



Examples of LEADER projects



About us

The National Network of Local Action Groups in the Czech Republic civic association (NN LAG CR) was founded at the beginning of April 2007, while the network itself had been established as early as in November 2005 as a informal grouping of Local Action Groups called "The National Rural Development Network".

The objective of the NN LAG CR is first and foremost to support the activities of Local Action Groups, to promote their cooperation and transfer of experience.

The activities of the network are managed by the Committee made up of 136 members representing the Local Action Groups coming from individual regions. The NN LAG CR cooperates as a partner with other institutions involved in rural development activities.

The objectives of the NN LAG CR are the following:

- to improve the quality of life in rural areas through continuous and integrated local development,
- to ensure reciprocal transfer of knowledge and experience between the individual members of the network and through the cooperation with the EU Member States and their LAGs,
- to encourage the cooperation with other countries that are ready to apply the LEADER approach in their rural areas.

The main tasks of the NN LAG CR are the following:

- to represent the LAGs at meetings with state and professional authorities,
- to create environment for cooperation and mutual assistance, sharing experience

between LAGs and examples of good practice,

- to promote and give publicity to LAGs activities,
- to provide their partners with ideas as to the focus of their professional activities,
- to hold every year the national conference of LAGs together with the annual assembly of the NLAGN of the CR members and programme oriented discussion,
- to cooperate with other institutions operating in rural areas,
- to support and develop the cooperation and partnership between rural population and farmers.

Thanks to the strong representation of LAGs, the National Network associates all the major players involved in rural development at local level and is a partner for the talks with state institutions (ministries, regional authorities...) and other national organisations (Agrarian Chamber, Association for Rural Renewal, etc).

In the early beginnings of its existence the network established contacts with the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD) and other similar organisations in Europe.

We believe that the activities of the NN LAG CR will bring about the extension, quality improvement and better visibility of the LEADER approach in the development of rural areas of the Czech Republic, contribute to the establishment of multiple new contacts at the regional, national and international level and facilitate the development of a number of successful projects.

National Network of Local Action Groups in the Czech Republic (National Network of LAG CR)

POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Examples of local projects supported under the LEADER Program development strategies of the Local Action Groups

Introduction

In the running period of 2007 – 2013 altogether 112 local action groups are able to implement their strategies of the LEADER Program – to check the correctness of the regional development strategies settings and to support local applicants' projects. Since the experience from the previous period of 2004 – 2006, when the LEADER program only started in the Czech Republic, can be only partially used, many procedures are now being tested and verified. The mainstreaming of the LEADER method has interconnected the LEADER Method – Axis 4 with the principles of the remaining axes. As the first and foremost result, the innovative character of the projects has been limited. Nevertheless, mainly owing to convenient communication among the managing authority, the paying agency and the National Network of LAG CR the former strict setting has been adjusted to the LEADER spirit and method requirements. Consequently, this has enabled the support of those projects that are pilot, innovative and of great importance to the development of specific rural regions.

The Local Action Groups unite the representatives of public, non-profit and business sector, and engage them in decision making on the development of their own regions and in future periods planning. The LAGs thereby contribute to preservation and building of social capital in rural areas. By constant linking of local players with local activities, counselling and small subsidies the LAGs help to preserve the rural regions as a place for full and contented life.

The following text introduces several successful Local Action Groups' projects in the Czech Republic that illustrate good practise in implementation of the LEADER development strategies. The experience from the period of 2007 – 2013 constitutes excellent ground for pursuing the community-led local development in the next period.

Examples of supported local entrepreneurs' and farmers' projects

The development strategies of the Local Action Groups include different kinds of support for entrepreneurs' projects. Most of the LAG concentrate in particular on the support of rural regeneration – municipality infrastructure and facilities for civilian and associational life. However, the support of agricultural business, diversification of farming activities and of other local business branches is of great importance for many LAG since it is considered to be the way to preserve and create the decreasing job opportunities in the rural areas. The LEADER Program strategies of the LAG in the Czech Republic support especially small projects of local farmers and of the smallest businesses as other subsidy programs are too complicated for them but their projects are evidently related to other spheres of rural life. The below presented projects are creative and innovative in applicants' activities as well as for the region.

Milk Vending Machines

*Cooperative farm Roštění, LAG Partnerství Moštěnka
Roštění, Prusinovice, Holešov (Region Olomouc)*

The Cooperative farm was, thanks to the subsidy, able to purchase three milk vending machines and placed them in small municipalities and towns. The sale of fresh and cooled milk in the vending machines represents the straightest way from the producer to end-users. The milk is only finely milked and quickly cooled and therefore the natural components, which strengthen the immune system and boost intestinal micro flora, are preserved. The subsidy from the Rural Development Program enabled to decrease the unit costs, increase the exercise price and thereby increased the profitability of animal production. The Local Action Group supported processing and sale of animal production in the region and shortening of the way from the producer to the consumer.

