



A new approach for participative rural development in Georgia

Analyzing challenges, opportunities and innovation needs in Borjomi Municipality

14th ERDN Conference “Knowledge sharing and innovation in agriculture and rural areas”,
3-5 October 2016 in Budapest, Hungary

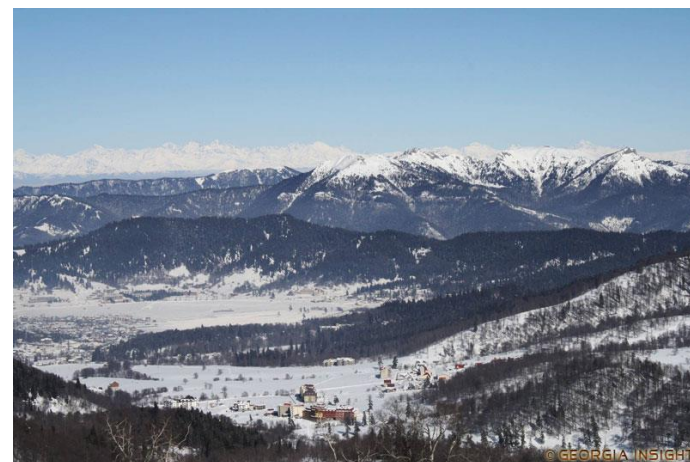
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Content

- Why a LEADER/CLLD-like approach in Georgia?
- Experiences from New EU-Member States
- Pilot regions in Georgia
- Methodology
- Results
 - Elaboration of LDS
 - Knowledge transfer
 - Institutional setting and learning
- Conclusions



Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park



Bakuriani in winter

Why a LEADER/CLLD-like approach in Georgia?

ENPARD Programm Georgia

ENPARD was launched in Georgia in 2013 with the aim to reinvigorate the agriculture and the rural sector (102 Mio. €).

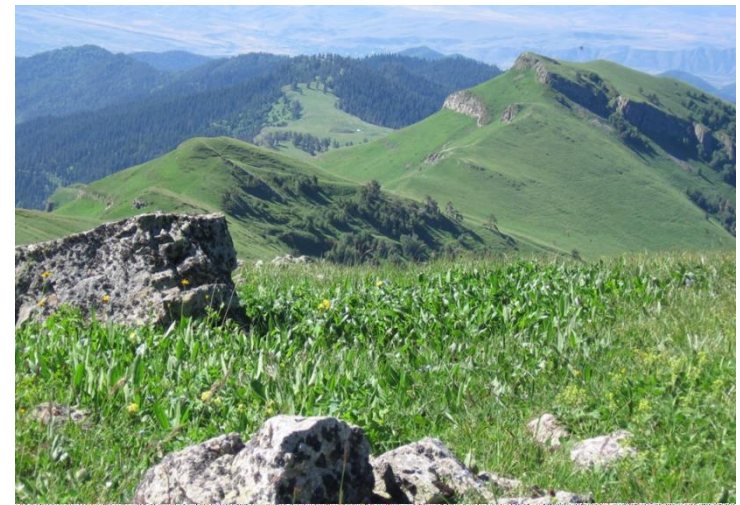
ENPARD Phase I: LEADER/CLLD-like approach in three Georgian regions (3 Mio. €);

ENPARD Phase II: three pilot + five additional projects (14 Mio. €).

→ Should help to guide the government towards adopting a comprehensive rural development approach.

