AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
http://ageconsearch.umn.edu
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

Assessing of the Projects Promoting Innovations in Rural Areas in the Czech Republic

AUTHORS
Marie Pechrová and Alena Kolářová

Paper prepared for presentation at the 131st EAAE Seminar 'Innovation for Agricultural Competitiveness and Sustainability of Rural Areas', Prague, Czech Republic, September 18-19, 2012

Copyright 2012 by [Marie Pechrová and Alena Kolářová]. All rights reserved. Readers may make verbatim copies of this document for non-commercial purposes by any means, provided that this copyright notice appears on all such copies.

Assessing of the Projects Promoting Innovations in Rural Areas in the Czech Republic

Marie Pechrová and Alena Kolářová

Annotation: Innovative approach is essential for a growth, but the understanding of the content of it is not unified. The term innovation itself is broad and can cover wide range of activities. The article deals with the projects promoting innovations in the rural areas of the Czech Republic (CR) financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Strategy Plans LEADER (SPL) submitted by Local Actions Groups (LAGs) which are operating under the LEADER[1] scheme are analysed and their approach towards innovation is evaluated. The importance of the innovations in the projects is evaluated on the basis of established preferential criteria for selection of the projects and finances devoted to the measure Fiche[2] which includes innovative projects. On the basis of case studies of the projects aimed on education I am coming to the conclusion that various types of projects are understood as innovative, but sometimes the term is misinterpreted. Preferential criteria for selecting projects defined by LAGs should be more precious and concrete. Despite the fact that innovations are one of the obligatory criteria for selecting projects which will be financed, its inclusion is mostly formal. Its relative weight in comparison with other criteria is quite low. Besides, the importance of innovative projects is not sufficiently underlined by finances. I argue that there is not adequate attention paid to the real contribution of the projects to innovations. I recommend the revision of the term innovation and its stronger inclusion into the preferential criteria for selection of the project in order to ensure that selected projects clearly correspond with the innovative approach.

Key words: innovative projects, rural area, Local Action Group, Strategic plan LEADER

1 Introduction

“Innovation in general and its spatial dimension in specific has been a primary object both of scientific analysis and of policy.” (Steiner et al, 2011) “Innovation is widely held to be a key driver of economic growth at the heart of the knowledge economy” (OECD, 1996 in Dargan and Shucksmith, 2008), although according to Dargan and Shucksmith (2008) the social and cultural dimensions of innovation are often neglected. They argue that “innovation policies are frequently regarded as central to improving a region’s competitiveness. Innovations are not only developed by scientist and taken up by practitioners and does not originate only in urban areas.“ In the most studies, the technological aspects of innovation, new product and development are the subject of analysis. Despite the fact that it may seems that only huge transnational companies can deliver the desirable amount of innovations, current studies revealed the fact that also innovations in rural areas are possible. “Many recent studies show that innovations occur without scientific knowledge.” (Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008)

Ability of producing innovations of the small and medium firms in the rural areas concerns Steiner et al (2011). They explore innovative behaviour through reviews and interpretation of the theories of regional innovation and concepts of innovative milieu. They analyse how specific milieu of the region affects the innovative potential and searching for the factors influencing innovative behaviour in rural areas. They conclude that range of innovation potentials in studied areas “are not an automatic outcome of this specific type of region but call for the organization and promotion of the revealed factors for innovation behaviour.” (Steiner et al, 2001)

---

[1] LEADER is an abbreviation from French "Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l´Économie Rurale" – i.e. Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy".

[2] Fiche = measure

European Council emphasise the importance of involving regional and local authorities in the design and delivery of results from EU programmes. (Bachtler et al, 2007) The EU policy goal (promoting growth, innovations and competitiveness) can be achieved only "if it is owned by all stakeholders – at EU, national, regional and local levels." (Hűbner in Bachtler et al, 2007) "Specific features and potential of rural areas for innovation deserve special attention." (Steiner et al, 2011)

1.1 Special innovation factors in regions

"Every region has its own economic and social infrastructure, its existing networks and organizations as well as its specific physical infrastructure. This set of factor endowments and assets determine the region's ability to innovate and successful regional innovation result in enhanced productivity and prosperity." (Steiner et al. 2011)

Policy makers must respect that the sources of innovations in rural areas are rather different than in urban areas. As Steiner et al. (2011) point out; the focus must be "more on intangible assets such as **conscious behaviour**, **cooperation** and **collective learning** than on the classical determinants of competitive advantage." Current studies also emphasise **social relationships** and focus especially on the **influence of the community**, **social norms** and **behaviour rules** as on the important factors that help to enhance innovations. I point out two principles on which the LEADER programme is based: cooperation and mutual learning.

