



DERREG

Developing Europe's Rural Regions in the Era of Globalisation

*An interpretative model for better anticipating and responding to
Challenges for regional development in an evolving international context.*

WP4:

**Work package 4: Capacity building, governance and
knowledge systems**

Deliverable 4.2

**Support of joint learning and innovation in grassroots
development initiatives: operational quality of arrangements
(June 2011)**

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LEIBNIZ-INSTITUT
FÜR LÄNDERKUNDE



A project funded by the European Union
Framework 7 Programme
Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities



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1 INTRODUCTION

Every rural area has its particular dynamics, its denizens being engaged in various activities and places that somehow (potentially) contribute to the development of the rural region. These can be considered as the basic (social) constructive processes resulting in the development of a territory, including primary processes of joint capacity building through joint learning and innovation (see D4.1).

In WP4, the public support and facilitation of capacity building (here conceptualised as joint learning and innovation) within grassroots development initiatives in different rural regional contexts in the European Union is mapped, analysed and its operation evaluated by its beneficiaries. The prime interest is *how public support and facilitation of joint learning and innovation within and between grassroots rural regional development initiatives can be best arranged, i.e. how well operating interfaces can be created between public policies, learning and innovation facilities and grassroots development initiatives, considering the contextual differences across the case study areas*. This raises the issue of the governance of joint learning and innovation in predominantly rural areas: i.e. how to arrange the collaboration of governmental and non-governmental actors in the development and implementation of public policies. It also raises the issue of institutionalisation and formalisation of these novel modes or ordering, i.e. how these novel practices that are shaped by shared and agreed upon rules become part of everyday routines- hence institutionalised- and to what extent these shared rule become formalised, i.e. shaped into regulations, procedures, contracts and a formal set of specified tasks and roles. The research is limited in scope. It does not comprise an evaluation of the policies or whether the policy objectives have been met. Neither does it include an assessment of what actually has been learned by the beneficiaries or an intervention into their novel practices or which innovations have been realised as a result of the support given.

In the analytical framework introduced in D4.1 (see figure 1.1), we distinguish two ways in which public policies can support and facilitate learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives. On the one hand, public policy can provide direct support and facilitation (e.g. finances, regulations, policy, advice, expertise, incubation, etc.) through direct interventions and interactions

(e.g. networking) of public administration and its representatives (e.g. aldermen, public officers) in the regions. On the other hand, public policy can stimulate and financially enable public knowledge institutes (by means of publically funded education, training, research or advisory programmes) and (public or private) intermediary agents or agencies (through providing education, training, research, advice, process facilitation, mediation, consultancy, etc.) to become engaged in rural regional development and facilitate joint learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives. Public policies can thus also indirectly support and facilitate joint learning and innovation by enabling the extensive and differentiated knowledge infrastructure to engage with grassroots development initiatives.

In order to engage public administration and the knowledge infrastructure in rural regional grassroots development initiatives, specific arrangements can be made with regard to interfaces operating between supporting policies, learning and innovation supporting facilities and grassroots development activities. These arrangements include two interrelated parts: 1) a constitutive agreement and 2) an operational interface.

Ad 1) Founding partners (these can be a coalition of various public and private partners) come to a constitutive agreement with regard to the *formal shaping* of the interface which is based on a shared and often negotiated understanding on a) what development activities or initiators should benefit from public support, b) the scale of governance, c) what types of support will be provided and d) procedures, rules and regulations attached to the provision of the support. These agreements can be informal or formalised to a certain extent and be based on a shared long- or short-term vision. Potentially, agreements involve different partners from all of the three domains distinguished in the analytical framework (see figure 1.1): i.e. from the domain of public administration, knowledge infrastructure and the 'region'.

Ad 2) Even though the founding partners shape the interface, operational agents or agencies are necessary to make the interface work. Next to a constitutive agreement, an arrangement therefore also includes the creation of an operational interface specifying a) the operational tasks and roles that can subsequently be delegated to b) operational agents and agencies. Depending on development activities and initiators targeted and the type of support and

facilitation provided, these can be located anywhere among the three proposed domains of our analytical framework (see figure 1.1).

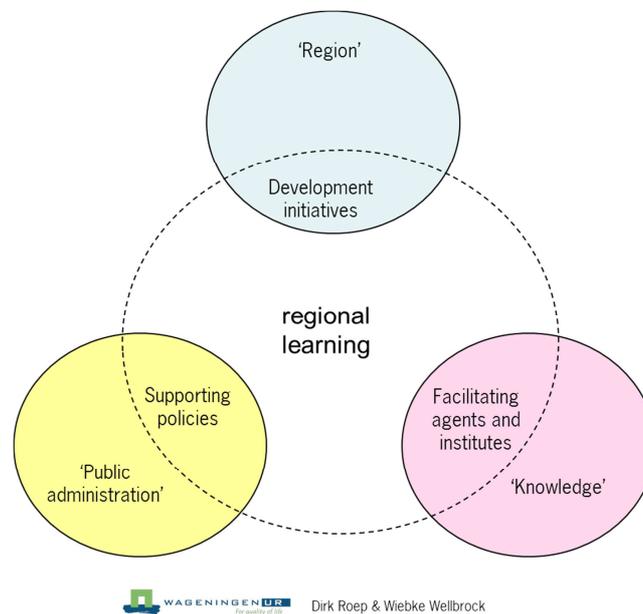


Figure 1.1 Analytical framework

The analytical framework allows us to map, identify and compare the different governmental bodies, private and public agents and agencies involved in making agreements and operating interfaces. It also allows us to map different scales at which operational interfaces are installed in the different case study areas (CSAs). As a heuristic research tool, the framework enables us to conduct a comparative case study in different rural areas (contextual differentiation). By comparing different ways of arranging support and facilitation for joint learning and innovation across different CSAs, we can arguably reveal good or promising practices with respect to the governance of joint (place-based) learning and innovation: i.e. how public policies to support joint learning and innovation across various types of (grassroots) development activities can best be arranged and operationalized in order to raise and sustain (personal and collective) capacities and eventually lead to a situation whereby local development initiatives can progress to a stage that sees a lessening of reliance on public and institutional support (particular financial), and where the relationship with public agencies and institutes becomes more of a partnership of mutual support and empowerment. *Good practices* are therefore defined as arrangements that are

perceived positively by the beneficiaries i.e. those contributing to their situation, learning or solving problems.

In order to find out how public support can best be arranged, current arrangements to support and facilitate learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives can be mapped and analysed, but are best evaluated through their targeted beneficiaries. Good or promising practices can thus be revealed and selected for a more profound description and analysis of the arrangements (Task 4.3) resulting in D4.3 'Summary of best practise examples'.

