





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

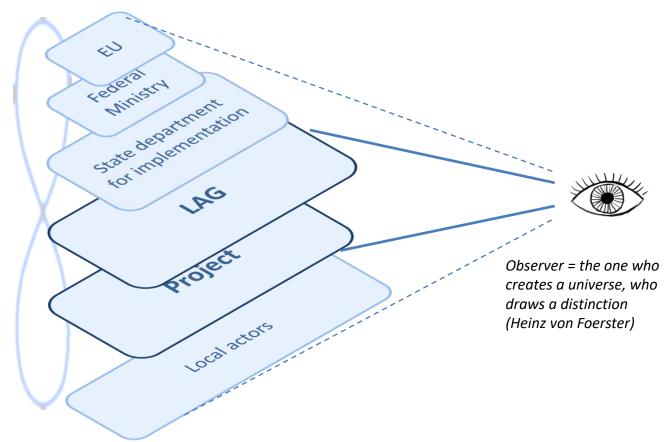
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Expected Results

- 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)



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:**

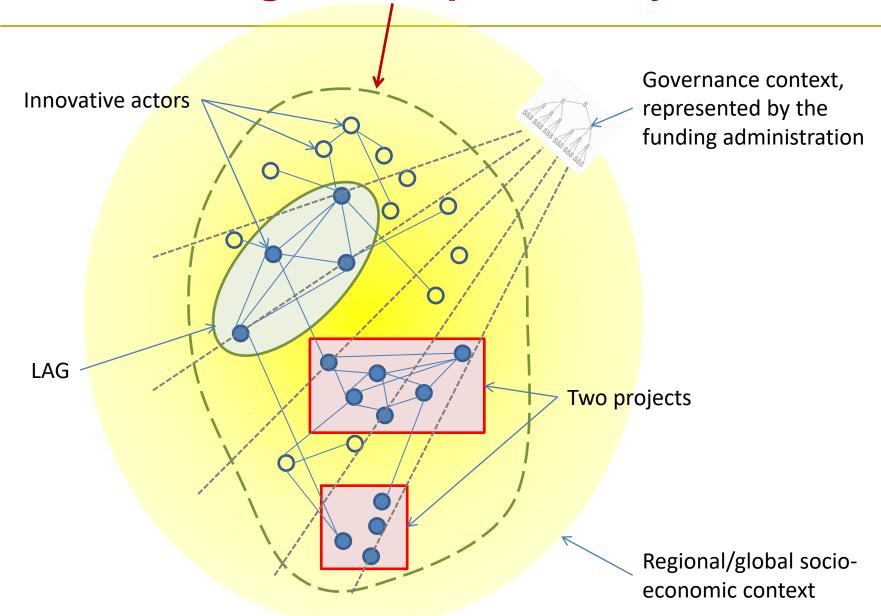
Social innovation refers to...

