

Monograph DE: The Rural Regional Development Programme Hessen¹

Contents

1. Description of the Rural Regional Development Programme in Hessen	I-5
1.1 Initial phase of mainstreaming	I-5
1.2 Increased mainstreaming in Hessen	I-7
2. Starting conditions and initiation of the programme	I-8
3. Time line reconstruction	I-9
4. Description of mainstreamed LEADER features	I-10
4.1 The eight LEADER features	I-10
4.2 Cooperation and networking: how has it been financed and organised?	I-11
4.3 Specific EC requirements for LEADER+	I-11
4.4 Transfer of projects initiated under LEADER	I-11
5. Factors influencing mainstreaming of LEADER features	I-12
5.1 Factors furthering mainstreaming	I-12
5.2 Factors hindering mainstreaming	I-12
6. Synergies between the regional programme and other programmes	I-13
7. Outcomes in respect to behavioural changes	I-14
8. Expected or observed added value	I-15
8.1 Added value concerning the achievements of the programme in respect to its objectives	I-15
8.2 Added value concerning cooperation and networking: Has it been a critical success factor for adding value to Rural Development approaches?	I-15
8.3 Added value concerning the Community Objectives	I-15
8.4 Added value concerning governance aspects	I-15
8.5 Added value concerning competences	I-16

¹ Authors: Manfred Geißendörfer, Otmar Seibert; Forschungsgruppe Agrar- und Regionalentwicklung Triesdorf, University of Applied Sciences Weihenstephan/Triesdorf, D-91746 Weidenbach-Triesdorf

9.	Success factors for mainstreaming (internal, external)	I-16
10.	Recommendations	I-17
10.1	Concerning particular aspects which could be simplified or should be better adapted	I-17
10.2	Concerning specific implementation questions of LEADER-features	I-17
10.3	Concerning the removal of obstacles for mainstreaming	I-17
11.	Comment and personal impression of the survey process	I-18
12.	Table of interviews	I-18

1. Description of the Rural Regional Development Programme in Hessen

1.1 Initial phase of mainstreaming

The „programme for rural regional development in Hessen“ (subsequently PLR) was implemented in the rural areas throughout Hessen from 1992 to 1999. It based on long-term experiences made with the Hessen Village renewal programme in context with local participation processes. Moreover, a Hessian regional programme that was predominantly developed for the creation of new job- and income opportunities in the rural areas existed since 1984. It was also one of the first regional programmes which explicitly focussed on the concept of independent and cross-sectional regional development in Europe.² At the same time EU-funding concepts (LEADER I, Obj. 5b-programme) were integrated into the objectives and strategies of the Hessian Land so that the use of internal and external funds according to State-guidelines could be adopted in the regions.³ However, in most cases this only succeeded on municipality or project level.

The PLR (applied since 1993) has aimed at the transfer of these experiences from the local to the regional level and also on their broad implementation in practice. Thus the programme obtained a pilot-function for the test of the regional „bottom up“ approach. Furthermore, on Land-level, PLR took over the co-financing function for parts of the 5b and LEADER funds because it represented a suitable supplement due to the variety of funding possibilities in the field of investments (diversification, small measures for business set up's) as well as in the non-investing field (management, studies, marketing, qualification etc.). For LEADER it was more or less the „Ponton“ for the realisation of the EU community initiative in Hessen.

Right from the beginning the PLR followed the strategy of an integrated and independent regional development with the following objectives:

- Development based upon the utilisation of endogenous (specific) potentials;
- Improved utilisation of the resources by integrated cooperation of different sectors;
- Preservation and evolution of economical and cultural diversity.

The **targets** of the PLR were deliberately formulated open and „soft“ in order to allow for the peculiarity and diversity of the region as well as to provide sufficient space for approaches typical to the region:

- Creation of „strong-identity“ regions and ecological utilisation of their resources;
- Support of regional independency and promotion of the personal responsibility of citizens by non-bureaucratic participation possibilities;
- Improvement of the regional climate for development and innovation;
- Integration of different scopes of policy and of promotion possibilities;
- Realisation of region-specific projects.

