

ESF+ Support Centre

Study visit on Simple functional model of CLLD in
ESF+: Minimum administration, maximum added
value

7-8 September
Prague, Czechia



Network:
Password:

Presentations by Czechia

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(Czechia)



European Union
European Social Fund
Operational Programme Employment



STUDY VISIT: SIMPLE FUNCTIONAL MODEL OF CLLD IN ESF+



Renáta Kučerová, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, CZ



7 – 8 September 2026

CLLD – LESSONS LEARNED FROM EXPERIENCE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

CZECH SUCCESS STORY

Czech ESF+ CLLD in OP Employment plus (OPE+): **Simple model with maximum added value of the bottom-up approach**

OPE+ CLLD target groups and activities : **Local knowledge and multidisciplinary approach = smart solutions for the community**

Evidence-based approach: **Quality, impact and continuous learning**

Multifund: **Unlocking the full potential of CLLD**

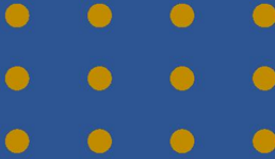
Key messages looking ahead: Call for action 28+



Czech ESF+ CLLD in OPE+

Simple model with maximum
added value of the bottom-up approach

CHANGING ROLE OF LAGS



OPE (2014 – 2020)

LAG as a funding body

LAG conducts project assesment and selection

LAG capacity building in administration

Contact with project implementers

OPE+ (2021 – 2027)

LAG as a project applicant (in cooperation with partners)

LAG as a coordinator of local stakeholders

LAG capacity building in specialized agendas

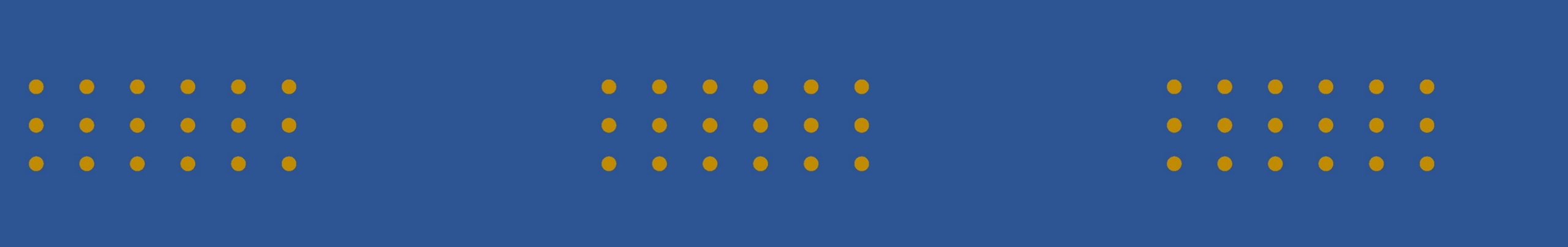
Direct work with target groups

Strengthening cooperation in the area

CLLD IN OPE (2014 - 2020) VERSUS OPE+ (2021 - 2027)



OPE (2014 - 2020)		OPE+ (2021 - 2027)
72 million EUR (2,7 %)	Programming period	99 million EUR (5 %)
151 LAGs	Allocation	153 LAGs
1 293 projects	Number of LAGs	284 projects
58 400 EUR	Number of projects	340 000 EUR
100% of the allocation	Average subsidy per project	98 % allocation in legal acts
1 call of the MA, 1 118 calls of LAGs	Absorption rate	2 calls of the MA (CLLD) 1 call of the MA (CLLD -U)
Indirect costs 25%	Number of calls	flat rate 40%
	Cost method	



OPE+ CLLD target groups and activities



Local knowledge and multidisciplinary
approach = SMART SOLUTIONS FOR THE
COMMUNITY

SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES: FROM SERVICES TO COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS



OPE

Social services

**Community social work
and community centers**

Support for families with children

Social entrepreneurship

Employment programmes

OPE+

Social work in rural areas (e.g. shared social worker)

Debt counseling

Community-based planning of social services

Community work

Support for informal carers, homesharing

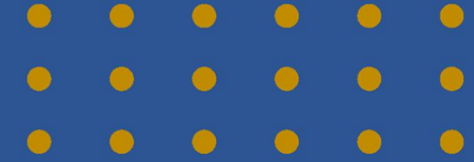
Home palliative and hospice care

Support for at-risk families with children

Complex employment activities



OPE+ TARGET GROUPS



**PERSONS WITH
ADDICTION HEALTH RISKS**



YOUNG PEOPLE



**PEOPLE WITH MENTAL
HEALTH CONDITIONS**



VOLUNTEERS



INFORMAL CARERS



**PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**



**FAMILIES WITH
CHILDREN AT RISK**



**MINORITIES,
MIGRANTS**



**LONG TERM OR
REPETEDLY
UNEMPLOYED**

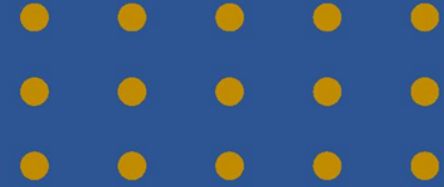


**PEOPLE AT RISK OF OVER-
INDEBTNESS**



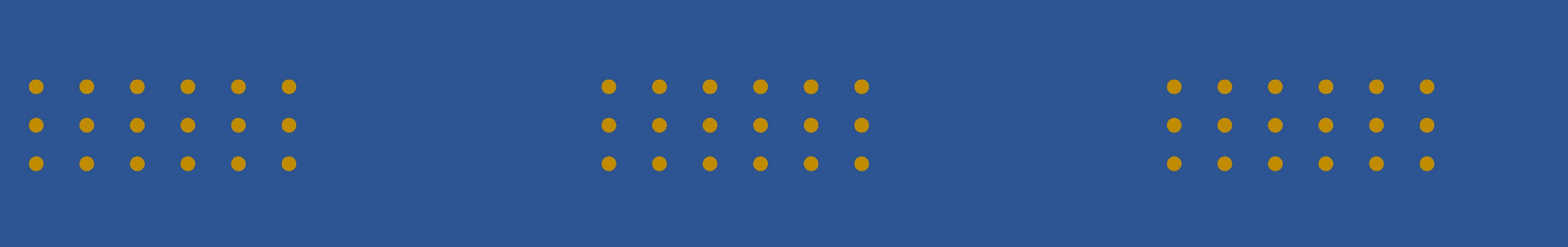
OLDER PERSONS

SHARED SOCIAL WORKER IN SMALL MUNICIPALITIES



- **Strengthening capacity of social work** – white spaces (completion of the official system)
- **Support of clients in their natural environments** - search of clients, early prevention
- **Local knowledge and partnerships based on long term activities of LAGs** - cooperation with mayors, social services, schools, authorities
- **Capacity building of mayors** (new competencies) in small municipalities, sustainability
- **High mobility and flexibility** - not restricted processes
- **Confidence of clients** – no repression mechanismus
- **New concepts:** united system of social work in the area, coordination, shared field social worker for more municipalities



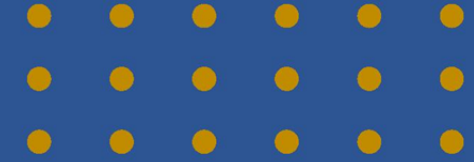


Evidence-based approach

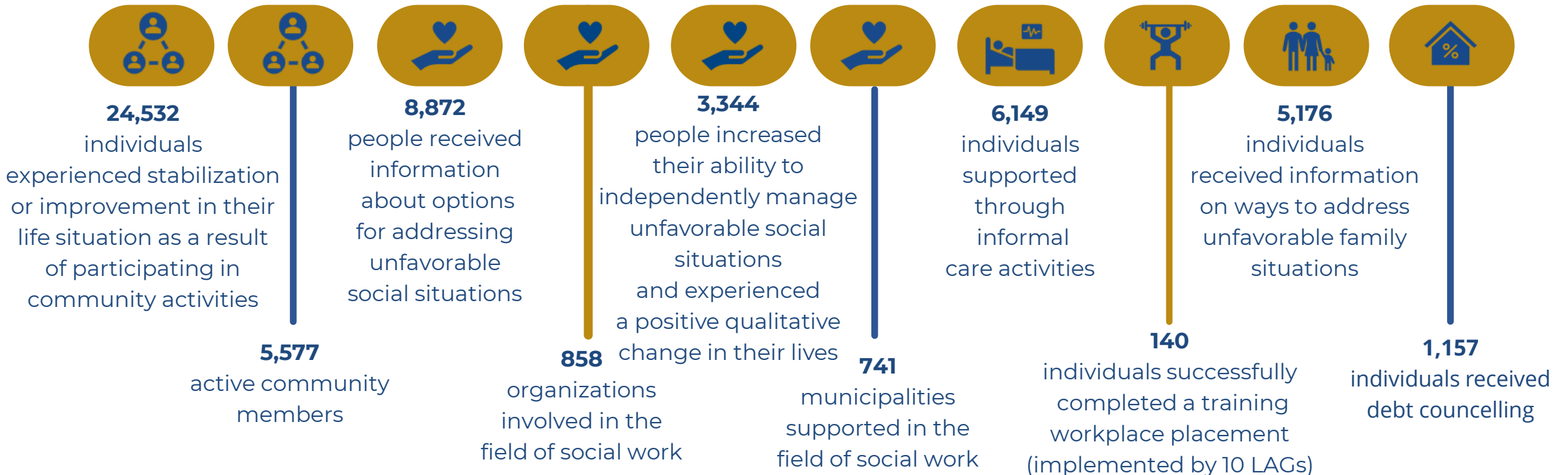


Quality, impact and continuous learning

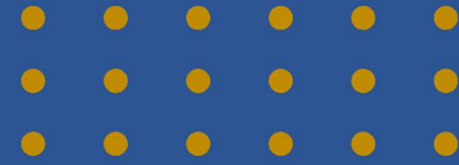
MONITORING IMPACTS, EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING



➤ Set of Monitoring Indicators



MONITORING IMPACTS, EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING



➤ **Self-evaluation of LAGs** as condition for the successive project

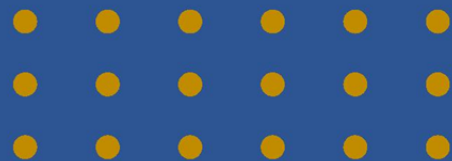
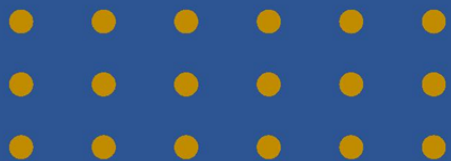


➤ **Evaluation and Studies by MA:**

Study on 5 Financial Models of Community Work in LAG´s projects (in preparation)

➤ **Good Practice**

➤ **Partnership MA and National Network of LAGs:** capacity building, advancing



Multifund

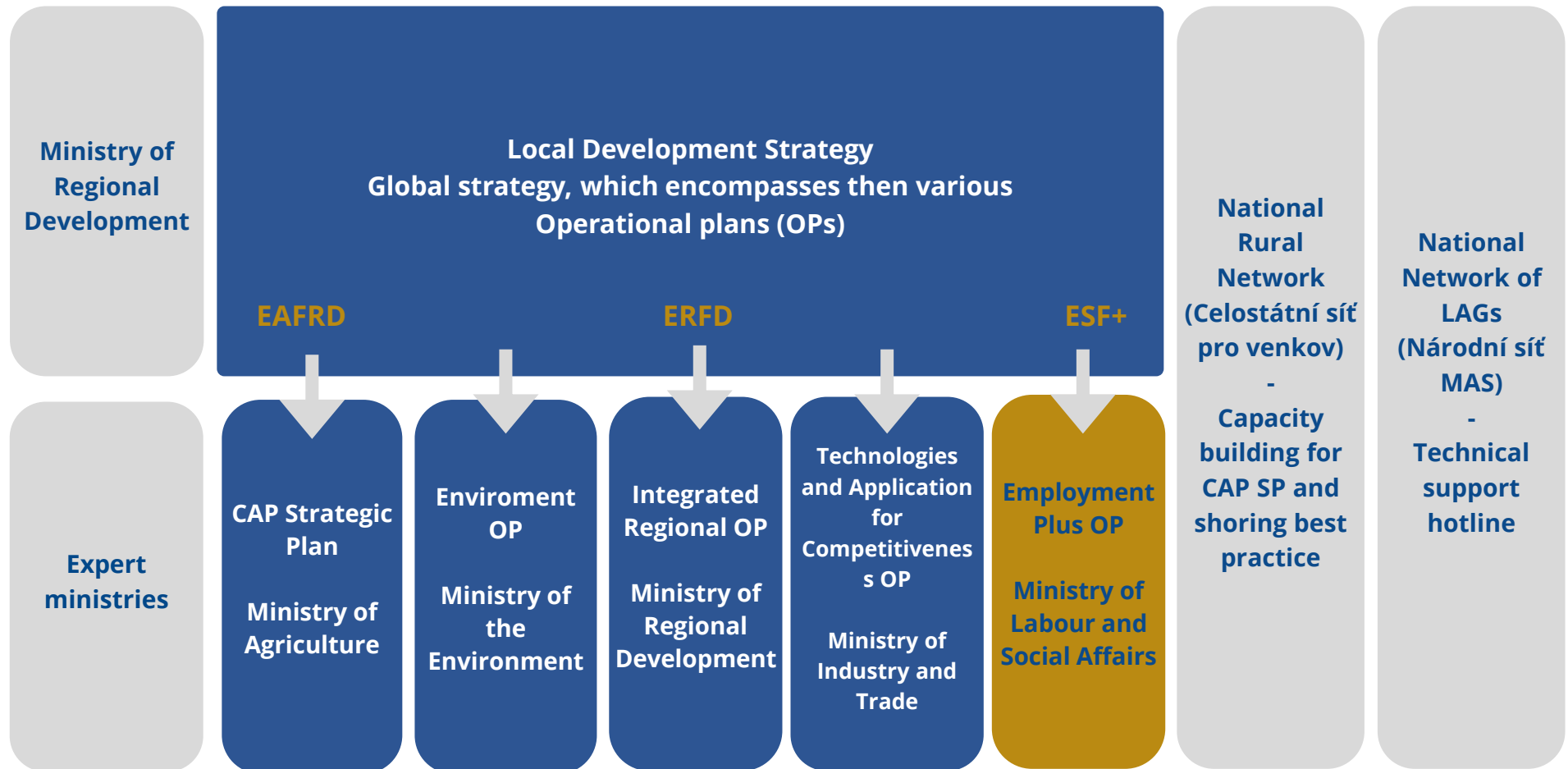
Unlocking the full potential of CLLD

CZECH MULTIFUND MODEL

Read more: EU CAP NETWORK 20 Jun 2025



[Integrated for impact: Czechia's multi-fund CLLD model shows the way | EU CAP Network](#)

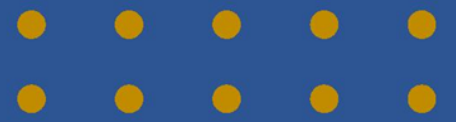




Looking ahead: key messages

Call for action: 28+

CLLD EUROPEAN SUCCESS STORY



CALL FOR ACTION 28+

➤ **CLLD meeting ambitions of Regulation proposals 28+**

place-based, from multifund to multisectoral, synergies, simplicity and flexibility, sustainable prosperity across all regions, quality of life in rural areas, comprehensive partnership

➤ **Lets build a European Community for Learning and Change**



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Presentation by the European Commission

Simona PULBERE

Policy Officer, European Commission, Directorate General
for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

CLLDs with ESF+

and future integrated territorial approaches

Study visit CLLD, Prague, 7-8
September

Simona PULBERE, DG EMPL G1

ESF+ 2021-2027



EU's key instrument for investing in people



Mission: to improve employment opportunities for workers in the Union (Art 162 TFEU) and to contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion (Art 174 and 175 TFEU) (ERDF, CF).