In Task 4-1a we have already inventoried supporting policies, rules and regulations aimed at facilitating (rural) regional learning and innovation processes. These findings were reported in M4.1. In Task 4-1b, potential facilitators of learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives from the knowledge infrastructure were introduced and in Task 4-1c, a first overview of formal arrangements to support and facilitate learning and innovation within potential rural grassroots development initiatives was generated and reported in M4.2. The findings for the different CSAs, including a comparative analysis and synthesis, are reported in D4.1.

In D4.2 we now report the results of Task 4-2: an inventory of the support and facilitation of joint learning and innovation within 61 grassroots development initiatives across the different CSAs. Since it is difficult to obtain a complete overview of all grassroots development initiatives in a CSA and to list all types of support and facilitation on hand, the inventory should be regarded as an exploratory study, aimed to reveal good practices in the governance of rural regional learning.

The inventory is divided into two parts. In Part I, different grassroots development initiatives are inventoried to identify different forms of learning and innovation activities and different types of support and facilitation received throughout their evolution. Different types of agreements between different types of (private and public) agents and agencies that provide support and facilitation for learning and innovation within the inventoried grassroots development initiatives were identified, and the operational interfaces through

which the support and facilitation was provided were mapped and analysed. For each CSA, a matrix was created, summarising the key characteristics of the arrangements found. In Part II of Task 4-2, 4-6 of the inventoried grassroots development initiatives in each CSA were selected in order to study more in-depth the operational interfaces of the identified support and facilitation. The grassroots development initiators were also asked to evaluate the different forms of support and facilitation received in order to identify good practises of providing support and facilitation to initiatives operating at grassroots level.

In the following sections, the results of Task 4-2 will be presented in the form of an executive summary for each CSA (sections 2-7). Each executive summary consists of four sections:

1. Data collection and processing method
2. Summarizing matrix of
 - a. different grassroots development initiatives inventoried and
 - b. different types of support and facilitation received
3. Evaluation of support and facilitation received by a selection of grassroots development initiatives inventoried.
4. Conclusion

In section 8, results reported in the CSA-specific summaries will be compared and analysed. Here, particular emphasis will be placed on differences between the arrangements identified in the CSAs, comparing the type of constitutive agreements made, the different operational interfaces found and the operation of scale at which these are located. In section 9, the results of the comparative analysis will be discussed with reference to the evaluation by the interviewed beneficiaries. In section 10, the report is concluded with an outline of potentially promising and innovative arrangements to govern learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in the European Union.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 'ALYTUS COUNTY (LT)', EMILIJA KAIRYTĖ

In the following, the research findings of the case study area 'Alytus county' are summarised. The summary consists of 4 sections. In section 2.1, the data collection and processing methods are explained. In section 2.2, results of an inventory into 10 different grassroots development initiatives concerning their direct and indirect support and facilitation for learning and innovation received throughout their evolution are presented. In section 2.3, the results of an evaluation by the grassroots development initiators of the available forms of direct and indirect support and facilitation for learning and innovation are presented. In section 2.4, conclusions are drawn on the quality of the operability of direct and indirect forms of support to facilitate learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in Alytus county.

2.1 Data collection & processing

First step in the data collection was a comprehensive review of literature and internet sources in order to inventory grassroots development initiatives that participate in regional development of Alytus county for M4.3 Part I. Several internet databases of regional NGOs and rural communities found demonstrated a large number of NGOs operating in the region, however there was limited information available about direct or indirect support to regional learning and innovations within the initiatives.

Between April 2010 and February 2011, the researcher visited the case study region several times in order to learn more about identified grassroots development initiatives and to interview the initiators. During the visits, several meetings with representatives of public administration and knowledge institutions were held to discuss the support and facilitation of regional learning and innovations within grassroots development initiatives and to see what kind of arrangements and operational interfaces between regional initiatives/public administration/knowledge infrastructure were functioning in the region. Both formally and informally organized regional development initiatives were taken into consideration during the discussions. These conversations were combined with other WP's (DERREG WP1) interviews and helped to obtain a better understanding of joint learning and innovation patterns within grassroots development activities in Alytus county. During selection of the initiatives efforts

were taken to address a wide range of development areas, such as rural economy, agriculture, nature and landscape, and civil (cultural) development. Though there were NGO's active in these and other areas, joint learning and innovation elements were mainly observed in business development initiatives.

Initiators of the 10 grassroots development activities were identified and 8 of them approached for an interview which lasted approximately an hour. The semi-structured interview included information about the goal, organisation, participants, activities and evolution of the development activity, the support they received to carry out their activities from public administration, the support and facilitation for activities from knowledge facilities and about the future plans of the initiators. Emphasis was put on the questions and information, which was not available on internet, literature sources or by initial email correspondence. With permission of the different interviewees, conversations were recorded using OLYMPUS (and alternatively mobile phone) digital voice recorder and notes were taken by the interviewer. Pictures were taken of some of the initiators. In other cases the picture was taken from the internet and the source cited.

In order to study and evaluate the support and facilitation of the different (formal) arrangements provided in M4.3 Part II, 4 grassroots development activities were selected. The initiators were asked to evaluate the support and facilitation received during the interview in M4.3 Part I. Besides, two workshops took place in Alytus county in October 2010, one with supporters – Alytus district LAG, public administration and knowledge infrastructure representatives on the 21st of October and one with support receivers - rural initiators and actors on the 22nd of October. The workshops were organized in order to evaluate existing arrangements for support and facilitation of joint learning-by-doing activities within rural development initiatives. At the beginning of these workshops, our Dutch partner Wiebke Wellbrock shortly introduced the analytical framework of WP4, presented the supportive arrangements and benefiting rural development initiatives that were found during investigations in the Westerkwartier and which were evaluated together with local stakeholders at a workshop organized by the Rural Sociology Group in the Westerkwartier on the 18th of October. Later the arrangements found in the Westerkwartier were compared with the situation in Alytus county, supportive arrangements and benefiting rural development initiatives of Alytus county were discussed and evaluated by the participants. By holding two workshops, the possibility for a two-sided evaluation (by supporters

and beneficiaries) of support and facilitation available in Alytus county was created. During the workshops minutes were written and discussions recorded, the basic findings were posted in a Weblog of Wageningen Rural Sociology Group, see <http://ruralsociologywageningen.wordpress.com/2010/10/27/rural-regional-learning-in-alytus-county-lithuania>.

For additional information, interviews from M4.1 and M4.2 were considered. When necessary, initiators were contacted again for the missing information by email/telephone.

