



# How to assess LEADER added value

## Good Practice Workshop

Luxembourg (Luxembourg), 23-24 November 2023



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## List of acronyms

CSP	CAP Strategic Plan
DG AGRI	Directorate-General Agriculture and Rural Development
EIP	European Innovation Partnership
GPW	Good Practice Workshop
LAG	Local Action Group
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale
MA	Managing Authority
NN	National Networks
RDP	Rural Development Programme
PA	Paying Agency
PMEF	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
HNV	High Nature Value
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
IFS	Integrated Farm Statistics
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JRC	Joint Research Centre
LAG	Local Action Group
LIDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
LUCAS	Land Use/Cover Area frame statistical Survey
MA	Managing Authority
NN	National Networks
PA	Paying Agency
PMEF	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

# Executive summary

The fifth Good Practice Workshop (GPW) of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (Evaluation Helpdesk) was dedicated to the topic 'How to assess LEADER added value'. The workshop took place in Luxembourg and had the overarching objective to reflect and learn from each other's experiences and practices in relation to assessing the added value of LEADER at the national- and EU-level. It was attended by 86 participants from 26 different EU Member States, including Managing Authorities (MAs), Paying Agencies (PAs), Local Action Group (LAG) representatives, CAP networks (e.g. National CAP Networks (NN), European Innovation Partnership (EIP), other), evaluators, researchers, LEADER experts, Commission representatives and other CAP evaluation stakeholders.

The workshop aimed specifically to:

- > Increase the knowledge of stakeholders involved in LEADER evaluations.
- > Exchange practical experiences from past evaluations of LEADER and its added value, both at LAG (local) and programme levels.
- > Provide an opportunity for networking and identification of needs for further support for MAs, LAGs, CAP networks and evaluators.

The first day of the workshop focused on Commission and Member State experiences and lessons from assessing the added value of LEADER in the 2014-2020 period. The second day of the workshop focused on the future and included, first, a presentation of the Commission's experience on indicators for assessing LEADER added value. This was followed by Member States' presentations of concepts and tools for assessing LEADER added value in the

current programming period, as well as proposed methodological approaches developed in the context of a Thematic Working Group of the Evaluation Helpdesk.

Key messages stemming from the workshop include:

- > The first step in assessing LEADER added value is to understand the underlying concepts of social capital, governance and enhanced results, and build a logical model to depict the links between LEADER activities and the achievement of added value elements. The role played by the seven principles of the LEADER method as well as the animation and support activities should be considered when building these links.
- > The second step would be to identify the success factors that contribute to added value and the development of metrics (indicators) to measure the success of LEADER, considering the non-tangible character of many of the added value features. Composite indicators or indices (e.g. network diversity index) may be an option for summarising and simplifying the complexity of the LEADER intervention logic.
- > The third step when choosing methods to collect and analyse data and information for assessing the added value of LEADER would be to consider surveys for complementing objective data, and methods that capture the networking or partnership aspects of LEADER (e.g. social network analysis).
- > Finally, given that the burden for the collection of data is mainly on LAGs, it is important to consider simplicity, objectivity and continuity in the choice of data.



Participants at the GPW on 'How to assess LEADER added value', Luxembourg, 23-24 November 2023



# 1. Introduction

The fifth GPW of the Evaluation Helpdesk was dedicated to the topic 'how to assess LEADER added value' with the objective to share practices and experiences on this topic. The CAP for the 2023-2027 programming period places emphasis on the added value of LEADER as one of the pivotal topics that Member States should assess. This stems from [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2115](#) and [Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2022/1475](#) that highlight LEADER added value and its significance in the evaluations of CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs).



Valdis Kudins and Marili Parissaki, Evaluation Helpdesk, Co-chairs of the GPW on 'How to assess LEADER added value'

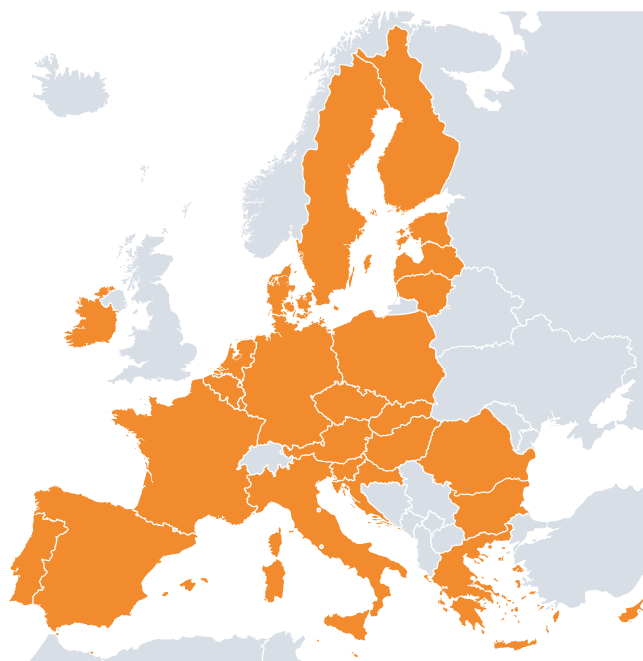
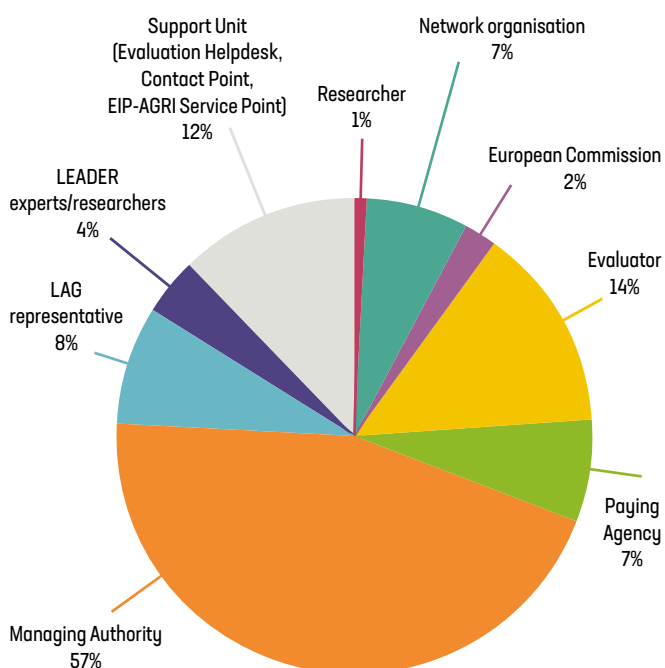
Building on [the guidelines on the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD](#) (Community-Led Local Development) published in 2017 by the Evaluation Helpdesk, this GPW sought to delve deeper into understanding the benefits accrued through the proper application of the LEADER method. While the guidelines provided a comprehensive concept of the LEADER added value, there were challenges for Member States in operationalising its components for facilitating its evaluation. Addressing this gap, a [Thematic Working Group](#) (TWG) was formed by the Evaluation Helpdesk to provide methodological support to Member States for the evaluation and demonstration of the added value of LEADER.

The GPW in Luxembourg (LU) provided an opportunity for participants to gather and share practices on how to assess the added value of LEADER at the national- and EU-level. The workshops' specific objectives were to:

- > Increase the knowledge of stakeholders involved in LEADER evaluations.
- > Exchange practical experiences from past evaluations of LEADER and its added value, both at LAG (local) and programme (regional or national) levels.
- > Provide an opportunity for networking and identification of needs for further support for MAs, LAGs, CAP networks and evaluators.

Eighty-six participants from 26 different Member States attended the event across the two days, including MAs, PAs, LAG representatives, CAP networks (e.g. National CAP Networks, EIP, other), evaluators, researchers, LEADER experts, Commission representatives and other CAP evaluation stakeholders.

**Figure 1. Participants of the Good Practice Workshop per role and EU Member State**



Source: European Evaluation Helpdesk for the CAP (2023)



## 2. Day 1 – The framework for assessing LEADER added value

### 2.1. Setting the scene

#### 2.1.1. Sharing the Commission's experience on evaluating the impact of LEADER – challenges and lessons learned



*Eduardo Serrano-Padial, Unit A.3 'Policy Performance', DG AGRI*

Mr Eduardo Serrano-Padial from the Commission (Unit A.3 'Policy Performance', DG AGRI) gave a presentation in which he introduced the evaluation of LEADER 2014-2020 and provided an overview of various challenges and lessons learned for such an evaluation.

Following up on the previous programming period, the European Court of Auditors has requested the demonstration of the added value of LEADER interventions, as this was not sufficiently demonstrated. LEADER is only one of multiple interventions contributing to local development and the complexity of its intervention logic also indicates the complexity of its evaluation for local development. As the intervention logic was found not to capture LEADER added value, DG AGRI moved to the LEADER common intervention logic to have a common ground for assessing not only the local-level, but also the EU-level added value of LEADER.



Mr Serrano-Padial stressed the lessons from the EU level study on the costs and benefits of LEADER, which concluded that additional benefits as a result of the added value of LEADER outweigh the additional costs. He shared a variety of challenges for the evaluation of the LEADER added value, such as the complexity and wide range of intervention logics, the low uptake to capture its effects or the quantification of LEADER added value.