Concretely: It helps to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and overcome challenges identified in the framework of the European Semester recommendations.

EU budget for ESF+ 2021-2027

€95 billion

Investments are implemented by:

Member States, which supplement €95 billion by the EU with their own budget, reaching:

Over €140 billion

Articles 7-24

European Commission under the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) Strand

€762 million

Articles 25-29

ESF+ Priorities



- EUR 44 billion to investments in employment,
- **EUR 45,5 billion to investments in social inclusion,**
- EUR 64.6 billion to investments in education and skills,
- **EUR 5,3 billion to investments addressing material deprivation.**

Thematic concentrations for Social Inclusion

Thematic concentration of **25% for social inclusion**:

"Member States shall allocate at least 25 % of their resources of the ESF+ strand under shared management to the specific objectives for the social inclusion policy area (...)" . Calculated on proportion of the EU amount.

On average, Member States invest 31% of their resources to social inclusion (based on EU amount).

Thematic concentration of at least **5% to address child poverty** in MS that exceeded the EU average of children at risk of poverty between 2017 and 2019.

On average, Member States invest 7% (based on EU amount).

Additionally, thematic concentration of at least 3% to **support the most deprived persons**.

On average, Member States invest 5.5% (based on EU amount). Some Member States go beyond 8% (LU/FR/RO/CY).

ESF+ territorial delivery mechanisms

Integrated Territorial Development for funds regulated under the **CPR (Regulation (EU) 1060/2021 (incl. the ESF+))** are defined by Annex 1 (Table 3) under the codes for **Territorial Delivery Mechanisms**, defining 8 types of territorial targets.

- Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)
- Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI)
- Other Territorial Tools
- Other approaches not under PO5

EUR 6.4 billion
Of investment reported under one of the territorial delivery mechanisms (ITI, CLLD or other territorial approaches)

In Member States having reported ESF+ investments for the Rural Area target under CLLDs and ITIs:

Rural Areas target	Incl. other targets associated to rural contexts
EUR 1.29 billion	EUR 3.49 billion
EUR 335 million	EUR 432 million

	DE	EUR 25.8 million
	EE	EUR 7.1 million
	EL	EUR 2.5 million
	IT	EUR 7.5 million
	PL	EUR 209.4 million
	RO	EUR 181.8 million

 **CLLD** is the most used for rural areas.

CLLDs – added value

Local
knowledge

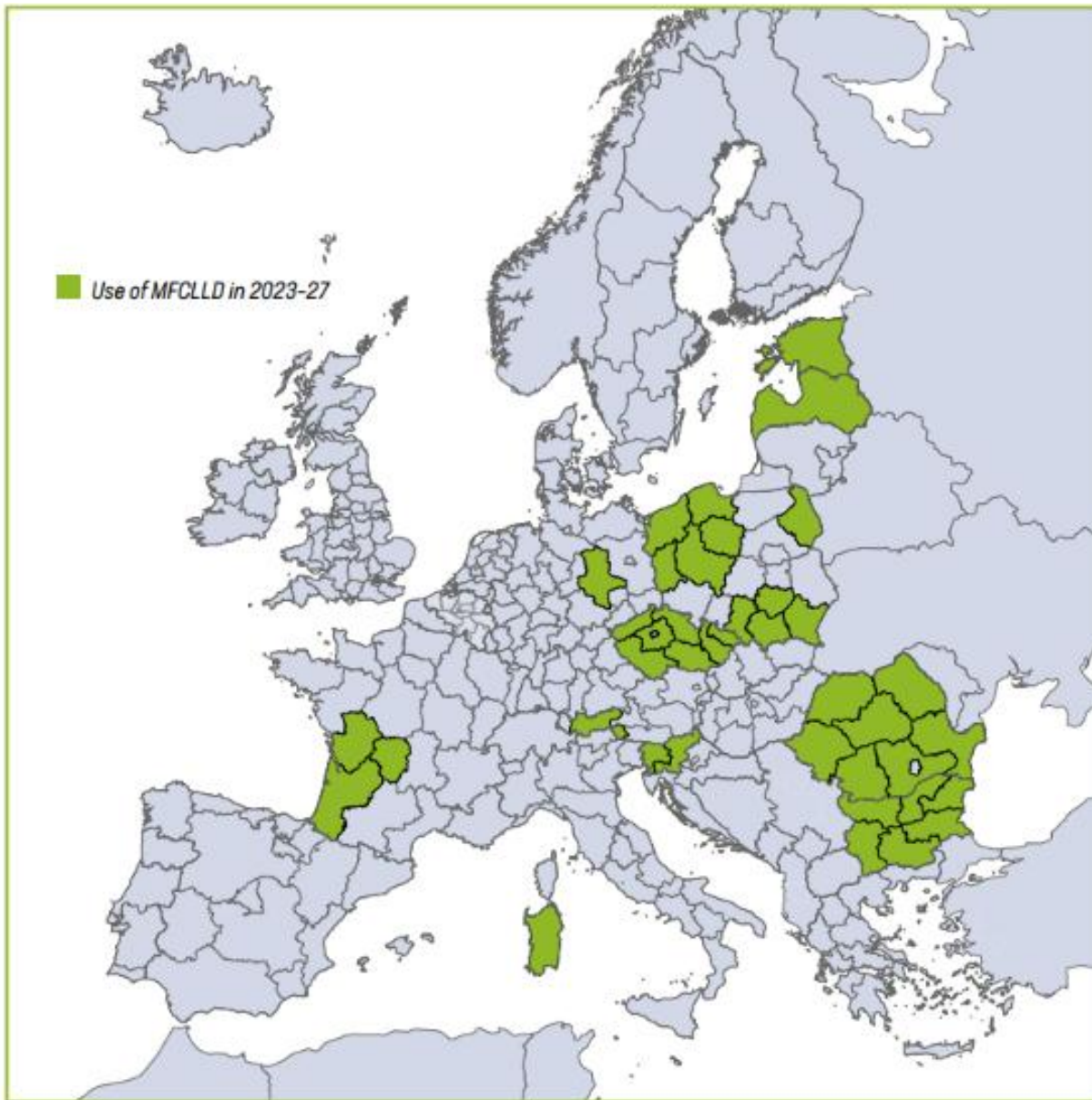
Partnership

Community
ownership

Tailored
solutions

Place-based
and people-
centred

Multi-funded CLLD 2021-2027



11 MS combine the EAFRD with at least one other fund, resulting in an estimated **891 multi-funded LAGs in 2021-27**

6 countries stopped using MFCLLD: DK, EL, LT, PT, SK, SE.

3 countries started using MFCLLD: EE, FR, and RO. While there are nation-wide models in EE and RO, in FR only one region will use MFCLLD (New Aquitaine).

The fund most combined with the EAFRD is the ESF+.

CLLD including LEADER 2021-2027

Benefits of a Multi-fund CLLD model	• increased and more diverse financial resources for LAGs. • Implementation of a wider range of activities • Broader network of partners and more know-how
Main Challenge	complexity and administrative burden resulting from combining different funds: • different rules and requirements • coordination between the relevant institutions at both regional and national levels

- The use of multi-fund CLLD has been **limited by fragmented rules and administrative complexity**.

Leading into the future

Simpler

More
inclusive

More
strategic

More flexible

More
evidence-
based

More
connected

Key features of the new MFF

A LARGER, SMARTER, SHARPER EU BUDGET

Larger in scale

EUR 2 trillion (1.26% EU GNI) to match Europe's needs and ambition

- **A larger and more flexible** budget, so Europe can have the **capacity to act – and react – fast** when circumstances change.

Smarter in design

Results oriented, simpler for beneficiaries, more agile

- **Simpler, fewer, more streamlined and consistent** EU financial programmes, so that citizens and companies can easily **find and access funding** opportunities.

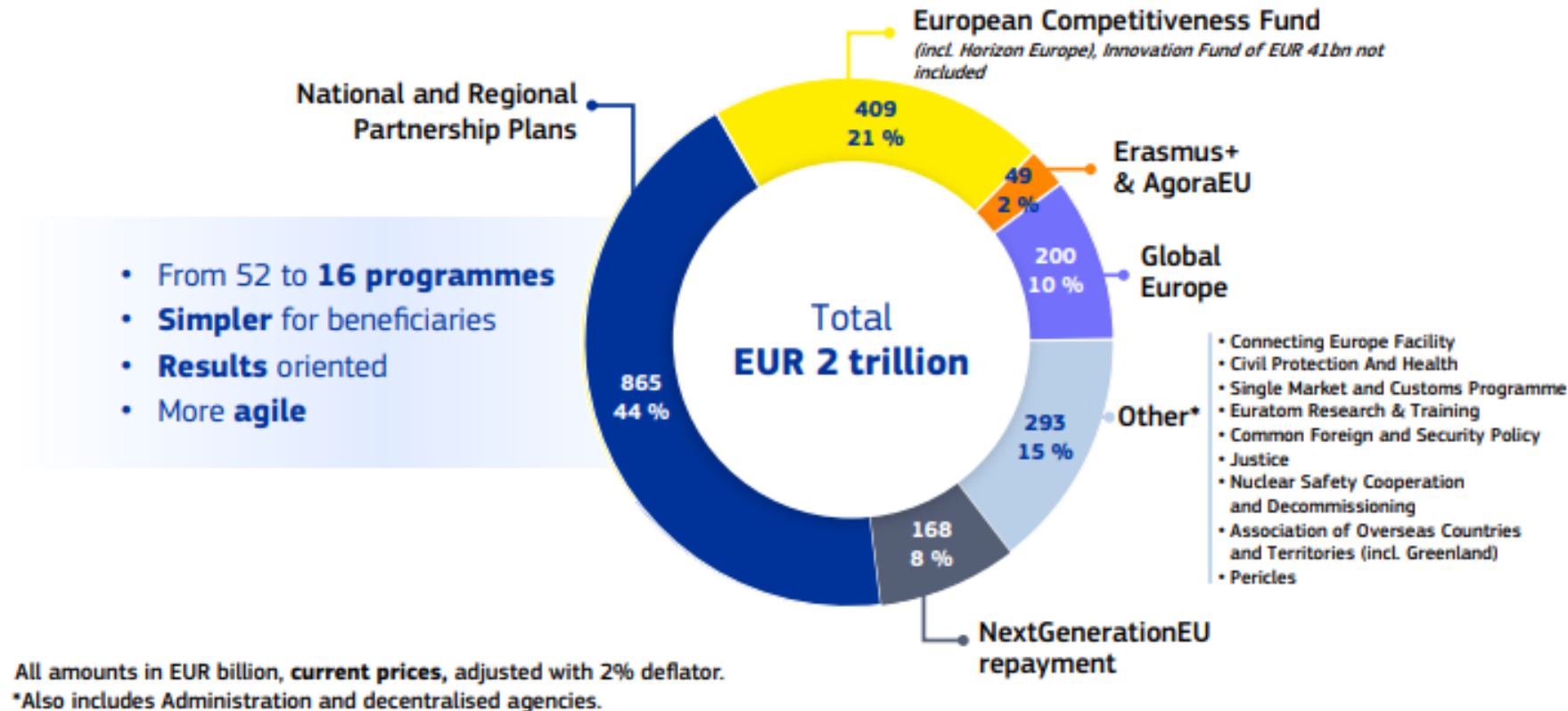
Sharper in priorities

Focus on European priorities

- **More strategic and focused on EU priorities** and projects with the highest **EU added value** such as cross-border infrastructures and innovation.

At least 35% of the EU budget will support projects related to climate and environment.

