Assessing an improved local governance through LEADER/CLLD – Looking at the input and output of governance arrangements

Kim Pollermann
Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute

Good Practice Workshop: “Showing the added value of LEADER/CLLD through evaluation”
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Outline

• **Introduction**: LEADER/CLLD in four/five federal states in Germany

• **Background and needs**: Why and how to assess “improved local governance” as an added value of LEADER/CLLD?

• **Process and methods**: evaluate the input/output of local governance
  o **What** are the evaluation questions?
  o **What** is its conceptual framework?
  o **How** was it implemented?

• **Evaluation findings, and lessons learned from the findings**

• **Reflections on the evaluation approach**
Introduction

1. Experiences using this approach during two funding periods: 2007-13 & 2014-20, in Germany

2. We evaluated four federal states/ four RDP in Germany (during the funding period of 2007-2013 in five RDP, with CLLD strategies in all federal states approved in 2015

3. Number of LAGs 2007-13 >> 2014-20:
   - Hesse: 20 >> 24
   - Lower-Saxony: 32 >> 41
   - North-Rhine-Westfalia: 12 >> 28
   - Schleswig-Holstein: 21 >> 22

4. The level of implementation is different: altogether low share of funds spent, but sufficient number of projects approved (2017 > 1000)

5. No federal states has implemented a multi-fund approach, except for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) in coastal areas

Figure 1 LAGs in examined federal states 2017-2013: Hesse, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine-Westfalia, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Background and needs

• Our work is **part of RDP-evaluation**, complying with evaluation duties of federal states, in addition to **cooperation with LAGs for the use of self-assessment results**;

• **How** have these needs planned to be addressed?
  o RDP evaluation plan (based on EU-requirements and detailed concept for single federal states)
  o External evaluation: assignment till 2024
  o Report for single RDP, in addition a report for LEADER (for all four states)
  o Based on experiences from 2007-2013, new evaluation guidelines

• **Stage of assessment**: for 2014-20:
  o First LAG-survey completed (2017/2018) → first results obtained, but analysis still ongoing, LAGs got results for self-assessment
  o Next (main) report: 2019
The evaluation approach

- Evaluation question: **What is the contribution of LEADER to improve the local governance?**
- Improving local governance is understood as better cooperation of actors from public sector/state, economy and civil society;
- **Key elements of definition:** network cooperation, three actor groups, voluntary commitment;
- Two aspects of local governance matter...
  - **on the input-side:** type and structure of participation, gender representation (really bottom-up?)
  - **on the output-side:** contributions to cooperation and rural development (is it useful?)

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The evaluation approach

• To detect the added value of LEADER/CLLD, it is crucial to get the estimations of LAG-members divided by state/public public sector, economy and civil society;

• Link to self-assessment of the CLLD strategy/ the LAGs
  o LAGs get results from LAG-survey (12 pages)
  o Especially open-ended questions (restriction for statistical examinations: 10 to 25 answers per LAG)
Evaluation elements to assess improved local governance

**Table 1: Additional indicators** used to improve the quantitative analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgment Criteria</th>
<th>Additional Result Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Input side</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the decision-making processes has increased by including wider parts of the community</td>
<td>• Number of participants in the events to set up the strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of working/projects groups enhanced from LAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of members in the LAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender balance in decision-making has increased</td>
<td>• Share of males/females in decision-making bodies of LAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionality of the LAG as an local governance arrangement was established</td>
<td>• Level of satisfaction of LAG-members (devided by public/state, economy, civil society) as concern a) decision-making b) content of decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Willingness for further commitment (= not to use the exit-option of a voluntary commitment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output side</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation attitude and cooperation of LAG-members has increased</td>
<td>• Estimations of LAG-members (development over time) as concern: a) better cooperation beyond administrative borders, b) understanding other views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Share of projects with cooperation from different groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of projects (in sense of an added-value) was increased</td>
<td>• Share of projects with voluntary commitment in project implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Share of projects with a focus on the whole region (instead of single muncipalities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of different groups in the LAG-area was increased</td>
<td>• Estimations of LAG-members about support of different groups of actors (state, economy, civil society)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The evaluation approach

1. Main data source is the LAG-survey;
2. General data directly from LAG-managers (Monitoring 2016 and 2019, every year 2009 to 2013)