Data processing

The recorded interviews were saved as mp3 files on the computer and basic thoughts typed out into word documents. The word documents were translated from Lithuanian into English and the information ordered according to the different development aspects as mentioned above. Based on the information provided, a matrix with the following columns was used to synthesise the key characteristics of support and facilitation within the different grassroots development activity inventoried:

1. Name; Type of organisation; Goal; Participants
2. Activity
3. Type of support/facilitation received from public/private administration; From whom;
4. Type of support/facilitation received from knowledge infrastructure, From whom

The evaluation of the support and facilitation received was summarised in a table. The available form of support/facilitation which was identified in M4.3 Part 1 was filled into the column "Available form of support/ facilitation". Next, M4.3 Part 1 was scanned for arrangements mentioned by the grassroots development initiators to provide the different forms of support. These were noted in the respective cells in the column "How is support/facilitation arranged?" Finally, M4.3 Part I, M4.1, M4.2, the workshops' minutes and additional interviews were scanned for information regarding the evaluation of support and facilitation received. The evaluation of the different forms of support and facilitation received was summarised in text form, using the different forms of support and facilitation received as headings. Thereafter, key words describing the different points of evaluation were added to the column "Evaluation of support and facilitation received". Although intended, the evaluation does not always refer

specifically to the arrangements found but to the different forms of support and facilitation received in general.

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
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2.2 Inventory of support and facilitation for learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in Alytus county

In M4.3 Part I, 10 grassroots development initiatives currently active in Alytus county were mapped and described. In the following, an overview of activities within the grassroots development initiatives inventoried and a description of the forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation received is described.

Overview of activities within grassroots development initiatives inventoried

The inventory of the different grassroots development initiatives in Alytus county revealed that out of the four targeted development aspects - rural economy, agriculture, nature and landscape and civil (cultural) development, regional learning arrangements were most typical in the area of rural economy. This corresponded with the findings of D 4.1, which demonstrated that regional learning, innovation, cooperation with science and public administration are most encouraged in strategic business development documents in Lithuania. In civil (cultural) development area first arrangements - LAGs, initiatives - rural communities, associations, public institutions with focus on rural/regional development have formed as well. In agricultural and environmental areas regional development initiatives were more concerned with their interest representation, but did not demonstrate special regional learning arrangements within them. In Lithuania, similarly like in other EU-10 countries, such arrangements are partly substituted by public advisory organizations (national technical support), established by the state to cooperate with regional initiators, such as regional offices of the Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service, National Paying Agency, Programme LEADER and farmers training methodology centres (training centres, accredited consultants), etc. These organizations often have budget or public institution status – they receive targeted public funding to

provide advice, guidance and training to regional development initiators and actors. Public institution is a non-profit limited liability public entity, whose objective is - to meet the public interest through education, training, scientific, cultural, health, environment, sports development, social or legal assistance, as well as other activities in the public interest. Founders of public institutions can be the state, a municipality or other non-profit oriented persons. The funding sources of public institution are contributions of partners, grants for implementation of public institution objectives, objective contributions to implement concrete objectives (support to implement the programme), budget funding for educational institutions and income from economic-commercial activities (Profit obtained by a public institution can only be used for its activity objectives defined in their statute).

In Lithuania, grassroots development initiatives in rural areas have little capacities (population age structure and density, emigration, unemployment) and experience in project management. Their activities are therefore also facilitated by privately founded public advisory institutions (for example, Alytus Business Advisory Centre, Alytus Region Development Agency, etc., see picture 2.1). Both state and privately founded public advisory institutions are intermediates between the regional government and grassroots development initiatives, facilitating the delivery of the programmes. They represent the knowledge infrastructure domain in the WP4 analytical framework in Alytus county.

The first rural community projects funded by LEADER were small and oriented towards basic needs - public infrastructure, community house renovation, cultural events and trainings. These projects were facilitated by the LAG. In case of more demanding projects including arrangements with public and/or knowledge sectors, international cooperation, public advisory institutions take the lead. They often act both as initiator and as the knowledge domain for their participants. Some of the initiatives presented below are organized by such public advisory institutions-facilitators.

The key characteristics of the analysed grassroots development initiatives and the different types of support and facilitation received from public administration and knowledge facilities are summarized in table 2.1.

Among the 10 grassroots development initiatives, 7 are linked to business and 3 to civil (cultural) development areas. Of these three initiatives - two from rural

economy and one from civil (cultural) development fields- represent youth organizations.

The analysed regional economic initiatives have started between the years 1995 and 2010 thus some of them have long experience and many activities done. The analysed civil (cultural) initiatives are younger – established between 2001 and 2010. However Eičiūnai Rural Youth Occupation and Leisure Centre was established before entering the EU and launching the LEADER programme (2004) in Lithuania and was one of the pioneers in the rural civil and cultural development area in the region.

The number and kind of activities vary between the different grassroots development initiatives, depending on their age, purpose and available funds. Nevertheless, similarly like in all case studies, two different phases of activities are typical to all grassroots development initiatives, namely a) developing and pursuing a collective development aim and b) acquiring joint capacities to realize the collective aim.

In case of Alytus county, grassroots development initiatives often act as knowledge centres within their area of activity in the region. The initiative's organizers/members provide consultations, organize trainings and events, not only for their participants but to all interested local residents.

Interestingly for grassroots development initiatives in the analysed Alytus county region, networks, websites, databases or the creation of an information centre were often pointed out as a result of their activity. Thus a grassroots development initiative creates a network as a measure for a more specific aim to target and the more specific capacities to acquire.

Table 2.1 Overview grassroots development initiatives inventoried

Grassroots development initiatives						Public/private administration		Knowledge infrastructure	
Name	Start	Type of Organisation	Goal	Participants	Activities	Type of support	From whom	Type of support	From whom
Business Angel	2002	Public institution	<p>During implementation of various projects educate entrepreneur, initiative and civil-minded youth, who would easy integrate in business environment after studies, would be able to use their energy and knowledge in team work together with experienced businessmen and make input in realization of innovative ideas.</p> <p>To motivate young and educated people to live and work in their region</p>	Youth and other active community members interested in business	<p>Free and confidential consultations for people with business ideas and newly started enterprises; trainings to calculate and estimate business idea using a business plan; practical experience for youth who finished business school but have no skills to use theoretical knowledge yet, introduction to practical business environment; participation in projects and networks focused on peripheral regions' problem solutions through bottom-up innovations, strengthening community spirit, youth creativity and entrepreneurship; discussions on regional problems and idea generation for original solutions. Business Angel took part in the regional projects "Business Map", "We Know the Way", Youth distribution Service", European projects PIPE, Innovation Circle, etc.</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>Finances are used to consult future businessman before he/she starts his business and to help him in comprehensive preparation to establish the enterprise. Business Angel prepares applications for various programmes and funds in order to implement it's projects. Applications are mostly given to competitions announced by Alytus city municipality.</p> <p>According to the Charity and Support Law of the Republic of Lithuania Business Angel as non-profit organization has right to collect 2 % from resident paid income tax sum. Business Angel helps to fill income tax declarations for those who decided to support its activities. In 2005 730 declarations were filled 19 percent of which were ex Business Angel clients</p>	<p>Regional</p> <p>Local government institutions and Alytus city and district enterprises. Support level for enterprises is not fixed, each enterprise is supporting according to it's possibilities. Alytus city and district municipalities are supporting consultations by 10 percent each from their funds.</p> <p><u>EU funds:</u> INTERREG III b, TACIS</p> <p>Residents of Alytus county</p>	Experience exchange, cooperation	<p>experienced businessmen</p> <p>Public Institution "Baltic Innovation group", Alytus youth organization union "Round Table", Druskininkai Education centre, Varena town Schoolchildren Board and others</p>
						<p>Cooperation</p>	<p>Lazdijai district municipality, Alytus city Municipality -partner in Innovation Circle Network</p>		