² See Ipsen, D. et al.: Evaluierung des Programms zur ländlichen Regionalentwicklung in Hessen, 1999, p. 9ff.

³ See idem, p. 11.

The programme included **3 fields of intervention** with 11 measures which, beside of the classic investments, also comprised soft factors of regional development like education, culture and communication:

- Programme-controlling and -initiation:
 - Regional development concepts
 - Regional development groups, regional management
- Project preparation:
 - Information-, education- and consulting services
 - Concepts, Feasibility studies for single projects
- Project implementation with support for:
 - Labour costs for innovative projects
 - Facilities for basic supply
 - Socio-cultural initiatives
 - Facilities for the transfer of knowledge
 - Local jobs in small businesses
 - Rural tourism
 - Ecological land use.

At first the Hessian Ministry for Agriculture was responsible for the implementation, afterwards the Ministry for Economy and State Development. The reason for the transfer of responsibility was a restructuring of the resort in the middle of the 1990s and the assignment of the responsible department „village and regional development“ to the Hessian Ministry for Economy, Transport and State Development. The implementation of funding in practice was assigned to the offices for Regional State Development and Agriculture (ÄRLL). Until 1999 ten regions participated in the programme with the following funding volume:

- Investments in total, approx. 57 Mio. € (111 Mio. DM)
- Grants approx. 26 Mio € (51 Mio. DM)
- 947 promoted projects, thereof 11 % in the field of programme controlling, 31 % in the field of project preparation and 58 % region-specific projects (accounting for approx. 79 % of the investment volume and approx. 64 % of the grants).

The high number of project preparatory measures was characteristic for the PLR, e.g. elaboration of concept, coaching and qualification (31 %). They ensured the success of the investment measures though they only accounted for 12 % of the grants volume.⁴

⁴ See Hessisches Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Verkehr und Landesentwicklung: Evaluation des Programms zur ländlichen Regionalentwicklung in Hessen, Wiesbaden, 2002, p. 13.

1.2 Increased mainstreaming in Hessen

Since 2001 the PLR has been integrated in a newly structured funding framework. Several aid programmes were integrated into 4 coherent aid schemes which partly consider EU and Federal guidelines (e.g. GRW), too. They aim at promoting

- SME-start-ups (horizontal)
- Innovation (sectoral)
- Vocational training (horizontal)
- Regional development (regional).

The realignment of the different programmes linked the former PLR stronger to the other regional support programmes (operating in selected areas only) and hence has followed the principle of regionalised structural policy. Therefore the regional programmes were centralised in the „Hessian guideline for the promotion of regional development“ (subsequently RiFRE). The regional assistance mainly follows the principles of both the “old” PLR (regional development concepts, regional forums and regional management) as well as the territorial and integrated approach of LEADER II. Furthermore, a link with the programme components of the Joint action for the Improvement of Regional Economic Development (GRW⁵, e.g. location marketing, operational investments, supply of infrastructure for industry and tourism) was established besides the continuation and expansion of the funding spectrum of the PLR (e.g. stronger focus on public relations, exchange of experience, networking and cooperation of regions). Since then the village renewal programme also belongs to this guideline. The former PLR corresponds to part 6 „promotion of independent development and quality of life“ of the new guideline (see table 1). The guideline was notified with the EC in 2000.

Table 1: Programme structure of the Hessian Guideline for the promotion of regional development (RiFRE)

1	Operational investments
2	Regional development concepts (REK) and regional management (RM)
3	Regional location marketing
4	Infrastructures for the settlement and development of enterprises
5	Tourism
6	Independent rural development and quality of life
7	Village renewal

On the one hand each part of the programme is applicable within designated areas only, e.g. parts 1 and 4 in the areas which are distinguished by the criteria of the GRW or the obj. 2-promotion. However, apart from the periphery of the large dynamic conurbations (Rhein-Main-area), programme part 6 is adopted in all rural regions of Hessen.¹

On the other hand common a comprehensive set of rules (e.g. legal, promotion-related and budget-related requirements) is effective for all programme parts. This also applies to EU co-financing.

