



Analysis of the potential of social innovation in the context of LEADER 2014-2020

Presentation for the Good Practice Workshop of the European Evaluation Helpdesk

HOW TO ASSESS THE LEADER ADDED VALUE

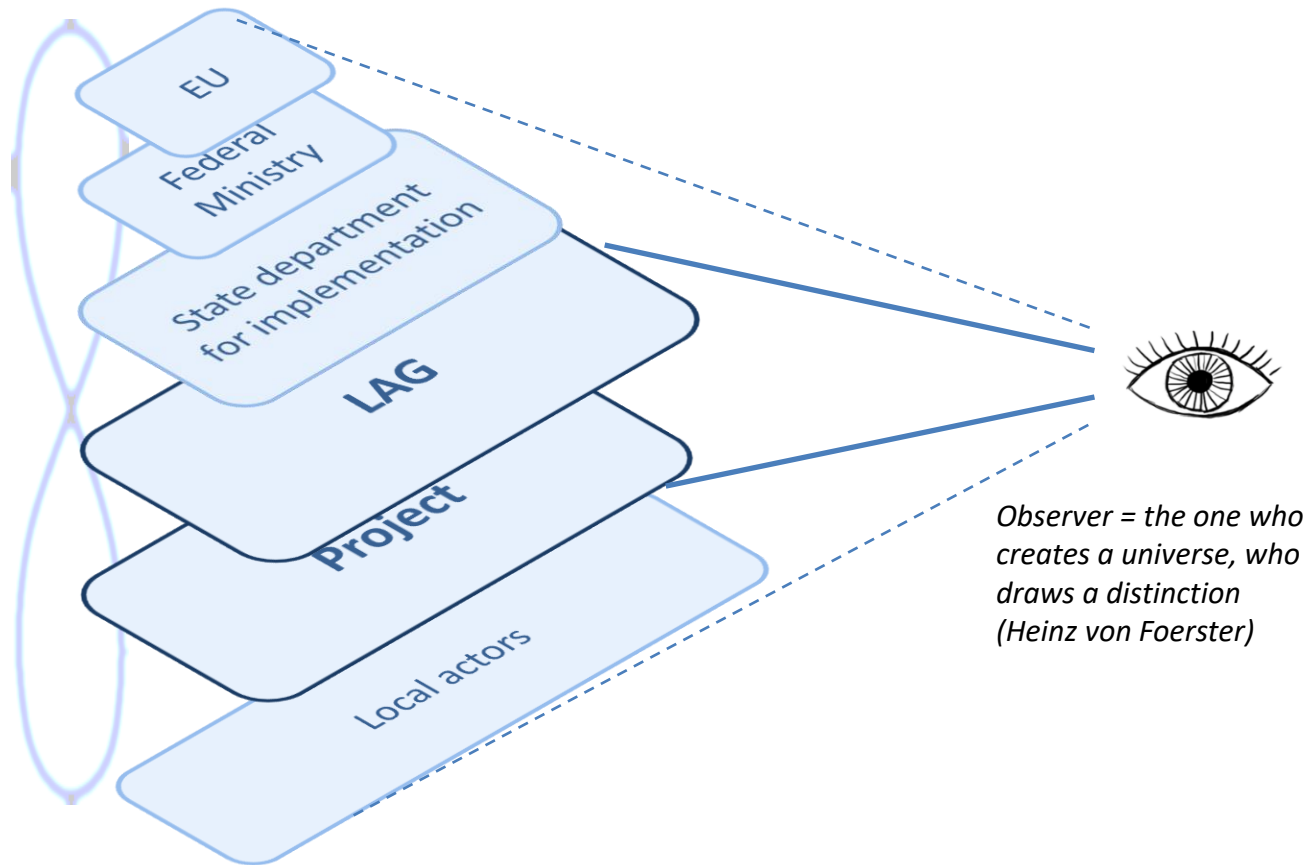
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Expected Results