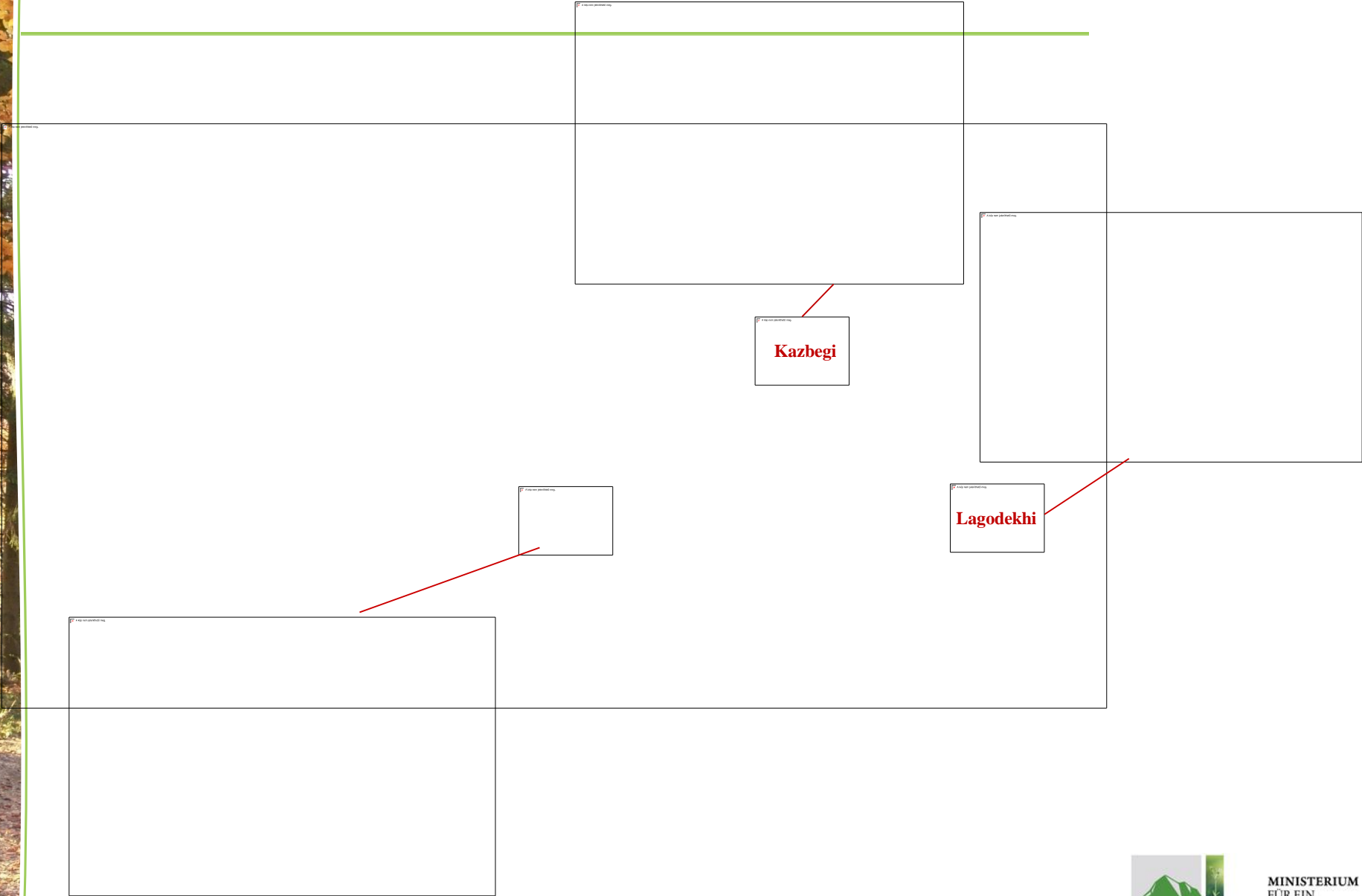
Seven key features LEADER/CLLD:

- area-based local development strategies;
- bottom-up approach;
- public-private partnerships;
- innovation;
- integrated, multi-sector actions;
- networking;
- and cooperation.



Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park

Pilot regions in Georgia



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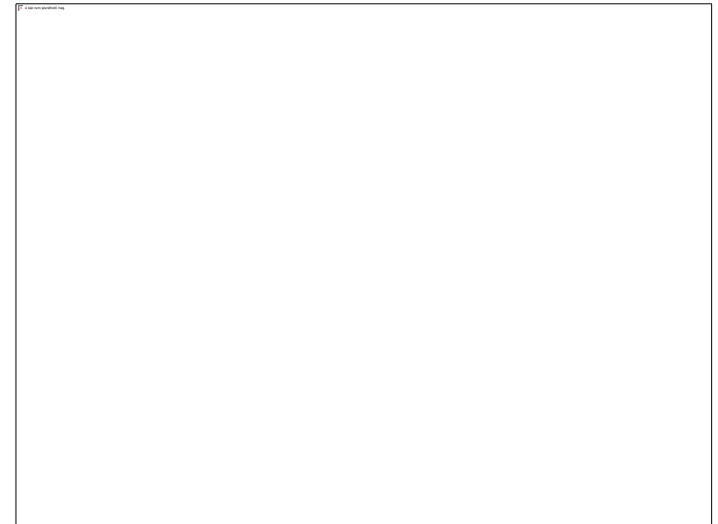
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Pilot region Borjomi Municipality

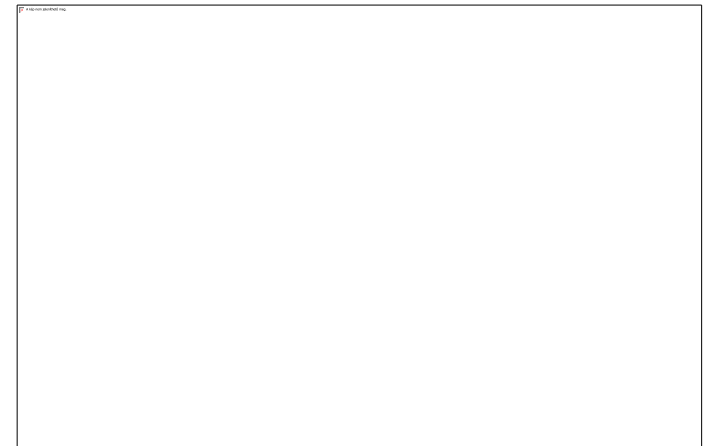
The traditional tourism region of Borjomi Municipality in the Lesser Caucasus was chosen because it is representative for an area that holds significant potential in the linkage of ***nature-based tourism activities, agricultural diversification, cultural events*** and ***environmental protection*** activities in a ***mountain region***.

Borjomi is a popular spa town that has been famous for the healthy benefits of its water since the early 20th century and Bakuriani is a well-known winter sports destination.

The bottling of its mineral waters has been the Municipality's leading source of income and one of the country's leading export brands.



Borjomi town



Bakuriani in winter

Experiences from New EU-Member States

Experiences with implementation of LEADER in post-socialist countries:

- (-)
- Low level of trust towards formal institutions;
 - No sympathy for collective actions;
 - Unwillingness of political leaders to share power and influence;
 - Leading role of mayors and strongly positioned county councils;
 - Local actors seem to lack initiative and need leadership;
 - Passivity strengthens the traditional political institutions and inhibits governance adaptations;
 - Overcoming this deeply rooted heritage of the socialist era needs a long-term process.
- (+)
- Actors of greater social distance can gather and be part of the LAG elaboration process;
 - Learning about time as a crucial factor in the implementation process of LEADER;
 - Time is essential for establishing social capital for counteracting the lack of trust;
 - Appreciation of a new innovative local development instrument.



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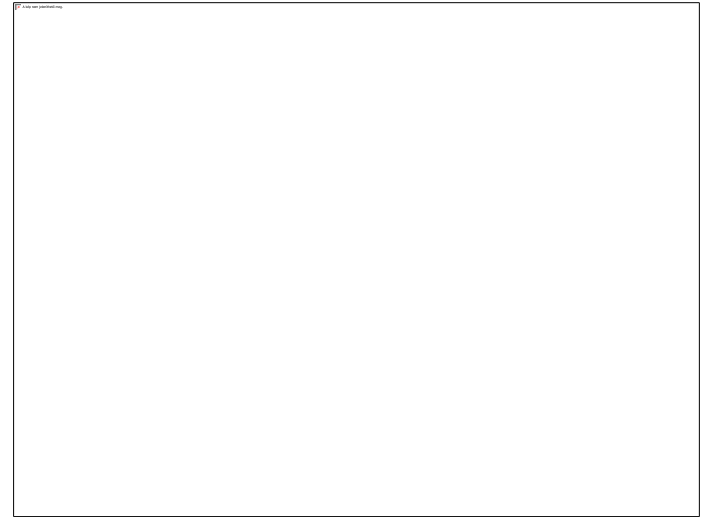
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Research questions