Some of the lessons that are useful for the future include the promotion of the LEADER added value concept and its features (e.g. animation, networking, innovation, etc.), complemented with Evaluation Helpdesk guidance to practically assess LEADER added value, as well as the need for more suitable/practical methods and points of comparisons, combined with better data for monitoring and evaluation. Finally, any future evaluations should try to bridge the missing link, notably the extent to which LEADER contributes to structural changes, including the effects on the economic, social and environmental dimension of local development in the rural areas.

**Link to Mr Serrano Padial's presentation:** [Sharing the Commission's experience on evaluating the impact of LEADER – challenges and lessons learned](#)



## After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

<p>CREA (IT) shared that LEADER added value is not an isolated effect and that its assessment should be placed within the overall context of the socio-demographical situation, as it is related to the change that LEADER can do to address local needs.</p>	<p>Mr Serrano-Padial fully agreed but also indicated that it is more of a reflection. The size of the measure is small to have an impact on general economic trends (e.g. employment), so he suggested to look at different structural challenges in LAG areas and explore such links.</p>
<p>CREA also questioned if having LEADER multi-funds needed to be considered and what it would change in the approach of the evaluation of LEADER added value.</p>	<p>Mr Serrano-Padial answered that there were different rules for the implementation of multi-funding, but no different rules for the evaluation. As multi-funding is supporting local strategies it should be addressed in the evaluation of LEADER. The current implementation period has more flexibility in approaching the topic.</p>
<p>Lattanzio KIBS SpA (IT) stated that a different time perspective is needed to capture LEADER added value as structural changes (i.e. social capital, innovation) brought forward by LEADER need more than one programming period to be observed. They therefore asked how to get out of the rigid timeframe of evaluating LEADER added value within a programming period and switch to a longer-term perspective.</p>	<p>Mr Serrano-Padial commented that LEADER is 30 years old so it could be possible to have long-term series of LEADER data and he did not see an issue in using this data. He acknowledged that social change takes time, but one could look at trends at certain points in time. For certain type of effects, it would be better to look at trends and compare this to the baseline, rather than try to capture the net-effect at the local level.</p>
<p>The Romanian MA asked for an example of what kind of supplementary data was used to address the challenges pertaining to some indicators.</p>	<p>Mr Serrano-Padial presented data on the composition of a LAG as an example of such supplementary data. Information on the LAG composition can be used to assess social capital, for which no common indicators were defined. This is also an example of the new data in the 2023-27 period 2023-27 that are easy to collect<sup>1</sup> which could then be used to calculate the diversity of a LAG's membership and social capital.</p>

### 2.1.2. Evaluation support study on the costs and benefits of the implementation of LEADER



Carlotta Valli, Evaluation Helpdesk

Ms Carlotta Valli (Evaluation Helpdesk) gave a presentation that illustrated an approach developed to operationalise and quantify, to the extent possible, the tangible and less tangible features of LEADER added value according to the three core elements: improved governance, improved social capital, and enhanced results and impacts. The approach was developed within [the evaluation support study of the costs and benefits of LEADER implementation](#) conducted for the Commission in 2022-2023. This evaluation covers the 2014-2022 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) across the 27 Member States.

**Link to Ms Valli's presentation:** [Evaluation support study of the costs and benefits of the implementation of LEADER](#)

<sup>1</sup> See data for monitoring and evaluation for LAGs and their activities in Annex VII of the Implementing Regulation (EU) 1475/2022.





## After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

<p>CREA (IT) was surprised by the idea of comparing LEADER projects with non-LEADER projects due to the fact that the topics and budgets are different, and asked if the results of the presented study are reliable enough.</p>	<p>Ms Valli explained that the evaluation was requested to focus on costs. She pointed out that the final report would hold some interesting information regarding costs at the level of the RDP, and that some measures were surprisingly cheaper to implement via LEADER than expected.</p>
<p>The Finnish MA asked if instead of comparing the projects they should focus on the work of the LAG and the state administrations and see who implements animation measures better.</p>	<p>Ms Valli commented that it would probably be worth analysing this aspect in a future evaluation. The evaluation of costs and benefits of LEADER could not cover this.</p>
<p>Lattanzio KIBS SpA (IT) commented on how it is mandatory to compare LEADER costs with non-LEADER costs, and highlighted the challenge of quantifying the intangible effects to assess if it is better to use LEADER for the same intervention. Only after this would it be possible to demonstrate the tangible effects of LEADER projects and if it is more robust than a similar project under the RDP.</p>	<p>Ms Valli said comparing added value at the level of the RDP with the added value achieved at the local level was not part of the evaluation. The problem was differentiating the observed LEADER and non-LEADER projects, which have similar types of investments, but are still different projects with distinct objectives, activities and scales of investment. There was also the issue of comparing smaller projects that get funded through LEADER and larger ones being funded under the RDP.</p>
<p>NordEval Oy (FI) asked how to assess the entire system (i.e. how does LEADER work in the system?) as LEADER is an integral part of the RDP in Finland and regionalised MAs cannot function without LEADER. The question was also posed if the governance model supports the functioning of LEADER.</p>	<p>Ms Valli answered that the evaluation study indeed focused on LEADER added value generated by the whole systems, and not only by the projects. However, analysing in detail 'how LEADER works in the system' was not an objective of the study.</p> <p>The evaluation study generally found that the multi-governance models in place support the functioning of LEADER (i.e. evidence from case studies).</p>

## 2.2. Sharing practical experiences on assessing the added value of LEADER

### 2.2.1. Analysis of the potential of social innovation in the context of LEADER 2014-2022



Robert Lukesch, ÖAR GmbH, Austria

Mr Robert Lukesch (ÖAR GmbH (AT)) presented the evaluation of the extent and occurrence of social innovation in Austrian LAGs in the period 2014-2020. He shared the approach and methodology, which consisted of conceptualising the LEADER delivery system and the term 'social innovation'. Using a quantitative survey, secondary data analysis and case studies, a process map was created and analysed. The evaluation concluded that up to one third of LEADER projects were identified as socially innovative. The LAG management leadership, diversity and reputation were identified as pivotal. LAGs may act as enablers of social innovation, shaping the context and supporting innovative actors along the innovation cycle, but LAGs can also act as promoters of social innovation, conceptualising and carrying out the project on its own. These two roles can be seen as the two ends of a continuum and most LAGs will place themselves somewhere in between, sometimes acting as enablers and sometimes as promoters (particularly when no relevant actor other than the LAG is going to take up the stick).

**Link to Mr Lukesch's presentation:** [Analysis of the potential of social innovation in the context of LEADER 2014 - 2020](#)



## After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

Ms Iwona Lisztwan (DG AGRI) asked what the 'Innovationsbiographie: Lehrlingswelten' (slide 11 of his presentation) was and if it showed the story of one project or one LAG?

Mr Lukesch explained that it was an innovation project on job orientation, which was the subject of at least one transnational LEADER project. Not everything was financed from LEADER, but also by INTERREG and domestic schemes. Multiple different actors appear in different roles and phases; it has to be read like a cultural study. Mr Lukesch explained that the different EU projects embedded were shown in green (slide 11), showing that social innovation usually takes more time than one funding period so that it has to be supported by an interwoven string of projects accompanying the design, testing, implementation and consolidation phase - which all in all takes at least two funding periods.

### 2.2.2. Evaluation of the LEADER approach in Finland (principles and governance)



Sari Rannanpää, Nordeval Oy, Finland

Ms Sari Rannanpää (Nordeval Oy (FI)) shared the Finnish experience of evaluating the LEADER approach. The focus was on the balance and interplay between LEADER principles and the governance model ('LEADER chain'), and the activities and results of LAGs. Evaluation criteria were developed for each of the seven LEADER principles and the added value of these principles was assessed. More specifically, in relation to governance, the evaluation sought to assess the extent to which the LEADER governance model supports the realisation of these principles. The study concluded that the governance mechanism supports many of LEADER principles, especially networking and cooperation. Networking adds value through multiplier and long-term effects, while added value can be enhanced by reinforcing the implementation of the dynamic principles of LEADER (networking, innovation and cooperation).

**Link to Ms Rannanpää's presentation:** [Evaluation of the LEADER approach in Finland \(principles & governance\)](#)

## After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

Ms Lisztwan (DG AGRI) commented how the use of the seven LEADER principles is not voluntary and that a legal place for these principles exists - which should be the starting point for the evaluation of LEADER. Therefore, each LAG should follow the seven principles since they are stipulated in the [Article 31 of Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1061](#).

Ms Rannanpää pointed out how not all LAGs would be able to perform such actions in the same way (e.g. for innovation), so it is not only the LAG but also the system which has to be designed so it is able to function within such principles. If the LAGs are decreasing in size, it could become difficult to engage in innovation, while they would need further resources to be able to perform other projects.

AREI (LV) asked if any data or indicators were found that could be quantified during the presented qualitative evaluation.

Ms Rannanpää explained that identified data could have been quantified, but that it was decided to go with a theoretical approach for this study. The data and the information were available, but the focus of the evaluation was LEADER principles and governance. A good qualitative analysis was preferred that accounted for all LEADER elements covered by the evaluation.

The Finnish National Rural Network shared how innovation camps were organised using the information which influenced the identification of selection criteria. The results of the evaluation have had a direct influence on the selection criteria.

Ms Rannanpää acknowledged that a dynamic network analysis was performed as it was important to map out the networks and find out how they are functioning, as well as finding their niche.