⁵ Gemeinschaftsaufgabe Regionale Wirtschaftsförderung
¹ Idem, p. 45.

The programme sections 6 and 7, for instance, are integrated into the Rural Development Programmes according to VO 1257/1999 in the form of funding regulations, in particular for the implementation of the measures in Art. 33. Programme part 6 is also considered as a funding basis for LEADER+ in Hessen. In contrast, the former scope of the PLR with respect to agro-environmental measures has now been offered exclusively within the mainstream promotion (1257/99). Comprehensive agricultural marketing activities have been integrated into a separate Hessian programme for regional marketing as well.

The Land Ministries have applied criteria from RiFRE to other programmes. On the level of enterprise and tourism promotion they differentiate between

- small commercial enterprises (promotion of rural development) and
- larger corporations (regional promotion of the economy).

By this a higher internal and external coherence of the Hessian regional assistance shall be achieved. This concerns in particular the programme section 6 which regulates the „supply of services for regional markets“.

2. Starting conditions and initiation of the programme

In 1999 the Hessian Ministry for Economy, Transport and State Development commissioned a two-parts evaluation of the PLR. Based on the analysis of actors, effects and procedures (institutions) recommendations were derived for the adaptation and further development of the PLR. The modified promotion guidelines reflect strategic elements of LEADER II, LEADER+ and of the „old“ PLR. Today they form the basis of the mainstream regional development policy in Hessen.

The combination of the individual programmes is based on the following developments (see figure 1):

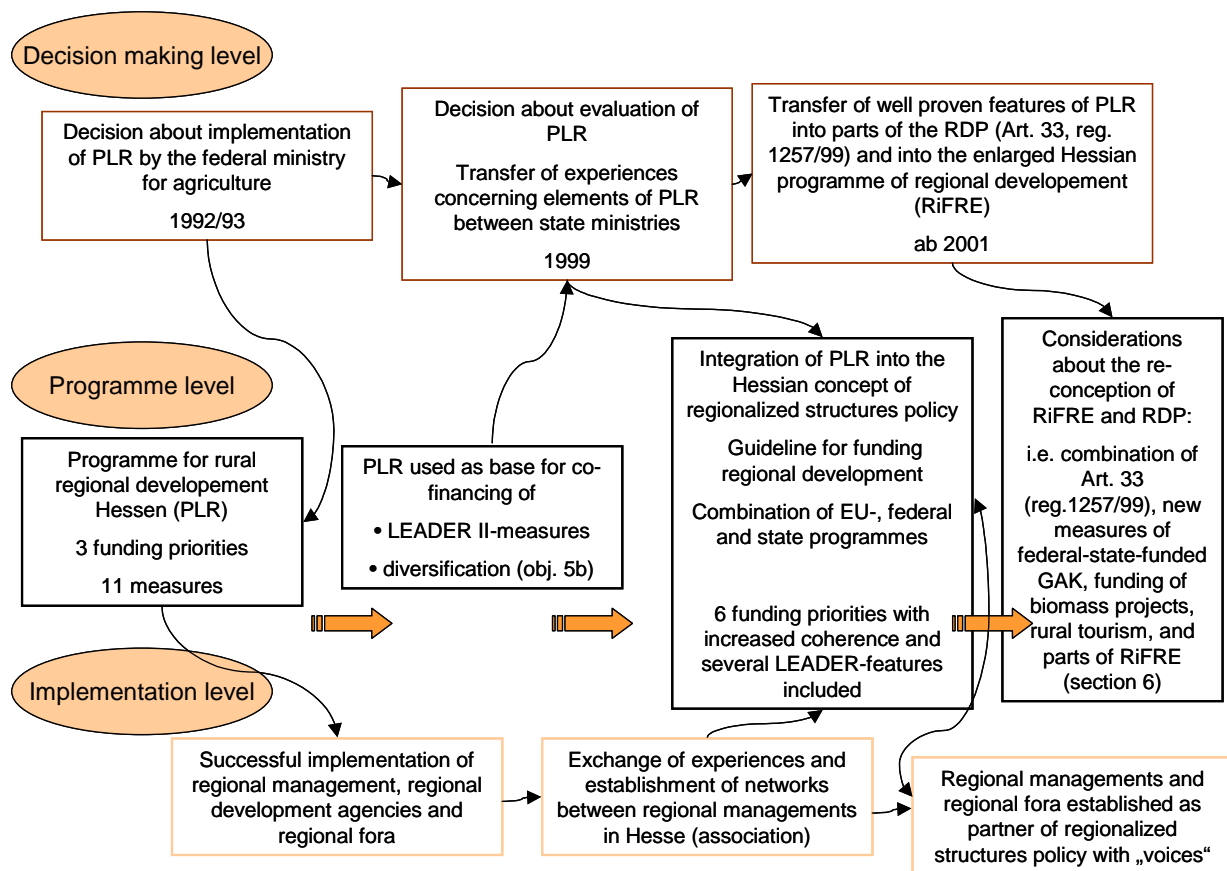
- The evaluation of the PLR measures in 1999 provided evidence of the success of the PLR;
- Simultaneously, several regional programmes have been implemented under a common roof since 2000; this was enforced by the reform of the EU structures funds and the need of an optimised utilisation of the modified aid schemes;
- The Ministries for Agriculture and Economy as well as their subsequent administrations have undergone slow, but steady organisational change. The office „village and regional development“, for instance, had been assigned to the Ministry for Economy (and therein to the department of state development) for 8 years. Since 2002 it has been integrated into the agricultural administration again. Thus conceptual renewal was initiated which, according to the responsible officials, otherwise would have taken place in a much slower pace or not at all.