Druskininkai Youth Organization “Free Business Ideas”	2006	Association	To provide opportunity for young people to improve leadership, social responsibility, entrepreneurship and communication qualities, needed to do positive changes in the region	Active, enterprising Druskininkai municipality 16-40 years old residents, those who have interesting ideas and want to realise them	Creation and organization of social, business and other training programmes to deliver missing knowledge and skills, organization of seminars, lectures, discussions, charity events, participation in regional economic, social, ecologic and other problem solutions, internal, external and international cooperation of young people from Druskininkai municipality, organization and participation in projects: „Let’s Organize Good Events in Druskininkai Ourselves!”, “Internet Website for Druskininkai Youth Creation” with information about events, projects, jobs, “Druskininkai Youth Entrepreneurship through Tourism and Culture” establishing new touristic routes that include cultural and natural objects of Alytus county , Project “Let’s Activate Druskininkai Youth”, Project “Young Parents’ Club in Druskininkai”	Finance, partnership	<u>Regional, national</u> Druskininkai municipality, regional and national enterprises, Sanatorium „Baltarusija“ club „Dangaus skliautai“, etc. <u>EU</u> EU Programme “Youth”, sub-programme “Youth Initiatives”, The Netherlands Fund	Cooperation, joint projects	Business Angel, Lazdijai Youth Business Club, Druskininkai Initiative Youth Tourism–Business Group
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Alytus Region Business Association	1995	Association	To stand interests of small and medium business companies	Alytus county small and medium enterprises	Preparation and implementation of projects for business environment development, implementation of cooperation ideas	Finance, partnership	<u>Regional, national</u> Alytus city and district municipalities, Alytus city SME Fund, Regional enterprises, Lithuanian Ministry of Economy National Support Fund <u>EU</u> INTERREG III a, INTERREG III b ERDF, Active Neighbours, SPF (Lithuanian and Polish border cooperation Small project Fund)	Cooperation and joint activities, projects	Public institution „Business Angel“, Public institution „Business Village“, Public institution „Alytus Business Incubator“, Lithuanian Innovation centre, VINNOVA, etc.
Business Cooperation Center of Southern Lithuania	2002	Public institution	To help companies in cooperation making their businesses, searching new customers, markets, project partners, employees and other services, to gain from economy of scale in cooperation	Founder Alytus Region Business Association, members regional small and medium enterprises	Representation of businessmen interests, joint projects to take advantage of EU Structural Funds, cooperated search for markets and clients, search for employees according to the needs of employers, discounts for fuel purchase, car and asset insurance, cheaper law services, cooperated purchase of raw materials	Finance, partnership	<u>Regional, national</u> Alytus city and district municipalities, Alytus city SME Fund, Regional Enterprises <u>EU</u> INTERREG III b ERDF, Active Neighbours, SPF (Lithuanian and Polish border cooperation Small project Fund)	Advice, Facilitation	Alytus Region Business Association
								Cooperation and joint activities, projects	Polish Craftsmen and Businessmen Guild, Latvian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, etc.
Eičiūnai Rural Youth Occupation and Leisure Centre	2001	Public institution	Youth education and voluntary occupation. Aim - conscious residents, developed abilities to express, act together, for own and public good. Focus - clean environment, modern technologies, active leisure, healthy life, cultural traditions	Rural children and youth	Represents interests of rural inhabitants in various institutions, provides public services, voluntary work in various projects important for rural youth and all rural community, international cooperation, travels, information gathering and dissemination centre (Local community newspaper, internet tv)	Finance	<u>National</u> State Youth Affair Board; Open Lithuanian Fund; Ministry of Agriculture Rural Support Programme; Lithuanian Ministry of Culture; Lithuanian Kolping Society <u>EU</u> EU programme “Youth”, EQUAL	Cooperation with lead project partners, ‘learning by doing’, learning from each other	Public Policy and Management Institute, women organization “Hope Bridge” other local, national and international partners

								Consultations , advice Methodological help and place in server for internet TV	Youth International Cooperation Agency; Institute of Mathematics and Informatics, UNESCO department, Vilnius Užupis community
								Trainings, singing, regional folk art, crafts teaching Trainings for newspaper publishing and layout	Local teachers, craftsmen Alytus print house 'Albagrafija' worker, Kolping society member
Eičiūnai Rural Community	2008	Association	local rural development organization, social and cultural activities	Eičiūnai rural inhabitants	Development of various projects, organization of events, trainings for local community Projects "Eičiūnai community centre renovation", "Wool Processing and Felt production Technology Revival", "Eičiūnai Community Strengthening"	Finances	National Rural Support Programme, Ministry of Agriculture, Lithuanian Ministry of Culture	Experience from previous similar organizations in the area, cooperation	Women and children organization (Eičiūnai section) "Hope Bridge", Eičiūnai Scout Community, Eičiūnai Rural Youth Occupation and Leisure Centre
"Mutual Help and Cooperation Network" - "WOOD NETWORK" (Wood Partners)	2004	No legal status Project outcome – cooperation network	Wood cluster development Project implementation goals: upgrading professional skills of wood processing specialists in Alytus region; fostering of cooperation among	The project target group - unemployed persons aged from 16 to 25 (registered at Labour Exchange or redundant)	Preparation of programs for wood processing workers' qualification upgrading; Organization and implementation of courses for wood processing workers' qualification upgrading; Creation of cooperation and mutual help network among	Finances, partnership	<u>Regional</u> Alytus City municipality and Governor Administration of Alytus County EU PHARE ESC 2001 Programme project	Network coordinator	Alytus Business Advisory Centre

			wood processing enterprises, training institutions and business support institutions by increasing employability and entrepreneurship; development of high quality training services, meeting the needs of wood processing sector and creating preconditions for employment of qualified workers.	with vocational education. Both women and men are accepted into this group. Network serves the	training, business support organizations and business enterprises in the area of wood processing; Employment of project participants in wood processing enterprises in Alytus region; Information dissemination about the project results and gained experience for the society of Alytus region and Lithuania. "WOOD NETWORK" is a cooperation platform between training organizations, business enterprises, business support and employment institutions			Project experts	Ministry of Education and Science, Career Training Methodology Centre - project expert professor Valdas Dienys Vilnius Gediminas Technical University - project expert doc. Vytautas Pauža
								Project assesor	Vytautas the Great University - Ramūnas Kuncaitis
								Project partners, cooperation, training programme development and implementation	Lithuanian Association of Adult Education, Alytus Labour Market Training Centre, JSC "Jundos stalių gaminiai" – (wood processing company), Alytus College