### 2.2.3. Assessment of LEADER principles and LEADER added value - the case of Lithuania



Neringa Viršilienė, ESTEP, Lithuania

Ms Neringa Viršilienė (ESTEP (LT)) gave a presentation based on the national level evaluation of LEADER added value in Lithuania. Using a survey-based approach, the evaluators looked for objective and subjective quantitative indicators to demonstrate the outcome of each LEADER principle as well as quantitative indicators to measure different LEADER added value components (improved social capital, improved governance, and enhanced results and impacts). As the number of indicators analysed during the evaluation was high, to

facilitate the communication of evaluation results and comparison of different LAGs in terms of their performance a composite indicator, the 'Performance Index of LEADER Approach' (PILA) was developed. Composite indicators are useful to summarise and simplify complex concepts (such as LEADER principles and LEADER added value) to communicate the evaluation results, and to compare and rank LAGs (in general and over time). The evaluation revealed that surveys of LAG members and administrations are an important source of information on the implementation of LEADER principles and LEADER added value as they complement objective data with the perceptions of LAG members and LAG administrations. Surveys need to be regular (e.g. repeated every two years or at least twice during the programming period) and standard (the same questions repeated) to enable measurement of changes. To ensure higher response rates and quality of responses, surveys should be short, questions should be simple and concepts within the questionnaire should be well explained and understood by respondents. As the evaluation of LEADER added value components requires specific expertise and mixed methods/indicators, it would be useful to ensure continuous evaluation of LEADER added value and dedicated evaluations of each specific component of the LEADER added value to complement quantitative data with narratives and good practice examples (qualitative information).

**Link to Ms' Viršilienė's presentation:** [Assessment of LEADER principles and LEADER added value - the case of Lithuania](#)

#### After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

Regarding the need for a 'Standard Rural Eurobarometer', the Belgian-Flemish MA commented that this may already exist in the [Rural Observatory](#) that was developed in the context of the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas.

Ms Lisztwan explained that the Rural Observatory focused more on rural statistical data at the local level. What was described to be needed during the presentation was more about the perception of people (i.e. what they think). This could be a potential next step of the Rural Observatory and this message will be transferred to the necessary people.

Ms Lisztwan (DG AGRI) asked if the conclusions were taken into practice and translated into policy, and if examples could be given of conclusions and what happened with them.

Ms Viršilienė considered that the conclusions were taken into account to some extent when developing the requirements for the new period for of Local Development Strategies (LDS), as new templates were developed which will facilitate collection and quality of LAG level data related to some components of LEADER added value, and simplify the aggregation and comparison of data at national level. Furthermore, decisions need to be taken in monitoring and evaluation LEADER added value at the LAG level and the national level. However, the lessons emphasised in the presentation are related more to evaluation than to monitoring and Ms Viršilienė hoped that they will be considered while planning national level evaluations of LEADER added value.

Ms Viršilienė added the issue is not only about monitoring, but also about a continuous effort of collecting additional objective and subjective data and updating evaluations to see changes. It is not always wise to put all the burden of data collection and evaluation on the LAGs while MAs have more resources to appoint qualified evaluators and to facilitate collection of comparable LAG level data. Therefore, she is in favour of centralised national level evaluations.



## 2.2.4. Bringing the EU to the kitchen table



Carl Strömberg, Swedish Board of Agriculture, Sweden

Mr Carl Strömberg (the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SE)) presented the LEADER evaluation of Sweden during 2022-2023, which was carried out in an effort to gain insights for the ex post evaluation of the RDP. The evaluation was performed by an external contractor with the purpose of assessing LEADER contributions to the RDP Focus Area objectives, evaluate the LEADER delivery mechanism, as well the added value of LEADER.

The evaluation applied a theory-driven mixed methods approach and the results show that Swedish LEADER projects produce relevant local results with a long-term perspective, which in turn strengthens local cohesion and social capital.

**Link to Mr Strömberg's presentation:** [Bringing EU to the kitchen table](#)

### After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

<p>Ms Lisztwan (DG AGRI) asked how the questions of bringing the EU to the kitchen table were conceptualised and what answers were received.</p>	<p>Mr Strömberg explained that the evaluation itself used no indicators as such to assess whether LEADER brings EU to the kitchen tables. Bringing EU to the kitchen tables was a frequently used phrase that surfaced during the case studies and interviews with project managers and LAG managers to describe aspects of the added value of LEADER.</p>
<p>The German MA wondered if people with a certain distance from LEADER were included in the analysis.</p>	<p>Mr Strömberg commented how this specific evaluation did not involve people with a distance from LEADER. Based on ten other evaluations available, conclusions were drawn from available material enabling the comparison. It was a 'big package' of evaluations on LEADER providing insights.</p>
<p>Mr Serrano-Padial (DG AGRI) wondered how the theory-driven evaluation is operationalised, while taking into account strategies and needs. He also questioned how people outside of LEADER (e.g. non-beneficiaries) were reached to have a balanced representation of local actors.</p>	<p>Mr Strömberg explained that the assessment of added value presented was an excerpt from a wider assessment of LEADER in Sweden. The evaluation took a theory-driven approach that started with an outline of the theoretical intervention logic of how the LEADER principles were operationalised. Then, LEADER projects, delivery mechanism and added value were assessed with respect to this intervention logic.</p> <p>The evaluation did not engage with non-beneficiaries as such so there is a potential for subjectivity bias. However, representatives of LEADER co-funders from municipalities and counties were active parties in the case study interviews. As co-funders of LEADER, municipalities and counties require a good return on investment from LEADER. Thus, these local stakeholders have an incentive to give a potentially, yet also subjective, contrasting view on LEADER added value.</p>
<p>The University of Padova (IT) asked how social capital was operationalised and how the concept was made understandable to the interviewees (i.e. how were complex concepts integrated and how were different conceptualisations tackled (e.g. social cohesion, cooperation).</p>	<p>The complex concepts used such as social capital, social cohesion and cooperation were all part of the case studies where representatives from LAG and local stakeholders met the evaluators for a group interview. As such, Mr Strömberg could not provide specifics on how these complex concepts were put forward to the group. However, as these concepts were part of these group interviews, interviewees were able to ask for clarifications and specifics on these concepts. The lessons from the RDP 2014-2020 evaluation will be used to identify best practices for assessing and quantifying social capital.</p>

After the presentations, participants exchanged experiences and ideas on lessons from evaluating LEADER added value. A full list of the outcomes of the discussions is provided in Annex 1.



# 3. Day 2 – Assessing LEADER added value: a view to the future

## 3.1. Setting the scene

### 3.1.1. Use of data for monitoring and evaluation (DME) to demonstrate the added value of LEADER



Iwona Lisztwan, Policy Coordinator LEADER, Unit B.3. Social sustainability, DG AGRI

Ms Iwona Lisztwan (Policy Coordinator LEADER, Unit B.3. Social sustainability, DG AGRI) stressed in her presentation that the monitoring and evaluation data (DME), which could have some indication of the LEADER added value is obligatory for each LAG in the EU (i.e. 3 000 LAGs and +/-50 variables). This provides a rich data set which is easy to collect and is numerical, though it is not perfect and requires additional qualitative analyses. In the case of LEADER added value, for the three aspects of LEADER (enhanced social capital, enhanced results and improved local governance), DME offers various variables, such as; (i) number of members by type, (ii) number of cooperation projects, (iii) number of members in the board by type, gender or age, (iv) financial information, (v) number of operations by area, (vi) local innovation, and (vii) selected result indicators. This set of data represents a proxy that indicates the three aspects of LEADER added value. For example, data on LAG's members could show the network effect (size, diversity), which is an illustration of social capital. In the future, it could be further extended, for example, by a network visualisation at the EU-level (mapping) where it is possible to see the way people interact, who cooperates, etc. Likewise, the composition of LAGs' decision-making bodies could be taken as an indication of local governance (e.g. inclusiveness, engagement of partners, diversity of actors). The third aspect of LEADER's added value, namely enhanced project qualities compared to non-LEADER delivery is crucial to define and is only partly reflected by the monitoring variables.



A slide of the presentation on the '[Use of data for monitoring and evaluation \(DME\) to demonstrate the added value of LEADER](#)'

Some features of projects with LEADER added value could include:

- > demonstrating innovation;
- > promoting underpinned by cooperation of actors;
- > projects linked with other projects in the territory;
- > valorising unique territorial assets;
- > responding to novel digital technologies;
- > contributing to the environmental and social transitions.