In January 2002 the RiFRE was officially published. Due to the modification of the principles of the Joint Programme for the Improvement of Agricultural Structures and Coast Protection (GAK, decided in December 2003), the Hessian Ministry for Agriculture now again intends an (even) stronger grouping of the aid schemes for the development of the rural areas (see figure 1).

3. Time line reconstruction

Explanations for the understanding of the relation between decision- and programme level, as shown in the subsequent figure, were given in section 2 already. In addition, the assistance of actors from regional organisation units (regional managements, regional forums, offices of the LAG) is also worthwhile mentioning. The ongoing exchange of experience between these operational units on the one hand and the growing significance of the regional organisations as a partner of land policy on the other, demonstrates the increasing regionalisation of the structures policy.

Figure 1: Time line of „Mainstreaming“ in Hessen



4. Description of mainstreamed LEADER features

4.1 The eight LEADER features

Territorial approach: The significance of regional development concepts (REK) is restricted to programme part 6. However, the area-based concept as an operational basis for funding decisions is to be emphasised stronger by each region. For that purpose the generation of area concepts as a separate programme part (2) are eligible for funding. In addition, the REK's will probably need to be updated in shorter intervals, in particular if they also serve as a decision basis for other structures policy programmes or programme parts (e.g. part 4 and 5). The REK's are not comparable for all programme sections; the mainly demand-oriented support of single enterprises (1), for instance, is excluded.

Bottom up: A strong participation of the population and social groups is particularly assumed in the sections 2, 6 and 7 of the RiFRE. In this respect a participation of the economical and social partners on local and regional level is expected. The focus thereby lies more on the participation of representatives of interest group than on the participation of individuals. The latter are invited to produce their ideas and perceptions within the village renewal process (programme section 7).

Local partnership: The RiFRE concentrates on the establishment of „regional fora“ which participate in funding decisions of projects. Simultaneously, the new guideline harmonises the regional management approach (RM) of LEADER with the possibility to promote regional management by the GRW (introduced in 2000). Due to the combination of different programmes under the roof of RiFRE the regional fora have been able to increase their scope of action in relation to funding decisions.

Innovation: The innovation criterion is just weakly realised both within the PLR and LEADER. However, it is clearer but also less „exquisite“ conceptualised within the RiFRE. The existence of a sufficient number of small enterprises operating in regional markets, for instance, stated as an ample condition for innovation. Thus it can be concluded that a linkage between the territorial and the innovation approach has taken place.