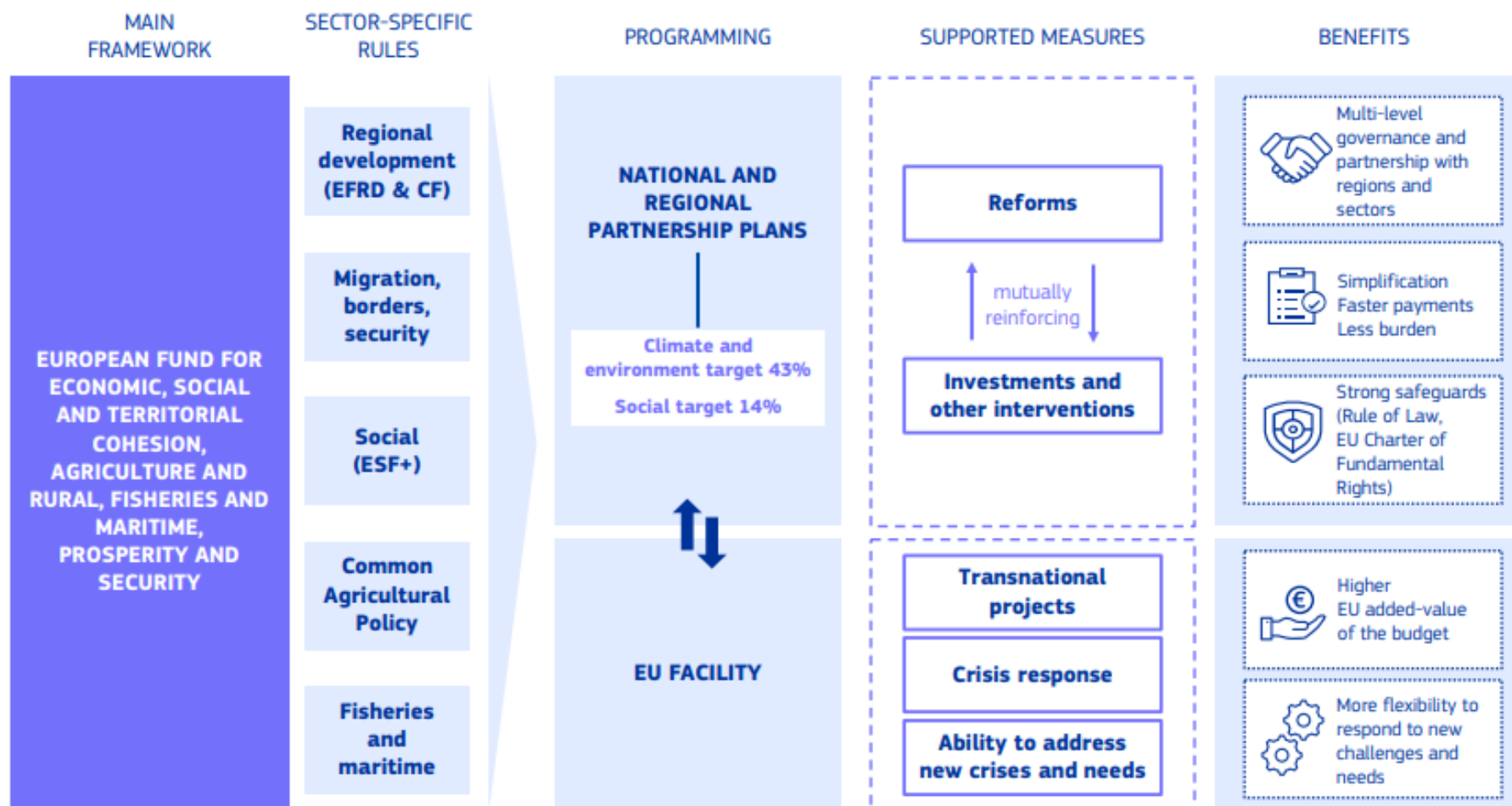
MFF budget 2028-2034



€ 865 billion for the NRP Fund including

- €453 billion for economic, social and territorial cohesion, including for fisheries and coastal areas.
- € 294 billion ringfenced income support for farmers
- € 2 billion minimum ringfenced allocation to implement some core areas of the common fisheries policy (CFP)
- € 72 billion EU Facility

MFF budget 2028-2034



Preparation of the NRP Plans

- **Objective:** simplifying programming and ensuring alignment with EU priorities; addressing each Member State's national, regional and local needs and challenges in a tailored, coordinated and effective manner
 - **One National and Regional Partnership Plan** per MS
- Each MS shall prepare and implement the Plan in partnership with partners, **including regional and local authorities**, and in accordance with their institutional, legal and financial framework.
- The Plan shall include **national, sectoral and, where relevant, regional and territorial chapters.**
- **Member States and regions will design how best to integrate support for CLLD into their Plans**, in line with their specific needs and priorities. It is one of the best examples on using synergies across the policy spectrum and channel CLLD support to cover rural, urban and coastal areas.

Preparation of the Plan

- Continue **focusing on evaluating the benefits and added value of the CLLD instrument** beyond financial support: social capital building, improvement of local governance and better projects quality. This is important in building social resilience and democracy in EU
- **Strengthen communication, knowledge transfer**, and the articulation of local needs across relevant policy agendas, including improved vertical links between LAGs and specialised departments of ministries, regional authorities, and municipalities.
- **Get involved in the different decision-making processes** with wider national stakeholders for planning and resources.
- Make use of the opportunities under the **simplified EU funding architecture**.
- **Start reflections** on the next programming period: how to position CLLD/LEADER?
- **Start acting on the next programming period** by engaging with different stakeholders in the area, build on the current programming period implementation, use communication of success stories, take part in public consultations, and try to influence the decision-making actors.

Thank you



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Presentation by Hungary

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Head of Unit, National Development Centre, Managing
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Community Led Local Development in Hungary

2014-2020 Programming Period

Prague, Czech Republic
7–8 September 2026

Zsófia SZALÓ

Budapest, Hungary

Head of Sustainable Urban Development Unit

Managing Authority of Territorial Development Operational Programmes

National Development Centre

UNDERSTANDING CLLD

✅ EU territorial development instrument for urban areas

🤝 Local partnerships

⬆️ Bottom-up approach

🎯 Integrated local development strategy

👥 Community-led decision-making

🤝 🎭 Strong thematic focus on community development and culture

Communities identify local needs, design local strategies and decide on local development priorities.

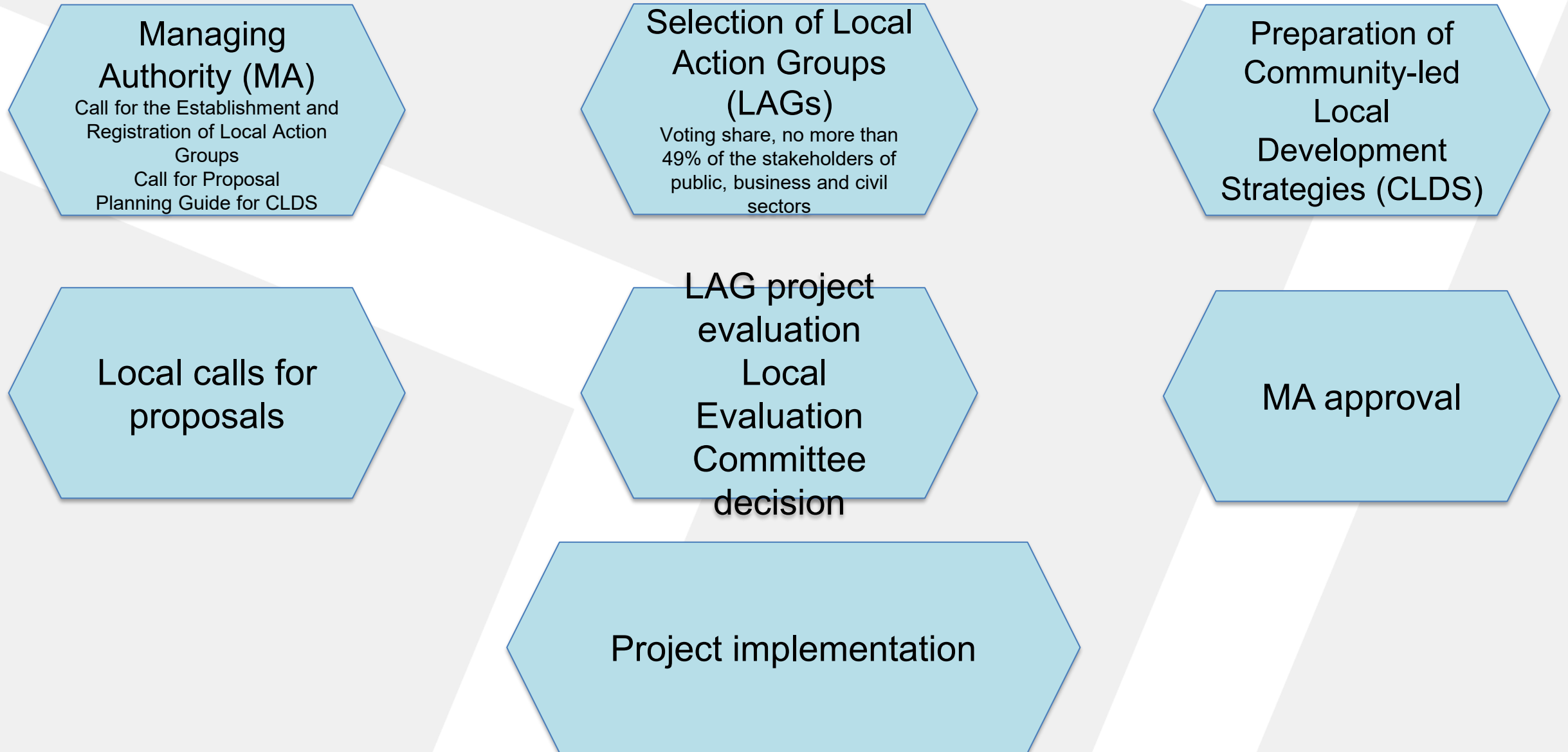
WHY WAS CLLD INTRODUCED?

Its main objectives were to

- ⇒ Strengthen local communities
- ⇒ Foster cooperation among civil society, local governments and local businesses
- ⇒ Develop community spaces and local infrastructure
- ⇒ Support cultural and community-based initiatives
- ⇒ Strengthen local identity and social cohesion

CLLD placed local communities at the heart of development, fostering cooperation, inclusion and sustainable local growth.

HOW CLLD WORKED?



FUNDING SOURCES

ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)

-  Buildings
-  Community centres
-  Parks
-  Cultural venues
-  Marketplaces

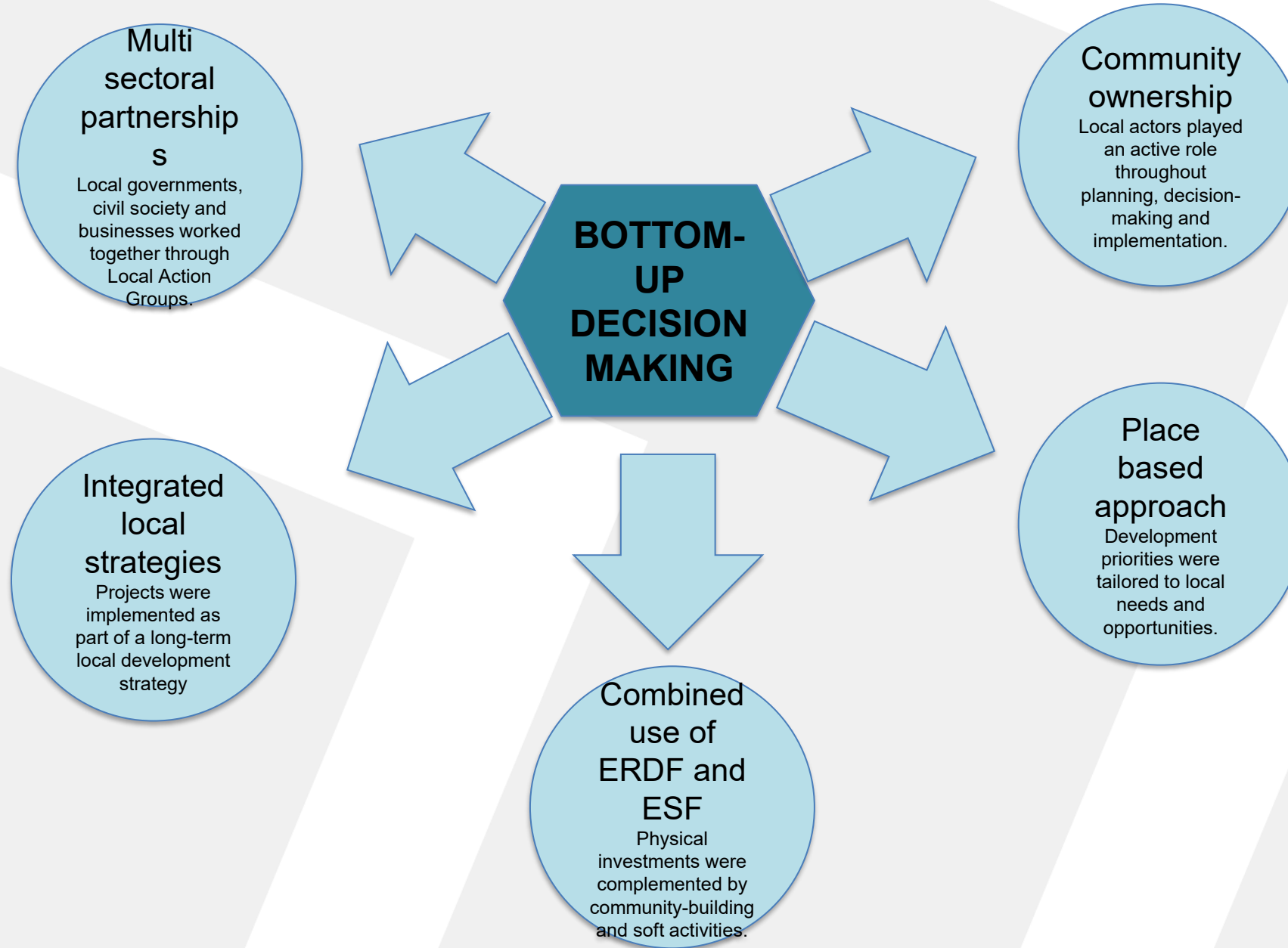
 ERDF : ESF = 2 : 1

ESF (European Social Fund)

-  Community events
-  Trainings
-  Community development
-  Local identity
-  Civil initiatives

The integrated use of ERDF and ESF ensured that investments in infrastructure were complemented by investments in people and communities.

WHAT MADE CLLD INNOVATIVE?



CLLD introduced a new way of delivering local development by putting communities at the center of decision-making and empowered Local Action Groups to stimulate innovation, facilitate networking and promote the exchange of forward-looking solutions to local challenges.

KEY FEATURES OF THE HUNGARIAN URBAN CLLD MODEL

Key projects

- ❖ Strategic investment projects could be identified as **key projects**, providing the foundation for other local initiatives
- ❖ Their budget was capped at **40%** of the strategy's allocable budget (excluding operating costs)
- ❖ The strategy had to demonstrate how other local projects would build on these investments

Integrated local development

- ❖ Strategies combined **urban development, community and cultural initiatives, and local economic development**

Participatory planning

- ❖ All **ERDF** and **ESF** actions had to be **planned and implemented with the active involvement of target groups**

Clearly defined action area

- ❖ Each strategy covered a **specific action area** with clearly defined boundaries and population
- ❖ Overlap with other **CLLD** or **LEADER** action areas was generally not permitted, except in limited, justified cases

Support for implementation

- ❖ Up to **15%** of the total public budget could be allocated to **strategy management and implementation**
- ❖ Eligible costs included programme management, staff, training, communication, monitoring, evaluation and beneficiary support (ERDF funding)

Strategic investments, territorial focus, clearly defined action areas and active community participation were the cornerstones of the Hungarian Urban CLLD model.