**Link to Ms Lisztwan's presentation:** [Use of data for monitoring and evaluation \(DME\) to demonstrate the added value of LEADER](#)



## After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

<p>The Evaluation Helpdesk pointed out that the change of the composition of a LAG cannot be assessed if the respective information is collected only once (e.g. change in the inclusiveness of the LAG structure).</p>	<p>Ms Lisztwan acknowledged that it is difficult to measure change. She stressed that the data has been difficult to come by, but Member States may consider collecting the information more than once in the next programming period. Currently, the data will be collected once for the identification and twice for the projects.</p>
<p>The Belgian-Flemish MA remarked how most LEADER projects are not generic and that the project idea emerges because of LEADER principles. The MA representative proceeded to suggest rephrasing questions from 'do you deliver the project through LEADER' to 'why do you deliver the project through LEADER?'</p>	<p>Ms Lisztwan remarked that LAGs in Flanders reach beneficiaries that would otherwise not do projects at all. However, it is not the case for all LEADER projects in the EU.</p>
<p>The German MA commented that if you reduce collected data to single projects, one will miss out on the network-aspect.</p> <p>Furthermore, they raised a point on the number of operations. In Germany, LAGs help with the installation of renewable energy projects, which are too expensive. And in such cases, LAGs provide moderation and information, and resolve issues before they become problems.</p>	<p>Ms Lisztwan said there is already an indicator dealing with this (RI) and a variable on project scope, namely: operations in knowledge transfer (L801).</p>
<p>The Luxembourgish MA remarked how projects primarily dealing with people, networks, etc., which could not easily find other funding were more inclined to be part of LEADER.</p>	<p>Ms Lisztwan remarked how this could be another feature of added value; projects that could not easily find other sources of funding.</p>
<p>Regarding the type of indicators that are to be measured once at the beginning, the Greek MA questioned what was to happen at the end of the programming period to determine if Member States were successful (e.g. number of young persons in a LAG board and how to assess that this has changed over a period).</p>	<p>Ms Lisztwan agreed with the idea, but for the moment it is crucial to keep the collection of variables at the EU-level simple. However, this variable can be asked for case studies/questionnaires in specific evaluations.</p> <p>The Evaluation Helpdesk commented that this type of data collection occurs at the EU-level, thereby making it possible to establish a system that enables repeating the counting according to the specified evaluation needs, for a particular Member State.</p>
<p>ÖAR GmbH (AT) commented how they would dissuade from conducting a data gathering exercise that only focuses on counting the projects/operations, as LAGs have generic projects which could include a multitude of operations within a single project.</p>	<p>The evaluation expert observed that this counting exercise unveils insights about the promoter – specifically, how it undergoes change. These changes are not in the numerical aspect but rather in the combination of promoters with specific types of projects.</p> <p>Ms Lisztwan explained that the current programming period provides numerical data per theme. Indeed, a simple count of projects can only show their added value to a limited degree. However, it will illustrate a diversity of LEADER projects that can sometimes be outside the focus of key relevant result indicators.</p> <p>The Evaluation Helpdesk explained how the role of evaluators will not be limited to just reporting, but to providing the story behind the data, where the qualitative information is important.</p>
<p>Ms Viršilienė (ESTEP (LT)) commented on the importance of counting projects with specific features (e.g. with innovations, implemented with partners, focussed on climate neutrality etc.) as evaluators need to filter operations or projects by those features. She explained that this provides a list of relevant projects, which saves time needed to identify them and allows more time for qualitative analyses.</p>	<p>Ms. Lisztwan remarked how it was not specified in the presentation, but the area of a project is defined exactly as in the equivalent result indicator (e.g. projects that create jobs, projects that support enterprises etc.) It allows to see in which areas the LAGs are intervening. It is a starting point, from where you can also infer something on added value.</p>



## 3.2. A view to the future from the perspective of Member States

### 3.2.1. Approach to evaluate 'LEADER added value' within the framework of the Austrian CSP 2023-2027



Christa Rockenbauer-Peirl, Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BML), Austria

Ms Christa Rockenbauer-Peirl (Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BML) (AT)) presented the Austrian approach to evaluating LEADER, as one of 36 evaluation topics of the evaluation framework for the Austrian CSP. The LEADER evaluation is planned to take place twice in the programming period, in 2027 and 2030. An impact model was defined based on the precondition that active local development process work is carried out. It assumes that this leads to improved social capital, local governance and projects with high acceptance and local benefit. Generated added value will be checked by several 'added value indicators' like cooperation or new project promoters. For each block of the impact model, a few conditions for success were defined that can be checked during evaluation. The design of the model builds on work already done to develop a new set of indicators for all Austrian LAGs for the period 2023 to 2027.

**Link to Ms Rockenbauer-Peirl's presentation:** [Approach to evaluate 'LEADER added value' within the framework of the Austrian CSP 2023-2027](#)

#### After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

<p>The Evaluation Helpdesk asked who designed the standardised LEADER added value indicators that Austria used, and if they would be mandatory for Austrian LAGs?</p>	<p>Ms Rockenbauer-Peirl explained that they were designed two years before the call for the LAGs in working groups that included LAG representatives, as they complained in previous periods that they had to monitor and report on elements that they did not find useable. This bottom-up approach was executed to involve them in the design of indicators from the beginning to avoid future complaints and to adapt them to the interests of the LAGs.</p>
<p>Ms Lisztwan (DG AGRI) asked how BML goes about monitoring animation activities.</p>	<p>Ms Rockenbauer-Peirl shared that it was not defined at the moment and was unsure if a division had to be made between animation and information activities as most things that LAG management does is some form of animation. She added that it was a complicated question because simplified costs options were used (i.e. there is only personnel costs and 35% for the rest) so no invoices are used. She acknowledged that further discussions were needed on this in Austria.</p>
<p>The University of Padova (IT) wondered, regarding the impact model, how the different items (for example social capital, improving local governance) would be measured/operationalised. The University of Padova also asked about the timing of the data collection, how the data would be used (e.g. what would be the appropriate questions) and the baseline that would be used, as these were of paramount importance when collecting information about changes in social processes, changes of behaviour, changing mentality, etc.</p>	<p>Ms Rockenbauer-Peirl explained that the impact model was also based on the indicators, so some of the data will become available. She explained that this input was the concept and the basis for the tender (to be launched), after which they would rely on the evaluators to provide a methodology on how this could be checked, in addition to an in-depth analysis with maybe a 10% sample of LAGs. She also acknowledged that measuring the change is always a problem because the baseline is not always known, and so it has to be seen if the concept works in reality.</p>



## After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

<p>The Finnish National Rural Network, whose role is to build capacity and communicate, asked for whom the evaluations are made (i.e. who would use the results) and if it had been considered how and to whom the results would be communicated.</p>	<p>Ms Rockenbauer-Peirl explained that the communication had not yet been considered, but found that different communication strategies would have to be used based on the target group to whom one wants to communicate the results (i.e. the Commission, the national government, the LAGs, etc.).</p>
<p>The Croatian LEADER network asked if it was considered to collect the data and measure LEADER added value through running costs and animation separately from the projects?</p> <p>Furthermore, the Croatian LEADER network asked what proof/evidence was being requested (e.g. a participant list) from the LAGs to back-up the provided data, and if this was being checked.</p>	<p>Ms Rockenbauer-Peirl indicated that this had not been considered as these elements work together. You cannot collect running costs and animation separately from the projects.</p> <p>She also advised to trust LAGs because they have been involved in the development of the indicators from the beginning and know what they must collect and what is expected of them.</p>
<p>The CAP Implementation Contact Point asked if a benchmark was used to compare LEADER to alternative/national programmes.</p>	<p>Ms Rockenbauer-Peirl explained that the comparison with other programmes is very difficult and that they had looked at other measures and interlinkages. But in Austria, most LEADER projects are there because of LEADER funding with few mainstream projects existing, which means a comparison would be not effective.</p>

### 3.2.2. How to access social capital in LEADER (at LAG level)



Elena Pisani, University of Padova, Italy

Ms Elena Pisani (University of Padova (IT)) presented some practical indications on how to measure the added value of LEADER at the LAG level, proposing three different methods and instruments:

- the 'Network Diversity Index' proposed by Nardone *et al.*, 2010<sup>2</sup>;
- the method for measuring social capital with baseline, *in itinere* and final evaluation results proposed by Pisani *et al.*, 2017<sup>3</sup>;
- an example of the application of social network analysis related to information sharing among LAG members and computation of betweenness and closeness centralities.

**Link to Ms Pisani's presentation:** [How to access social capital in LEADER \(at the LAG level\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> Nardone, G., Sisto, R., & Lopolito, A. (2010). Social Capital in the LEADER Initiative: a methodological approach. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 26(1), 63-72. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0743016709000540>.

<sup>3</sup> Pisani, E., Franceschetti, G., Secco, L., & Christoforou, A. (2017). *Social Capital and Local Development: from Theory to Empirics*. Palgrave MacMillan. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-54277-5>.