1.1.1 The importance of cooperation for innovations

Roles played by a variety of different actors have been recognised in recent studies. Strong relationship between innovatory economic development and a strong civil society, focusing especially on the presence of networks, both within the territory and between its actors is suggested by many authors (e.g. Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008). The relations are essential, because according to Leeuwis and van den Ban (2004 in Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008) "co-operation between actors with a variety of different forms of knowledge and experience, who are then able to contribute to the development of innovations and can facilitate knowledge transfer", contribute to promoting innovatory economic development in rural areas.

1.1.2 The importance of learning for innovations

"In view of the shift towards a knowledge-driven economy, the capacity of urban and rural regions to support processes of learning and innovation has been identified as a key source of their competitive advantage." (Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008)

One of the key factors which are seen as essential for the innovation is **regional knowledge base**. "Common regional knowledge base is not just crucial for an effective communication and information exchange between local actors, but also contributes to a sustainable economic development and a successful innovation system." (Longhi, 1999 in Steigner et al, 2011)

Current approaches emphasis the role of learning rather than scientific findings in the innovation processes. "Learning need not necessarily imply discovery of new technical or scientific principles, and can equally be based on activities which recombine or adapt existing forms of knowledge." (Smith, 2000, in Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008)

There are many concepts which highlight the importance of **knowledge and learning** in the rural areas: **relational assets**, **learning regions**, **social capital**, **institutional thickness** and **associational economies**. (Mackinnon et al, 2002 in Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008)

Steiner et al (2011) name concept "**learning-by-doing**" as a one of the key factor which can lead to the innovations. Some scientists emphasises the theory of **collective learning**, **agglomerative preconditions** of **innovative behaviour** or "milieu innovateur". They focus mainly on the intangible tacit knowledge. Untraded interdependencies constituted around tacit

conventions and informal agreements assist to the economic learning and adaptation. One of the possibilities how to enhance learning is through better education of the rural population.

1.1.3 The importance of education for innovations

Education in the rural areas is essential to build up local identity and create an environment for innovation. The support of the human resources in the rural areas (Steiner et al, 2008) is strictly recommended as they often face brain drain.

According to the proclamations of the officials (Hlaváček, 2012) "one of the main pillars of the future economic growth on the European continent will be support of the research, implementation of the innovations and strengthening of the Europe. To make this pillar effective, it is necessary to ensure constant increasing education of all population."

However, the over-estimation of the educational programmes does not have to lead to the desired results. Mackinnon et al (2002, in Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008) criticised that there is a growth of a so-called regional development industry, which is oriented toward the production and circulation of knowledge in the form of reports, conferences and seminars. Despite the effort of the police-makers, the demand from regional agencies for concepts and models of development which offer guidance on how to increase competitiveness and foster innovation in their areas still persists. The question is "whether the explanation for poor economic performance lies within (poor collective learning) or outside (dependency on external capital)." (Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008). Lagsey´s (1984, in Dargan and Shuccksmith, 2008) came to conclusion that poor learning characteristics that are internal to regions themselves can result to under-development of the regions.

I presume that this might be because of the nature of the selected projects. Programmes implementing the projects through the bottom-up approach suppose that the local actors have the right notion about the development of the region. They are assumed to know the best, which projects to choose in order to bring the growth and development to their region. However, this might not occur in all cases. Therefore the selection process of the projects has to be examined.

1.2 LEADER programme

European Union's LEADER programme has been initially designed to develop innovative approaches to the rural development. "This is a programme that supports development in particularly vulnerable rural regions of the European countries, members of EU. It supports creative and innovative projects that can contribute to the long-term and sustainable development in these regions." (Vidal, 2009) It became integral part of the EU´s approach to the rural development.