- General overview on the **occurrence, ways and forms of social innovation** triggered or enabled by local action groups under LEADER (RDP 14-20)
- **Successful concepts** derived from positive examples and a discussion of their transferability
- **Recommendations** for the framing and promotion of innovative actions through the LEADER measure

The study was commissioned by the (at that time) Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism as an element of the Rural Development Evaluation Plan (2014-2020)



Observer = the one who creates a universe, who draws a distinction
(Heinz von Foerster)

To operationalize the term Social Innovation we used a German translation of the SIMRA (EU-Horizon Project “Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas”) definition which goes:

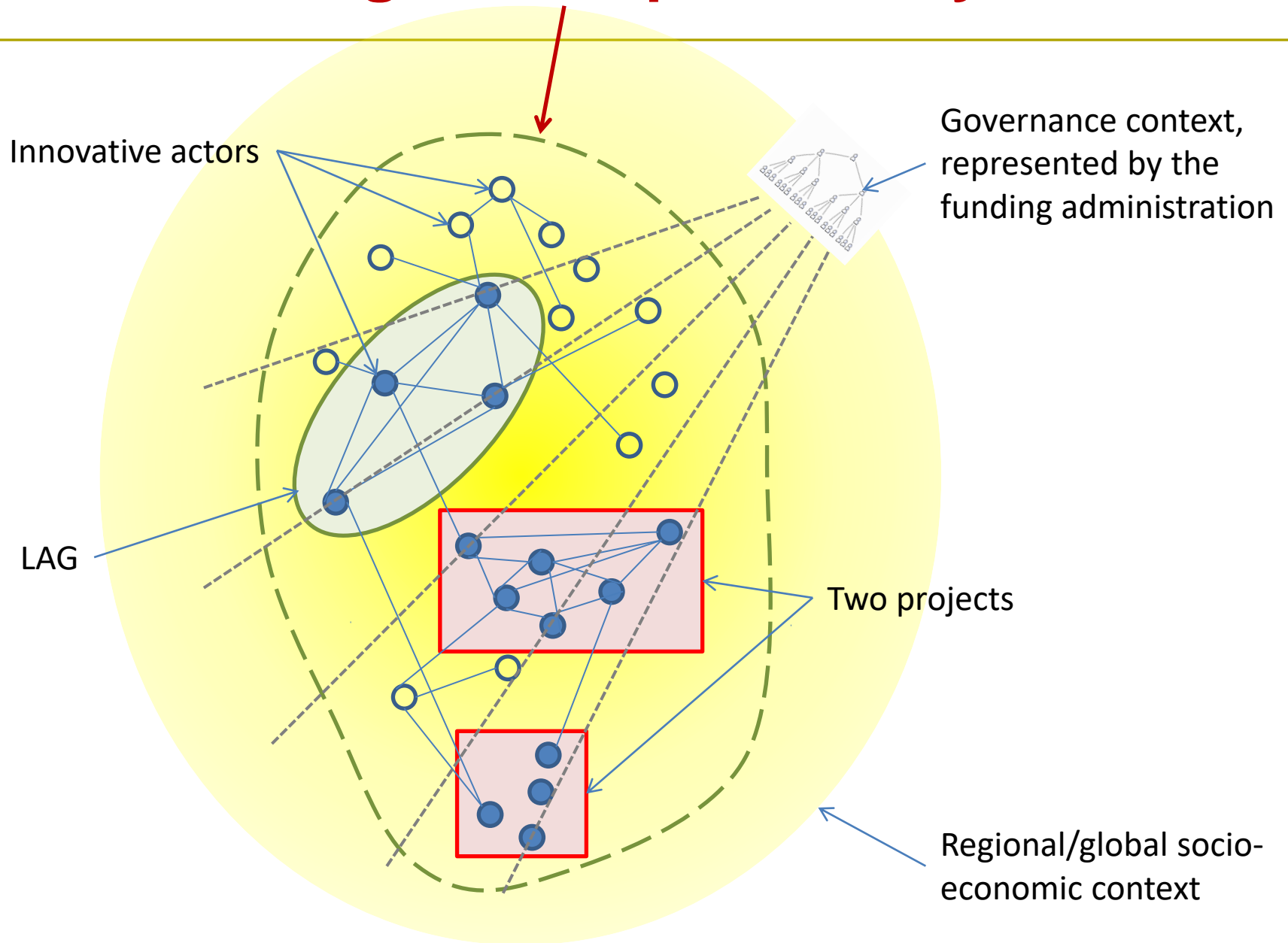
Social innovation refers to...