„E-Cooperation – Innovative Clusters“	2010	No legal status Project outcome - electronic cooperation network	to stimulate cooperation between Lithuanian and Polish enterprises in border regions in innovative economic sectors, by strengthening connections of Polish and Lithuanian companies working in the field of metal (and wood) processing	Lithuanian and Polish metal and wood processing enterprises	create internet website (platform): www.e-cooperation.eu , with Polish and Lithuanian firm database, prepare Metal Processing Cluster Strategy and Map, arrange seminars with 40 participants both from Lithuanian and Polish regions	Finances	European Territorial Cooperation Objective Lithuanian and Polish Cross-border Cooperation Programme Lithuania-Poland 2007-2013 Small Project Fund	animating connections between firms working in Palenkė metal processing cluster and Lithuanian metal processing enterprises, partnership	Alytus Business Advisory centre, Palenkė Region Programming Centre
								experts	prof. habil. dr. Robertas Jucevičius, dr. Kazimieras Juzėnas, Kaunas University of technology, dr. Henrikas Mykolaitis, Engineering Industries Association of Lithuania LINPRA, dr. Kęstutis Naudžius, public institution “Park of Science and Technologies”

								<p>Technical assistance in Metal Processing Cluster Strategy and Map preparation. Research with the aim to diagnose the needs and cluster development directions and to present cluster initiatives in this territory. On the basis of this analysis Metal processing cluster strategy and map prepared.</p>	<p>Public institution „INTEHCENTRA S“</p> <p>The experiences of ABAC and PRPC in administering wood (Lithuania) and metal (Poland) processing cluster initiatives were used in this research.</p>
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<p>„Lithuanian and Polish International Training and Business Centre“</p>	<p>2010</p>	<p>No legal status yet, project outcome – training and business centre</p>	<p>The project aims to ensure proper collaboration conditions by common participation in practical specialist trainings, to learn about new service technologies and to extend Polish and Lithuanian service market. Besides common economic activities, possibilities for making new social contacts and knowing specialists of other country will appear.</p>	<p>Small firm owners of Suvalkai county and Alytus county, namely - representatives of two related professions - hairdressers and cosmetologists</p>	<p>Establishment of Lithuanian-Polish International Training and Business Centre. The structure of this centre will be created on both sides of the border - in Suvalkai and Alytus. Various professional training, encouragement programmes of new technologies, business meetings, presentation of products and services, preparatory courses, qualification exams, permanent update of informational database of firms in Suvalkai and Alytus will be done in the centre. The database will be put in the new internet website and constantly corrected and updated with information about new firms and their areas of activities; common practical and theoretical trainings in Suvalkai and Alytus, exchanging the groups of participants; International Hairstyle and Make-up Tendencies' Presentation "News 2010" in Suvalkai for Polish and Lithuanian businessmen; promotional booklet about the centre, event and small companies and their services in both regions (in both languages)</p>	<p>Finances</p>	<p>ERDF, Active Neighbours, Lithuanian and Polish Cross-border Cooperation Small Project fund – special Lithuanian and Polish cross-border cooperation programme funding scheme for small projects</p>	<p>Partners, coordinators</p>	<p>Business Cooperation Centre of Southern Lithuania, Polish Guild of Artisans and Businessmen</p>
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Local Activity Centres on Cross-Border	2010	No legal status, project outcome - information center	Stimulation of cross-border cooperation between the regions, establishment of Community information centers in Elk and Alytus	Elk (Poland) and Alytus region rural communities and NGOs	<p>Establish community centers in Elk and Alytus with accumulated database of community contacts, activities and good practices</p> <p>Organize 4 exchange visits in Alytus and Elk for community members from both regions (20 representatives from each)</p> <p>Organize 8 day trainings to Alytus Region NGOs on project initiation, preparation, international cooperation and other questions</p> <p>Provide 200 hours of consultations on legal issues to Alytus region NGOs</p> <p>Carry out analysis of Alytus region communities present situation</p> <p>Establish cooperation network between Alytus and Elk communities</p>	Finances	ERDF, Active Neighbours, Lithuanian and Polish Cross-border Cooperation Small Project fund – special Lithuanian and Polish cross-border cooperation programme funding scheme for small projects	facilitation	Alytus Region Development Agency
						Partnership, facilitation	Elk city municipality		

2.2.1 Direct and indirect forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

The concept of regional learning and innovation is still new for Lithuanian grassroots development initiators, therefore public institutions involved in regional development often help as intermediates to connect the initiatives with public administration and/or knowledge infrastructure.

As figure 2.1 shows, support and facilitation for learning and innovation within the different identified initiatives can be provided directly through arrangements between public administration and grassroots development initiatives. Support and facilitation for learning and innovation can also be provided indirectly through enabling knowledge facilities to engage with grassroots development initiatives. However, during the research period arrangements between local initiatives and knowledge infrastructure were not identified in Alytus region. The most common way of cooperation between the three domains is through the partnership in projects, when special support and expertise is needed, or through established boards for specific regional issues in the process of policy making.