LEADER has twin focus: (a) "on economic development and on democratic development and (b) on democratic learning and widening the "local" (endogenous) governance aspect of the initiative." (Papadopoulou et al, 2011). There are characteristic features making the programme unique, such as flat or lose hierarchical structure, which allows greater control over the projects by the local participants (Papadopoulou et al, 2011), involvement of local actors, bottom up approach, mobilization of local knowledge, strengthening of the social capital, searching for flexible public-private partnerships, multi-actor, multi-level and multi-dimensional approach (Hradiská and Hudec, 2010).

1.3 The role of the Local Action Groups

LAGs submitted their SPL within Rural Development Programme (RDP) implemented during the programme period 2007-2013. Chosen accredited LAGs have been allowed to select the projects which will be co-financed from the EAFRD. "Support may be given to the projects

which are in accordance with the approved SPL of the LAG and according with the measures set out within the RDP." (SAIF, 2012) The applications are submitted by the various applicants to the LAG´s selection committee. It selects the projects for implementation according to the prior defined preferential criteria. This should ensure that only particular project aimed exactly on the previously stated objectives will be chosen. Also the conflict of interests will be prevented.

LAGs are left with relatively wide freedom regarding the setting of the scoring criteria. Certain number of them is obligatory; some can be established on the voluntary bases by LAGs themselves according to the regional needs. The emphasis on innovation is clear especially in the measure IV.1.2 *Realization of local development strategy*, where one of the compulsory evaluation criterions is the innovative approach. The weight given to this objective is left on the LAG. Some LAGs also include this criterion into their set of optional preferential criteria.

Selection process of projects by LAGs takes place at least once a year. Accepted application for grants has to be administratively checked by the LAG and has to undergo eligibility check. (Ministry of Agriculture, 2012) Unfortunately, the lists of projects with preferential score are not published.

2 Methods

In order to assess the understanding of the term innovation by LAGs, the paper analysis in detail their SPLs. The selection of LAGs for analysis was made on the basis of their success in the 10th call for applications for grand under measure IV.1.2 *Realization of local development strategy*. Only LAGs, which implemented projects linked to the education, were included in the case study. The sample consists of 21 LAGs.

The analysis of strategic documents' content was performed and the key indicators of innovative approach were highlighted and categorized. Consequently they were assessed and quantitatively evaluated.

The importance of the innovations for the LAG can be assessed by preferential score given to them during the selection procedure and hence by the amount of financial means devoted to the innovative projects. Therefore the forms for each Fiche were analysed and relative share of the score for the innovations on the total preferential score was calculated. The financial plan drafted in the SPL was used to establish the percentage of financial means for the particular Fiche. Special attention was paid to the innovations in educationally aimed projects.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Evaluation of the LEADER programme

Document *Mid-term review of the LEADER programme* evaluated its implementation positively, although some deficiencies were pointed out. The whole concept of the Axis IV and its functioning is according to the evaluators of the Rural Development Programme (DHV and TIMA, 2010) underestimated. The potential for rural development was not fully used and the traditional top-down approach remained the same. "LEADER was not considered as a method which would enable independent decision making of the LAGs." Therefore the original purpose of the programme could not have been fully achieved.

LEADER programme as a whole is evaluated according to the set of criteria. There are mostly of the quantitative nature and fail to measure qualitative benefits of the programmes. Economic criteria and procedures of their evaluation are easier to establish and to be checked. "View of managing authority, which is focusing from its external perspective more on formal

attributes, control and financial mechanisms, is not acquainted enough with the internal situation of the LAGs." (Hradiská and Hudec, 2010) Evaluating questions may ask for the qualitative benefits, but it is not clearly declared, what indicators should be used to answer them. Evaluators face the problem, how to articulate the results of the programmes.

As Papadopoulou et al (2011) argues, LEADER "effects are so different between regions and countries that any trans-regional generalization is likely to be unreliable." Therefore the possible form of evaluation can be rather based on the extended communication between paying agencies (which select the projects) and local actors (applicants) than on the "hard" evaluation methods. Ministry of Agriculture of the CR holds annual evaluation of Local Action Groups and divides them into four groups according to their performance and contribution to the local development. This assessment takes in account number of criteria with the aim to point out the best performing LAGs and their good practices.