KEY FEATURES OF THE HUNGARIAN URBAN CLLD MODEL

FUNDING



Maximum eligible total cost of a LAG project



10,001–18,000 inhabitants: **€ 0.69 million** (HUF 250 million)



18,001–60,000 inhabitants: **€ 1.11 million** (HUF 400 million)



60,001–150,000 inhabitants: **€ 2.08 million** (HUF 750 million)



Type of support

Non-refundable resources (grants)



Maximum funding intensity

100%



Funding for local projects

€ 2.8 thousand – € 1.17 million (HUF 1–420 million)

CLLD AT A GLANCE

98
Local Action Groups

97 Cities involved

98
Community-led Local Development
Strategies

607
Calls for proposals (297 ERDF, 310 ESF)

2 810
Projects supported (829 ERDF, 1981
ESF)

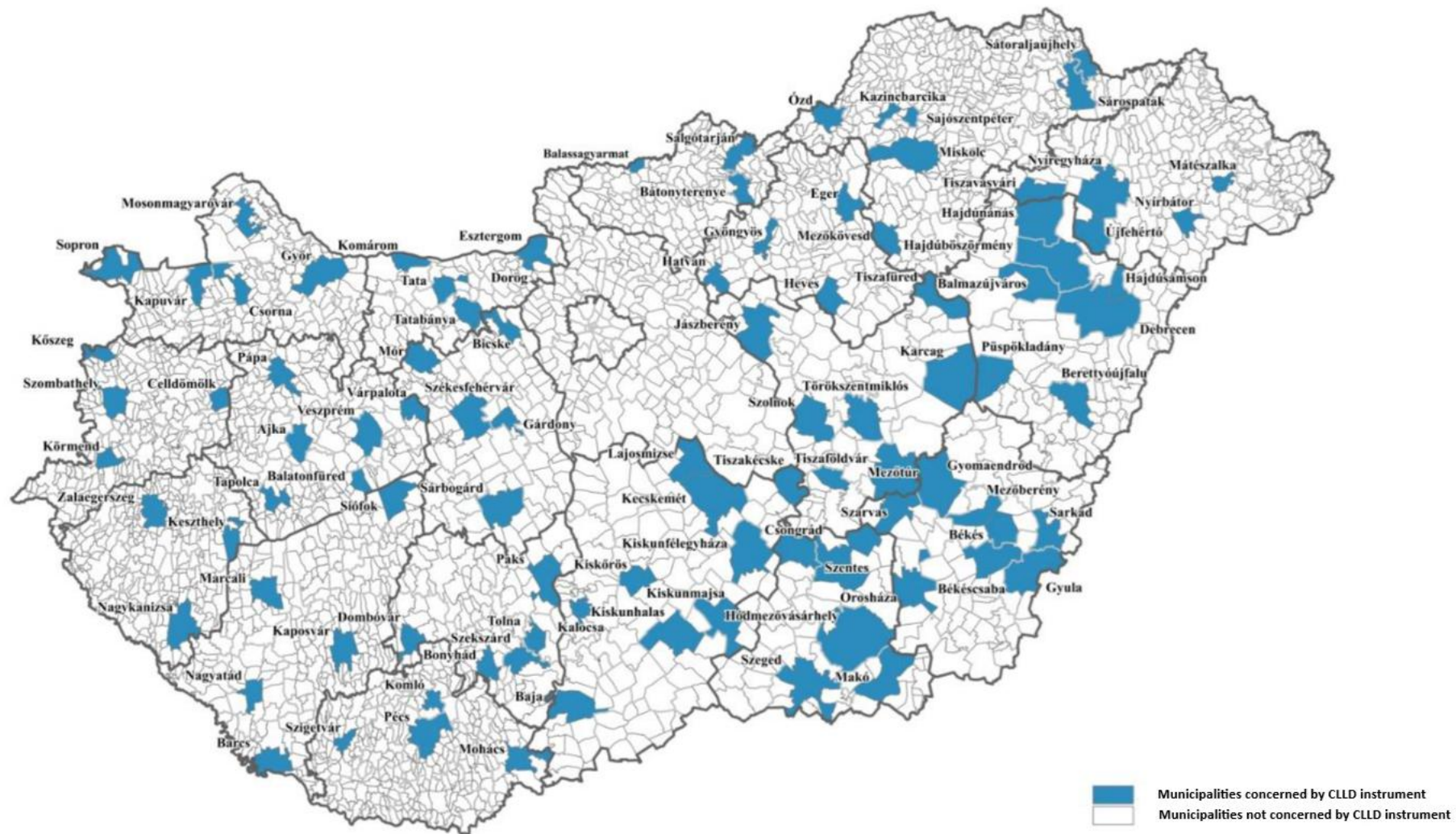
€ 99.4 million (HUF 35.8 billion) EU contribution
(€ 67.6 million (HUF 24.34 billion) ERDF, € 31.9 million (HUF
11.48 billion) ESF)

2 713
Projects implemented (731 ERDF, 1973
ESF)

Total payments amounted to € 96.2 million
(HUF 34.66 billion), comprising € 65.1 million (HUF 23.47
billion) under the ERDF and € 31.1 million (HUF 11.19 billion)
under the ESF. The programme achieved implementation rates
of 90% for the ERDF and 95% for the ESF.

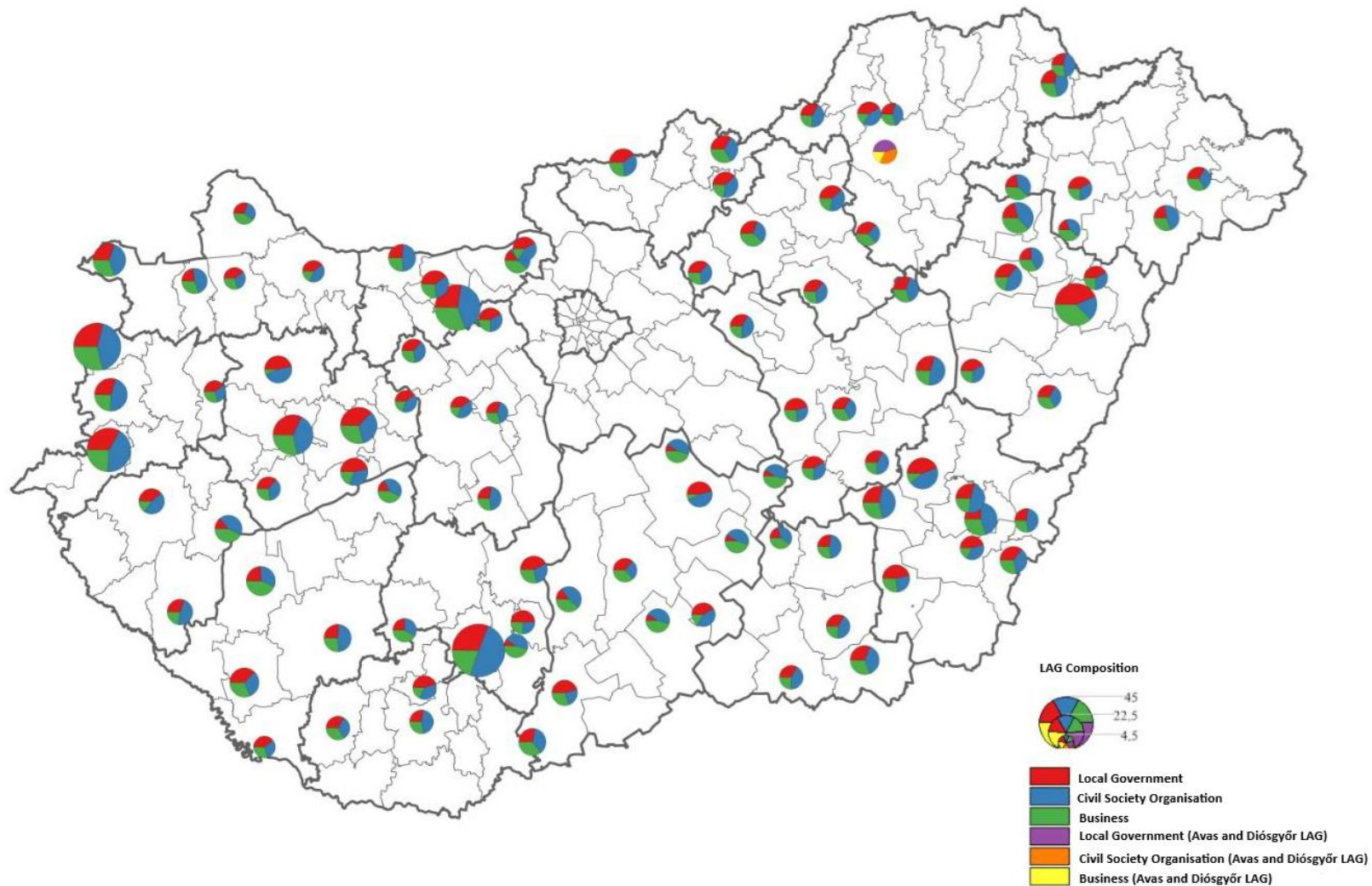
The programme successfully translated allocated funding into tangible local investments and community initiatives.

CLLD MUNICIPALITIES IN MAP



Map reproduced from the doctoral dissertation of Csilla Horváth PhD. Courtesy of the author.

STAKEHOLDER COMPOSITION OF THE LAG



Map reproduced from the doctoral dissertation of Csilla Horváth PhD. Courtesy of the author.

KEY STRENGTHS & ACHIEVEMENTS

-  Strong local partnerships
-  Rapid response to local needs
-  Active civil society engagement
-  Community building and social cohesion
-  Creating opportunities for young people to remain in their local communities
-  Improved cultural and community infrastructure
-  Integrated, place-based local development
-  Stronger strategic planning and long-term local vision
-  Support for grassroots initiatives and community innovation
-  Better use of fragmented local resources through integrated planning
-  Dedicated EU instrument for culture and community development
-  Stronger dialogue and cooperation among local stakeholders
-  Full absorption of available EU funding

Beyond funding projects, CLLD empowered communities to shape their own future through partnership, innovation and local ownership.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES



Administrative complexity

- Extensive administrative requirements
- Two-stage project selection process
- EPTK system



Capacity constraints

- Varying capacities of Local Action Groups
- Staff shortages



Time and delivery

- Lengthy preparation phase
- Extensions of CLLD Strategies



External factors

- COVID-19 pandemic
- Inflation
- Sharp increase in construction costs



Long-term sustainability

- Ensuring the sustainability of project

Despite significant implementation challenges, close cooperation between the MA and LAGs ensured the successful delivery of the programme

HOW DID THE MANAGING AUTHORITY RESPOND?



Capacity building

- Workshops
- Training sessions
- Regional forums
- LAG to LAG forum



Guidance and communication

- FAQs
- Operations Manual
- Continuous consultation
- Direct communication with LAGs



Programme flexibility

- Deadline extensions
- Amendments to calls for proposals
- Reallocation of funding
- Additional funding for beneficiaries facing financial difficulties (based on individual requests)

The MA played a proactive role by providing continuous guidance, adapting programme implementation and supporting LAGs throughout the delivery process.

WHAT IS THE LEGACY OF CLLD?

CLLD left a lasting legacy by:

-  Establishing a culture of local partnerships
-  Strengthening strategic local planning
-  Embedding community-led planning
-  Promoting social innovation
-  Generating valuable implementation experience
-  Shaping the design of Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) in 2021–2027

Although the CLLD programme has come to an end, its principles, partnerships and experience continue to shape sustainable urban development in Hungary.

CLLD IN PICTURES

Projects implemented: 🏛️ Community spaces 🎭 Cultural events 🤝 CSO capacity building ❤️ Local identity initiatives 🎨 Creative industries 👥 Community-building activities 🎓 Training programmes



FURTHER INFORMATION (in Hungarian)

CLLD Publication

<https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/kozlemenyek/megjelent-a-kzssgvezrealt-helyi-fejlesztsek-clld-kiadvny>



CLLD Call for proposal for LAGs

Establishment and Registration: <https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/programok/szechenyi-2020/top>

Implementation of the Strategy: <https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/programok/szechenyi-2020/top/top-711-16/alapadatok>

Access to TOP CLLD Local Calls for Proposals

<https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/programok/szechenyi-2020/top>



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Thank you for
your attention

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Presentation by Czech organisation

Marie PONÍŽILOVÁ

OPZ+ Project Coordinator, LAG Vizovicko a Slušovicko,
Czechia

MAS VIZOVICKO A SLUŠOVICKO

Our Territory: Local Knowledge as the Foundation for Support

Zlín Region · Eastern part of the Czech Republic ·
Rural area northeast of Zlín

22

municipalities

206 km²

area

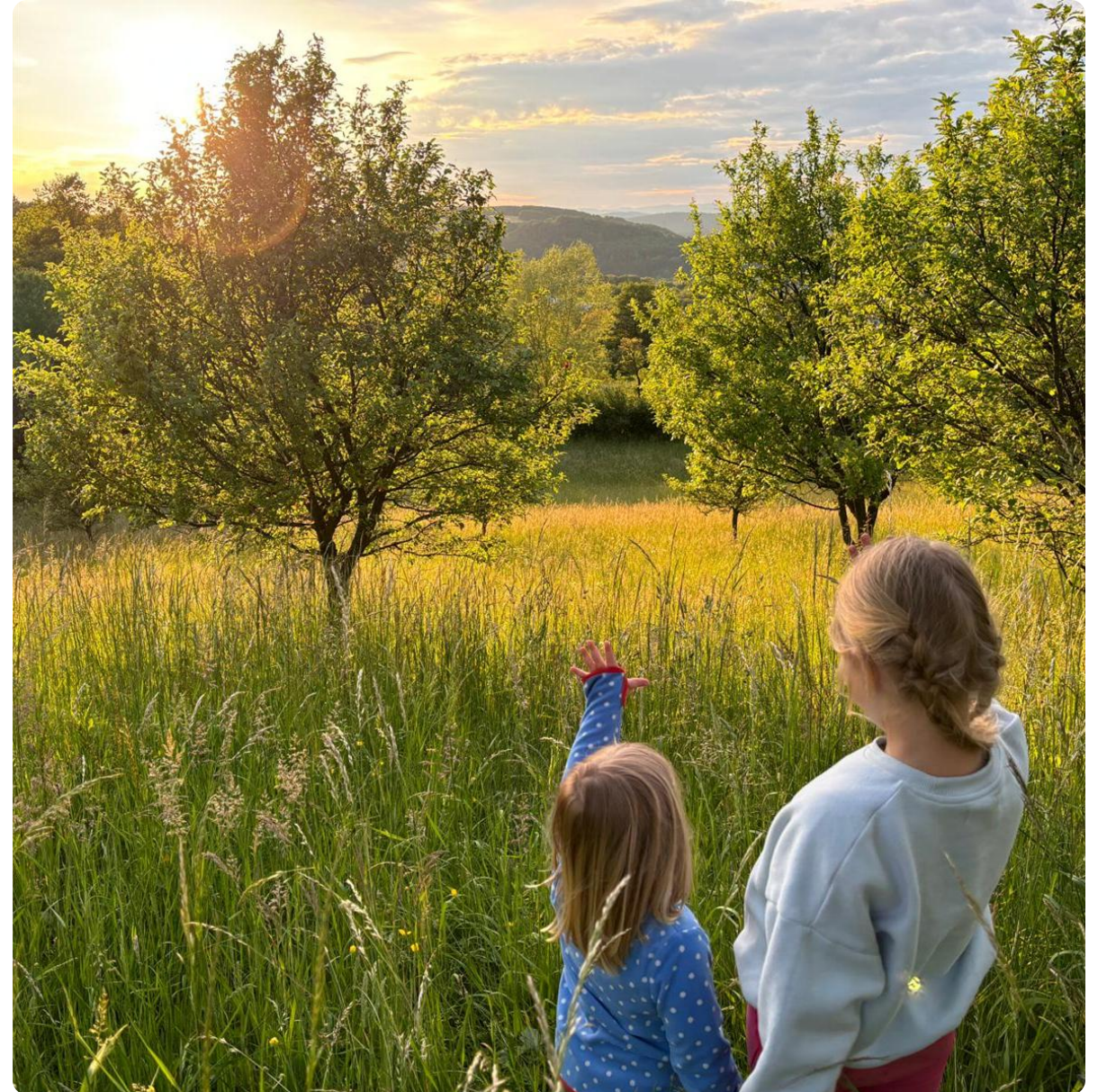
21 416

inhabitants

A local partnership of municipalities, community organisations, businesses, and active residents.