Total cost 2 400 000 CZK (96 000 €), subsidy 800 000 CZK (32 000 €).



Picture 1 Milk vending machine in Holešov

Wood and Biomass Processing, Production of Semi-Finished Wood Products, Wood Fuel and Wood Pellets

*ACACIA Liběchov, Ing. Pavel Dostál, LAG Vyhlídky
Liběchov (Region Central Bohemia)*



Picture 2 Presentation of the use of black locust wood in ACACIA Liběchov

One of the buildings in agricultural premises was reconstructed and equipped with black locust wood processing technology. Main products that are produced there are black locust lumber, processed logs, pillars, chopped wood fuel. The black locust wood is hard and durable and therefore it's used for example as a pasture fence and for production of outdoor wooden playgrounds. Waste wooden material and other agricultural production waste is used for production of wood pellets. The subsidy enabled creation

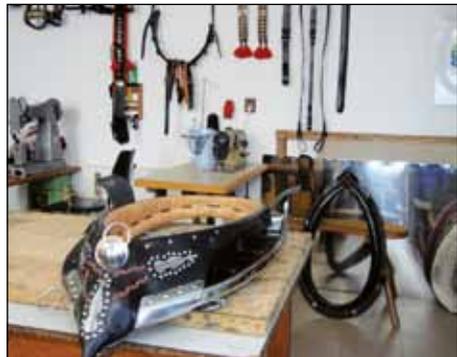
of new wood processing production in the region, the biomass is used to produce ecological fuel. The project created one new job.

Total cost 2 398 087 CZK (95 900 €), subsidy 1 199 043 CZK (47 960 €)

Development of Craft Workshop – Lubomír Jelínek

*Lubomír Jelínek, LAG Horní Pomoraví
Hanušovice (Olomouc Region)*

For 11 years the applicant run saddler's workshop in rented premises of a textile factory that ended its operations and thus he had to move the workshop. To avoid the risk of time-limited lease agreements, he decided to build a new workshop on his land next to his family house. The subsidy allowed to finish the building operations, equip the workshop and to build facilities for employees. The project created one new job. While the assigned subsidy represented inconsiderable part of



Picture 3 Lubomír Jelínek's saddler's products

the total cost of building the workshop, the resulting merit for the region is immense. The saddler's production is unique in the Czech Republic, there is no training centre yet for apprentices to gain experience and therefore Mr. Jelínek

offers his workshop for this purpose. During the last two years, the saddler's production of the workshop expanded so much, that, apart from the creation of one new job and offering the possibility to gain experience to apprentices, two more employees were hired and, except for classic saddler's production, the workshop produces also modern equipment for motorcycling and fashion accessories. The certificate "JESENIKY – regional product®" was awarded to Mr. Jelinek's products in 2011 for their quality and great deal of handwork.

Total cost 498 127 CZK (19 920 €), subsidy 298 000 CZK (11 920 €).

Examples of municipalities' and non-profit organizations' projects

The municipal budgets are lacking sufficient financial resources for majority of infrastructure and community facilities and for maintenance of cultural heritage of the countryside. The LEADER Program strategies of most of the Local Action Groups respond to the situation by focusing on support of this sphere. The projects supported from the Axis IV of the Rural Development Program are innovative mainly in joint community planning and involvement of volunteers in maintenance of cultural sites, public areas and green spaces in the municipalities. Apart from financial savings, the LAGs contribute to strengthening the bond of people to the place, where they live.

Brewery Archive and Museum of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia

Brewery Archive of Černý Kostelec, o.p.s., LAG Podlipansko Kostelec nad Černými lesy (Region Central Bohemia)



Picture 4 Brewery Archive

The outcome of this project is the reconstruction of the staircase entrance to the exhibition and purchase of a new exhibit to the museum of brewery, traditional local industry. The entire project of the museum of brewery renovation respects traditions. The original staircase, including the paving, as well as unique granite soaking container from another brewery were preserved. The project gained support from a whole range of

partners – museums, schools, state regional archives, The National Heritage Institute, Research Centre for Industrial Heritage, the financial partner is Dej Bůh štěstí (May God Give Luck), Ltd., company that run a restaurant in the neighbourhood of the museum.

Total cost 997 308 CZK (40 000 €), subsidy 887 604 CZK (35 500 €)

Learn and Live in Green Space

*Municipality of Štítina, LAG Opavsko
Štítina (Moravia-Silesian Region)*



*Picture 5 The ecosystems
in front of the primary school in Štítina*

The project improved the environment in the municipality, the subsidy enabled to refine public areas and to restore and enlarge green space near to the primary school. The innovative concept of the space is aimed at practical and immediate education of local primary school pupils. Apart from planting of new vegetation and purchase of equipment, five ecosystems were created to introduce flora and rock of savannah, desert, temperate zone, pond side and mountain area to the pupils. They could

be also used by teachers as illustrations in the lessons.