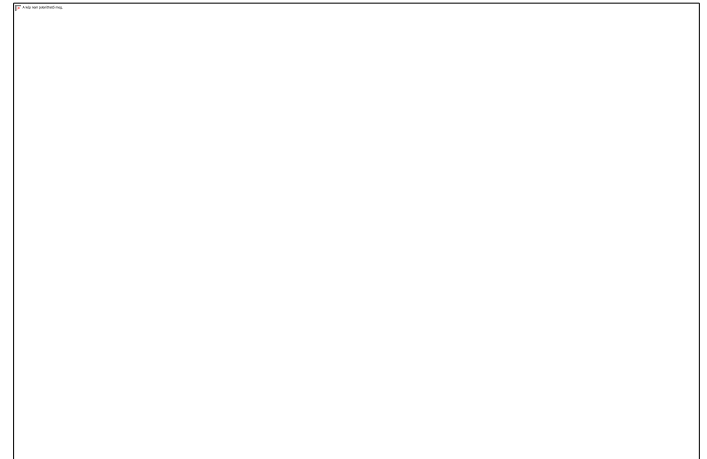
Is the LEADER/CLLD-approach transferable to the situation of rural areas in Georgia?

Which types of local and regional institutions are required to a successful rural development process and how could useful assistance be provided?

How can the existing institutions adopt the new rural development approach?



Farm women in Tsagveri



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Methodology I

A mixed set of methods was used:

a) for project implementation:

- Moderation methods;
- SWOT-Analysis;
- Needs-Analysis;
- Focus-groups;
- Expert interview;
- Accompanying observation.

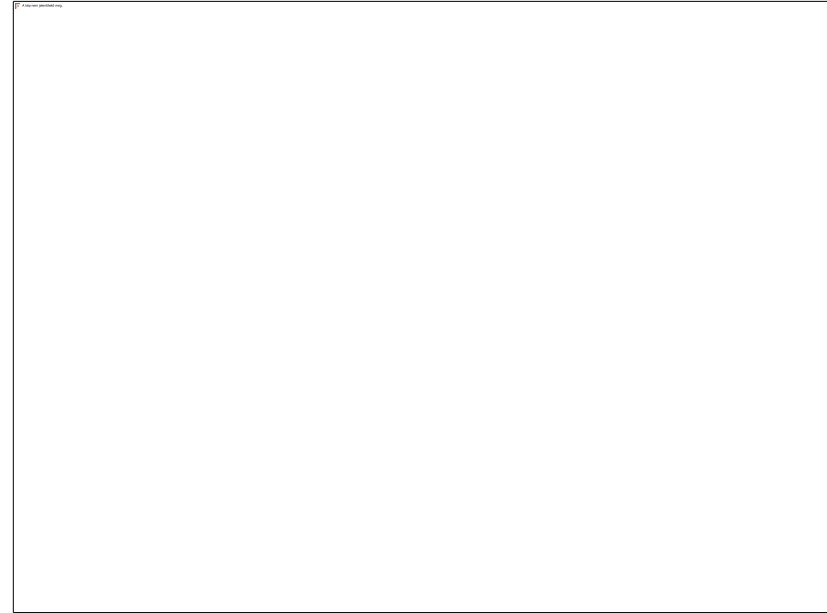
b) for monitoring and evaluation:

- Focus-Groups;
- Interviews with project applicants;
- Document analysis.

c) for internal and external communication and mediation:

- Consultancy and technical assistance;
- Meetings.