Spolufinancováno
Evropskou unií



The LAG coordinates, the community takes action.



Knowledge of the whole area helps prevent duplication and respond to emerging needs.

From Local Needs to Community Impact



01 Identify a need

Directly within the community, bottom-up approach

02 Inform and connect

Help find suitable solutions, resources, and remove barriers

03 Connect with support

To available professional support or local initiatives

The aim of simplification is not just to reduce administration, but to create more space for meaningful community work.

The capacity of the LAG strengthens the entire region.



People

Community work,
facilitation and communication,
continuous learning

Cooperation

Sharing experience, methodological
support, connecting local stakeholders,
LAG and Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs

Territory

Active local leaders, stronger municipalities,
community organisations, better services
and infrastructure

Empowered people and better cooperation increase the the capacity of local stakeholders to address the needs of their communities.

The greatest impact comes when people become co-creators

**Local people do not simply participate.
They gradually take on a more active
role in the community.**

Building trust and openness

Identifying and supporting local leaders

The LAG as a neutral facilitator

Soft activities bring local infrastructure to life

**The result is not just more activities, but
stronger relationships and the prevention of
social exclusion.**





THREE RECOMMENDATIONS

Key takeaways from our experience

1 Concentrate administration where the expertise is

The LAG can handle project complexity on behalf of small municipalities and local stakeholders.

2 Keep decision-making as close to the community as possible

Local knowledge and local leaders ensure that support meets real needs.

3 Build capacity that stays in the territory

Invest in people, relationships, cooperation, and local leadership.

The role of a strong LAG is not to do everything for others, but to foster an environment where local communities can reach their full potential.

Session 3

Ensuring community-impact: Experiences from LAG Brdy- Vltava

Field visit

What we are doing in our LAG



20
seasons
in region
2006
2026

... small steps to sustainable Brdy-Vltava region
OUR GOAL AND DREAM 😊



MÍSTNÍ AKČNÍ SKUPINY pokrytí České republiky

stav k 30. 4. 2021

180 MAS

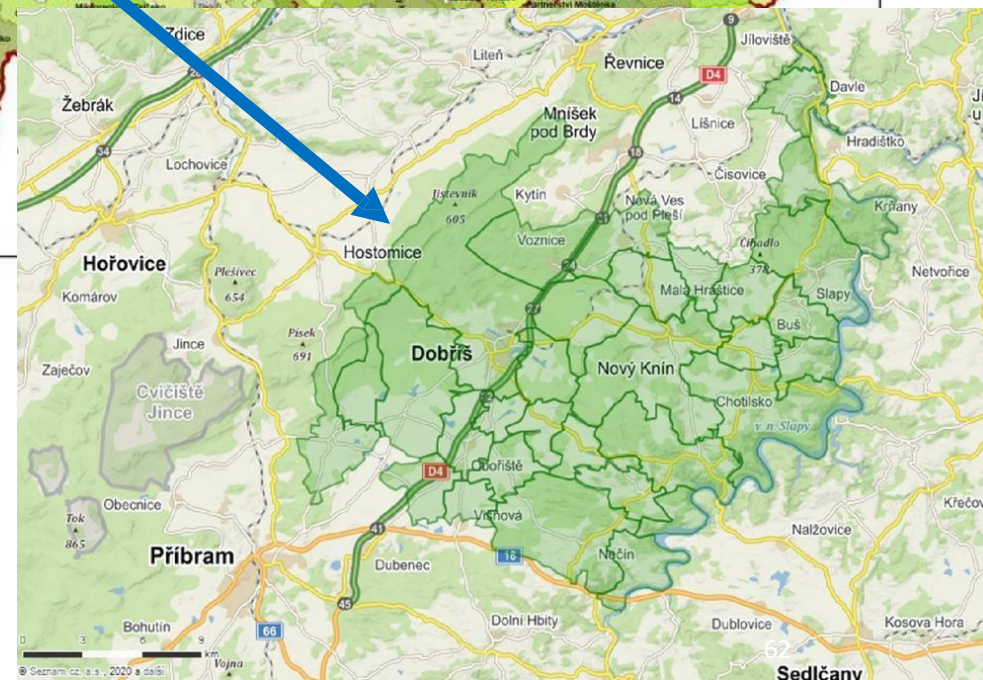
93% pokrytí území ČR

60% obyvatel ČR

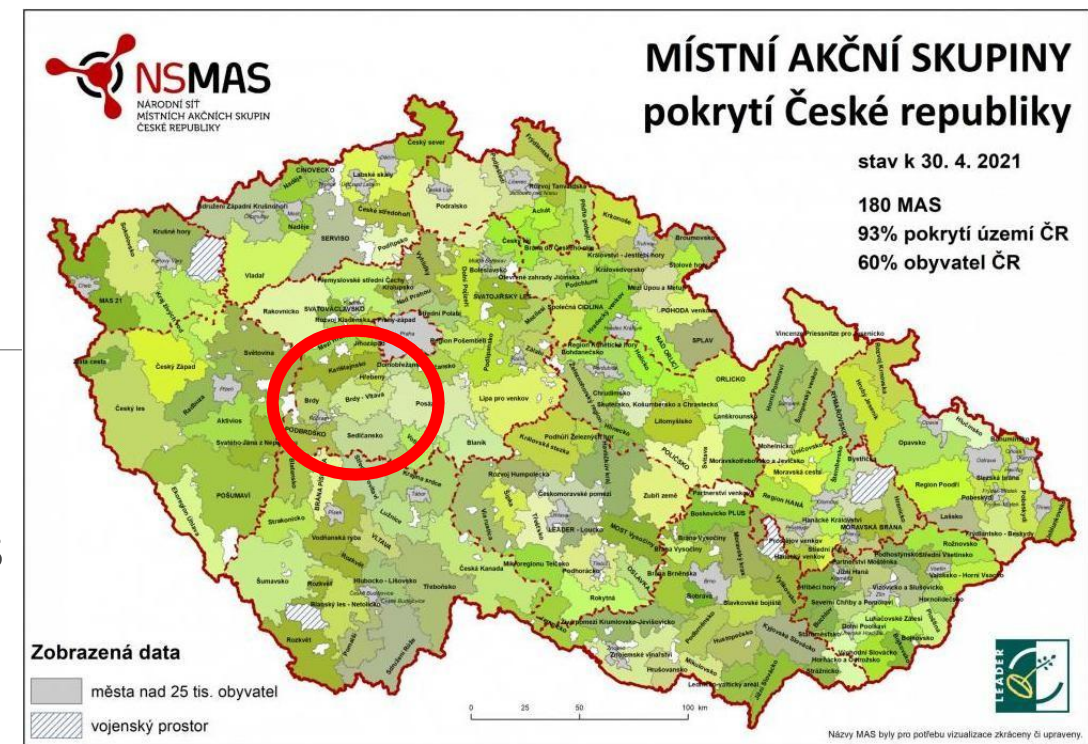


Zobrazená data

- města nad 25 tis. obyvatel
- vojenský prostor



- Central Bohemia Region – 40 km from the capital of Prague,
- 32 municipalities in our LAG (32.243 inhabitants),
- We are in this region since 2006, 20 years Anniversary.
- We have 44 partners at this time,
- Strategy of Community – Led Local Development 2021-2027 (= CLLD)
 - supported areas: entrepreneurs (incl. farmers and social businesses), municipalities, social area, support of regional employment, kindergartens, primary schools, nature trails etc.
- Our budget for distribution in the period 2021- 2027 is 74.000.000 CZK(2.989.118 EUR), ESF+ 674 100 EUR



OUR PROJECTS IN SOCIAL AREA

- 1) **COMMUNITY PLANNING OF SOCIAL AND RELATED SERVICES (ESF, NOT CLLD)** – continual monitoring of the needs of our inhabitants. We made it a part of the CLLD Strategy. On the basis of this plan we then support activities in social area in our region. (2011 +).
- 2) **SOCIAL FUND FOR BRDY-VLTAVA REGION (ESF, NOT CLLD)** – municipalities contribute to this fund and we as a LAG distribute the money to the social service providers in our region (separate calls on the basis of common Community Plan of Social Services). (2014+).
- 3) **SUPPORT OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE (2013 - 2023 ESF and National money, NOT CLLD, 2023-2025 ESF+ CLLD)** – with the help of our municipalities.
- 5) **WORLD OF GOOD PEOPLE - COMMUNITY CENTER**– our so called „Key Project“ (the most important for LAG community), **supported from our LAG Strategy (ESF CLLD 2020-2022)**
- 4) **SUPPORT OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES (external finance)** – with the help of IOM (International Organization for Migration 2022-2023)
- 6) **COMMUNITY WELLBEING – CLLD ESF+ ongong programming period 21+, (2023+).**

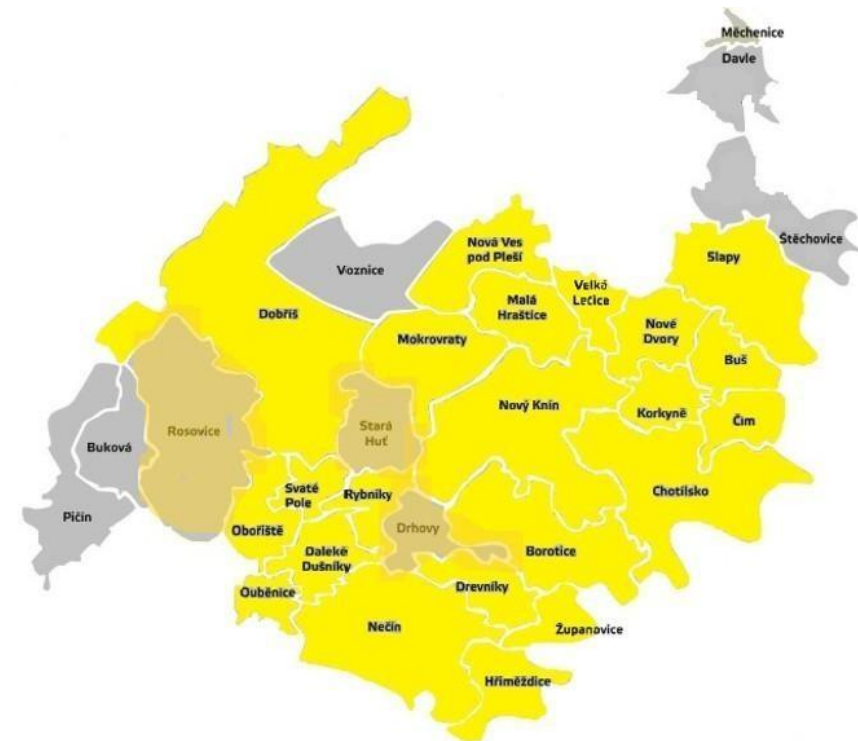
COMMUNITY PLANNING OF SOCIAL AND RELATED SERVICES

- Long term cooperation with providers of social services and other kind of supporting services (community and family centres, clubs for children etc.).
- Community Plan for Social and related Services from 2011 - until 2024, now we are participating in updating and evaluating of the plan for another period until 2027. It became a part of our CLLD strategy. Multidisciplinary approach.
- We created active community and learned about the needs of our inhabitants – from the LAG budget we supported local network of social service providers. We have already supported several projects from this plan:
 - new day centre for elderly people,
 - summer camps for children whose parents are employed,
 - sewing workroom for handicapped people,
 - debts consulting,
 - relief service for handicapped people and their families.
- Some of these projects we do as a LAG – support of long-term unemployed, Social Fund, community centre World of Good People.



SOCIAL FUND OF BRDY-VLTAVA REGION

- 12 calls (2015 – 2026), finance for providers of social and related services
- Selection board – consists of the donors and social service providers from our region (municipality representatives)
- We call for 67 CZK per inhabitant (2.68 EUR per inhabitant)
- 2026 we distributed 1.434.668 CZK (57.387 EUR)
- Involved now 26 municipalities from total number 32
- **OUR GOAL**: to involve all municipalities into the system of social fund and to explain them the importance of regional social service network



EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED OR THREATENED BY SOCIAL EXCLUSION

- Team of workers (long-term unemployed people) who took care about public spaces in our member municipalities – cleaning, cutting grass, pruning, forestry etc.
- Concept of our team was penetrable = who wanted to keep the job, we gave him all support (professional social consulting, professional psychological support, debts consulting, food aid, etc.)
- We cooperated with local employers – to place employees who went through our support into local companies, so they have a sustainable employment.
- **OUR GOAL**: to strengthen confidence of regional actors in the target group of long-term unemployed, to help people who want to gain and then maintain their job. **After 13 years municipalities created new jobs for those people.**

■ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCB_TgLPIVU

■ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=477BMwa9FaM>



WORLD OF GOOD PEOPLE - COMMUNITY CENTRE

Beneficiary: Brdy - Vltava o.p.s., key project was supported from the LAGs allocation.