## After the presentation, participants posed the following questions and/or comments

<p>Lattanzio KIBS SpA (IT) asked in which framework the study was conducted and if the study was carried out in the context of an RDP evaluation. or if it was another study/animation process.</p>	<p>Ms. Pisani explained how the first goal was to understand social capital and that working on specific LAGs was akin to a social laboratory. It was important to conduct an academic analysis to understand the functioning of social capital at the local level. While conducting the evaluation support study on the costs and benefits of LEADER implementation, a need arose for an expeditious methodology to analyse social capital in different LAGs. Ms. Pisani remarked how network diversity is feasible and that LAGs involved in the last programme period's 'Measure 16' can be analysed using this index.</p>
<p>Ms Lisztwan (DG AGRI) noted how, based on the presented study, it could be discerned that a model with three distinct situations could be made: 1) a beginning stage with little to no social capital; 2) a medium stage, and 3) an advanced stage. She asked if the observed LAG was aware if it produced social capital, and if it was possible to inform LAGs on how to produce social capital. A goal in the future could be to develop a simple guide on social capital, including trust, reputation, etc.</p>	<p>Ms Pisani emphasised the need for caution when dealing with numbers. Comparing evaluation results across significantly different LAGs can lead to varying outcomes. A more important consideration is the observation of a LAG over an extended period. This would provide information on how social capital evolves over time. The emphasis was placed on organisational aspects, and from both theoretical and ethical standpoints, avoiding direct comparisons between individual LAGs is preferred. Each actor possesses distinct features and cultural heritage, and the development path is specific for each context. Recognising the significance of change along the way, understanding the context becomes crucial. It is crucial to note that social capital exists from the beginning, whether positive or negative. Even in the presence of initial negative social capital, improvements can still occur to transform negative into positive social capital.</p>
<p>Concerning the upcoming Evaluation Helpdesk guidelines on assessing LEADER added value, the Hungarian MA asked whether the indicators would complement the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PMEF) indicators and whether it will be mandatory.</p>	<p>The Evaluation Helpdesk explained that the guidelines on how to assess LEADER added value are not mandatory.</p>
<p>Nordeval (FI) questioned how LAGs could produce social capital in conjunction with projects. In Finland, it was noticed that the social capital proxy was the hours of voluntary work in LAG projects and that the hours could be counted as contribution to a project - to a certain amount. It allowed smaller operators to have projects since they needed fewer financial resources. The end result was building trust and creating a feeling of community. Furthermore, it was remarked how beneficiaries who have worked in European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or Interreg projects specified they learned a lot in LEADER projects.</p>	<p>Ms Pisani applauded the Finnish case but shared her scepticism about the viability of producing data for all the LAGs in Europe on a voluntary basis. There is already a feeling of unwillingness in some Member States and if it were to become mandatory it could become counterproductive. Making a matrix on it might not be necessary, but it is interesting for an evaluator, nonetheless.</p>



### 3.3. Methodological support to Member States for the evaluation of LEADER added value



Valdis Kudins, Evaluation Helpdesk

Mr Valdis Kudins (Evaluation Helpdesk) gave a brief presentation of the methodological support to Member States for the evaluation of LEADER added value, namely the work of the TWG by the Evaluation Helpdesk in 2023. The TWG aims to operationalise the concept of LEADER added value and propose examples of an evaluation framework, as well as examples showing how LEADER added value can be assessed at LAG and at CSP level. The outcome of the TWG will be non-mandatory guidelines which will provide options for evaluating LEADER added value. Mr Kudins explained the principles of the TWG and showed the proposed structure of the evaluation

framework which builds on the components of LEADER added value. It includes elements to assess, proposed factors of success and related output, result and impact indicators, along with data sources for each one of them.

**Link to Mr Kudins' presentation:** [Methodological support to Member States for the evaluation of LEADER added value](#)



Mr Kudins invited participants to familiarise themselves with the draft factors of success and indicators being developed for the guidelines and share their feedback in a structured way. Following his presentation, the interactive session 'Marketplace' was organised to facilitate this exchange. A full list of the outcomes of the discussions is provided in Annex 2.

### 3.4. Wrap-up

The GPW was concluded with some key messages:

- › The Croatian MA was happy to see the high-level of attention given to assessing LEADER added value. It is important to demonstrate to the public, at the local and national level, how LEADER has been and will continue to be pertinent for local development.
- › Mr Kudins explained that the [2023 European LEADER Congress](#) on 18-19 December in Brussels (BE) has an Evaluation Helpdesk session dedicated to assessing LEADER added value.
- › The CAP Implementation Contact Point reflected on the need for a consistent approach to assessing LEADER added value and saw the need for a core set of indicators developed for LEADER and not necessarily for evaluators.
- › Mr Hannes Wimmer (Evaluation Helpdesk) highlighted that indicators used to assess LEADER added value depend on the context in the specific Member State. He added that stakeholders must also consider how to collect the data for these indicators.
- › Ms Parissaki (Evaluation Helpdesk) explained that indicator fiches will be developed to explain what the indicators specifically mean and how they are to be calculated.



Participants at the Good Practice Workshop, on 'How to assess LEADER added value', Luxembourg, 23-24 November 2023

To close the GPW, Mr Serrano-Padial (DG AGRI) conveyed the message that the LEADER added value concept is new and complex, but that a way forward could be found by simplifying the feedback from the workshop's participants and finding the relevant data for monitoring evaluation. This would be a good starting point to analyse the three elements of LEADER added value (i.e. social capital, governance and enhanced results). Adding to this, Ms Lisztwan shared her delight in the presence of LEADER added value on the agenda and the attention paid to this, as it was not always at the centre of LEADER discussions. She added that the CSPs contain a lot of knowledge on how to evaluate this, but it is also important to inform the LAGs that their focus should not solely be on project and strategy implementation because they will also be judged on the process used for this.



## 4. Concluding remarks

The outcomes of the presentations and group discussions provided useful insights in relation to the most important lessons and challenges for the assessment of LEADER added value. They also offered suggestions that can help evaluation stakeholders address these challenges, in particular MAs and LAGs, along with a view on building an evaluation framework for assessing LEADER added value.

An overarching lesson is that added value differentiates LEADER from any other measures or programmes because it requires an assessment that demonstrates, enhances visibility and recognises the role of LEADER and LAGs. For this reason, it is important to reach a common understanding on the concept of added value and its components, notably social capital, governance and enhanced results.

Lessons from evaluation experiences stress how both quantitative and qualitative indicators are needed to capture LEADER added value elements, based on clear definitions and simplicity. At the same time, simplicity can also drive evaluation methods that are easy to use, drawing on data and information that is expected to be collected on a continuous basis through monitoring systems set up at the LAG level. To achieve this (i.e. the development of appropriate indicators and systematic data collection) there are two prerequisites, a participative and collaborative attitude of LAGs and other LEADER stakeholders, and capacity building to increase their evaluation and data collection capacities.

There are also several challenges to overcome, ranging from conceptual to data related and methodological challenges. Frequent conceptual challenges relate to the lack of common understanding of LEADER added value concepts of social capital, governance and enhanced results, the links between them and their measurement. Regarding the latter, there are specific challenges for measuring the added value stemming from the existence of too many indicators to choose from; the limited availability of monitoring data and the lack of baselines or the difficulty to measure intangible elements, such as social capital. Methodological challenges relate to the selection of appropriate tools and the difficulties to compare LAGs with different contexts and strategies or to isolate the effects of LEADER from other policies. Budget constraints and lack of evaluation experience of LAGs, or even lack of motivation of LAGs to engage into self-evaluation, are further challenges that need to be addressed.

Against this background, the proposed evaluation framework for assessing LEADER added value, developed in the context of the Evaluation Helpdesk's TWG, may offer some solutions to these challenges. It is structured around the three added value elements of LEADER and key conclusions from the discussion on each element during the workshop are listed below.

In relation to measuring social capital, the most relevant aspects according to participants are the size and diversity of networks by looking at the LAG members and the type of organisations they represent, the social interactions within and outside the LAG territory as well as the level of trust in the LAG. At the same time, there is a need to clarify more abstract concepts, such as shared beliefs or mutual trust, provide descriptions on how to measure, and ensure a clear distinction between social capital at the level of the LAG and outside the LAG, i.e. within the community or territory.