Total cost 420 000 CZK (16 800 €), subsidy 315 000 CZK (12 600 €)

Cinema in the village – Mobile cinema for Šumperk countryside

Film for People, o.s., LAG Šumperský venkov (Region Olomouc)

The purpose of this project is to open a mobile cinema, that enables the municipalities of the LAG Šumperský venkov to organize a whole range of socio-cultural events. The project includes purchase of high-quality projection technology, sound system, mobile inflatable screen and plastic chairs. The cinema is run by Film for People, non-profit organization, that, being a non entrepreneurial subject, offers the movie projection to the municipalities at overhead



Picture 6 The mobile cinema

cost. The project responds mainly to the digitalization of cinemas that lead to closings of majority of village cinemas and the mobile cinema thereby enables to preserve the tradition of countryside film projections at minimal cost. The mobile cinema should be particularly used for projections on the village squares and other outside public spaces, however it could be used in cultural centres as well. During the first season, the cinema attendance was around 215 persons per one projection, by way of contrast, the average cinema attendance in the Czech Republic in 2012 is 20 persons per projection.

Total cost 424 350 CZK (17 000 €), subsidy 381 915 CZK (15 270 €).

Projects of cooperation

By supporting the projects of cooperation the Local Action groups develop the potential for creating networks and sharing the experience that could provide the municipalities, non-profit organizations and entrepreneurs in the countryside with new perspective, approaches and ideas for developing their region and activities. However, due to demanding paperwork, insufficient experience of LAGs as well as language barriers, only a few projects of international cooperation were prepared in the period of 2007 – 2013. Thanks to the subsidies, many brands for local products, educational paths through valuable natural areas and tourism products based on local historical and cultural heritage were created in cooperation with the LAGs.

The Trail from the Other World to Týn

LAG Vltava, LAG Lužnice, LAG Střední Povltaví (Region South Bohemia)



Picture 7 Stop along the trail

Between 2009-2011 the project of cooperation of three neighbouring LAG created the longest educational trail in the Czech Republic, which connects beautiful places of interest and conveys information about their natural value and history. Along the 66 km of the trail, there are 32 marked stations and 26 rest areas equipped with information boards, seating and another wooden equipment (benches, wooden installations). Besides, as a technically demanding part of the project, a suspension pedestrian bridge above water was reconstructed. Other local organizations and companies participated in reconstructions of the trail's infrastructure, e.g. bridge reconstruction.

Total cost 2 836 001 CZK (113 400 €), subsidy 2 754 151 CZK (110 170 €).

Preservation of Traditions and Cultural Heritage of Hornolidečsko and Buchlovsko

LAG Hornolidečska, LAG Micro-region Buchlov (Region Zlin)



Picture 8 Folk costumes of Hornolidečsko

Between 2009 - 2011 two Local Action Groups from ethnographically interesting regions of Moravian Wallachia and Moravian Slovakia purchased together traditional folk costumes that are used at cultural events held in both regions. Thus, the subsidy helped to strengthen local traditions and at the same time connected the activities of local associations that are focused

on strengthening folk music and dance traditions, typical for these Moravian regions.

Total cost 5 086 376 CZK (203 450 €), subsidy 4 525 900 CZK (181 036 €)

Shaking Hands with Cultural Heritage

LAG Český Západ – Local Partnership (Region Pilsen), Kyjov Slovakia on the Move (South Moravian Region), LAG Micro-region Frýdlantsko (Region Liberec)



Picture 9 Volunteers repairing monument in the region of Frýdlantsko

Historically and culturally valuable monuments situated in the regions of these three LAGs were mapped between 2008 - 2011, restoration studies and studies on the use for some of them were worked out. Each LAG issued promotional material and organized working weekend for volunteering students from other Local Action Groups. A book Journey to the Monuments and Stories of Three Regions was published. The different experience of traditional

region (Kyjov-Slovakia) and two regions from the former Sudeten-borderland was very challenging in this project.

Total cost 2 655 000 CZK (106 200 €), subsidy 2 431 100 CZK (97 240 €)

VISION 2014+

abstracted from National Strategic Plan LEADER 2014+

National strategic plan LEADER 2014+ is a strategic material, thematically and temporally focused on LEADER method implementation in rural development in the period after 2013. The document has been created by the National local action groups network of the Czech Republic, as a main representative of LEADER movement in the Czech Republic. The document serves as a preliminary material for a discussion about the future of LEADER method in the Czech Republic, about its use in future rural development programmes as well as in other activities developing and supporting the rural areas in our country.