Subsidy/Total costs: 149 934,45 EUR (Programming Period 2014-2020, ESF)



Project: LAG Brdy-Vltava pursues this project because it was identified on the basis of the Social Plan as crucial for solving in our region. **The main goal was to create a safe space for meeting people and to help people in need.** We aim to increase participation of local actors to get interest in our region. We offer concrete help (**food aid, sanitary, clothes, individual support, therapies, counselling as well as workshops and meeting place for broader community**). Activities for people in need are for free. The place was finished in 2021.



SUPPORT OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

- At the beginning we organized collection of food, beddings, clothes and everything what was actually needed and with the help of the National Network of LAGs we sent it to the Slovakia borders.
- After refugees came into our region, we organized the help for them together with our municipalities. These activities were financed by Ministry of the Interior and the IOM.
- We helped them with housing, food, winterisation, schools and kinder-gardens, lessons of Czech language, psychological support, leisure time activities for children and many more...
- We supported 300 refugees.



CLLD AT THE LEVEL OF SCHOOLS

- After our experience with the strategic planning - we were chosen in region to create development strategy of local education (2016+). We communicate local needs with schools in this area. We help with grants (administration, advices) to support schools' development.
- And we provide **FOREST PEDAGOGY** to schools in municipality forest. In morning and afternoon programs we teach children and also adults how to maintain sustainable forests (including bee keeping). Financed through ESF, ESF+ and local funds.



COMMUNITY ACTION – BASED ON ABCD APPROACH





Visit Our Website
www.brdy-vltava.cz



Visit Our Facebook
[brdyvltava](https://www.facebook.com/brdyvltava)

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vltava



Contacts:

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LAG director

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Strategy of Community-led Local Development LAG Brdy-Vltava for period 2021-2027

Conceptual part

www.brdy-vltava.cz



Presentations by Belgium, Czechia, Croatia

Stephanie VAN OPSTAL

Policy Maker Rural Policy, Flemish Land Agency, Belgium

Iva ČERNÁ

Community coordinator, LAG Pomalší, Czechia

Milan MEDIĆ

Manager at LAG Vallis Colapis (Croatia)



Flanders
State of
the Art

Evaluation of the added value of LEADER

- ▶ Stephanie Van Opstal
- ▶ Policy officer rural policy

**FLEMISH
LAND
AGENCY**

Agenda

- ▶ Flemish Land Agency – Rural policy: who we are?
- ▶ Added value of LEADER – why?
- ▶ Development of the Flemish evaluation framework
- ▶ Added value: main findings
- ▶ Lessons for ESF+



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the Art

Flemish land agency – who are we?

FLEMISH
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AGENCY

Flemish Land Agency – Rural policy

- ▶ Implementing a structural rural policy for vibrant rural areas under a minister for Rural Policy
- ▶ Coordinate Rural Development: managing authority for LEADER under CAP + evaluation of projects
- ▶ Applying instruments like the Rural Report and calls for smart villages, neighbourhoods on the countryside, allotment gardens/food forests and hedgerows



A dynamic open space and rural policy



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the Art

Added value LEADER – why?

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LAND
AGENCY

Added value of LEADER?... A few preliminary points

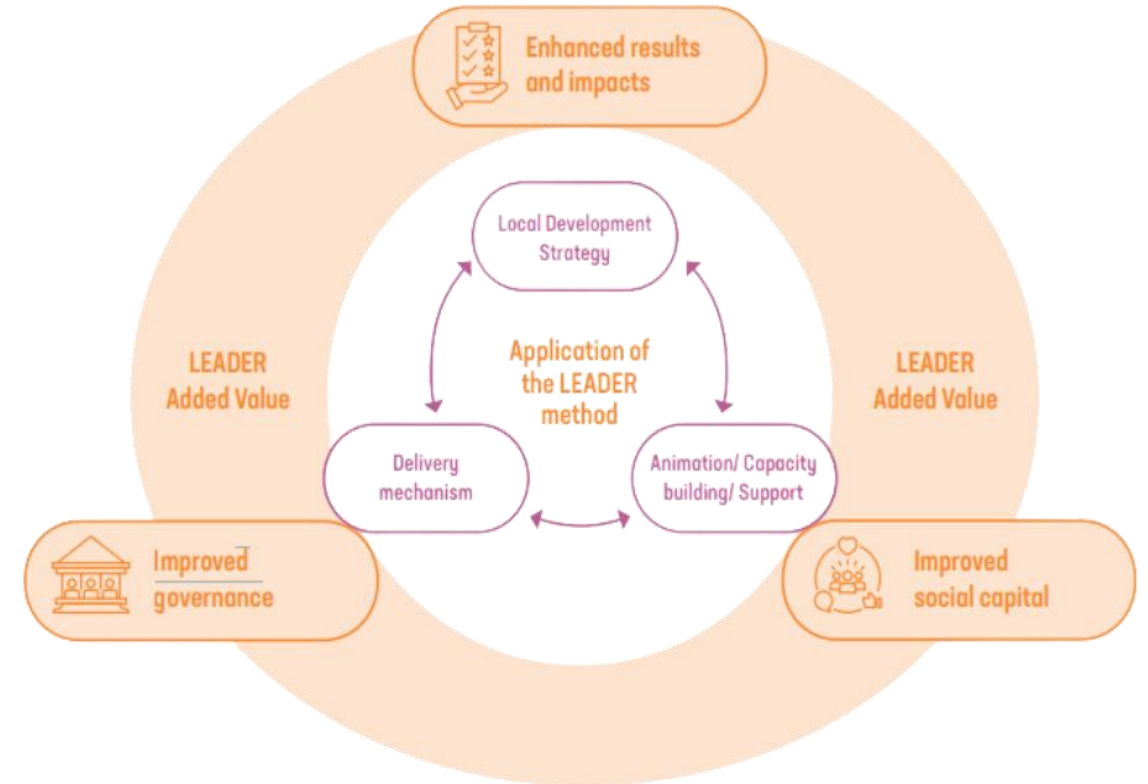
- ▶ LEADER's specific methodology provides added value for rural areas that goes beyond the projects themselves
- ▶ The evaluation of LEADER therefore goes beyond the substantive implementation of the LDS (LOS) and project delivery & results
- ▶ Developed in a specific European evaluation framework
- ▶ European urgency to demonstrate the added value of the LEADER instrument more clearly (cf. EU Court of Auditors).
- ▶ Preparation for the next programming period

Key findings from the European Court of Auditors report (2022):

- Local Action Groups promote local engagement, but they entail additional costs and lead to slower approval procedures.
- Although LEADER projects aim to improve local governance and social capital, these impacts are very difficult to measure or to demonstrate with sufficiently robust evidence.
- LEADER succeeded in involving local communities in the development of projects and strategies, but some groups remain underrepresented (e.g., women and young people).
- The quality of local development strategies varies. While many Member States applied appropriate procedures for selecting LAGs, some used less stringent quality standards when selecting local development strategies.
- The multi-fund approach, introduced in 2014–2020 to better coordinate local development, often increased complexity. It required coordination across different funding streams (such as agricultural, fisheries, social and regional funds) and, in many Member States, resulted in administrative difficulties.

Framework of the assignment

- ▶ The LEADER methodology simultaneously contributes to three interconnected dimensions:
 - **Social capital** (networks, shared values/trust, collective capacity and knowledge).
 - **Governance** (governance and cooperation capacity, participation and decision-making).
 - **Results/impact** (targeted, innovative, sustainable projects with structural changes).
- ▶ **Added value:** When fully and correctly implemented, LEADER should create added value in these three domains, regardless of the specific project results.
- ▶ **Application of the LEADER methodology** based on three supporting processes and 7 principles (*delivery mechanism*)



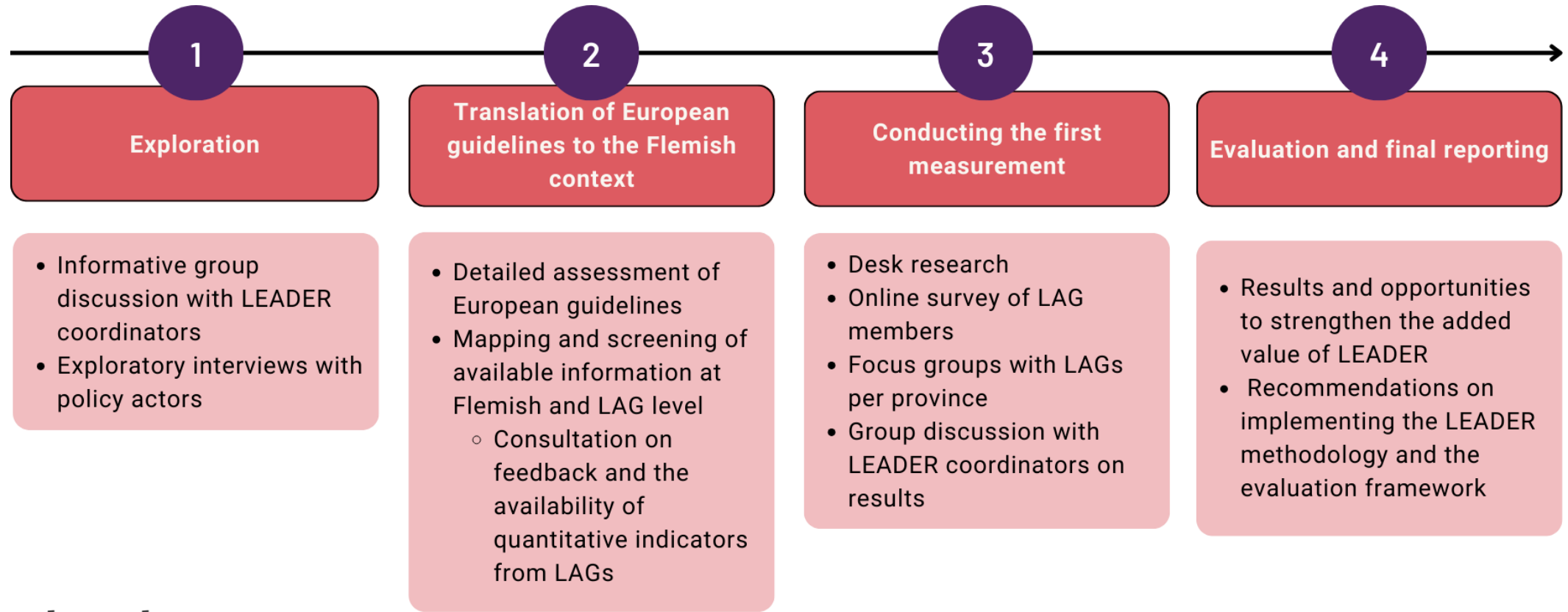


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Development of the Flemish evaluation framework

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Steps taken and approach





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Added value: main findings

Social capital



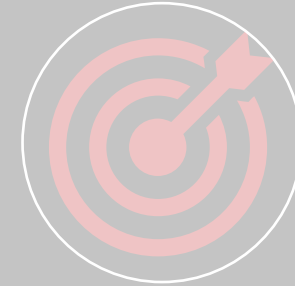
Social Capital

People and organisations are connected with each other—collaborations, networks, trust, and a shared vision for the area are created.



Governance

Decisions are made jointly, fairly, and transparently, and local actors are well supported in implementing those decisions.



Enhanced results and impact

Projects are innovative and meet local needs; they create long-term sustainable effects and often have a leverage effect for further development.



Social capital

► Strengths:

- Bringing people and organisations together
- Creating networks, strengthening cooperations and contribute social cohesion

Opportunities for improvement:

- Continue to invest in broadening and diversifying the LAG composition (private actors, young people (representatives), culture/sport, social economy, vulnerable groups, women), with targeted recruitment via sector federations, youth councils, civil society, the social economy and sport/culture.
- Invest in informal, low-threshold meetings between LAG members outside LAG meetings.
- Enable knowledge sharing between different LAGs possible
- Build bridges with knowledge institutions and businesses (contact points at colleges/universities, chambers of commerce/UNIZO, sector federations).
- Provide personal guidance for vulnerable and less experienced applicants, with step-by-step support where needed – provided the capacity of the LEADER secretariat is strengthened.

Governance



Social Capital

People and organizations are connected with each other—collaborations, networks, trust, and a shared vision for the area are created.



Governance

Decisions are made jointly, fairly, and transparently, and local actors are well supported in implementing those decisions.



Enhanced results and impact

Projects are innovative and meet local needs; they create long-term sustainable effects and often have a leverage effect for further development.