...the reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors.

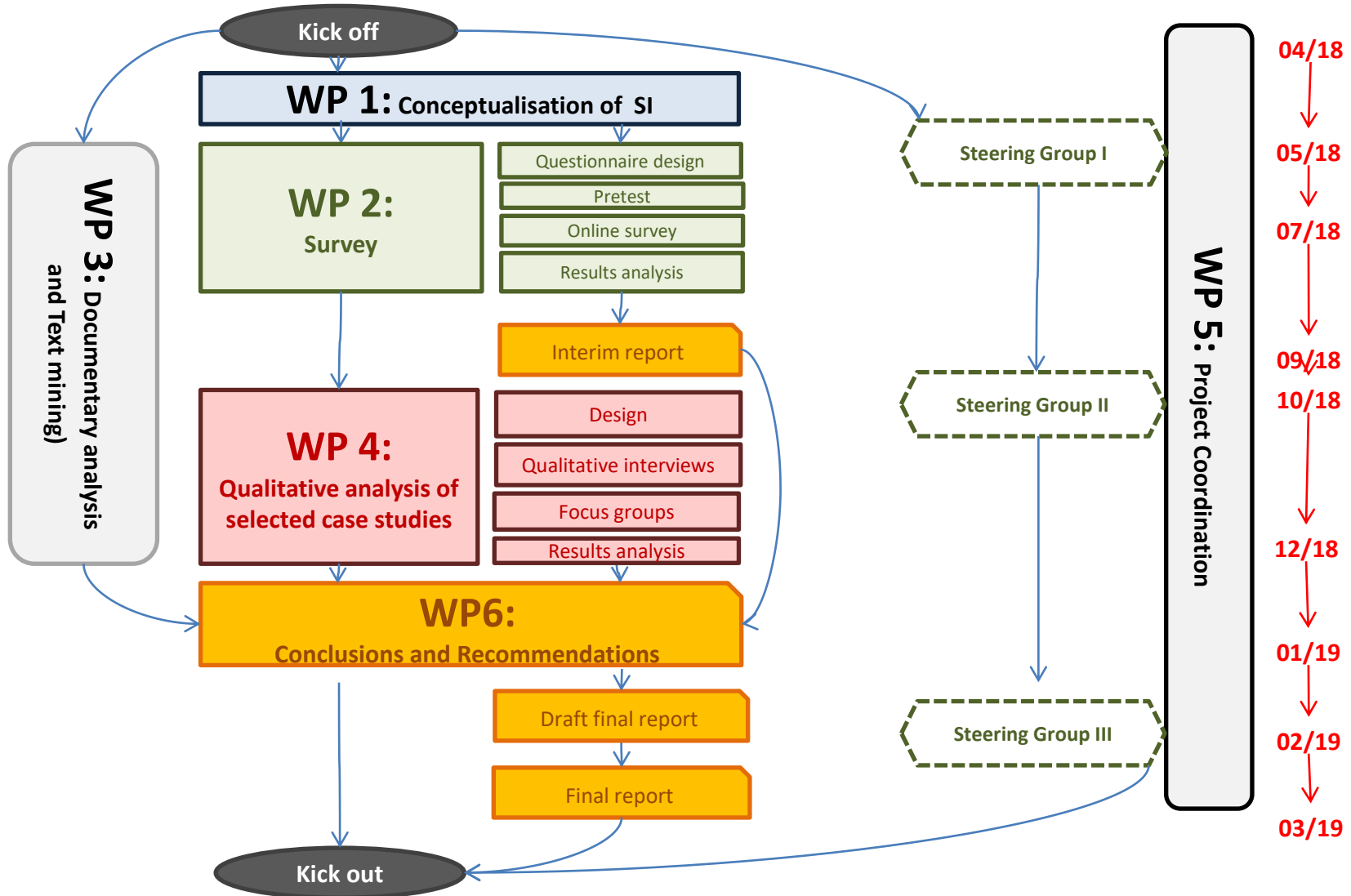
Key questions

- Which ways and forms of social innovation have emerged and to which extent did they so in the context of LEADER funding 2014-2020?
- Which are the main actors promoting the emergence, consolidation, expansion and institutionalisation of social innovation, thereby inducing more innovative changes in the environment?
- How can the framework conditions be improved to allow social innovation to emerge?
- How can social innovation be directly promoted and/or supported? Which challenges or conflicts arise while implementing social innovation and how can they be solved in the best possible ways?
- Which factors (e.g. regarding time horizon, actors configuration etc.) favor social innovation and/or boost their odds to prevail?

Modeling the cooperation system



Designing the process and work packages



WP 1: Conceptualisation

Aim of this work package was to operationalise

- **„the significance and extent of projects with particular emphasis on aspects of social innovation among Local Action Groups (LAGs)“,**
- **„the effects of such projects in the respective areas“**
- **„their impact on women and men of different age groups and on other less favored groups“**

All this implies the analysis of **„the promoters and their specific interventions, the organisational structures, the processes, the particular features of cooperation and the involvement of different population groups under consideration of their specific needs in the course of socially innovative actions“**.

