of the interactive strategic planning process at the local level should be presented in the form of a document. The practicality should be its main feature as it is not a to be placed on the shelf, but an instrument to be used during the strategy's implementation. This feature is often overlooked by those, who elaborate development strategies.

The strategy document should be written in a clear way (meaning clear structure and language used), easy to understand for any reader, in particular those, who will be using it in the development process.

It should not be too big and too detailed as time is a very precious resource in contemporary world. Big volume is also an enemy of the clarity, it is easy to lose track in too extensive documents.

It should clearly describe the features, potential and development barriers of the concerned area and (more briefly) the local actors' group participating in the planning process.

It should present in a coherent manner the strategic and intervention logic (the desired change and the way how to reach it), the implementation framework (means, institutions and procedures helping to reach the change).

It should describe a monitoring and evaluation framework (how to assess if desired change happened in reality).

Therefore the document should contain the following major parts:

- general context of the strategic and action plan (the area and the partnership, broader environment),
- vision for the future situation of the area,
- detailed situation description (resource audit),
- situation analysis of resources (SWOT and problem analysis),
- strategic framework (strategic goal, strategic development priorities and specific objectives),
- intervention framework (action and financial plan),
- monitoring and evaluation framework (questions, targets, indicators, baselines),
- strategy's relation to other relevant programs, strategies, plans etc., especially those, which will condition an access to financing of the assumed operations),
- strategy's implementation framework.

Strategic Planning in the LEADER Approach

Application of strategic planning is a fundamental principle for financial support under European Union's schemes using the LEADER/Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) approach. This support is further a subject to a number of secondary conditions, which are described below, drawn from Polish regulations. One should be aware that in each EU member state these conditions may differ. What counts is the general philosophy of the LEADER/CLLD approach, conditioning access to funds and influencing the strategic planning process implemented with the use of this approach.

Elaboration of a local development strategy (LDS; this document may have different names in particular EU member states) is a pre-requisite for a rural area to gain access to funds from the Rural Development Programme, which consist of European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) funds and the national ones.

The LDS has to be elaborated by the local action group (LAG) which covers the concerned area with its activities. The LAG is a multi-sectoral partnership, consisting of entities and individuals representing civic, public and business sectors. This multi-sectoral feature has to be depicted not only by the LAG membership, but also by the composition of its 'decisive body' responsible for selection of operations to be financed from the LAG-acquired funds. The LAG may decide to use its Management Board as a decisive or can establish (which was a requirement in Poland in EU Programming Period 2007- 2013) an additional organ to perform this task. Important is that all sectors are represented in it and no one has a majority of votes.

LAGs in Poland in the Programming Period 2014-2020 will have a legal form of 'associations of special type' (associations whose membership may consist of both physical and legal persons).

The area covered by the LAG activities has to meet certain requirements with regard to its features and size. It has to be a rural area, which however allows it to include towns with population up to 20 thousand. It has to be territorially compact (all the included administrative units have to form one, uninterrupted area). It may not consist of less than two communes and have population not smaller than 30,000 and not bigger than 150,000.

LAGs elaborate local development strategies in accordance with a pre-defined structure at national level. In addition to regular elements described above it includes also a relatively detailed description of the LAG potential. On the basis of the strategies' content LAGs are selected by the designated LEADER authorities (ministry, regional authorities) to obtain support for implementation of strategies.

The strategy implementation process consists of implementation of single projects by local entities: companies, farmers, local authorities, NGOs and citizens. The beneficiaries and their projects have to meet the access criteria defined by the national LEADER managing authority (ministry) and, additionally, the local selection criteria set by the LAG. They also have to contribute to achievement of development goals defined in the strategy.

The exemplary local selection criteria may include:

- Resources, experience and qualifications of the applicant
- Durability of project results
- Project's innovativeness
- Use of local resources.
- Value of requested financing
- Potential of the project to serve as best practice
- 50+ age group being a target one
- 20- age group being a target one
- Applicant's farm size smaller than the region's average (in case of farmers' applications)
- Number of created jobs
- Links to/complementarity of the project with other undertakings
- Project's positive impact on promotion of the area
- Location of project's implementation (preference for smaller and more peripheral settlements)
- Project's outreach
- Participation (cooperation with) other partners

As in other types (non-LEADER) strategies indicators constitute an important element as they are a mean of measuring the impact of strategy's implementation on local community. They are divided into three categories: Product Indicators – at the level of single projects implemented in the framework of LDS, Result Indicators – at the level of the LDS Operational Objectives and Impact Indicators – at the level of the LDS Strategic objectives.

The individual LDS indicators should be in line with the set of indicators defined for the national Rural Development Programme.

Proper definition of indicators and access to data enabling verification of indicators are among the biggest challenges of the strategic planning process.

References

1. Jonathan M. Harris, *Basic Principles of Sustainable Development*, Global Development and Environment Institute, 2000
2. *Sustainable Development How Your District Council Can Play Its Part*, Sustainable Northern Ireland, 89 Loopland Drive, Belfast, 2007
3. *Animating Local Partnership in Rural Areas – a practical guide*, developed under the TEPA project (Training for European Partnership Animators)
4. Ana Vukadinović, Branislav Milić, Gaia Montelatici, Goran Paštrović, *Priručnik za metodologiju participativnog učenja i delovanja (PLA/RRA)*, 2008, Kancelarija za smanjenje siromaštva
5. *Participatory rural appraisal for community forest management*, Asia Forest Network
6. Daniel H. Walker, August 2001, *Decision support, learning and rural resource management*,
7. Luigi Cavestro, October 2003, *Participatory Rural Appraisal Concepts – Methodologies and Techniques*, UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA, FACOLTA' DI AGRARIA, DIPARTIMENTO TERRITORIO E SISTEMI AGRO-FORESTALI,
8. *The LEADER approach – fact sheet*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2006
9. *Rural Development – Environmental Programming Guidelines*, Published October 2005 by WWF, LUPG and SNM, Brussels, Belgium
10. Lidija Pavić – Rogošić, Višnja Jelić Mück, Roman Haken, Jadranka Pelikan, Pelikan Mamula, *Together for sustainable rural development - Manual for the implementation of the LEADER approach in Croatia*, HMRR – Croatian Rural Development Network, ODRAZ – Sustainable Community Development, 2010
11. Material from sites www.ec.europa.eu