Yet soft aids for innovation (e.g. funding of innovation assistants for SMEs) have also been adopted in other sectors of the Hessian Ministry for Economy (apart from regional promotion).

Multi-sectoral integration: The improvement of the quality of life and the strengthening of the regional identity are the main objectives of programme part 6. Both topics are cross-section issues arising from an analysis of the opportunities and risks of the area. Thus funding is closely related to:

- cultural potentials (regional history of landscape and culture),
- the safeguarding of a sufficient local supply (also with information-, communication- and service networks),
- the promotion of small enterprises and start-ups,
- projects aiming at the raising of peoples awareness

A multi-sectoral link of different interests can be observed in the programme sections 2, 3, 6 and 7.

Decentralized management: The responsibility for regional development lies with the district administration (subordinate to the rural district administrator). The rural district administrator is a member of the regional forum. Hence, the district administration became final beneficiary. The funding application is complemented with a statement of the regional forum and forwarded for approval to the managing

authority (in Hessen: Investitionsbank Hessen AG). Yet the separation of the financial responsibility and the rights to submit project proposal and the restricted possibilities for regional fora influence funding decisions.

4.2 Cooperation and networking: how has it been financed and organised?

Networking and trans-national cooperation are explicitly mentioned as objectives in the RiFRE. In coherence to the objectives of LEADER+ the RiFRE asks the Hessian regions to participate in exchange of experience and the development of cooperation projects in the scope of national and trans-national cooperation of rural areas (article 6.4.1). Regarding the practical implementation of article 33-measures, however, co-operations are predominantly reduced to the national level.

4.3 Specific EC requirements for LEADER+

Participation and decision making: The votes of the regional fora play an increasingly important role respecting the allocation of funds, also outside of LEADER groups.

Thematic orientation: No requirements concerning the thematic approach are mentioned in the programme. However, the strong orientation of programme part 6 on culture, regional identity and the general improvement of the quality of life needs to be mentioned. In contrast tourism, private investments and infrastructures are regulated in different programme parts that barely permit comprehensive thematic approaches. An implicit topical focus only results from the requirements for a conclusive overall-concept for the development of the region in programme part 2 and 3 (REK, regional marketing).

Evaluation: Regional managements are meant to generate regular annual- and monitoring reports in order to document the progresses of the actor- and project-oriented working processes.

4.4 Transfer of projects initiated under LEADER

The transfer-quote of LEADER projects is, according to statements of the LEADER programme-administrator, only moderate so far. LEADER II projects are predominantly adapted by new LEADER+ groups and, however, also by regions which are not funded by LEADER. In particular in the fields

- „promotion of the quality of life by securing the basic supply“ (e.g. village- or neighbourhood shops, mobile points of sale) and
- „facilities for the improvement of cultural events“ (e.g. community buildings in villages, meeting points for women or youth),

show a more intensive utilisation of well-proven LEADER concepts, that area also realised in other programme parts (e.g. part 7 village renewal).

A higher transfer-quota yet results from the application of soft instruments, e.g. of project preparatory and accompanying measures. The adoption of coherent regional concepts with operationalised goals and indicators, for example, was also introduced by other offices of the Ministry for Economy.

5. Factors influencing mainstreaming of LEADER features

5.1 Factors furthering mainstreaming

The exchange of information between different departments of the Ministry for Economy and the Ministry for Agriculture has provided favourable conditions for the take-over of successful programme parts. In this context the department “village- and regional development” did not force a transfer of “extremes”. However, other ressorts also demonstrated a general willingness for mainstreaming. This was favoured by the anchoring of „soft” elements within the GRW since 1995 (REK) and 2000 (RM) respectively.

Yet in the LEADER II-phase the innovative and multi-sectoral approach (see 4.1) was not interpreted “exquisitely”. Integrative concepts were in fact demanded from the LEADER groups; however, these concepts did not have to be as comprehensive as regional plans and needed to refer to project-oriented conversion strategies of local actors. Thus, in most cases not more than 2 to 3 sectors were integrated into regional concepts.

