

Enhancing Sustainable Local and Rural Development in the SAP Countries by Introducing the LEADER Experience

Objectives

The ICDT aims to transfer Hungarian experience and best practices associated with a successful EU-wide scheme, the LEADER-approach on rural development to the countries in the EU's Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), commonly referred to as the "Western Balkans."

Background

LEADER (an acronym meaning "Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale", i.e., "Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy") is a European Community Initiative for assisting rural communities in improving the quality of life. Experience has shown that LEADER can make a real difference to the daily lives of people in rural areas by playing an important role in encouraging innovative responses to rural problems. The Hungarian LEADER experience has two important features: the program is not only running with great success and is well documented (thus making the experience readily adaptable) but it was adopted in a transitional environment that offers several additional lessons learned.

Project

The ICDT created adequate "visibility" for the idea by bringing together national officials and civil society leaders at a conference and study tour in Hungary. The conference examined the LEADER approach's applicability in the Western Balkan countries and was followed by a site visit in the local development area of the region surrounding a village near Budapest. Second, to assure the biggest impact and multiplying effect possible, a "Training for Trainers" workshop was conducted in November 2008. These activities have been complemented by the translation of a comprehensive "LEADER Manual" based on Hungarian experiences and know-how into local languages and the preparation of a needs assessment study on the regional applicability of LEADER. As a follow-up, the ICDT has participated in the implementation of a number of training workshops in partnership with national governments including Serbia and Macedonia.

The ICDT is currently looking for additional funding to enable the continuation and expansion of these highly successful activities.

Donor:	Central European Initiative Know-how Exchange Program (CEI KEP) Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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