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

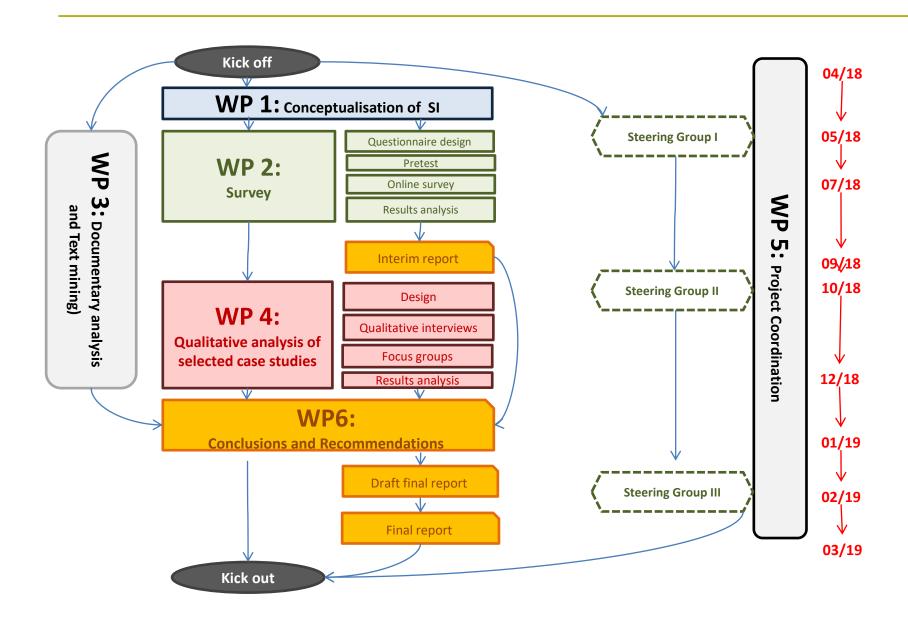
Key questions

- 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 <u>main actors</u> promoting the emergence, consolidation, expansion and institutionalisation of social innovation, thereby inducing more innovative changes in the environment?
- How can the <u>framework conditions</u> be improved to allow social innovation to emerge?
- How can social innovation be directly promoted and/or supported?
 Which <u>challenges or conflicts</u> arise while implementing social innovation and how can they be solved in the best possible ways?
- Which <u>factors</u> (e.g. regarding time horizon, actors configuration etc.)
 <u>favor social innovation</u> 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 <u>features</u> of social innovation such as conceptualised in the first Work Package!

WP 3: Secondary data exploitation

Three sources

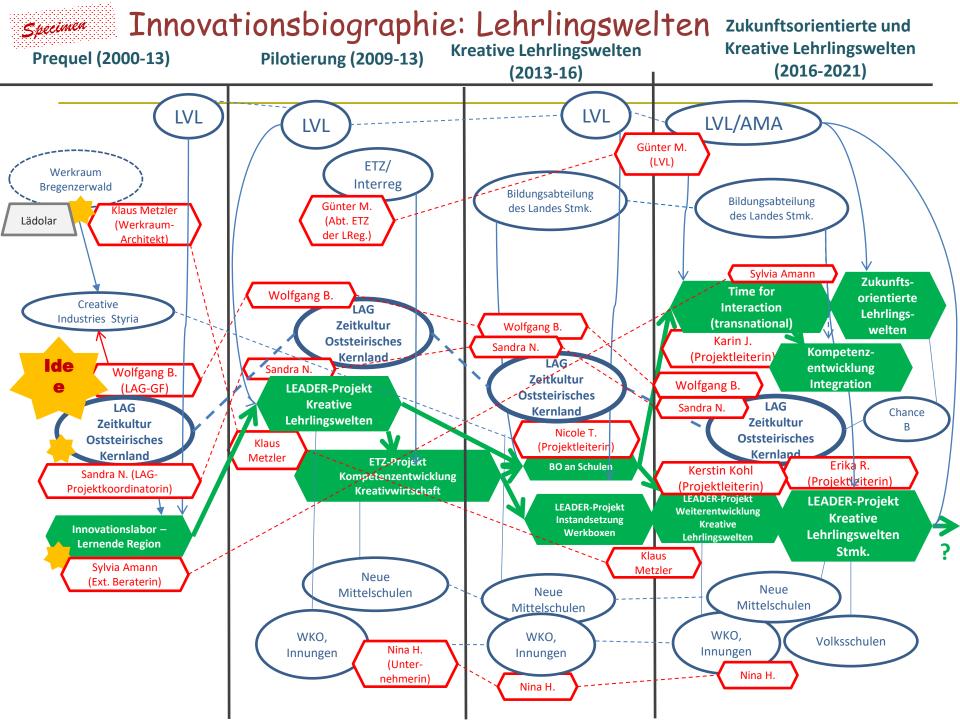
- Project data base of the National Rural Network (around 300 LEADER projects of the 2014-20 period)
- Data base of the funding administration (register of all approved LEADER projects)
- 77 Local Development Strategy Documents
- Text mining as a method to track down and analyse social innovation
 - 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



Flashlight on conclusions and recommendations

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

Bolster experimental character of LEADER

Make SI integral part of the LDS

Strengthen the LAG's capacity as a niche player ("where no man has gone before")

Privilege multifund approach (for the sake of getting more diverse stakeholders into LEADER)

Simplify funding (small and umbrella projects, advance payments, longer duration of project funding)

Tailor control mechanisms to the actual size and complexity of the operation

Enhanced results and impacts RDP/CLLD Strategy CLLD CLLD Application o Added Value Added Value the LEADER Animation. Delivery capacity mechanism building/ **Improved** support **Improved** social governance capital

Actors: Promotors and Gatekeepers; civil society participation; the art of negotiation; women very present, but often in precarious conditions

Ingredients: Need for change -Clear vision/philosophy -Solution-oriented action

The LAG as a boundary player: the innovative power of the "foreign in one's own" (bridging social capital)

Cultivate selfconfidence and selforganisation capacities

Decision autonomy of the LAG

Stick to the quota of civil society participation

The role of LAGs: Enabler by exception or by design to temporary or permanent social entrepreneur continuity, reputation. LAG management as the pivotal point ar

Leadership in LAGs: Diversity,

Active participation in inter-regional networks and trans-national cooperation

nt Increase understanding of SI among key actors and strengthen network links and interfaces witho other actors in the region