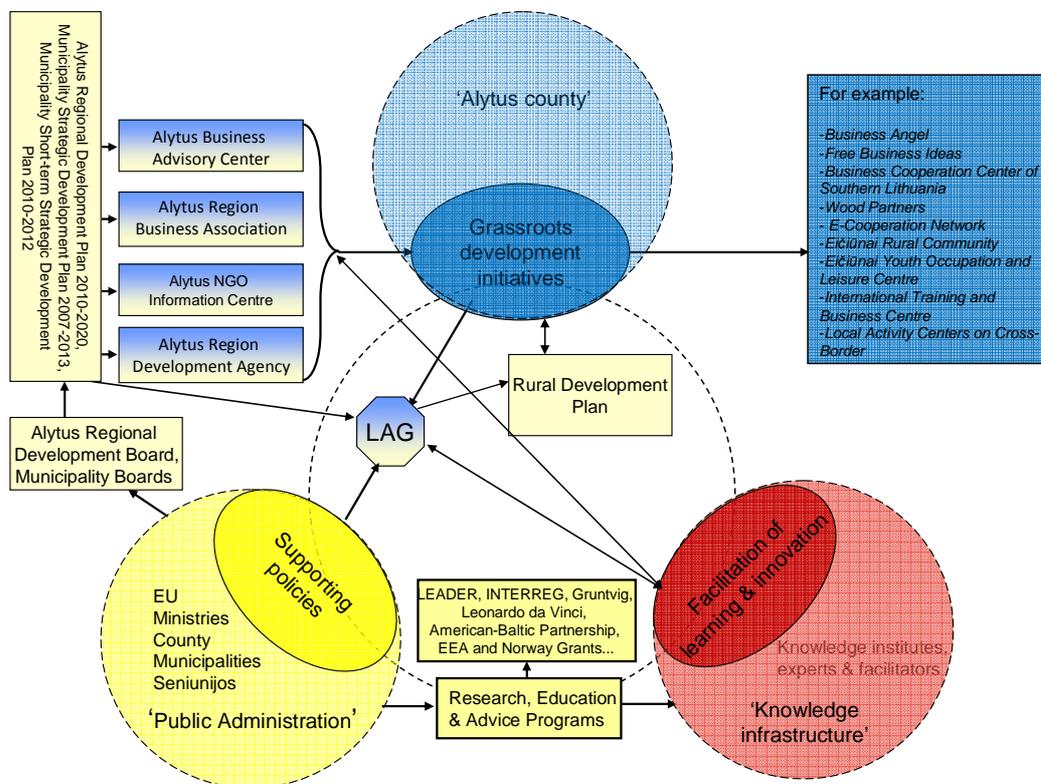


Figure 2.1 Arrangements for support and facilitation of learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives in Alytus county

Direct forms of support and facilitation

Public administration supports grassroots development activities in Alytus county along three lines: **initiation, advice and partnership** and **finances**. These forms of support and facilitation appear to be particularly relevant regarding the focus of developing and pursuing a collective development aim. The main sources of support are coming from three levels: EU funds (EARDF, ERDF, ESF), national funds (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Social Affairs) and municipality funds for economic and cultural development. Lithuania belongs to NUTS 2 level of administrative unit classification and many programmes are administered at national level. Therefore, grassroots development initiatives can participate both at regional and national competitions/calls for applications.

Initiation

Some of the analysed grassroots development initiatives received financial support at their initiation phase. Usually, this was done as partial contribution to their projects. For example, the National Board of Youth Affairs supported the project "Establishment of Eičiūnai Rural Youth Occupation and Leisure Centre", Alytus city municipality and Governor Administration of Alytus County supported the establishment of "Mutual Help and Cooperation Network" - "WOOD NETWORK", Alytus city and district municipalities - Business Cooperation Center of Southern Lithuania. The source of support received depends on which kind of policy goals the initiative is matching.

Initiatives initiate new networks using their accumulated experience and financial contribution in project co-funding. For example, Alytus Region Business Association established the public institution Business Cooperation Centre of Southern Lithuania and Business Cooperation Centre of Southern Lithuania established Lithuanian and Polish International Training and Business Centre. In these examples they are initiators, facilitators and also process managers. Thus, the knowledge is transferred from initiative to another and the older one with experience obtains knowledge institute functions.

Advice and partnership

Public administration in Alytus county (similarly as in other Lithuanian counties) provides primary advice and directs the initiative towards the relevant advisory

institutions. In some cases, regional public administration participates as partner with the initiative in common projects. This allows interaction between the two domains and shows political support for the activity. For example, Business Angel together with Alytus city municipality and public institution Baltic Innovation Group are partners in the Innovation Circle Network.

Financing

Within the developing field of regional economy, the majority of initiatives received funds from INTERREG III b, ERDF, Active Neighbours, SPF (Lithuanian and Polish Cross-border Cooperation Small Project Fund), the initiatives were also supported/cofinanced by local administration and regional enterprises. Other sources used include: TACIS programme, PHARE programme, Lithuanian Ministry of Economy National Support Fund, residents of Alytus county (2 % from resident paid income tax). Initiatives within civil (cultural) development area received support from Ministry of Agriculture Rural Support Programme, Lithuanian Ministry of Culture. Besides the provided examples, some rural communities in Alytus county received support for pilot projects (renovation of community houses, public infrastructure, cultural events) and trainings from LEADER programme.

The youth organizations received funds from the EU Programme "Youth", sub-programme "Youth Initiatives", EQUAL, State Youth Affairs Board, Open Lithuanian Fund, Lithuanian Kolping Society, The Netherlands Fund and from the municipalities.

Besides the various funds, some grassroots development initiatives have introduced membership fees in order to generate an own budget. Another resource used to support the activities was 2 % from resident paid income tax sum dedicated by residents of Alytus county.

Indirect forms of support and facilitation

Support and facilitation by the knowledge infrastructure seemed to be important both in developing and pursuing a collective development aim and in acquiring joint learning capacities to jointly achieve development goal. The knowledge infrastructure in Alytus county is represented by the above mentioned public institutions dealing with regional development and regional education centres

like Alytus Labour Market Training Centre, Druskininkai Education Centre, Alytus College, however, less represented by universities or institutes.

As shown in table 1, support and facilitation from the knowledge infrastructure was received along the four lines: **initiation, expertise/seminars, consultancy/facilitation and training/skill development.**

Within these different lines of activities, grassroots development initiatives inventoried were on the one hand supported by publically funded organizations and on the other hand by private knowledge facilitators.

Initiation

In Alytus county, there are cases when knowledge institutions/mediators are one of the initiators or founders (co-founder) of the new organization/network. For example Alytus College helped to establish Alytus Business Incubator, Alytus Business Advisory Centre – Alytus Region Business Association, Alytus Region Business Association - Business Cooperation Centre of Southern Lithuania, Alytus Region Development Agency - Local Activity Centres on Cross-Border etc. This demonstrates that competence and experience in business management can be helpful in creating new initiatives.

Expertise, seminars, consultancy, facilitation and trainings/skill development

These functions belong to the public advisory institutions – intermediates, involved in regional development and/or national technical support organizations/their regional sections. The networks “Mutual Help and Cooperation Network” and „E-Cooperation – Innovative Clusters”, for example, are facilitated by Alytus Business Advisory Centre. Advice, facilitation and expertise may also be provided by private consultants. Depending on the field of interest (agriculture, business, environment, social) initiator may select a consultant accredited by Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture. A new regional arrangement working as advisory centre for Lithuanian rural communities is the LAG. Rural initiators can approach the LAG with a project idea and receive technical support for any stage of their initiative development, if the project is matching rural development plan objectives. The LAG also organizes seminars and trainings with regard to the needs of rural communities. The new initiatives need indirect support and facilitation more than older ones. As mentioned, with

time and experience successful grassroots development initiatives turn into the regional knowledge centres themselves.

In the more demanding initiatives, universities/institutes are invited to provide expertise. Usually scientists participate in the initiatives as project experts in relation to their expertise field. These include, for example, the Ministry of Education and Science, Career Training Methodology Centre - project expert professor Valdas Dienys, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University - project expert doc. Vytautas Pauža in the initiative "Mutual Help and Cooperation Network"; Kaunas University of technology - prof. habil. dr. Robertas Jucevičius, dr. Kazimieras Juzėnas, Engineering Industries Association of Lithuania LINPRA - dr. Henrikas Mykolaitis, public institution "Park of Science and Technologies" - dr. Kęstutis Naudžius in the initiative „E-Cooperation – Innovative Clusters“. However, there are no specific programmes that would fund research and cooperation of grassroots development initiatives with knowledge infrastructure in Alytus county. There is no analogous programme to Dutch Regional Transition Programme in Lithuania.