**Table 2:** Indicators & data sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Unit of measurement</th>
<th>Data source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with decision-making</td>
<td>Likert-scale (6 levels)</td>
<td>LAG-survey (2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimation about support from different groups</td>
<td>Likert-scale (6 levels)</td>
<td>LAG-survey (2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of male/females in the decision making bodies of LAGs</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Monitoring from LAG-managers (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of working and projects groups</td>
<td>Number / average per LAG</td>
<td>Monitoring from LAG-managers (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of projects with voluntary commitment in project implementation</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Beneficiaries-survey (2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3: Steps to implement the LAG-survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Who does what</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. Conceptualising the approach** | - Adapting the EU Common Evaluation Questions to the RDP context by developing complementary questions & create additional indicators  
- Development of questions (different types: open-ended, for key-indicators mainly: 6 level Likert-type-scale)  
- Timing of survey (agreement with LAG-managers)  
- Choose type of survey: online-tool, written, we used both options (Online: Lime-Survey) | - MA, external evaluators, working group (external evaluators, LAG-managers, authorities) |
| **2. Collecting data** | - Carrying out the survey in every LAG (participants: all LAG-members, so also beneficiaries have been included, LAG-managers NOT, they will get an own survey) | - External evaluators  
- LAG-managers support with reminders/advertising |
| **3. Analysing data** | - Apply statistical techniques for key-indicators at RDP level to examine differences in the level of satisfaction between:  
  a) different kind/type of actors within the LAGs  
  b) different LAGs with different regional settings  
  c) different time periods (i.e. LAG surveys in 2009, 2013, 2017) | - External evaluators |
| **4. Discussing and disseminating of findings** | - Self-assessment: arrange meetings with LAG members to discuss options for improvements at LAG-level  
- RDP evaluation: Include findings in reports to estimate contributions to local governance | - RDP level: external evaluators  
- LAG level: LAG manager |
Findings and lessons learned – Input

**Table 4: Indicator “Number of working and projects groups”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal state</th>
<th>Nbr of LAGs</th>
<th>LAGs with working groups</th>
<th>Nbr of groups</th>
<th>Avg of active groups per LAG</th>
<th>Open to public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4,1</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1,8</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2,7</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data (Monitoring of LAG-structures 2017)

**Findings:**

- Although there are no clearly defined duties for wider participation, there is a wider participation of local stakeholders in working groups.
- In LAGs: dominance of the “usual suspects” of participation (i.e. male, academic, over 40) – so the LAG-compositions show a lack of underprivileged groups and shortfalls in gender balance.

**Table 5: Indicator “Gender representation in LAGs”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal state</th>
<th>Share of females 2007+</th>
<th>2014 +</th>
<th>Settings for application 2014+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>There should be an equal representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>There should be an equal representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>There should be an equal representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRW</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>There was a new 30% minimum quorum for all leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Follow up actions:**

- For participation in working groups: no rules needed (but recommendation at EU-level to set a 10-person-minimum for LAGs).
- For gender representation: one federal state react with a quorum … with good results.
Findings and lessons learned – Output

Graph 1: Indicator “Increased support from different groups”

Graph 2: Indicators “Increased cooperation in the region”

Estimations of LAG-members (average rating: scale 1 to 6, 1 is best)

Findings/Follow up actions:

- Confirmation: added value to improve local governance in general was achieved
- But rethink the role of economy, carefully monitor a possible dominance of public sector (consequence: change of co-financing rules)
- Reduce bureaucracy/narrow funding conditions to strengthen non-public actors!
Reflections on the evaluation approach

• Limits: with a LAG-survey it is possible to analyse an “inside”-view (= judge the functionality of the governance-arrangements), but only limited how these governance-arrangements are working together with actors, who are not part of these arrangements

• Challenge for implementing such surveys: cooperation with LAGs is crucial for reply rate, and for acceptance by LAG-managements you need early coordination (timing of survey, questions)
  - results should be useable for self-assessment (to LAGs it is not possible to give results divided in single groups of actors (numbers get to low), but open questions are even more interesting for self-evaluation)

• The LAG-surveys (all three 2009, 2013, 2017) worked well, but it is quite an effort: in principle it can be used in other Member States (even possible to use our results for key indicators as a base for comparisons)

• The approach is able to show an added value of LEADER: fine for local governance at RDP level, and such LAG-surveys also delivers results for aspects of social capital
Thank you

Kim Pollermann
Thünen-Institute of Rural Studies
kim.pollermann@thunen.de

Further information:
https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/173061  (conference paper about input/output aspects of improved governance)

https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/149409/2/10-1228-pollerman.pdf  (article about LEADER-evaluation 2007-13)

www.ele-evaluierung.de  (information about RDP-evaluation, but only in German)