3.2 Assessment of the understanding of the term innovation by LAGs

Each LAG has to answer the question about incorporation of the innovative factors in the selected projects in its SPL. It should describe the changes in the approach of solving local problems, the way, how the local potential will be used for innovations and make a list of innovative activities. According to the official declaration, the innovative approach within the framework of the LEADER programme is understood as:

- Introducing of the new products and services, which are reflecting the specificity of the particular location;
- Non-traditional ways of management and involvement of the local inhabitants into the decision making processes and the project realization;
- Introducing of the new methods for using the potential of the area;
- New action or activity which is performed in the area for the first time.

The innovation approach declared in the LAGs´ SPLs was analysed. The statements about what is considered as innovation can be categorised according to the main idea included. Naturally, the number of ideas exceeds the number of LAGs.

In the most cases (42), it is supposed that innovation is included in the way of co-operation. Especially the co-operation between traditionally separated sectors, involvement of public sector, private sector, non-profit sector, co-operation between municipalities and farms was considered as a benefit in 9 occurrences. Project preparations and realization based on community planning was mentioned five times as same as involvement of the local community in decision making, management and realization of projects, involvement of new inhabitants in region. In two cases, the pure establishment of the LAG itself was viewed as an innovative deed. I argue that it might be true for the first year after the funding of the LAG, however, the mere existence of it cannot ensure innovative approach in the future years.

Introduction of new products, services, technologies or activities was considered to be innovative in the 21 cases. The emphasis was laid particularly on the local products or services. In 10 cases, LAGs gave the preferences to the support of labelling of local or regional products, original product reflecting the specifics of the area and traditional products, because they consider them innovative. However, the nature of the projects raises doubts if they are truly of the innovative nature - for example, the renewal of the old traditional carnival.

The innovative approach should have been ensured by the support of the entrepreneurs in 7 cases. According to the 4 SPLs, the innovations are included in the projects supporting food companies, entrepreneurship incubators and local incubators of production based on woods and plants; while in 3 cases, the establishing of the new companies such as biogas plants,

renewable energy producers or various kinds of micro companies itself shall ensure the enhancement of the innovations in the rural areas.

Innovations resulting from the connection of the projects, their broader scope or enrichment were considered in 7 cases. Mutual connection of projects in production process, cumulative and linked activities are seen as key factors for bringing innovations.

Innovations in the area of tourism were mentioned in 6 SPLs. The local actors consider innovative the projects which are improving the attendance of the sites outside the season, tourism management and co-operation between providers of the tourism services; further the projects which support suburban tourism and agroturism. New methods in education or alternative kindergartens were mentioned as innovative in 3 cases. Innovations which ensure sustainable development in rural areas were stated 2 times as same as the appreciation of a cultural heritage which should lead to the development of the region, or to the incensement of the tourism.

Among other mentioned innovative activities was building of infrastructure, non-profit activities for rural development, localization of the projects in small municipalities, market for local products from small producers, new methods of usage of potential of the people and new usage of the local resources. It is questionable, if the projects aimed on infrastructure building can ensure innovations and in what area. Similarly, non-profit activities does not necessary imply that they are innovative. What is innovative about the fact that the project is implemented in the small municipality? The same question is if establishing of a market itself could bring innovation and in what area? According to my opinion, the criteria should target the nature and content of the projects, rather than its localization of it or the conditions it is creating. Despite that the new methods of usage of potential of the people and the local resources are not further specified, I am at the opinion, that this is the way, how should be the projects assessed in terms of innovations.

3.3 Assessment of the relative importance of innovations in the projects

My aim is to find out, how important are the innovations in the projects selected by LAGs to be implemented within Axis VI. of the RDP in the Czech Republic. To evaluate the importance of the innovative approach within the projects I compare the approaches applied by each LAG during selection process.

Each project submitted by applicant within certain Fiche is evaluated according to the prior declared criteria. The relative score given by LAGs to the innovation as one of the obligatory (and in four cases also voluntary) criterion can point out on the importance of the innovations for the local actors. It is also necessary to support the declared significance by finances. Therefore financial plans stated in LAGs' SLPs and 2008-2013 financial breakdowns have to be explored. The aim is to assess whether the means are devoted to the Fiches where innovations are highly valued.

The innovations were included mostly only in obligatory preferential criteria, sometimes exclusively in voluntary criteria. No more than four LAGs included innovations in both categories. The relative score in percentage (i.e. (score for innovation/total preferential score)*100) was calculated in order to enable the comparison between different Fiches and LAGs.