→ *All these methods are useful for the animation and mobilization of the participants in the rural development process.*

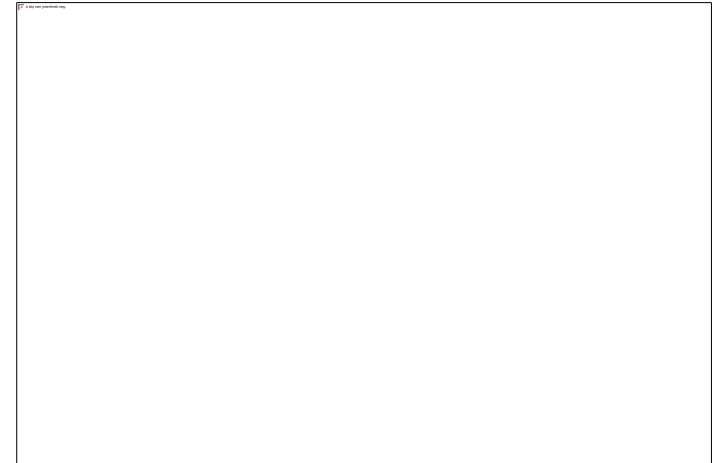


Workshop SWOT-Analysis in Borjomi

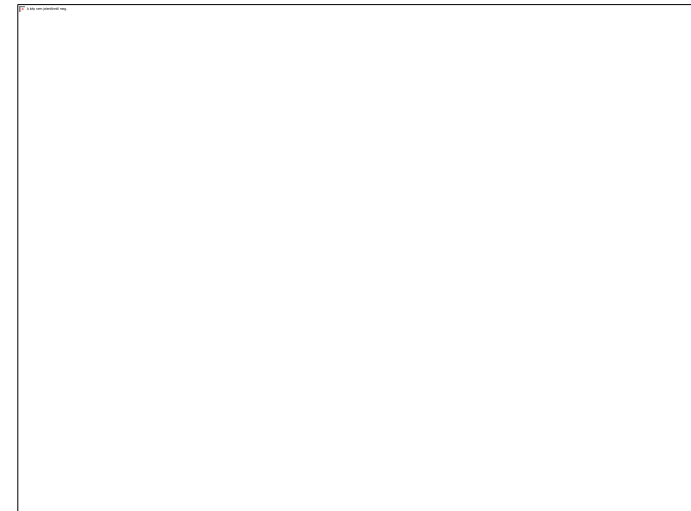
Methodology II

Steps of the LDS Elaboration Process and implementation since July 2015

- Project Kick-Off-Workshop;
- Information campaign about the pilot-project: 28 villages with approximately 1.350 participants;
- Training workshop for the prospective LAG members;
- Formation of the LAG;
- Workshops and Focus-Groups for the elaboration of the LDS;
- Study Tour to Scotland;
- LDS prioritisation and decision;
- LDS publication;
- Animation campaign +Call of EoI;
- Full grant applications;
- Selection of the projects (25–30 projects).



Kick off meeting in Borjomi



Workshop SWOT-Analysis

Results I

Focus on the participatory aspect and the knowledge transfer in rural development from EU countries to Georgia.

Aim of the LDS:

To improve the quality of life of Borjomi residents and create a more attractive destination for visitors.

Objectives of the LDS:

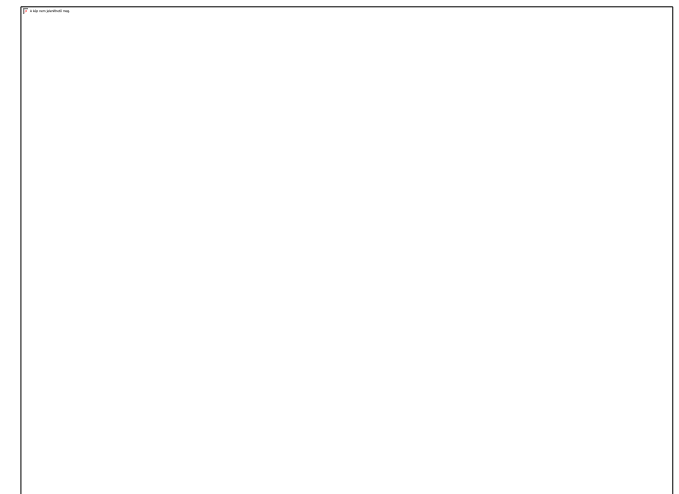
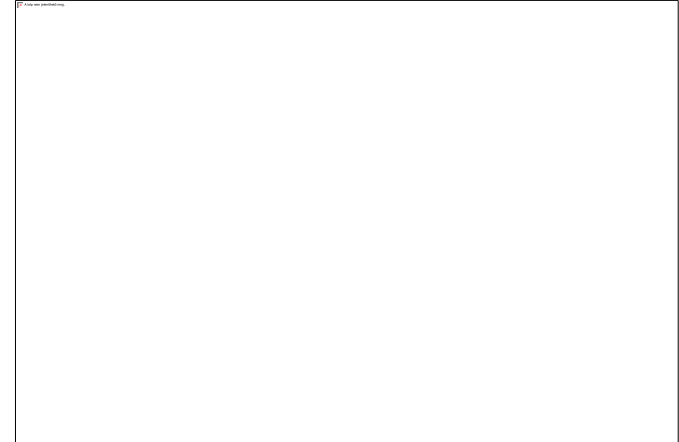
- To increase the contribution of sustainable tourism to the local economy making it a model for the whole of Georgia
- To improve agricultural productivity and diversification, and to enhance professional knowledge, making farming a more attractive and profitable business sector
- To strengthen sports and cultural activities to enhance quality of life and increase a sense of belonging
- To protect the environment through sustainable use of natural resources, effective land and waste management and awareness raising to enable local people to take a more active role on environmental issues.