For the programming period 2014 - 2020, following is proposed: LEADER method becomes a part of all operational programmes, which will implement their targets in rural areas; more-over, these programmes incorporate LAGs into their implementation structures as effective representatives of rural communities. LEADER approach, based on integrated approach and multi-sector partnership of local administration, entrepreneurs and civil society, should become an overall method for detection and financing the specific needs of rural areas.

We assume 100% coverage of rural areas in the Czech Republic by a network of local action groups, voluntarily established according to current LEADER rules. Approximately 40 new LAGs, newly established or till now not selected, would join the current 112 selected LAGs and so that approx. 150 LAGs would function this way.

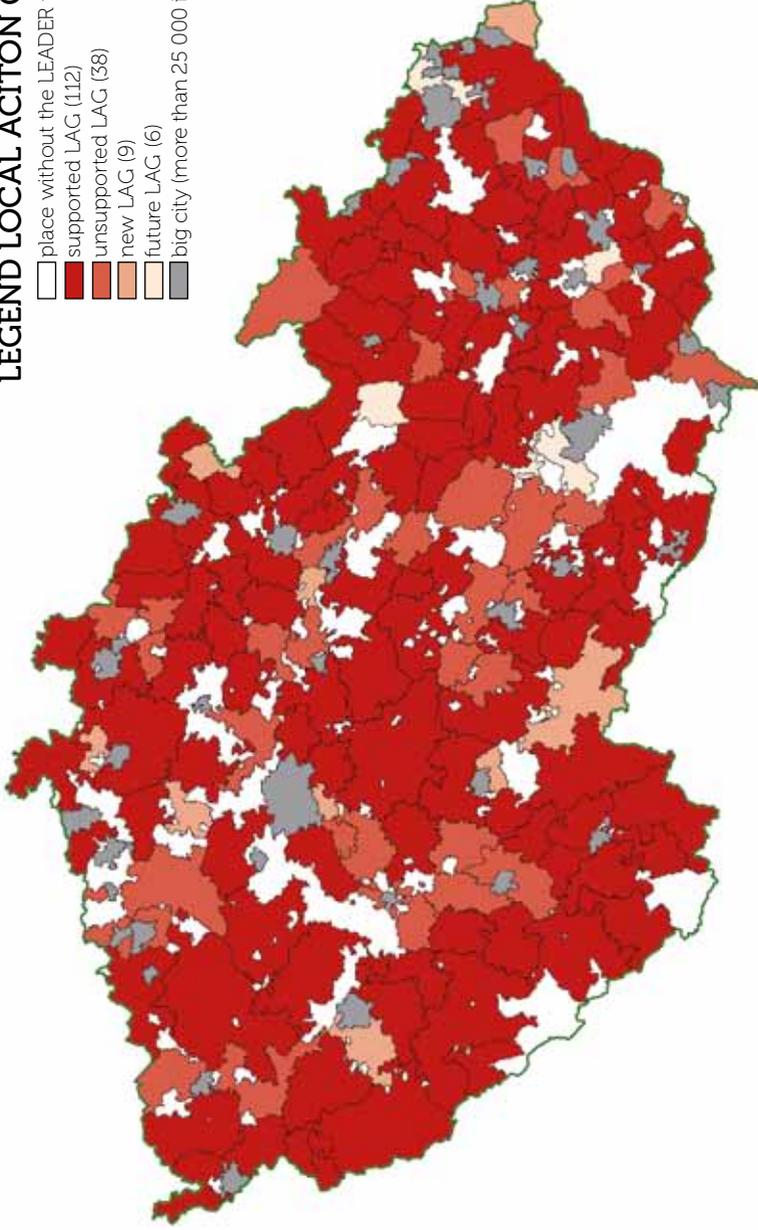
Concretely, we propose that 50% of programme, corresponding to current Rural development programme, would be implemented by this method, in thematic areas corresponding to current Axis III and IV. Furthermore, we propose, that all other operational programmes, which fulfil their targets in rural areas and can have rural beneficiaries (small villages, rural schools, micro, small and medium entrepreneurs, NGOs etc.), would contain a special axis, implemented by LEADER method with 10-25% of resources devoted to it, as it corresponds to desired share of integrated and innovative projects implemented by coordinated efforts of the community in rural territory. Provided this system covered an area of municipalities up to 10 thousand inhabitants, 47% of Czech citizens would be included.

Average allocation for 1 medium-size LAG would reach 28 million EUR / 7 years, i.e. 4 million EUR per year. With this support, rural areas are capable to retrieve and generate their own resources, multiply the invested finances, namely thanks to the use of partnership cooperation animated and supported by LAGs.

Map of LAG regions in the Czech Republic

LEGEND LOCAL ACITON GROUPS

- place without the LEADER method
- supported LAG (112)
- unsupported LAG (38)
- new LAG (9)
- future LAG (6)
- big city (more than 25 000 inhabitants)



0 100 Kilometry



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