The preferential points for innovations remains usually the same in all Fiches measures (e.g. LAG Region HANÁ, c.a.[3] is awarding innovations with 30 points in all Fiches), but the total score of the preferential criteria varies. Therefore the relative weight of innovations can be reduced.

[3] civic association

Average score given to the innovative projects during selection procedure was 9.46 % (i.e. 9.46 preferential points out of 100). However it varies significantly from one LAG to another (standard deviation was 4.86 percentage points). For example LAG Posázaví put the 10 mandatory points for innovation criterion out 335 in total, while Rýmařovsko, p.s.c.[4] 50 out of 200, which accounts to the one quarter of all preferential points. It was also the LAG who gave in total the most preferences to the innovation during its selection procedure. On the other hand, the minimum score was given by LAG nad Orlicí 0.79 %. It evaluated projects within the framework of all its Fiches only by 3.22 %.

Histogram of frequencies shows that 5 LAGs evaluated innovations in submitted projects under 5 %, while only 2 LAG gave to the innovation significance over 15 %. Most of the LAGs gave score to the projects between 5 % and 10 % (7 LAGs). The distribution of points follows the normal distribution.

The most of the projects, where innovations are relatively highly considered, were aimed on the tourism or tourism infrastructure. Business supporting projects were awarded with the highest preferential score in 6 cases. From the point of view of innovations, also projects concerning cultural heritage were important.

LAGs have to present in their SPLs allocation of finances to each Fiche and, in some cases, to their functioning. The maximum share which was devoted to the LAG´s management was 20 %. The initial thesis is that the importance of the highly innovative projects should be underlined by the amount of finances devoted to the measure, where innovations have relatively high weight in the selection process.

27 projects, where innovations were highly scored amongst preferential criteria, were selected. In average, there was only 12.23 % of the financial means devoted to the Fiche with highly scored innovative projects.

The maximal allocation of the finances to the Fiche where the innovations are highly valued was established only in three cases. The best example is LAG - Partnership Moštěnka, c.a. which allocated on *Fiche 2: Colourful life in our home in the rural area*, where the innovations are rated by 50 out of 640 points (15.63 %), 40% of the finances for the period 2008-2013. LAG Region HANÁ, c.a. planned to allocate 15 % of the finances to the *Fiche 4: Development of the municipalities, infrastructure and service*s. The innovations in the projects are awarded by 30 points out of 520, which is the highest score of all LAGs' programmes. Another LAG, BYSTŘIČKA, p.s.c., awarded innovations in the projects by 50 out of 250 points in the framework of *Fiche 2: Village renewal and development, infrastructure* and planned 20% of the budged to spend on this Fiche.

These three LAGs are the only who actually support the innovative project with significant percentage of its expenditures. Otherwise, the most of the financial means were devoted to the Fiches where the innovative element in the project was not so important. For example LAG Strážnicko allocated 45 % of the budged on *Fiche 8: Our people in action* where innovation preferential criterion has only low significance (3.91%). Another example is LAG Moravská cesta (Litovelsko-Pomoraví), c.a, which favours within *Fiche 3: Tourism* the innovations by 50 points out of 270 (i.e. 18.52 %), but the financial amount devoted to this measure is only 3 %. On the other hand, 45 % of the financial means goes to the Fiche 2 which is improving the quality of life in the rural areas. The innovations are not highly scored in this type of projects; only 50 out of 380 are given as preferential points (13.16 %).

However, it must not be forgotten that the distribution of finances is only a plan, which could differ from the reality according to the number of approved and financed projects.

---

[4] public service company

3.4 The innovations in the LEADER educational projects

Education is considered to be one of the most important drives for the innovations. Therefore the projects within the axis *IV.1.2 Realization of local development strategy* aimed on education or related to the education were selected. The list of LAGs and their approved projects can be found in the Table 1. in Appendix. There is a Fiche specialized on the trainings and schooling. However, only few LAGs actually took the advantage of implementing it. Therefore the projects were selected from all LAGs' projects despite the fact that they were implemented under different Fiche.

Only 6 out of 21 LAGs established the measure aimed on education. *Fiche 11: Education and cooperation for active development* was introduced by LAG nad Orlicí, LAG Krkonoše implemented *Fiche 11: Education* as same as LAG Blanický les - Netolicko *Fiche 7: Education*. LAG Pošumaví named its *Fiche 6: Education and information* while Citizens Association Aktivios aims in its *Fiche 1* on *conditions for training and education*. *Fiche 7* of the Region Pošembeří, is focused on *education across generations and region*.