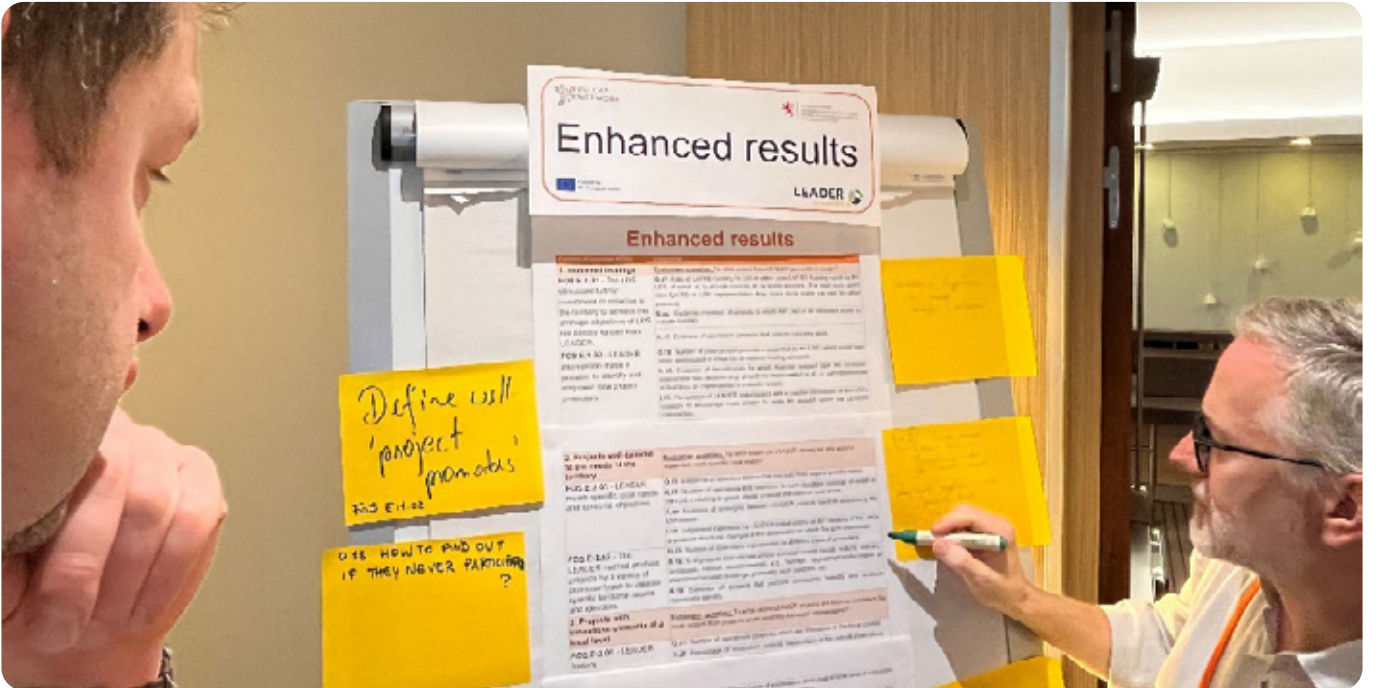
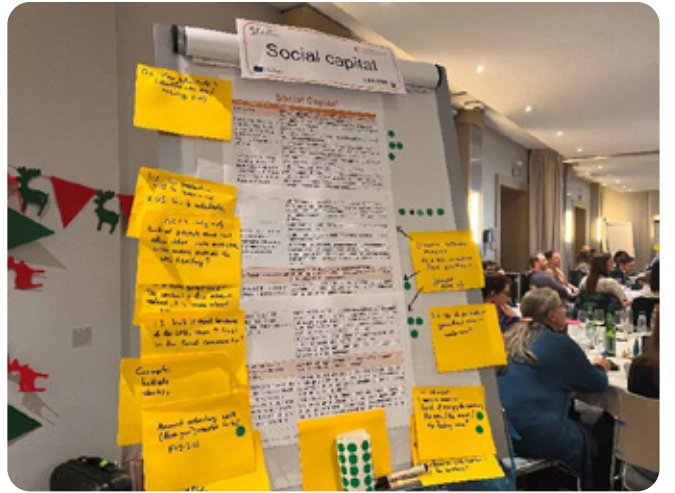
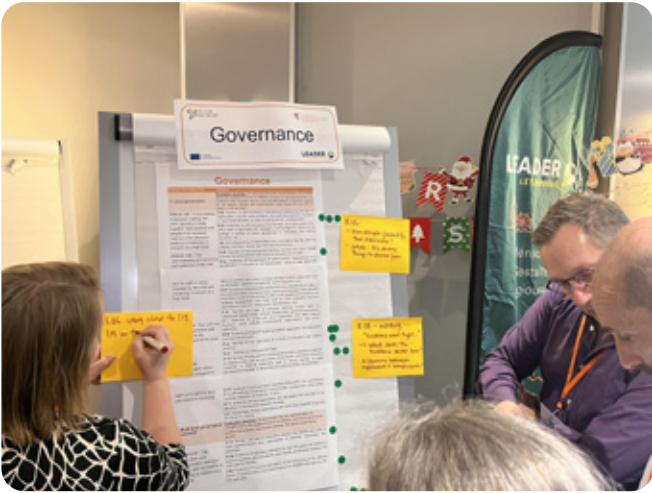
Concerning the assessment of local governance, the most relevant aspects to measure are the inclusiveness in decision making by looking at the LAG members in the decision making body by type, age and gender, the administrative and technical competences of LAGs, as well as the type of animation and support they provide to their target groups. The effectiveness of multi-level governance by looking at the type, content and quality of interactions between LAGs and the MA/PA is also considered important to assess. There is, however, a need for a clear description of concepts and of how the evidence will be collected, given that most of it is 'soft' evidence.

Finally, in relation to measuring enhanced results, the most relevant aspects according to participants are: the capacity of LEADER to engage new promoters; the capacity of LAGs to produce structural changes in their territory; the value of LEADER in enabling projects from different types of promoters and valorise unique territorial assets; the implementation of innovative projects in the local context; the capacity of LEADER to produce economic, environment and social sustainability; and the promotion of cooperation. For these measurements to be possible, there is a need to identify benchmarks or points of comparison. A key conclusion in this respect is that LAGs are unique in terms of contexts and strategies, therefore comparisons may be more pertinent across time for the same LAG rather than across LAGs. Some overarching indicators can be selected by Member States for reaching overall results at the level of their CSP, based mainly on the datasets obtained through the monitoring and evaluation variables described in the Implementing Regulation<sup>4</sup>.

A concluding remark is that the nature of LEADER implies the use of more qualitative than quantitative methodologies and tools, which are based on perceptions. Careful design of questions is therefore required as well as representativeness of survey samples, to minimise biases and subjectivity of the evaluation outcomes. To the extent possible, triangulation of information sources and methods can also help reduce biases and validate the evaluation results.

<sup>4</sup> Annex VII of Regulation (EU) 1475/2022.





# 5. Annex 1 – Results from group discussions on Day 1: the framework for assessing LEADER added value

Below is a full list of the input from GPW participants during group discussions of Day 1 where they shared lessons learnt about evaluating LEADER added value in the past, as well as identified challenges for the future.

## Evaluation of LEADER added value

### Lessons learned from past experiences

#### Why assess the added value of LEADER

- › Added value differentiates LEADER from other measures.
- › It is important to go beyond minimum requirements and demonstrate how LEADER principles 'produce' added value.
- › Assessing added value improves the visibility of LEADER/LAGs.
- › Assessing added value valorises role of LAGs and creates aspirations.
- › The needs of different levels (LAG, national) to be taken into account.

#### Common concepts

- › A common understanding is needed at each level of LEADER added value elements (social capital, governance, enhanced results).
- › LEADER added value is the concept that puts all these elements together.

#### Definition of indicators

- › Develop indicators related to social aspects (people), the planet (environment) and profit (economic).
- › Identify both quantitative and qualitative indicators.
- › LAGs should define their indicators, focused on experience from projects from the previous programming period.
- › Not all indicators proposed for monitoring need to be used. Distinguish between mandatory and optional indicators.
- › Having 1 475 indicators is a good start for evaluation, but they need to link with added value components.

#### Evaluation methods

- › LAGs should have a common grid/monitoring and evaluation system to monitor social capital, governance and enhanced results. Evaluation methods can use information from this system.
- › Structural change takes time (over several programming periods) – methods to capture this change are needed.
- › Strive for simplification of the evaluation of LEADER added value.

#### Evaluation stakeholders

- › A participative attitude of LAGs and stakeholders is needed.
- › Ensure synergy between LAGs and MAs (give LAGs some ownership).
- › It is important to capture the perception of LEADER stakeholders.



## Capacity building/learning

- › Evaluation is a learning process.
- › Start thinking about the evaluation since the beginning (clear intervention logic, etc.), think *ex ante* to avoid problems *ex post*.
- › Need to develop capacities in evaluation (by capacity building activities at all levels).
- › Learning can also stem from the past: institutional memory (for all, e.g. MA, LAGs, etc.), information from past projects, etc.
- › It would be good to have training material about added value for the EvaluationWorks (Evaluation Helpdesk supported capacity building) activities in Member States.

## Challenges to be addressed for the future:

### Conceptual challenges

- › How to make a conceptual map with all the elements to assess – ‘LEADER is the basil in the pasta’.
- › How to clarify the links between the elements of added value, e.g. do social capital and governance contribute to enhanced results?
- › Difficult to measure social capital and seven LEADER principles or link principles with outputs/results. Social capital is found in cooperatives/communities and the level of interaction at local level is difficult to describe.

### Data related challenges

- › There are too many and unclear indicators.
- › Lack of monitoring data will prevent the *ex post* evaluation of LEADER added value
- › How to feed LAG data into the monitoring system (for result indicators).
- › How to encourage LAGs to use indicators.
- › How to select from too many options of indicators.
- › How to develop a common approach (indicators) for very variable projects.
- › Absence of baselines make interpretation of evaluation results more difficult.
- › How to measure added value that is not visible or is intangible. Data (numbers) are difficult to use for intangible effects.

### Methodological challenges

- › How to build the necessary tools in advance.
- › How to compare LAGs when they have different situations/contexts and different LDSs. It is difficult to obtain a national view, how to find commonalities when there are such differences. Comparisons may be dealt with by comparing with the previous period.
- › How to deal with the lack of an evaluation strategy or a theory of change for LEADER.
- › How to assess local development strategies that have poor target setting or unclear objectives.
- › How to evaluate changes in behaviour in policy making in communities.
- › As LEADER projects are focused/adapted to the specific area, how to evaluate side-effects.
- › How to isolate the impact of LEADER from other policies and quantify added value.



### **Managing the evaluation**

- › LAGs do not have evaluation and monitoring mindset to organise and carry out evaluations.
- › There are often budget constraints for data collection, especially at the LAG level.
- › Lack of communication of LAG projects may hinder the effective management of an evaluation.

### **Accountability and motivation challenges**

- › LAGs see themselves as administrative agents and not as local development agents.
- › LAGs do not have sufficient understanding of added value concepts, which reduces their interest in the assessment of added value.
- › They also have limited experience in self-assessments.
- › There are also cases of tired LAGs (use NNs to remotivate LAGs).
- › Municipalities/regions need to know what they are buying with the money allocated to LEADER.