Source: LDS Borjomi Municipality 2016

Results II

Different types of knowledge transfer

- Between Partners in the ENPARD Programme (EU, MoA, FAO, UNDP) and the consortia (Mercy Corps, PIN and CARE);
- Between the consortia Mercy Corps, PIN and CARE (exchange, visits, study tours);
- Between the partners in the consortium of the pilot project of Borjomi Municipality;
- Of specific expertise concerning LEADER to the Mercy Corps team and the LAG;
- To the Mercy corps team in Borjomi Municipality;
- In the region concerning LEADER.



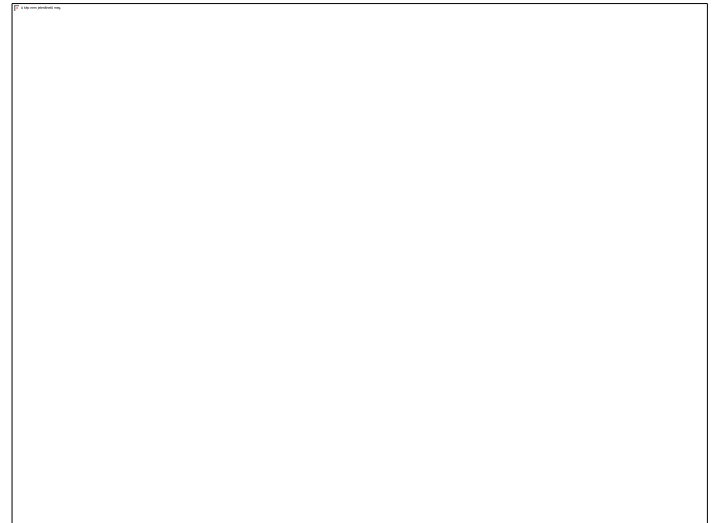
Results III

Institutional setting and learning

Acceptance of the need of collaboration between different institutions and between public and private partners;

Understand general rules, the potential of a local development approach and different roles of the partners in the process;

Experience issues of time schedule, grant possibilities, relevance of priorities and planning, as well as the need of a co-operative approach („new governance“).