The score given to the innovations in the projects is generally very low as same as the amount of finances. The average for all six LAGs is only 6.2 %. It can be interpreted that the project gained only 6.2 out of 100 preferential points due to the fact that it was innovative. LAGs in average devoted to the educationally aimed Fiches only 5.84 % of their financial means.

4 Conclusion

The aim of the article was to present general approach to innovation within public financed programmes in the Czech Republic. On the basis of the analysis of the LAGs' SPL I came to the conclusion that under the term of innovation it is mostly understood innovation in the way of co-operation between various actors, communication and the fact, that the local actors are involved in the decision making process. However, I am of the opinion, that these innovations will be exploited in the few first years of the functioning of the programme or project.

Secondly, introducing of new products, services, technologies or activities is viewed as innovative. However, the new nature of the projects can be questioned in several cases. In the most of the cases, the products or services are not new themselves, but only to the area, where they are implemented. I have doubts if for example a project introducing regional brand is still innovative when similar ones are introduced by many other LAGs.

The innovation does not seem an important preferential selection criterion. Only three LAGs include innovations as their voluntary preferential criterion, while others used it only obligatorily (or voluntary only). The score for including innovations in the projects usually remains the same regardless the topic of the project (i.e. in all Fiches), but as the total score is different, the relative importance of innovations is diminished.

The importance of the highly innovative projects should be underlined by the amount of finances devoted to the measure, where innovations have relatively high weight in the selection process. However, most of the LAGs planned to devote the maximum amount of finances to the projects which do not prefer innovations in the selection process.

Considering the innovations in educationally aimed projects, I came to the conclusion that they are not highly valued there and are not an important criterion for selection of the project for financing.

It can be concluded that in selected projects the innovations are seen only as an obligatory need. I provided some examples, where it was clearly visible that under the term innovations was possible to include various aspects of the project – in some cases very questionable. I proved that in comparison with other preferential criterion, innovations are treated

disproportionately. Besides, the projects where innovations are highly valued do not, according to the LAGs' financial plans, receive sufficient amount of financial means. I am aware that my methodology is dealing only with official documents which are publically accessible. The challenge for the future research is deeper analyses of concrete implemented projects, larger and cross-year sampling.

References

1. Association of DHV CR, spol. s r.o. and TIMA Liberec, s.r.o. (2010) Zpráva o střednědobém hodnocení. Průběžné hodnocení Programu rozvoje venkova ČR za období 2007 - 2013. [online], Available: http://eagri.cz/public/web/file/109376/Zaverecna_zprava_EK_151210.pdf [10 Nov 2011].

2. Civic association Aktivios (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.mas-aktivios.cz [11 Jun 2012].

3. Dargan, L. and Shuccksmith, M. (2008) 'LEADER and Innovation', European Society for Rural Sociology, vol. 48, no. 3, pp. 274-291.

4. Development partnership of Region Hranicko (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.regionhranicko.cz [20 Jun 2012].

5. Fritsch, M. and Slavtech, V. (2011) 'The Determinants of the Efficiency of Regional Innovation Systems', Regional studies, vol. 45, no. 7, pp. 905-918.

6. Hooghe, L. (1996) Cohesion Policy and European Integration. Building Multi-level Governance, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7. Hradiská, A. and Hudec, O. (2010) 'Kritické faktory úspešnej implementácie v prístupe LEADER', Region Direct, vol. 1, no. 2, pp 32-51.

8. Kyjovské Slovácko in move (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.kyjovske-slovacko.com [12 Jun 2012].

9. LAG BYSTŘIČKA, p.s.c. 2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.masbystricka.cz [20 Jun 2012].

10. LAG Blanický forest - Netolicko (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.mas-netolice.cz [11 Jun 2012].

11. LAG Gate to the Czech paradise (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.masbcr.cz [10 Jun 2012].

12. LAG Krkonoše (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.mas-krkonose.cz [10 Jun 2012].

13. LAG nad Orlicí (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.nadorlici.cz [10 Jun 2012].

14. LAG of Mikroregion Frýdlantsko (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.jizerske-vyrobky.cz [26 Jun 2012].