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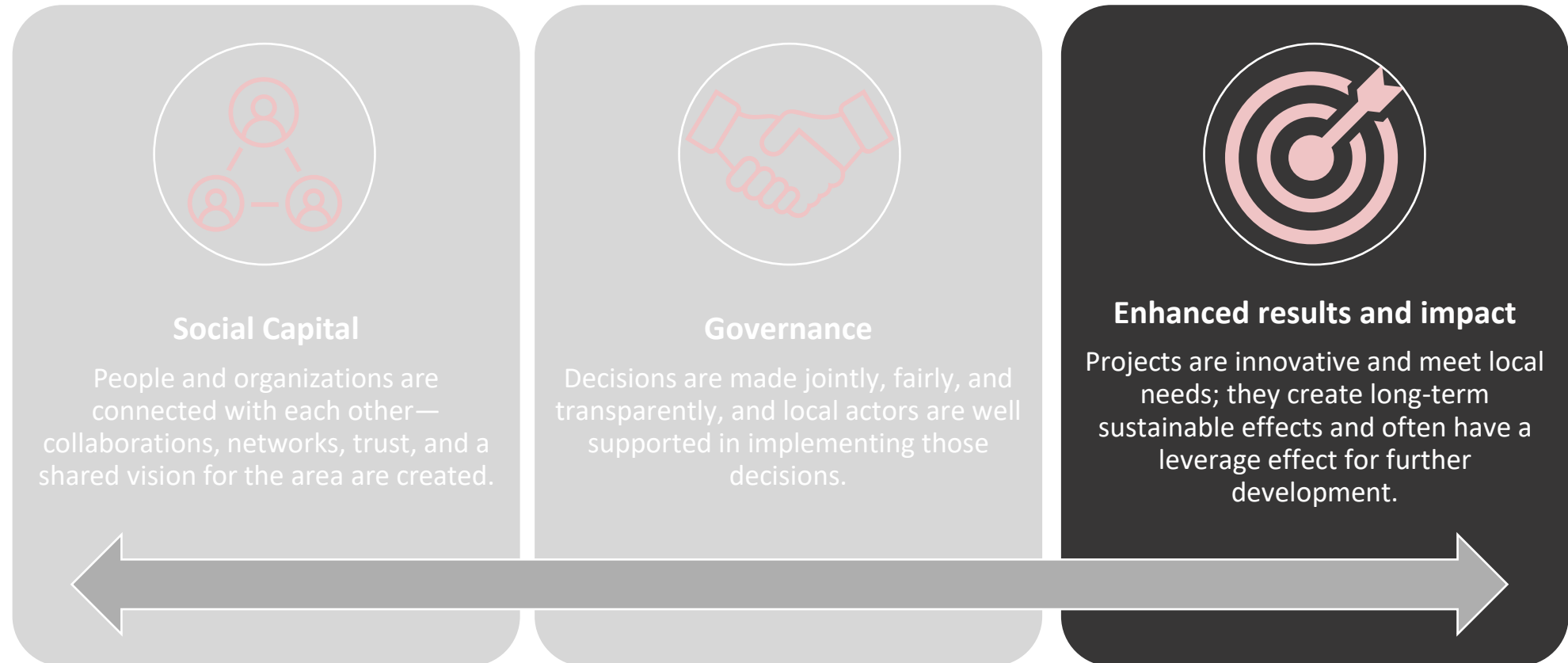
Governance

- ▶ LAG's fulfill their formal role quite well
- ▶ Appreciation of the participatory approach

Opportunities for improvement:

- Embed pitch moments structurally to make decision-making more inclusive and to gain better insight into projects and the quality of partnerships. These pitch moments create opportunities for promoters who are less strong at writing applications, but require attention to supporting less vocal promoters.
- Low-threshold forms of involvement (such as theme evenings or WhatsApp groups) to also involve groups from the community who do not (or cannot) form a structural part of the LAG.
- Create room for dialogue in LAG meetings alongside project assessment to connect interests, bridge oppositions and strengthen cooperation and implementation of the LDS (LOS).
- Foster stronger engagement of LAG members in broader regional development by investing more in networking, thematic exchange and project development beyond formal decision-making.
- Put more emphasis on communication by communicating more about projects and their achievements to the local community, and to stimulate more exchange between LAGs.

Enhanced results and impact



Enhanced results and impact

- ▶ LEADER focuses on local needs and leverages local strengths
- ▶ Wide diversity of projects and promoters

Opportunities for improvement:

- Work on a strategic approach to micro-projects – sustainable effects, progression & scaling up towards regular projects.
- Continue to work on broadening the LAG and LEADER network and on involving actor types that are still at a greater distance – economic networks, knowledge players...
- Continue to look for ways to reduce the administrative threshold and burden for project submission and implementation, e.g. by further unburdening, facilitation in preparation, reporting and closure.
- Strengthened follow-up of project results and supra-local dissemination, as well as aftercare and support for exploring follow-up steps.
- Work on appropriate possibilities for follow-up trajectories for (innovative) LEADER projects, to further develop and embed them.



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the Art

Lessons for ESF+

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ESF+ - lessons learned

Social Capital

involve a broad mix of local actors in the composition of the LAG

provide tailored support for less experienced applicants

invest in networking and trust-building

Better governance

Ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making

Use simple engagement tools such as pitch sessions and community dialogue

Create ownership through cooperation and co-creation

Enhanced results and impact

Reduce administrative burden for applicants and projects

Connect initiatives to other funding and support opportunities

Focus on sustainability, follow-up and scaling up

Broad participation + local ownership + simple procedures = stronger social inclusion outcomes

More information

www.vlm.be
info@vlm.be



<https://x.com/VLMtweet>



<https://www.facebook.com/VlaamseLandmaatschappij>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/vlaamse-landmaatschappij>

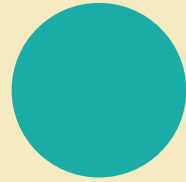
LIVING COMMUNITY POMALŠÍ





<https://youtube.com/shorts/y5aamWiqYfU?feature=share>

long story short



this is what our community work is all about

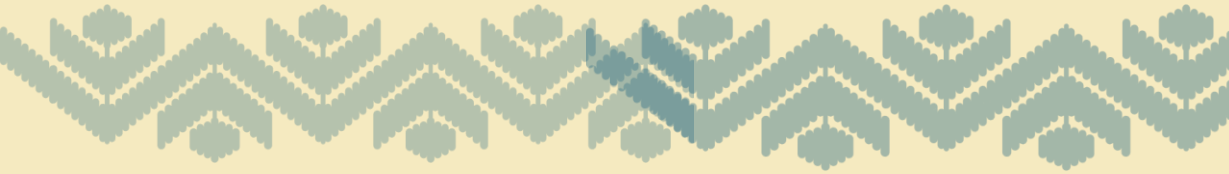
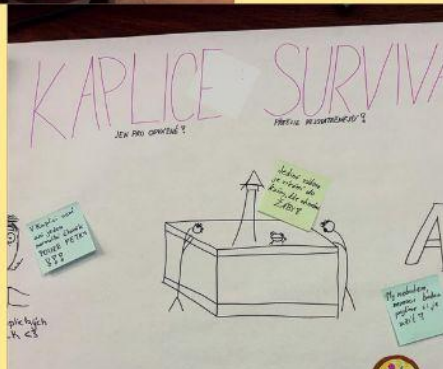


First, we walk around and grumble...

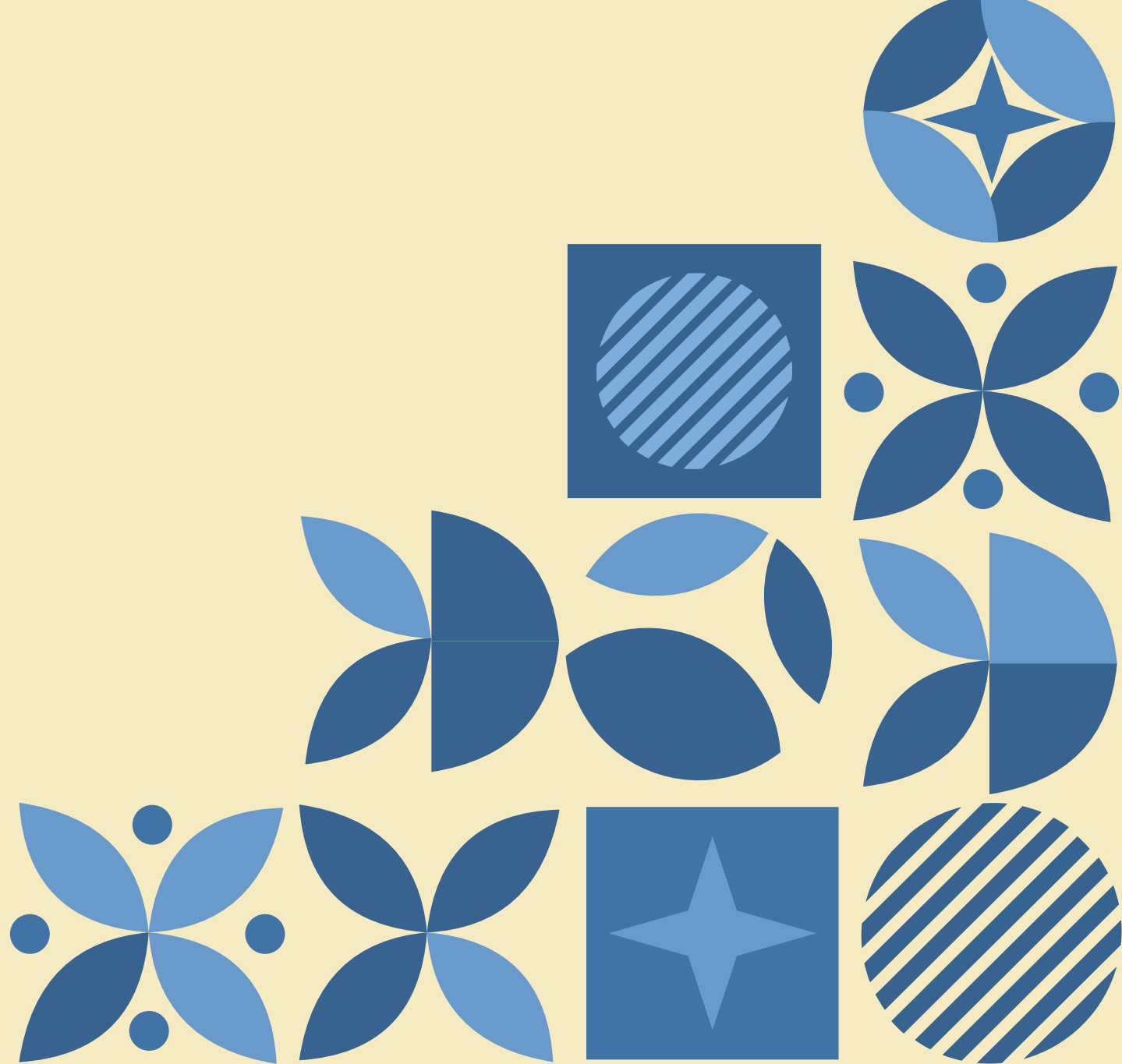




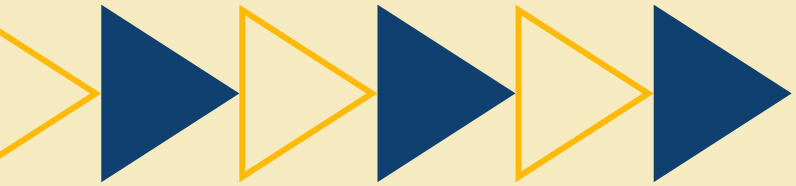
MAS Pomalši



or excite us...

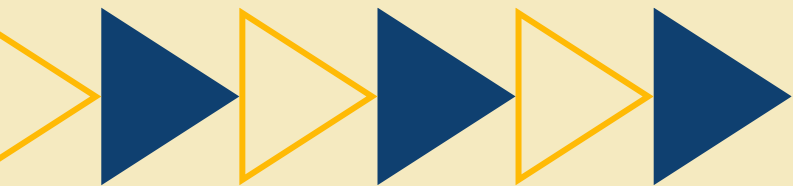






...we talk things through...





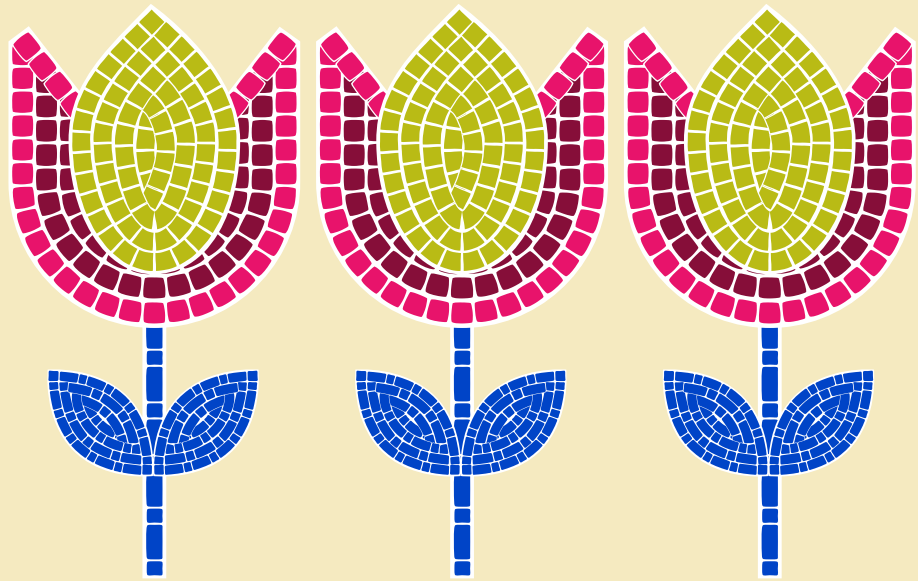
The background of the entire image is a dense, repeating pattern of small, light blue triangles pointing in various directions, set against a pale yellow background. The triangles are of varying sizes and are distributed evenly across the entire frame.

...we give it a try
...carefully
...with care



The background of the slide is a solid yellow color. Overlaid on this background is a dense, irregular pattern of small blue triangles. These triangles are of various sizes and are scattered across the entire frame, with a higher concentration in the lower-left and lower-right areas, creating a textured, abstract effect.

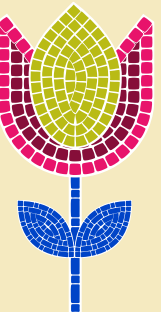
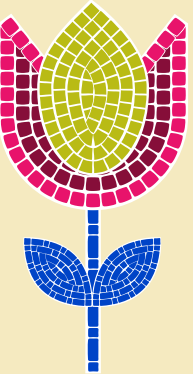
...and sometimes it
just doesn't work...



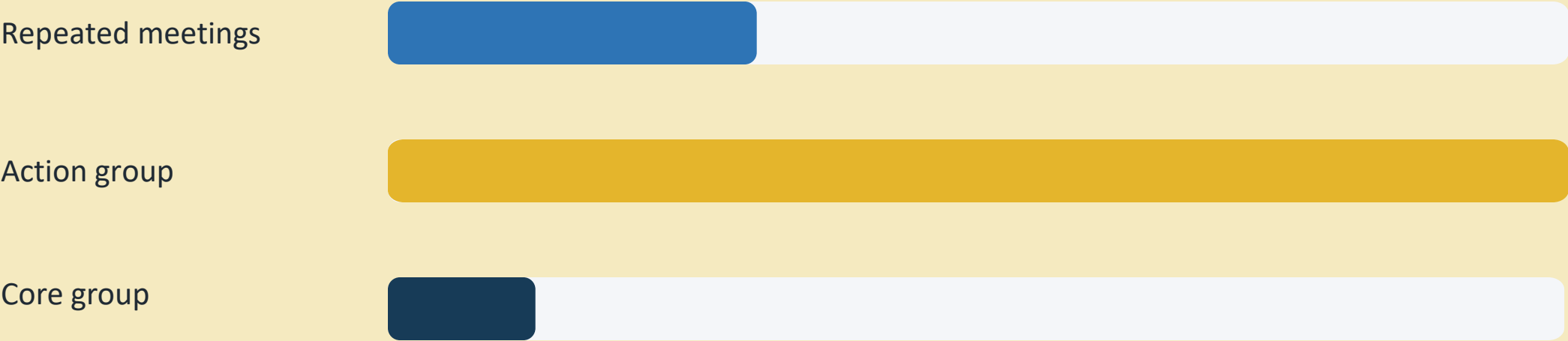
...but in the end, we
know we've left our
mark on the place we
call home.