For the initiative "E-Cooperation – Innovative Clusters", Alytus Business Advisory Centre also approached a public institution „INTECHCENTRAS" for a paid research and technical assistance assignment in order to prepare the Metal Processing Cluster Strategy and Map. For these services, the initiator paid the knowledge facilitators for their services through a budget taken from subsidies received.

Contacts with publically funded and private knowledge facilitators are often made through informal networks and coincidental encounters. The creation of informal networks and the likelihood of coincidental encounters is supported and facilitated indirectly through public administration, mainly through promotion of regional, interregional and international cooperation within the regional development programmes. The majority of intermediates and grassroots development initiative networks provides a space or electronic platform for various regional actors to meet and communicate. Regional initiatives also participate in the activities of national (and further European) networks, such as the Lithuanian Rural Network, Lithuanian Business Innovation Centre, Lithuanian NGO Information Centre, etc, which allows information and knowledge exchange and contact network extension. Several interviewees also mentioned to get information about available expertise through informal talks with other

members, through visiting lectures or courses and receiving suggestions about potential knowledge facilitators. The leaders of the initiatives are usually good experts in their areas and have their social network useful for contacting experts. For example, Dalia Matukienė, the president of Alytus Region Business Association in 2010 was also a chairperson of Lithuanian Small and Medium Business Board.

2.3 Evaluation of direct and indirect form of support and facilitation received by grassroots development initiatives

In M4.3 Part II, 4 grassroots development initiatives were invited to participate in a workshop to evaluate the forms of support and facilitation they received for learning and innovation. With additional information of the interviews conducted in M4.3 Part I and follow-up interviews, first the evaluation of direct forms of support and facilitation will be presented, followed by the evaluation of indirect forms of support and facilitation.

2.3.1 Direct forms of support and facilitation

In Alytus county, public administration offers formally arranged support and facilitation for grassroots development initiatives along three lines: 1) initiation of the grassroots development activities; 2) primary advice concerning the development plans, the application for subsidies, process management and direction towards the relevant advisory institutions 3) the provision of finances. Table 2.2 provides an overview of arrangements that were mentioned by grassroots development initiators in Part I as having provided support and facilitation. Furthermore, table 2.2 provides an overview of key words to describe the evaluation of the different forms of support and facilitation received by the grassroots development initiators. Hereby, the evaluation refers to the form of support/facilitation received and not necessarily to a particular arrangement.

Table 2.2 Direct forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
Initiation	Through ABAC, ARBA, ARDA, Alytus NGO Support centre, LAG	Organized meetings, discussions, trainings bring potential partners together, Help to identify common problem and develop collective aim for initiative Founder, project applicant or co-partner of initiated network/activity
Advice, expertise, facilitation	Through ABAC, ARBA, ARDA, Alytus NGO Support centre, LAG	Advice on organization establishment procedure Municipality representatives have too strong influence on decision making in the LAG Too much bureaucracy Only first examples of arrangements in the region, little experience, we are learning, Enable to carry out local SWOT analysis for project preparation Project preparation and management trainings for NGOs enable to become applicants for subsidies Clusterization - new expectations for regional business development
Subsidies	<p><u>Regional</u> Alytus city and district municipalities, Alytus city SME Fund, Governor Administration of Alytus County (Alytus Regional Development Plan 2010-2020, Municipality Strategic Development Plan 2007-2013 Municipality Short-term Strategic Development Plan 2010-2012)</p> <p><u>National</u> Lithuanian Ministry of Economy National Support Fund Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture, National Support to Rural Communities Lithuanian Ministry of Culture, Lithuanian Ministry of Social Affairs, State Youth Affair Board, Open Lithuanian Fund, Lithuanian Kolping Society</p> <p><u>EU</u> LEADER, INTERREG IIIa, INTERREG IIIb, ERDF, Active Neighbours, SPF (Lithuanian and Polish Boder Cooperation Small Project Fund) Gruntvig, Leonardo da Vinci, TACIS, EU Programme "Youth", sub-programme "Youth Initiatives", The Netherlands Fund, EQUAL, PHARE ESC 2001</p> <p>American-Baltic Partnership Programme, EEA and Norway Grants</p>	<p>Subsidy process is slow Too many rules and regulations to comply, they are changing Lack of financial resources for operational costs and office maintenance expenses No support to individual initiatives working for public good, forcing artificial formation of organization Support to regional initiatives is depending too much on the people in local government, political parties. Should be more objective</p>
Meeting space	Offices of ABAC, ARBA, LAGs	
Partnership	Alytus city and district municipalities	Project partners – political support and interaction

As table 7.2 shows, 27 different supportive and facilitating arrangements were identified. Of these, 22 are providing or provided support and facilitation with regard to subsidies, 5 arrangements are able to provide advice, expertise and facilitation and 5 arrangements can help initiate grassroots development initiatives in Alytus county. Furthermore, 3 arrangements provide a physical meeting space for grassroots development initiatives – 2 for business and 1 for social/cultural initiatives.

Some of the identified arrangements are providing two or more different kinds of support and facilitation to rural development initiatives. For example, LAG is an arrangement to give advice, expertise, facilitation and subsidy and a physical meeting space. Furthermore, Alytus Business Advisory Centre and Alytus Region Business Association act as initiators as well as providers of advice, expertise and facilitation.

Initiators associate public administration mostly with the provision of subsidies. Accordingly, initiators evaluated the process of obtaining subsidies more frequently than the support and facilitation regarding the initiation of grassroots development initiative and advice provided by public administration.

Initiation

The basic issue with regard to the initiatives and arrangements mentioned during the workshops was that there is not enough employable people in rural areas. Due to ageing of population, emigration to cities and abroad population structure changed dramatically. Due to unemployment, others are too busy to drive for work to the closest cities. Therefore when establishing initiatives, only few capable people are carrying out the work. Usually these are rural intellectuals – people with high education, working in the local knowledge and culture centres.

It was also mentioned that initially there is usually enough incentive to establish an initiative, but later on volunteers appear to be too busy with daily works and hardly find time for keeping an initiative going. Therefore, permanent and compensated workers/ managers are needed. Furthermore, the manager should know that his wage will be paid on a regular basis, so he/she can plan activities ahead.

In general initiators have enough available technical support for initiation of activities from public administration, advisory institutions as well as private consultants.

Advice/Expertise/Facilitation

The only special arrangement between the grassroots development initiative and public administration domains in Alytus county is the LAG. The LAG board consists of representatives from rural communities, public administration and rural business. The LAG provides advice, expertise, trainings and financial support for rural initiators and regional NGOs.