15. LAG Opavsko (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.masopavsko.cz/ [10 Jun 2012].

16. LAG p.s.c. for Czech paradise (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.craj-ops.craj.cz [10 Jun 2012].

17. LAG - Partnership Moštěnka, c.a. (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.mas-mostenka.cz [12 Jun 2012].

18. LAG Posázaví (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://leader.posazavi.com [11 Jun 2012].

19. LAG Pošumaví (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.posumavi.jz.cz [20 Jun 2012].

20. Local Action Group Hříběcí mountains, c.a. (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://leader.isu.cz [12 Jun 2012].

21. Moravian path (Litovelsko-Pomoraví), c.a. (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.moravska-cesta.cz [20 Jun 2012].

22. Papadopoulou, E., Hasanagas, N., Harvey, D. (2011) 'Analysis of rural development policy networks in Greece: Is LEADER really different?', Land Use Policy, vol. 28, pp. 663-673.

23. Region HANÁ, c.a. (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.regionhana.cz [20 Jun 2012].

24. Region Pošembeří, p.s.c. (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.posemberi.cz [14 Jun 2012].

25. Rýmařovsko, p.s.c. (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://mas.rymarovsko.cz [13 Jun 2012].

26. Steiner, M., Kirschner, E., Harder, S. (2011) 'Innovation in rural areas? Exploring the potential for co-operation, knowledge and competitiveness', Region Direct vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 58-89.

27. Strážnicko Local Action Group 2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.straznicko.cz [11 Jun 2012].

28. Vidal, R. V. (2009) 'Community facilitation of problem structuring and decision making processes: Experiences from the EU LEADER+ programme', European Journal of Operational Research, no. 199, pp. 803–810.

29. Vyhlídky, c.a (2012) Strategic plan LEADER, Fiche [online], Available: http://www.vyhlidky.eu [13 Jun 2012].

5 Appendix

Table 1. The selected projects aimed on education

	Name of the LAG	Educational project
1	LAG nad Orlicí	Cycles of educational courses for the municipality employees
2	LAG p.s.c. for Czech paradise	Expansion and renewal of the educational trail in the Eco-centre
3	LAG Krkonoše	Touch – open centre for education and entertainment and meeting of the inhabitants of the east Krkonoše
4	LAG Gate to the Czech paradise	Village school in new; Information on time and everywhere
5	LAG Opavsko	Summer archaeological school
6	LAG Blanický forest - Netolicko	Modernization of the kindergarten

7	LAG Posázaví	Vlašim´s observatory – a popular educational activity – education in the area small craft
8	„Strážnicko“ Local Action Group	Hroznolhotsko´s cultural association – Development of cultural activities in Hroznová Lhota
9	Kyjovské Slovácko in move	Municipality Milotice – The library more accessible to the citizens; Municipality Želetice – Modern cultural house; Municipality Ratíškovice – Municipal library – the world of information for everybody; City Bzenec – They have where to play
10	Local Action Group Hříběcí mountains, c.a.	Following forman roads, paths – through the Moštěnka and Hříběcí mountains
11	LAG - Partnership Moštěnka, c.a.	Following forman roads, paths – through the Moštěnka and Hříběcí mountains
12	Civic association Aktivios	Meetings – the way to others
13	Rýmařovsko, p.s.c.	Municipality Václavov u Bruntálu – Let the people have entertainment
14	Vyhlídky, c.a	Municipality Chorušice – Building of the penthouse with the background for social events in Velký újezd
15	Region Pošembeří, p.s.c.	Civic association SOSák – Material-technical background for cultural events
16	Moravian path (Litovelsko-Pomoraví), c.a.	Municipality Náklo – Leisure area for children and adults
17	LAG BYSTŘIČKA, p.s.c.	Municipality Doloplazy – To our children for pleasure
18	Development partnership of Region Hranicko	Czech beekeepers association c.a. - Educational bee trail
19	Region HANÁ, c.a.	Civic association AKTIV+ - We are doing it for kids
20	LAG Pošumaví	Úhlava p.s.c. – Get known your neighbour; Education of the rural population in the area of diversification
21	LAG of Mikroregion Frýdlantsko	Information technologies for development of the educational capacity in Frýdlant area