Discussion I

Pilot region Borjomi Municipality

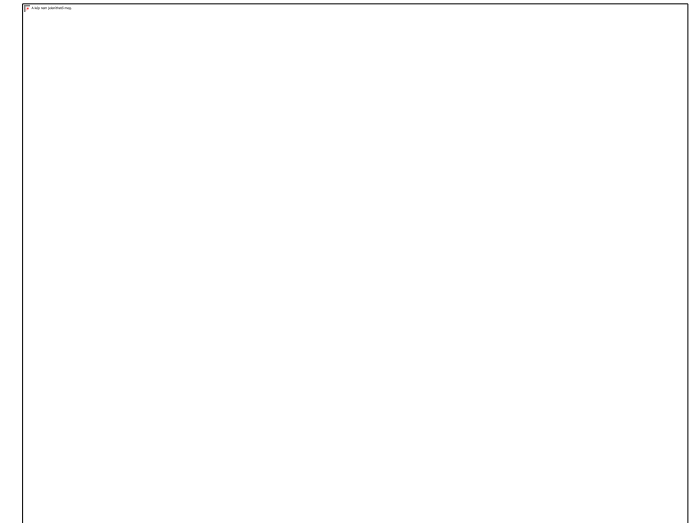
Aim

- to maximize the gain of information and mutual exchange between the pilot regions and the official authorities
- as well as to get evidence how a LEADER/CLLD -like approach could be performed in all rural areas in Georgia.

Formation of LAG and successfully elaboration of LDS indicate a high degree of acceptance of the LEADER/CLLD -like approach.

Team in Borjomi: great efforts to animate people in the villages and to provide guidance and support.

Important background: most team members of MC in Borjomi were already experienced in (international) project implementation and have their roots in the region.

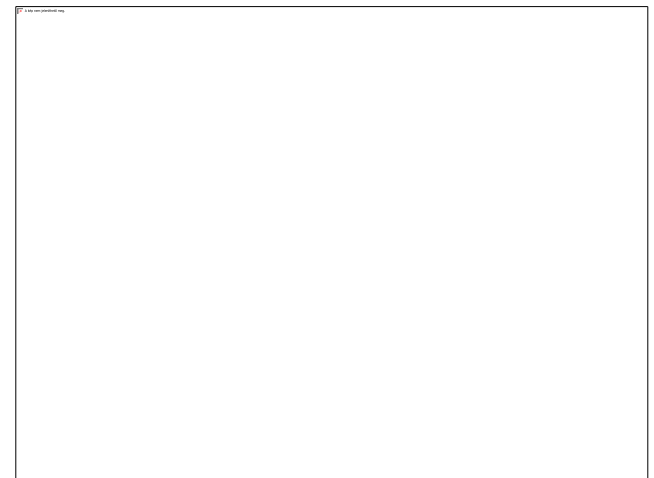
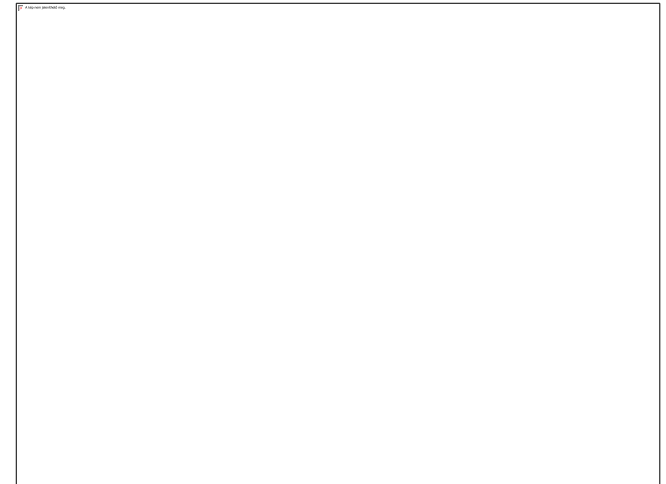


Discussion II

Transfer of experiences from EU Member States and to learn from long-term implementation as well as national and transnational reflection;

For people involved in rural development processes in transition countries it becomes obvious that **quick solutions** are usually **not possible** and that it often needs **a long breath** to get forward with: new forms of co-operation and networking, the elaboration of development strategies or the application and implementation of projects;

Often the **mediation and encouragement** of the project team is the core aspect to make clear that people should not give up.



Discussion III

The transfer of experiences and the presentation of best practices from Austria and Scotland to Borjomi Municipality was a key input into the pilot project;

Transfer of specific expertise with useful sustainable and multi-sectoral development of mountain regions in the fields of eco-tourism, farm-tourism, food processing, diversification on alpine farms and multi-sectoral co-operations);

The Lesser Caucasus has a similar resource base to Alpine countries – learning from examples is useful: this is inspiring and provides incentives for new initiatives in rural Georgia.