## 6. Annex 2 – Results from the ‘Marketplace’ on Day 2: Assessing LEADER added value – a view to the future

Below is a full list of the input from the GPW participants during the ‘Marketplace’ on Day 2 during where they shared constructive comments and feedback on the draft factors of success and indicators being developed for the ‘Guidelines on how to assess LEADER added value’ in the Evaluation Helpdesk’s TWG on this topic. Furthermore, they could indicate which indicators they found to be most relevant by ‘voting’ for them. Comments to the proposed evaluation framework are listed **in orange** in the tables below.

### 6.1. Social capital

Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<p><b>General comments regarding this element:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Clarify concepts: beliefs, identity, etc.</li> <li>&gt; Dynamic Network Analysis can be used as a tool answering these questions, especially for indicators O.04, O.06, R.04.</li> <li>&gt; Can we compare the financial cost of the different indicator methodologies?</li> <li>&gt; A lot of questions about LAG, should there be a wider focus on community?</li> <li>&gt; Better definition of ‘evidence’ is needed.</li> <li>&gt; Can we look at communication/exchange of information/collaboration between members?</li> <li>&gt; When there is no impact indicator, how do you follow up in the ex post or for the next period?</li> </ul>		
<b>1. Networks</b>	<p><b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent does LEADER contribute to quality interactions and networking among relevant actors?</p>	
<p><b>FOS.S:1.01</b> - The size and diversity of the network and quality of interactions <b>within the LAG</b> is improving or remains at a high level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Monitor and evaluate the active participation in the network.</li> </ul>	<p><b>O.01:</b> Number of LAG members broken down by type of organisation: a) public administrations; b) private local economic interests; c) social local interests; d) other.</p>	7
	<p><b>R.01:</b> Network diversity index of the LAG membership (as a proxy of structural social capital of the LAG).</p>	6
	<p><b>I.01:</b> LAG members that consider a quality cooperation culture has developed between LAG members (e.g. frequent exchange of information, frequent meetings, good relationships developed).</p>	3





Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<b>FOS.S:1.02</b> - The social interactions in the LAG territory (but outside the LAG itself) have improved or remain at a high level thanks to LEADER.	<b>0.02:</b> Number of operations (projects) jointly implemented by several types of promoters (specifying types). > <b>Can also help to identify who am I missing.</b>	
	<b>0.03:</b> Number of participants in joint operations (projects).	2
	<b>R.02:</b> Evidence of participants in local development projects who improve their capacity to organise themselves in social groups and integrate into the community fabric (e.g. they participate in associations, networks, pressure groups, community groups, other interest groups).	2
	<b>I.02:</b> Perception of improved social interactions in the LAG territory (e.g. being heard, common understanding reached, conflicts resolved, exchanges useful, features of bonding/bridging social capital, as well as negative social capital), amongst a) partners in LDS, b) institutional partners. > <b>How will perceptions be measured?</b> > <b>Difficult to understand.</b>	7
<b>FOS.S:1.03</b> - The LAG has developed or maintained networking with relevant partners outside the LAG territory. > <b>Why only look at projects and not also other activities (e.g. networking) with actors outside the LAG territory?</b>	<b>0.04:</b> Number of interregional cooperation operations (projects) implemented by the LAG.	5
	<b>0.05:</b> Number of transnational cooperation operations (projects) implemented by LAG.	3
	<b>R.03:</b> Evidence of the quality of interactions of the LAG members with external actors at different levels of decision-making (national, transnational, business, Mas etc.) (e.g. other LAGs, research bodies, start-up networks, universities, national CAP networks, EU CAP network).	
<b>2. Mutual support &amp; trust</b>	<b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent has LEADER contributed to mutual support and trust within the LAG and the local community and among all programme stakeholders?	
<b>FOS.S:2.01:</b> The level of mutual support and trust between LEADER stakeholders has increased or remains at a high level.	<b>0.06:</b> Evidence of trust in the LAG, of which: a) beneficiaries' satisfaction in relation to LAG activities, b) LAG employees' engagement, c) LAG members' collaboration. > <b>Not only 'beneficiary' but also other potential beneficiaries.</b>	6
	<b>R.04:</b> Level of trust of the local community towards the LAG (to capture if there is a better assessment in terms of trust towards the LAG compared to the general level of trust in the LEADER area, i.e. the result of what the LAG has done during the programming period and how its actions has been perceived by local stakeholders). > <b>How do you measure generalised trust in LEADER areas?</b>	2
	<b>I.03:</b> Change in the trust of the local community towards the LAG (to capture the value added of LEADER in terms of trust).	1
	<b>I.04:</b> Index of improvement of normative social capital of the LAGs (it is composed of the previous indicators).	



Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<b>3. Shared mental models, values and beliefs</b>	<p><b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent does LEADER contribute to shared mental models, values and beliefs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>Who has shared values? What do the terms 'shared mental' &amp; 'shared beliefs' mean?</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Is it more governance? The content is less about values it is more about governance.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>'Shared mental model' seems very abstract. Cannot be translated into 'Shared territorial identity/vision' in the context of LEADER.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Level of trust of the managing authority in the LAGs (not always).</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>FOS.S:3.01:</b> Shared vision for the territory, territorial identities, common objectives, values and/or beliefs are promoted by LEADER within the LAG and in the LAG area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>Indicators for FoS3.1: LAGs transform into something else.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Amount of voluntary work (move from governance to social capital?).</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>O.07:</b> Evidence of shared social awareness in the LAG area (e.g. sense of belonging in the area, attitudes of solidarity, inclusiveness by welcoming disadvantaged groups, including women and young, recognition of social problems).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>We want to measure: Level of energy for developing the area/ the mood/the 'feeling index'.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>How do you know it is because of LEADER? Maybe focus on LAG members and not the territory.</b></li> </ul>	2
	<p><b>R.05:</b> Evidence of shared values in cooperation and/or joint operations (projects), considering (1) capacity to keep agreements; (2) truthfulness in social and economic relationships, (3) responsiveness and respect for the rule of law, (4) capacity to avoid opportunistic behaviours or free riding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>How to calculate?</b></li> </ul>	1

## 6.2. Governance

Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<p><b>General comments regarding this element:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>Clarify what 'evidence' means and what is the unit of measurement.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Evidence points to 'hard evidence' like documents, maybe a softer formulation is needed.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>What is the definition of local stakeholder.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>'Technical knowledge' to create factors of success. Did you use an external expert, or did you create FoS internally by LAG staff/managers?</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Governance is mostly about roles and processes.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Clarifications of 'new' and then how to collect. Not only new, but also maintained actively.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Depends on persons and not on systems. A good LAG manager creates a good impression.</b></li> </ul>		



Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<b>1. Local governance</b>	<b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent has the implementation of LEADER led to the establishment of an effective process of local governance, in a collective and inclusive manner, ensuring participation in decision-making for the people, groups, and organisations, even those that are hard to reach, in the territory?	
<b>FOS.G:1.01</b> - Inclusiveness in decision making: the LAG capacity to bring together organisations and people in an inclusive manner in the decision-making is improving or remains at a high level.	<b>O.08:</b> Number of LAG members in the decision-making body by type of organisation: a) public administrations; b) private local economic interests; c) local social interests; d) other (including women, young people).	12
	<b>R.06:</b> Evidence of LAG processes that facilitate local governance (e.g. office open to applicants with competent staff available for advice for an average X number of hours, procedures for complaints and conflict resolution, etc.).	1
	<b>I.06:</b> Percentage of local stakeholders with a perception that the LAG is a credible institution/central agent for local development. <b>&gt; Very close to I.13, I.13 maybe in the wrong place?</b>	1
<b>FOS.G:1.02</b> - The administrative and technical competences of the LAG and its staff (in areas covered by the LAG) are improving or remain at a high level.	<b>O.09:</b> Number of training/capacity building activities that have helped improve the administrative and technical competences of LAGs.	1
	<b>R.xx:</b> Evidence of improvement of administrative competences (e.g. simplification of procedures for beneficiaries, ability to take decisions, ability to perform key tasks in a timely and legal manner, other skills such as facilitation, network management, conflict resolution, etc.). <b>&gt; Simplification of procedures for beneficiaries.</b> <b>&gt; This is not only a LAG competence! It is also MA/PA.</b>	2
	<b>R.07:</b> Evidence of improvement of the technical competences of LAGs in the LDS and areas covered by it (e.g. technical knowledge of the LEADER method principles for the design of LDS, including partnership building and strategy development, and areas such as local marketing, business development, tourism, infrastructure improvements, etc.).	1
<b>FOS.G:1.03</b> - The LAG has improved animation and contributes to the empowerment of the local population	<b>O.10:</b> Number and type of animation activities, broken down by stakeholder group (sector, territory, beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries, etc.), organised by a) the LAG, b) in cooperation with other regional business, social cultural, environmental organisations, and public authorities.	3
	<b>R.08:</b> Evidence and type of support provided to applicants, new applicants and new beneficiaries. <b>&gt; Clarify the wording.</b> <b>&gt; 'Evidence and type...' - What does evidence mean exactly?</b> <b>&gt; What is the difference between applicant and beneficiary?</b>	11
	<b>R.xx:</b> Number of new applicants as a result of animation and support activities.	4
	<b>R.xx:</b> Indicator on empowerment (tbd).	



Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<b>FOS.G:1.04</b> - Communication within LAGs, with prospective applicants and the local population is improving	<b>O.14:</b> Number of LAGs with the following documents available on website: a) statutes of the LAG; b) composition of the board; c) minutes of general meetings; d) financial statements (part of annual reports); e) local development strategy; f) descriptions of funded projects, g) newsletters.	2
	<b>O.15:</b> Evidence of communication activities of the LAGs, e.g. a) existence of a LAG website, b) presence in social media, c) presence in other public common channels, d) meetings, e) other.  > <b>Evidence or measure with Yes/No?</b>  > <b>Do you want to measure communication? Can use communication statistics.</b>	2
	<b>R.13:</b> Evidence of local stakeholders who are aware of a) the LAG, b) its activities, c) the local development strategy.  > <b>Evidence or percentage?</b>  > <b>How do you get the data reliably?</b>	2
	<b>I.11:</b> Percentage of local stakeholders who think that LEADER brings the EU closer to citizens.	
<b>2. Multi-level governance of LEADER</b>	<b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent has the implementation of LEADER led to the establishment of an effective multi-level governance system that ensures coordination between the various governance levels?	
<b>FOS.G:2.01</b> - The coordination and communication between the LAG and the MA/PA is improving or remains at a high level	<b>O.13:</b> Number and type of interactions between the MA/PA and LAGs or LAG representatives (e.g. participation in meetings, assemblies, Monitoring Committee meetings).  > <b>Add network.</b>	9
	<b>R.38:</b> Evidence of activities undertaken by the LAG and/or the MA/PA to improve systems and procedures and simplify coordination between the LAG and the MA/PA.	4
	<b>I.08:</b> Evidence of a positive perception of the functioning of the different levels of governance in the implementation of LEADER amongst the MA, PA and LAGs.	4



## 6.3. Enhanced results

Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<p><b>General comments regarding this element:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>Enhanced compared to what?</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>What consistent benchmarks can be used by each MS LAG?</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>We need to compare similar with similar for a level-playing field.</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>1. Increased leverage</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent does LEADER generate leverage?</p>	
<p><b>FOS.E:1.01</b> - The LDS stimulated further investment or activities in the territory to achieve the strategic objectives of LDS not directly funded from LEADER.</p>	<p><b>O.17:</b> Ratio of EAFRD funding for LDS to other (non-EAFRD) funding spent on the LDS, of which a) by private sources, b) by public sources. (For each euro spent from EAFRD in LDS implementation, how many more euros are paid by other sources).</p>	3
	<p><b>O.xx:</b> Evidence (number) of projects to which the LAG or its members apply to, outside EAFRD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The information to be provided also by expenditure, not only number of projects.</li> <li>&gt; Difficult to find out – specify other funds.</li> <li>&gt; Make it clearer what ‘outside EAFRD’ means – provide examples, e.g. EU and also national funding.</li> </ul>	3
	<p><b>R.15:</b> Evidence of operations (projects) that include voluntary work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>How much voluntary work (in hours) should be included.</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Indicator could also be used for social capital.</b></li> </ul>	3
<p><b>FOS.E:1.02</b> - LEADER intervention made it possible to identify and empower new project promoters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Define ‘project promoters’ well.</li> </ul>	<p><b>O.18:</b> Number of (new) project promoters supported by the LAG, which could have never participated in other EU or national funding schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The distinction is difficult, although some participants consider it is easy to find out.</li> </ul>	7
	<p><b>R.16:</b> Evidence of beneficiaries for which financial support from the LEADER intervention was decisive (e.g. project not implemented at all, or not implemented at that time, or implemented in a smaller scale).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>Distinction is difficult.</b></li> </ul>	3
	<p><b>I.13:</b> Percentage of LEADER stakeholders with a positive perception of the LAG’s capacity to encourage more people to apply for support under the LEADER intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Not linked to the output and results Indicators of this FoS.</li> <li>&gt; The underlying concept is not clear.</li> </ul>	



Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<p><b>2. Projects well-tailored to the needs of the territory</b></p> <p>&gt; <b>Local needs: everything can be 'local need', why not replace with 'projects that cannot be (easily) funded elsewhere?'</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent did the LEADER strategies and actions supported meet specific local needs?</p>	
<p><b>FOS.E:2.01</b> - LEADER meets specific local needs and territorial objectives.</p>	<p><b>O.19:</b> Existence of selection criteria that prioritise most urgent/priority needs.</p> <p>&gt; <b>It is compulsory.</b></p>	1
	<p><b>R.17:</b> Number of operations that contribute to each identified typology of needs in the LDS, including to green, digital or social transition of rural areas.</p>	
	<p><b>R.xx:</b> Evidence of synergies between LEADER projects towards addressing the LDS needs.</p>	1
	<p><b>I.14:</b> Judgement expressed by LEADER stakeholders on the capacity of the LAGs to produce structural changes in the dimensions on which the LDS intervenes.</p>	5
<p><b>FOS.E:2.02</b> - The LEADER method enables projects by a variety of promoter types to valorise specific territorial assets and identities.</p> <p>&gt; <b>Difficult to have a common understanding of 'specific territorial assets and identities'.</b></p>	<p><b>O.20:</b> Number of operations implemented by different types of promoters.</p>	6
	<p><b>R.18:</b> Percentage of projects that valorise unique territorial assets (social, cultural, culinary, landscape, natural, environmental), e.g. heritage, upgrading/transformation of abandoned/unused buildings, promoting local products, etc.</p>	4
	<p><b>R.19:</b> Evidence of projects that produce community benefits and reinforce community identity.</p>	2
<p><b>3. Projects with innovative elements at a local level</b></p> <p>&gt; <b>Desirable, but not mandatory.</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent are LEADER projects more innovative in the local context than projects under centrally managed interventions?</p>	
<p><b>FOS.E:3.01</b> - LEADER fosters introduction/diffusion of innovations in the local context.</p>	<p><b>O.21:</b> Number of operations (projects) which are innovative in the local context.</p> <p>&gt; <b>A common definition of innovation at local level would be helpful.</b></p>	4
	<p><b>R.20:</b> Percentage of 'innovative' projects' expenditure in the overall expenditure.</p>	
	<p><b>R.22:</b> Evidence of different types of innovations produced at local level in response to a) digital, b) green, c) social challenges/transition.</p>	
	<p><b>I.15:</b> Percentage of LEADER stakeholders who consider that LEADER contributes to the generation of new ideas, products or processes in the LAG territory that are innovative in the local context, compared to mainstream projects.</p>	



Factors of success (FoS)	Indicators	Nr. of votes
<b>4. Sustainable projects</b> > <b>Desirable, but not mandatory.</b>	<b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent did LEADER projects produce sustainable results?	
<b>FOS.E:4.01</b> - LEADER projects produce sustainable results. > <b>Projects need to be sustainable (five years).</b>	<b>O.22:</b> Number of projects that contribute to: a) economic, b) environmental, c) social sustainability. > Can also be limited to impacts (impact indicator).	6
	<b>O.23:</b> Number of operations (projects) that have improved through consultation within LAG (LAGs operate in their local contexts to activate the capacity of local actors to identify their project ideas and, consequently, to propose more robust and sustainable project proposals).	1
	<b>R.22:</b> Evidence of projects which are sustainable due to knowledge of local conditions. > <b>Definition of what 'sustainable' means exactly and also the time span.</b>	4
<b>5. Projects that promote links between actors</b>	<b>Evaluation question:</b> To what extent LEADER promotes partnerships, networks and collaborations that would not have existed without it?	
<b>FOS.E:5.01</b> - New partnerships, networks and collaborations are established or sustained.	<b>O.24:</b> Number of projects that demonstrate links between LEADER projects and cooperation of local actors (e.g. smart specialisation, projects with several partners, integrated projects, umbrella projects). > <b>How to demonstrate this?</b>	1
	<b>R.23:</b> Share of LEADER projects that have produced cooperation in the form of networks, partnerships and other collaborations.	3
	<b>I.16:</b> Change in the percentage of stakeholders that consider LEADER produces stronger links between actors.	1



## 7. Annex 3 – Results of the feedback poll

Below is the outcome of the Mentimeter feedback poll on the GPW. The poll was launched in order to determine participants' satisfaction of the workshop, as well as to get feedback on how future events can be improved.

### 7.1. Feedback on the Good Practice Workshop



### 7.2. Written feedback on strength, weaknesses, suggestions and comments

- > That was a new experience that made me have new aspects of LAG activities.
- > LAGs and Rural Network cannot participate because of the costs. Here we only have public administration because they have money.
- > In some years, it will be interesting to see the results of consequences.
- > Very good, nice event. Thank you so much!
- > More time to presentations and details in presentations would have been useful. Overall, it was nice. Content useful to different participants, but not sure about LAGs.
- > Very good, interesting and useful workshop!
- > More time for group discussions.
- > Good mix of more academic/advanced methods and more practical examples.
- > More time for discussion.
- > Good engagement and the topic were well-covered.
- > Lack of food during the first day, but the content of the workshop was wonderful.
- > A core set of common indicators for the CAP will help facilitate consistent comparisons to assess relative added value across a level playing field.
- > The way that you shared the information was a strength, and the methodology to help participation was great.
- > Suggestions: share good examples on self-assessment of LAGs; give a clear picture for Member States of the process of replanning the PMEF results indicators because of LEADER contributions.
- > Structural network of LEADER MA representatives.





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