WP 2: Quantitative Survey

Aim of the Work Package:

- Gaining insight on the status quo of social innovation in all Austrian LAGs
- Scouting good practice of socially innovative projects/ processes/ framework conditions and positive effects which were to be studied more in-depth later on in case studies (WP 4)
- First appraisal of „**ecosystems of social innovation**“

Method: Standardised online survey among all 77 LAGs

Respondents: LAG managers (with the option to fill the questionnaire together with other key actors / board members)

→ We did not ask about „social innovation“ by making explicit use of the term. We elicited the features of social innovation such as conceptualised in the first Work Package!

WP 3: Secondary data exploitation

- **Three sources**
 - **Project data base** of the National Rural Network (around 300 LEADER projects of the 2014-20 period)
 - **Data base of the funding administration** (register of all approved LEADER projects)
 - **77 Local Development Strategy Documents**
 - **Text mining as a method to track down and analyse social innovation**
 - Using an algorithm-based linguistic analysis method to **unveil language patterns** in unstructured texts
 1. **Training of a text vector (by feeding the programme with social innovation literature)**
 2. **Tracking social innovation in project data bases and LDS documents**
 3. **Complementary latent semantic analysis to unveil implicit descriptions of social innovation**
- *Nowadays Artificial Intelligence will probably make the job easier*