If regional development concepts (REK) are to be relevant for the daily work of the regional management and the implementing institutions, they need to be adapted to the relevant settings. The incentive for a regular update of the REKs may be increased if these are also considered as a basis for the allocation decisions within other programmes related to structural policy. The increase in importance of REKs is demonstrated by the establishment of a separate programme part within the Hessian RiFRE.

According to the managing authority the success of the regionalised structural policy was quasi “self-supporting”. The productive competition between the departments for agriculture and economy was certainly an advantage. The take up of the successful concepts of the regions on programme level (vertical mainstreaming) and the exchange of these experiences between the departments led to a horizontal mainstreaming on institutional level. Political support for the regionalised structures policy (e.g. on State Secretary level) as well as the „trojanic tactic” of the office „village- and regional development” in this regard provided an important background.

5.2 Factors hindering mainstreaming

In 1993 only some regions had gained experiences in „regional management”. Moreover, suitable qualification- and vocational training possibilities were missing. This has hampered a more intensive mainstreaming until the end of 1990.

In the beginning regional development groups have worked in parallel to the administrations for regional development and agriculture. The unclear division of tasks hence led to friction losses.⁶ Thus, for a transfer of LEADER elements it is necessary to clarify responsibilities and divisions of tasks. Mainstreaming can only work if funding- and implementing institutions think and act as coherent and integrated as the regional development groups.

Finally there are technical factors which burden mainstreaming: The financial processing of different programmes in separate households with annual budgets complicates the flexible use of instruments (whether of LEADER or the PLR). Perennial “approval windows” and the possibility for transfer of funds into the coming year facilitate the process-like development and realisation of projects. This requires on the one side a consolidation of the multiplicity of programmes into one single programme

⁶ Idem, p. 33.

to be managed by one institutional entity (on state level) and on the other a regional mechanism for distribution and transfer of funds which facilitates a flexible administration of funds.

6. Synergies between the regional programme and other programmes

The simplified LEADER approach was implemented into various parts of the new regional development programme (RiFRE, see parts 1.2 and 4.1). The programme part “endogenous rural development and quality of life” (part 6 of the RiFRE) simultaneously forms a basis for the implementation of Art. 33-measures (see chapter 1.2). Thus only slight differences between LEADER+ and Art. 33-measures in Hessen occur. Out of the spectrum of Art. 33-measures only regional management was not accepted from the EU-Commission as a funding element..

7. Outcomes in respect to behavioural changes

The following valuations refer to the experiences with the PLR and the Hessian LEADER II-programme, because the questions placed here are hardly to be answered in the desired form for the mainstream programmes. Instead of that the middle column indicates, how strong LEADER led to changes (scale from +++ to 0); the right column provides some background information regarding this appraisal.

Changes related to ...	Phenomenon, Intensity of changes	Explanation Background of changes
...formulation of a joint vision and an area-based strategy	++	An increasing number of regions developed area-based concepts; the LAG worked as model; the strategy of "endogenous regional development" pursued by the federal state government found broad acceptance.
...participation of population in development processes	+	On local level individual citizens' participation may be realizable and favourable; on regional level representatives of groups and institutions (multipliers) rather than individual citizens should be involved; partly this participation process ran quite slowly.
...self determination of the regional development process	+++	See first row (strategy); Strong engagement of the population in the formulation of own development concepts; the federal state provided the necessary instruments (e.g. regional management).
...encouragement of innovative practices	++	Although at first the understanding of "innovation" created some problems, large parts of the population were prepared to try something new; no shyness at new one; predominantly very open population.
...acquisition of private funds	0	Up to now the financial participation of enterprises and private groups remains rather hesitant; this phase is expected to come – because most projects are considered to be successful and partly eradiate far beyond the regions.
...realtions between sectors	+	Only the sectors necessary for the particular development activities have been included; No extreme efforts were undertaken, in order to participate further sectors.
...trans-territorial co-operation	0	Not realised yet.
...networking	++	
...management and financing	+++	After a start-up phase a professional regional management developed in all LAG; the managements found broad acceptance and could develop itself a strong position compared to the administration of-fices.