Lessons learned

- Go into the field – experience the place first-hand, not only through statistics and documents.
- Talk to people – have informal conversations where people naturally meet.
- Listen to what frustrates and excites them – look not only for problems, but also for motivation, skills and local energy.
- Don't overanalyse – learn enough to take a safe first step.
- Test quickly – try ideas on a small, temporary and low-cost scale.
- Learn by doing – after each attempt, reflect together on what worked and what should change.
- Work in partnership – connect residents, municipalities, public officials, organisations and experts.
- Create visible wins – let people experience that their actions can make a real difference



Community Progress (January–June 2026)



138

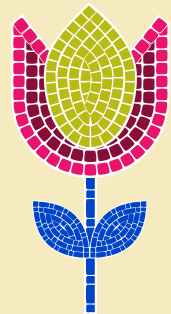
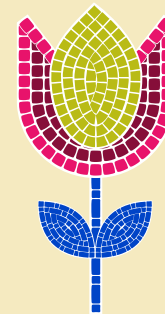
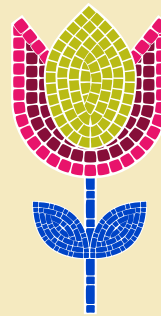
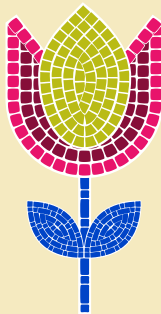
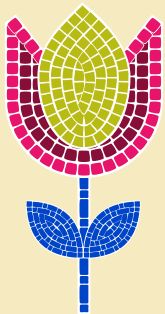
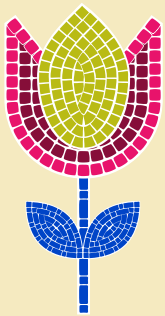
completed activities

1 097

recorded attendances

Typology of Community Work Approaches

- We are developing a shared language to describe and explain community work clearly.
- In cooperation with 31 Local Action Groups, we developed a typology of different community work approaches.
- We are not looking for one “correct” model. Approaches vary according to people’s needs, the situation of the community and the local context.
- Together with other experts, we will examine how these approaches work, who they work for, how they can be combined and what results they produce.
- Our goal is to demonstrate the value and real impact of community work more clearly.



Different Approaches to Community Work

- 1A Participatory model – with an active municipality

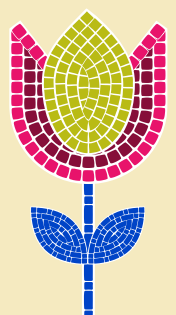
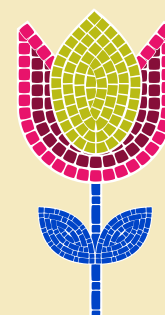
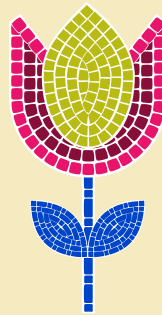
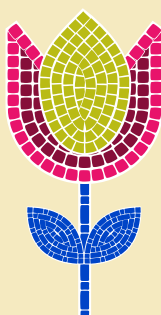
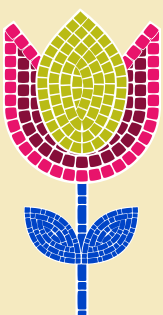
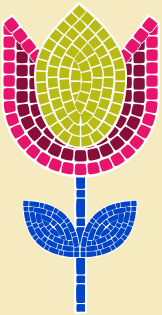
Community mapping, work with local leaders and public dialogue connect residents with an active municipality → community priorities enter local decision-making → participation, trust and the municipality's ability to respond increase.

- 1B Participatory model – without an active municipality

Conversations, neighbourhood projects and support for local leaders mobilise residents without active municipal involvement → community-led initiatives and a stronger community voice emerge → the community becomes more capable of acting independently.

- 2 Stable community hub model

An accessible shared space and regular meetings enable repeated contact → relationships, trust and a sense of safety develop → people gradually co-create activities, establish new groups and become less isolated.



Different Approaches to Community Work

- 3 Hybrid community and social work model

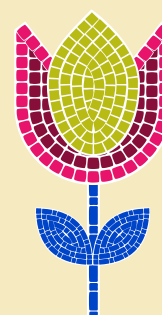
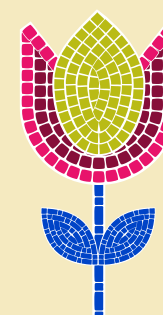
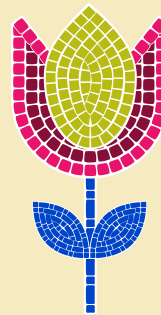
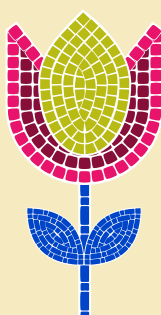
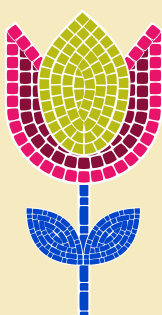
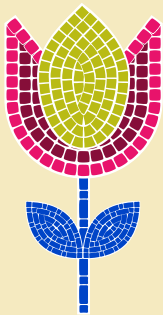
Community activities are combined with counselling, individual support and stabilisation → practical and relational support reduces pressure and isolation → vulnerable people gain better opportunities to participate in community life and access services.

- 4 Coordination and networking model

Schools, municipalities, social services and other institutions are connected through a shared platform → needs are identified earlier and stakeholders coordinate their roles → duplication is reduced and fewer people fall through gaps between services.

- 5 Community-based recovery model – proposed

The approach builds on the strengths, goals and abilities of disadvantaged people → they gain meaningful roles, experience success and develop new relationships → their self-efficacy, social capital and ability to address challenges using their own and local resources increase.



Thank you
POMALŠÍ - a Living community
+420 608 878 775
cerna@maspomalsi.cz



ESF IMPLEMENTATION IN CROATIA RELATED TO LEADER-CLLD



LAG Vallis Colapis

Milan Medić



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills



**E
S
F** | **UČINKOVITI
LJUDSKI
POTENCIJALI**

LEADER-CLLD IMPLEMENTATION IN CROATIA

Programming Period	No. of LAG's approved by Ministry		Territory	Population	Model of Implementation
IPARD 2007-13	42 LAG	- FLAG	69%	34%	MONO FUNDING

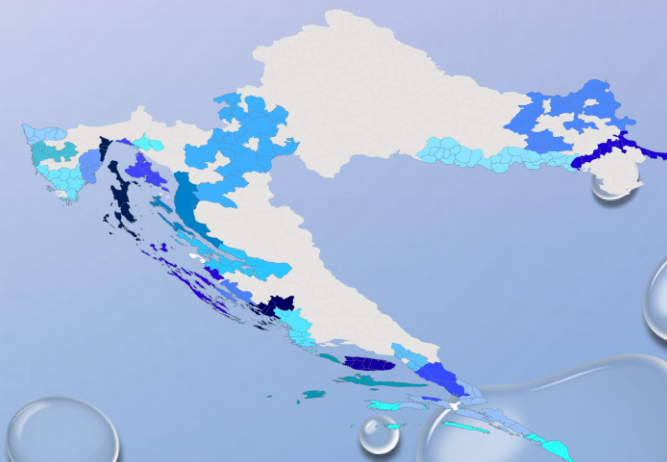
2013 – Croatia has become a member of the EU

EAFRD 2014-20/22	54 LAG	14 FLAG	90%	57%	MONO FUNDING
SP CAP 2023-27	56 LAG	23 FLAG	94%	62%	MONO FUNDING

KARTA ODABRANIH LAG-OVA ZA RAZDOBLJE 2023.-2027.



Izvor: Ministarstvo poljoprivrede, siječanj 2024.



ESF IMPLEMENTATION IN CROATIA

- ESF (2014-20):

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

“EFFECTIVE HUMAN RESOURCES” (1,8 B. EUR)

- YOUTH WORK
- VOLUNTEERING
- STRENGTHENING LOCAL NGO'S CAPACITIES
- SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND NGOS
- SERVICES TO ELDERLY POPULATION

29/68 LAGs applied for ESF granting:

42,6% LAGs

Total ESF cofinancing:

28,38 mil. EUR

People employed on ESF projects:

1.450

Emoloyed in LAGs

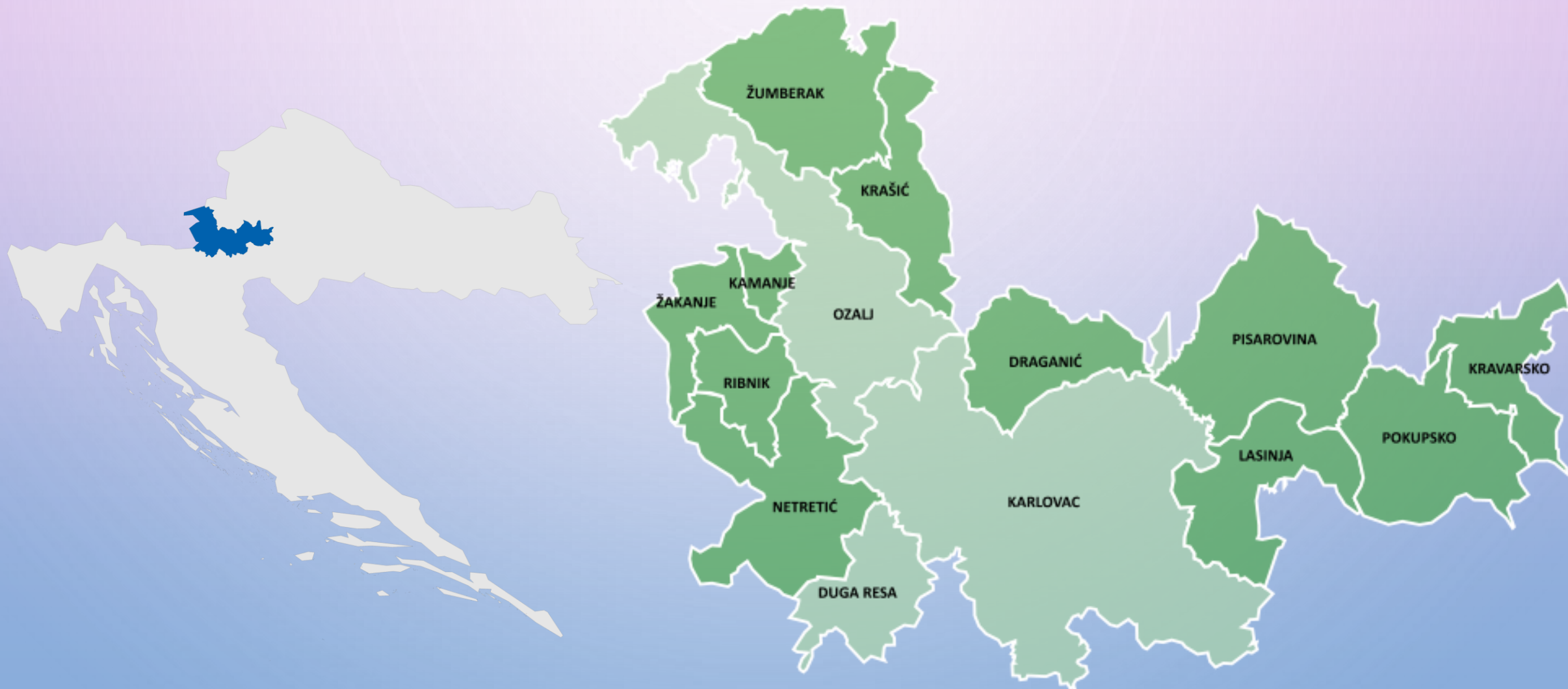
783 (54%)



LAG VALLIS COLAPIS:

14 RURAL MUNICIPALITIES & SMALL CITIES (CENTRAL CROATIA)

1.502,66 KM2, 95.607 INHABITANTS





LAG VALLIS COLAPIS

TOTAL INVESTMENT 2014-20/22.

	EUR	%
EAFRD: LEADER-CLLD	2.779.618,40	32,36%
EAFRD: Technical Assistance	4.221,77	0,04%
ESF	4.408.748,34	51,3%
Interreg Slovenija - Croatia	730.411,68	8,5%
Erasmus +	279.783,66	3,3%
Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare	212.483,39	2,5%
Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Program	168.381,63	2,0%
TOTAL:	8.583.648,87€	



CHEESE COTTAGE INDUSTRY MILKA

- 2017 BUSINESS START
- FAMILY-OWNED SMALL SCALE COMPANY
- 5 EMPLOYEES
- 3 SUPERMARKET CHAINS
- 22 FARMERS – PARTNERS IN MILK PRODUCTION



SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- GRANT: 139.301,69 EUR
- DURATION: OCT. 29, 2021 – JUN 29, 2023.
- BENEFICIARY: CHEESE COTTAGE INDUSTRY MILKA
- PARTNER: LAG VALLIS COLAPIS
- ACTIVITIES:
 - TRANSFORMATION TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
 - SALARIES AND EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYEES
 - PROMOTION



INSTEAD OF LESSONS LEARNED AND DESIRED CHANGES... AN INTRIGUING EXAMPLE

- **INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY (LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIJA)**

- 2024 RESEARCH – 365 FIRMS

76% FIRMS ARE MSE AND FAMILY OWNED

67% FIRM OWNERS ARE OVER 65 YEARS OLD – AND THEY DON'T HAVE SUCCESSION PLAN

40% OF BUSINESS OWNERS IN SLOVENIA PLAN TO RETIRE IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS

32% FIRM OWNERS CONSIDER EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP TO BE A SUITABLE SOLUTION

23. OCT. 2025. SLOVENIAN GOVERNMENT ADOPTED - WORKERS' OWNERSHIP COOPERATIVE ACT
- BASED ON AMERICAN ESOP MODEL



WHAT A LAG CAN DO:

- **IDENTIFY BUSINESSES WITH OWNERS 55+ READY TO TRANSFER**
- **ORGANISE INFORMATION AND AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS**
- **CONNECT STAKEHOLDERS WITH LOCAL BANKS, DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES AND EU FUNDS (LEADER/CLLD)**
- **FORM A LAG WORKING GROUP TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP**



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