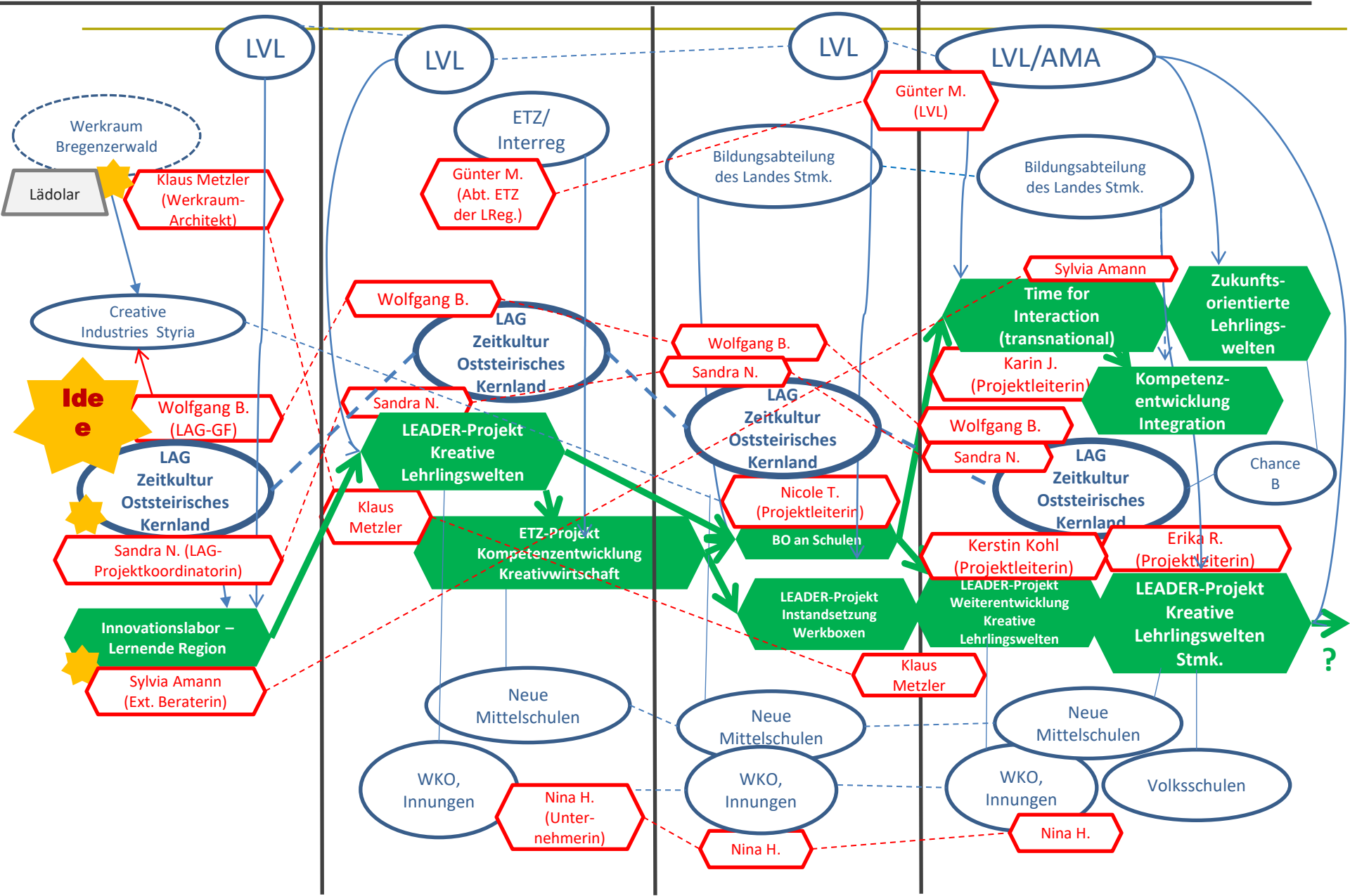
WP 4: Qualitative analysis (case studies)

- Conceptual (ways and forms of SI) and strategic (number, geographical distribution) **selection criteria**
- Exploitation of available **data and documents**
- **Individual interviews (stories)** with innovative actors
- **Nine in-depth case studies**: A comprehensive narrative of about 15 to 25 pages, using **Innovation Biographies** as visualisation tool.
- **Focus groups** with representatives of LAGs and innovative actors

Prequel (2000-13)

Pilotierung (2009-13)

Kreative Lehrlingswelten (2013-16)



Flashlight on conclusions and recommendations

Between 17% and 33% of projects identified as socially innovative

Obstacles: red tape, too risky to invest, lack of know-how, too complex to cope with, local actors' indifference