8. Expected or observed added value

8.1 Added value concerning the achievements of the programme in respect to its objectives

The added value of soft instruments is widely accepted in Hessen. Even the State Audit Court withdrew its criticism of the regional management.

After the recent adaptations of the Joint Programmes GRW and GAK the utilization of the two instruments “integrated regional development concepts” and “regional management” will probably find increasingly acceptance in practice. However, the assessment of their particular added value demands for a comprehensive analysis of the achievement of objectives over a longer period.

8.2 Added value concerning cooperation and networking: Has it been a critical success factor for adding value to Rural Development approaches?

Up to now cooperation and networking contribute only in a limited way to the mainstream programme (PLR). Many regions had to improve their administrative capacities and to create internal acceptance through specific projects in order to achieve a degree of flexibility the preparation and implementation of trans-regional projects demand for.

8.3 Added value concerning the Community Objectives

The added value of the integration of LEADER elements into the rural development programmes cannot be quantified. The application of LEADER features primarily results in qualitative effects, which indirectly affect also quantifiable results. As the implementation of measures in the frame of reg. 1257 started not until 2001, the mid-term review of that programme dated at the end of 2002 could not yet provide reliable results.⁷ However, the Hessian authorities assume that by the application of the LEADER-characteristics in the mainstream programmes similar effects are to be expected on a long-term basis like during the LEADER II-period in the LEADER-areas.

8.4 Added value concerning governance aspects

The establishment of regional development groups and other regional fora strengthens the decentralized co-ordination of sectoral interests and the decision making capacity on regional level. In the long run the structures created by LEADER II (LAG), PLR (regional management) and other programmes (regional forums) encourage the regional governance approach in terms of a more independent institution for regional development.

Furthermore the representatives of the Hessian State department of village- and regional development recognize a paradigm-change within the administration concerning the rather strict EU-programming procedure. While at first programming was regarded as annoying and labour-consuming, today the requirements of programming – logical frameworks, quantifiable targets, strategies for implementation as well as indicators for monitoring and evaluation – are regarded as helpful. These facilitate considerably an output- and target-oriented budgeting. Even the evaluation is regarded less as control but as learning tool today.

⁷ See Bundesforschungsanstalt für Landwirtschaft (Institut für Betriebswirtschaft, Agrarstruktur und Entwicklung ländlicher Räume): Halbzeitbewertung des Plans zur Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums in Hessen, 2003.

In the course of preparation and approval of projects the subordinate authorities for the implementation (ÄRLL) had to learn to look across their sectoral horizon. Thus integrated perspectives and cross-institutional-linkages found support even within the administration.

In the course of administrative reforms in Hessen funding institutions, that formerly have been acting independently (including the ÄRLL) has been integrated under the roof of the regional district administration recently. This new “pool” forms a part of the district administration and is assigned to the district administrator directly. At present the advantages of that reform are not to be assessed. Anyhow, several specialized departments are working in a spatial proximity, which will allow for more intensive cross- institutional-linkages and an improved trans-sectoral coordination.

8.5 Added value concerning competences

Both the new constituted regional managements and the administrations in charge of LEADER (and PLR) had to develop new competences first. This has concerned the following (only exemplary) fields of activity:

- Assessment of processes and projects;
- Advice on and management of projects;
- Sensibilisation of actors for regional initiatives;
- Public relations and regional marketing;
- Balancing of interests between actors (public – private, communes – state etc.);
- Creation of a “creative milieu for innovation”;
- Integrated management for funding and financing (co-ordination of sector policies on regional level);
- Constitution of monitoring systems (data pools for evaluation purposes) and self control (self-evaluation, basis for the application of soft instruments);
- Promotion of networking and trans-regional co-operation;

The requirements at regional management, which demand for particular competences, were described meanwhile in numerous publications⁸. In Germany an increasing number of qualification offers directed to different tasks of regional management respond to the needs for qualification (see e.g.: www.euregia.de).

The acquisition of competences and thus initiated learning processes both within the regions and the administrations involved must be ranked as the most important effects of the LEADER-approach respectively the follow-up activities of LEADER.

