



LEADER approach in North Macedonia

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Introduction of LEADER in N. Macedonia

- LEADER approach theme in North Macedonia is present for almost 10 years
- Local “bottom-up approach” initiatives supported by several donor organizations (SIDA, UNDP, USAID)
- Initiatives were aimed at building and **strengthening of the social /human capital and capacity building** of potential LAG stakeholders in a number of municipalities
- During this process, the LEADER Approach was utilized to provide **examples** of what could be **achieved through the mobilization of different stakeholders.**



Introduction of LEADER in N. Macedonia

- Most significant actor for introduction of the LEADER approach is the **Rural Development Network of North Macedonia**
- Several LAGs were established and formalized as legal entities providing examples how to achieve local mobilization of different stakeholders



Introduction of LEADER in N. Macedonia

- Young and relatively well-educated residents of rural municipalities who were already active in the grassroots NGO sector became particularly engaged
- Acquiring soft skills and knowledge transfer, through a series of trainings, guidance and coaching methods of the local actors according to LEADER principles
- Implementation of small pilot initiatives at local level in pilot municipalities
- Creation of LAGs and preparation of LDS, with potential LAG constituents through serial of workshops
- Local ownership of rural development has grown, and some municipalities have started to allocate funds from their budgets for implementation of activities within their strategies for rural development

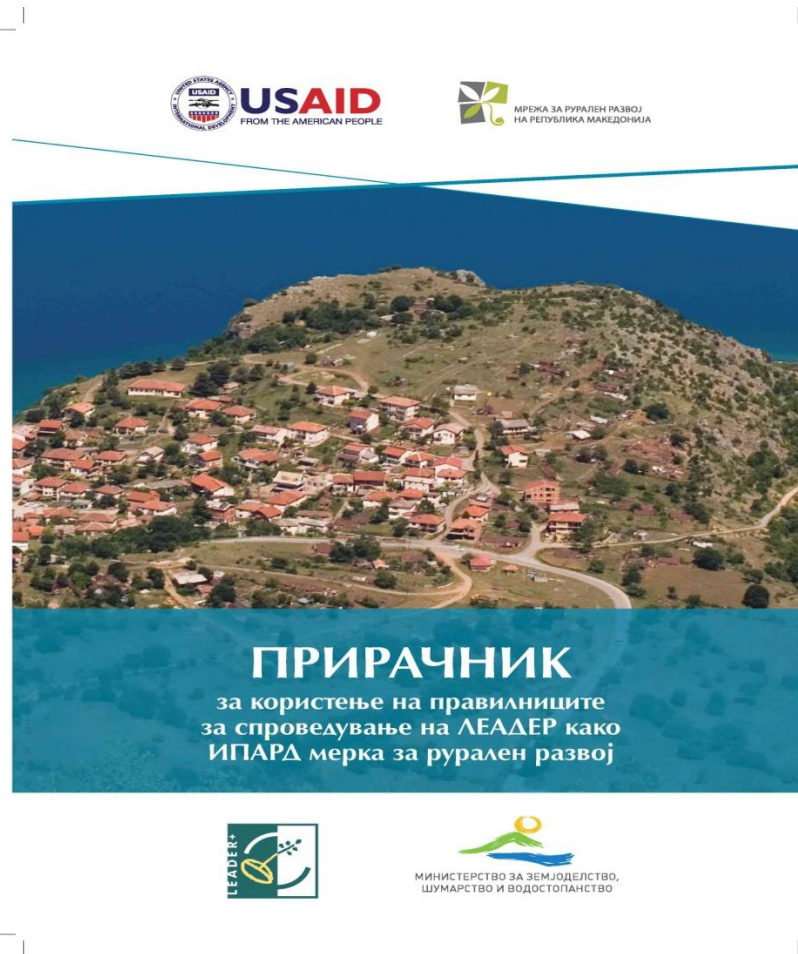




Legislation

- The Law on Agriculture and Rural Development regulates the LEADER approach which is a basis for the National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2023-2025(NSARD).
- The status of local action group (LAG) is regulated in the LAG register in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE) according the Rulebook for the detailed conditions for registration in the records of the local action group (OG 40/2013).
- Rulebook for the content and methodology for preparation of strategies for local development of rural areas group (OG 40/2013) (Rulebook for LDS

Manual for using LEADER Rulebooks





Local Action Groups

- Current LAG area covers approximately 2/3 of the territory of N. Macedonia.
- LAGs are registered in Central Court Register as associations of citizens (non-governmental organizations).
- National support for LAGs is provided from the National program for Rural Development
- In March 2019, first call for application was launched. 11 LAGs applied while support was granted to 9 LAGs.



Local Action Groups

- 13 LAGs are issued with decision on registration in the records of the LAG register within MAFWE





Opportunities for transition to IPARD funding

- LEADER measure is part of the IPARD 3 program, (still not accredited)
- The measure Technical Assistance foresees eligible expenditures, associated with activities of acquisition of skills to prepare potential LAGs for the implementation of the local development strategies.



Main difficulties encountered for implementation of LEADER

- Each of 13 LAGs are at a different stage of “maturity” due to differences in the baseline capacity of the LAG members in each region. However, the average organizational and project cycle management capacity of the LAGs remains low.
- Majority of the 13 LAGs lack sufficient capacity to implement Local Development Strategies and
- Lack of developed procedures from the relevant authorities for administering implementation of local development strategies.
- Donor funding has predominantly been used to cover the costs of training and facilitation of local groups and the costs associated with the analysis of local area needs and development of local development strategies.
- Slow process for accreditation of the LEADER measure within IPARD.



Sharing cooperation project examples with EU member states

Name of the project: TWINLAG

Timeframe

01.03.2020 - 31.10.2022

Partnership

- LAG Pays Vichy-Auvergne (**France**) SECAD (Ireland), LAG Ykkosakseli (**Finland**), LAG EMO (Finland), LAG Plackovica (**North Macedonia**), LAG Colinele Tigheciului (**Moldova**)



Objectives

1. Knowledge transfer and partnership building:
2. Thematic cooperation through knowhow, events and exchange of practitioners
3. Local development practices in LEADER-territories



Result and impact

- New contacts and cooperation
- Increased knowhow on territorial development, processes and methods
- Dissemination results