LEADER Netwerk Nederland

LEADER:

a valuable instrument to work together on the strength and beauty of the Dutch countryside

The bottom-up approach works!

Since 1991, the LEADER method has proven its viability and success. It is an area-based method through which stakeholders collaborate in a bottom-up way towards integrated, innovative, and above all concrete solutions. This generates widely supported initiatives that improve the vitality of the local community and contribute to a sustainable local economy. An approach that, in the context of current challenges, is needed now more than ever to future-proof both agriculture and countryside.

LEADER as a flywheel

LEADER acts as a flywheel and has a significant multiplier effect: one LEADER euro generates an average of between 5 and 10 euros in local investments. Working with the LEADER method leads not only to public and private investments but also to new employment and economic activity. And it acts as a catalyst for social capital (direct citizen involvement, self-organizing capacity, building local knowledge, (social) innovation, and sustainable area networks).

Europe closer to the citizen

With the LEADER method, the local citizen is directly involved and is allowed to shape and implement the program themselves. Participatory democracy in its purest form! LEADER entails tackling and solving local/regional problems and challenges locally/regionally, together with all stakeholders, public and private.

Next Level with LEADER

LEADER as a breeding ground and treasure trove of rural development

Agriculture and the countryside face a multitude of major and often interconnected challenges. The LEADER method is the ideal instrument for this: through an area-based process, a Local Development Strategy is developed and implemented by the area itself. This enables local actors to realize a wide range of concrete initiatives that strengthen the power and beauty of the Dutch countryside.

How can we get even more out of it: from sowing to harvesting

The LEADER logo, which can be found on hundreds of thousands of projects throughout Europe, represents a germinating seed. In the Netherlands, with a relatively limited budget, we have already been able to sow a great deal and help germinate many hundreds of local initiatives. In 35 years, not only many inspiring projects have been realized, but also networks have been built and knowledge developed. Knowledge that can be shared and disseminated quickly and locally through direct collaboration between regions.

In areas with a substantially robust program with sufficient professional support serious impact can be generated. The impact increases disproportionally more with the size of the program.

We are ready!

The LEADER regions in the Netherlands are ready to create a powerful program for the new LEADER period, utilizing its full potential in service of a strong, vital and viable countryside.

What is needed for the next period?

1. Making LEADER accessible to all rural areas in the Netherlands.

2. Each LEADER area possesses sufficient critical financial mass, meaning a budget of at least €2 million in public funds, so that sufficient professional support can be guaranteed and real impact can be achieved.

3. A robust program requires a substantial budget. For the Netherlands as a whole at least €150 million in public funds must be made available.

4. In addition, opportunities to channel other provincial and local rural resources via LEADER and its Local Action Groups should be used more fully.

5. Sufficient national support will have to be made available to enhance further professionalization and strengthening of the role of the LAGs in area activation, knowledge sharing, capacity building and the selection and assessment of project.

This position paper reflects the vision and proposals of the LEADER Network Netherlands (LNN). LNN is the partnership of the current 31 LEADER regions. Together, they comprise two-thirds of the Dutch countryside and over 5 million inhabitants.

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