9. Success factors for mainstreaming (internal, external)

In principle a certain degree of “common sense” across the different authorities concerning the strategies of regional development is necessary. This can be favoured by political support of the players on regional and land level.

⁸ See e.g. Forschungsgruppe Agrar- und Regionalentwicklung et al.: Handbuch „Erfolgreiches Regionalmanagement“. Edited by the Bavarian State Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning , 2003.

10. Recommendations

10.1 Concerning particular aspects which could be simplified or should be better adapted

Often in the programmes of the German Länder and in the regional development concepts the LEADER-features were formulated very „exquisitely“ and at an abstract level. Hence, it was necessary to establish a common understanding regarding the feasibility and acceptance of these features before the first LEADER measures could be realized. In the course of the practical implementation LEADER-features then lost a bit of “extravagance”. The increasing exchange of experience between the regions also contributed to that fact. Moreover, the funding institutions learned to distinguish between

- territorial innovations (what is new in the region?) and
- real inventions (what is generally new, e.g. within an industry?).

10.2 Concerning specific implementation questions of LEADER-features

The transfer of LEADER-specificities into other programmes is easier, if it is not forced by means of “hard requirements”. The support of voluntary partnerships and a certain openness towards new funding practices is more important. It also became clear that strong political and economic support is a distinct advantage as it increases acceptance. This refers also to the implementation of new control structures.

The close connection between the regional management and the funding institutions or other regional development agencies proved to be very helpful. It has become obvious that a regional forum requires a “critical size” in order to obtain a sufficient enforcement-power of the regional management.

In Hessen the measure „qualification“ was not very popular although a close relation between project-implementation qualification and the success of the projects could be observed. LEADER+ will focus on ESF-type actions for support.

10.3 Concerning the removal of obstacles for mainstreaming

Obstacles for mainstreaming may result both from the actors and the instruments of mainstreaming. So, in practice, the actors need to be identified first; and the most effective instruments of mainstreaming can rarely be determined on an objective base only.

The transfer and mainstreaming of innovative and proven models can be supported by “push” as well as “pull” activities. Thereby the following approaches are helpful:

1. Identification of „best practice“ models;
2. Initiation of competitions for projects;
3. Networking and clustering of experiences and/or actors;
4. Diffusion of tacit knowledge through the support of the information- and model-transfer;
5. Transfer of the experiences via pro-active approach.

The first instrument is adopted relatively frequently, the second more often and the last rarely. However, mainstreaming should be all the more effective, if the stakeholders of a programme realise the benefit of the feature to be transferred.

At first the regional actors may create connections in order to practise a common horizontal mainstreaming (build-up of networks, clustering). In this respect service agencies can be helpful to spread out innovations. Many studies demonstrate that such networks are particularly efficient if they are borne by public-private partnerships.⁹

Furthermore, the actors may try to create vertical transfer in the dialogue with the administrative level. These stakeholders, however, can only be persuaded if they are able and willing to acknowledge developments in their field of operation to be ready for mainstreaming (e.g. by evaluation). The learning-effects on the level of programme administrators (in many cases the sectoral departments) are hence most decisive for the modification of the mainstream-policy. They have the greatest leverage effects to render innovations as standard in practice by „push“ activities like „policy making“. Nevertheless, the other instruments are also important because innovations at first need to be settled and implemented at the organising political level (bottom-up)

11. Comment and personal impression of the survey process

The talks and interviews for the provision of the required information were conducted in a very open way. Yet the time required for the reply and for own inquiries respecting the identification of mainstreaming have been much higher than expected.

12. Table of interviews

Name of interviewee	Function	Date of interview
1. Mr. Klaus Schüttler	Head of department "Dorf- und Regionalentwicklung" (village- and regional development)	2004-01-08 2004-01-18
2. Mr. Jörg Schramek	Evaluator, ex post evaluation of LEADER II	2004-01-08

⁹ See Forschungsgruppe Agrar- und Regionalentwicklung Triesdorf et al: Evaluation des Regionalmanagements als weiches Instrument der Landesentwicklung in Bayern. Triesdorf 2002.