Though the introduction of LAGs was evaluated positively by public administration, some rural initiators were raising an issue of too strong public administration voice in the LAG decision making. Many LAG chairmen are public administration representatives. One of the regional initiators said that to apply for a LAG is similar as to apply for municipality administration - the application still has to be approved by public administration. This brings a complex problem - on the one hand, there is a lack of human capacity in rural areas to deliver LEADER programme, where public administration comes to help, but on the other hand, rural inhabitants do not feel that the LAG represents their interests.

Advisory institutions ABAC, ARBA, ARDA claimed they have to fight constantly for public administration support in order to have funds to deliver advice, expertise and facilitation, but they usually come to an agreement. The role of advisory institutions is important in the region - they enable initiatives to formalize, to prepare and manage the projects, thus to become independent actors in regional development. ABAC and ARBA are also organizers and facilitations of cluster networks in Alytus county, allowing business networks to expand beyond the border.

As mentioned at the workshop with public administration and knowledge infrastructure representatives, we only have first examples of arrangements in Lithuania introduced through LEADER programme, we are still learning. After LAGs, the new arrangements will form where needed. However, both supporters and support receivers are sceptical about introducing too many support structures into practice, because it may result in inefficient use of means and function duplicate. It may also cause confusion for rural initiators. Therefore, it is

important to define the role and separate the functions of arrangements very clearly.

Finance

Grassroots development initiatives demonstrated a wide range of funds used for their activities. The majority of received funds were small and therefore various funds were approached to support the activities. The preparation of many small applications was time consuming and some initiatives claimed the lack of human resources for application or report preparation. The support was also received from three levels, municipality, national funds and EU and often co-funding between the three was organized.

Some rural initiators stated that they did not intentionally participate in the LEADER programme because the programme itself and its goals are very unclear and not result oriented, too much means go for programme administration instead of supporting good initiatives. They decided to apply for other funds instead.

One initiator also stated that a good regional project was not supported only because of the opinion of some particular persons in the local government, prevailing political colours - evaluation was not objective. With a different local government, the project could have succeeded.

During the interviews few analysed initiatives pointed out the lack of financial resources for operational costs and office maintenance expenses, because they don't have enough funds to maintain the premises (ARBA, BA). The regional initiatives work mainly on voluntary basis, using subsidies for their activities.

Since funds are usually only paid to legal entities, the prospect of receiving subsidies appear to be the driving factor for the development activities to become legal entities. During the workshop with rural initiators, participants mentioned this as an issue because sometimes one person is working for the sake of community. In this case he/she should be an eligible support receiver and not forced to establish an organization in order to get funds for his/her activities. A person is more motivated to act in his name, if he is running the activity. Operating regional internet TV, weaving material for regional folk clothes are examples of such individual activities for public good.

2.3.2 Indirect forms of support and facilitation

In contrast to arrangements between public administration and grassroots development initiatives, no special arrangements between the knowledge infrastructure and grassroots development initiatives were identified in Alytus county. However, this does not mean that these two domains do not interact. As presented in table 2.1, they cooperate in common projects as partners, coordinators of the networks/initiatives, advice and facilitate, provide methodological help and technical assistance, organize/provide trainings for the initiatives, cooperate as project experts or assessors. Usually, the knowledge infrastructure is represented by regional advisory institutions (intermediates) and regional education centres, for more demanding tasks national advisory institutions are involved, for expertise and assessment – universities/institutes.

2.4 Conclusion

1. The inventory of the different grassroots development initiatives in Alytus county revealed that out of the four targeted development aspects - rural economy, agriculture, nature and landscape and civil (cultural) development, regional learning arrangements were most typical in the area of rural economy, followed by social cultural and youth areas.
2. In Alytus county there is no analogous Regional Transition Programme or similar programme like in the Netherlands which would stimulate creation of regional learning structures in the region and most important - provide funding for them (except LEADER). Thus, support for regional learning and innovation should firstly be considered at political level.
3. The only special programme for creating similar arrangements is LEADER. However, there is no (both political and public) awareness that funds from the LEADER programme could be used to support other regional learning structures than LAGs (no measure in the programme). A local project is understood as activity, but not as structure. This should be articulated more clearly in EU LEADER guidelines, if promotion of such facilities is intended by LEADER funds.
4. In the Lithuanian case, the partnership structure of LAGs is not always functioning properly in practice – public administration has a too strong position in decision making, since this domain possesses the funds. The

idea to replace public administration with the knowledge pillar, could be considered as a solution. Sometimes it looks as if the most effective regional learning happens in the conflict between public administration and regional initiatives, if the latter are strong.

5. Both state and privately founded public advisory institutions are intermediates between the regional government and grassroots development initiatives, facilitating the delivery of the regional development programmes. They represent the knowledge infrastructure domain in the WP4 analytical framework in Alytus county.
6. Support and facilitation by public administration and knowledge infrastructure seemed to be important both in developing and pursuing a collective development aim and in acquiring joint learning capacities to jointly achieve development goals in Alytus county.
7. Financial support to regional learning and innovation from public administration was evaluated as not sufficient. Financial support is needed not only at initiation phase, but also for keeping activities going. Support for process managers, operational and office costs is needed.
8. Public advisory institutions are evaluated as successful promoters of regional learning and innovations in Alytus county.
9. There were no special arrangements found between the knowledge infrastructure and grassroots development initiatives in Alytus county. However, they cooperate in common projects as partners, facilitators of networks/initiatives, knowledge institutions advice, provide methodological help and technical assistance, organize/provide trainings for the initiatives, cooperate as project experts or assessors. Usually, the knowledge infrastructure is represented by regional advisory institutions (intermediates) and regional education centres, for more demanding tasks national advisory institutions are approached, for expertise and assessment – universities/institutes are contacted.
10. An issue of legal entity establishment in order to get activities funded was raised by the rural initiators. There are individual initiators who have good ideas that serve public interests and solving public problems, but they want to act in their name not in the name of an organization, because often organizations are created artificially and only one person is doing the work.

11. Rural areas do not have enough human capacities to run projects from various funds. The gap of human resources (administrational capacities) in rural areas might be reduced by help from the knowledge infrastructure. Measures to bring knowledge infrastructure capacities closer to the rural areas could be considered. An idea would be the part-time employment of lecturers in rural project development (extra income for knowledge sector)?
12. A good approach from the American-Baltic Partnership Programme reported by the respondents was to identify and support already started grassroots development initiatives if the initiative is contributing to regional development. It takes too long until a good practice appears in the programmes for targeted funding.
13. Population density in rural areas, bad demographic structure caused by ageing and out migration is an important factor to consider while introducing social innovations. This will be an issue in a number of new member states.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 'COMARCA DE VERIN (S)',LOLA DOMINGUEZ GARCIA

In the following, the research findings of the case study area 'The Comarca of Verín' (The Comarca, from now onwards) are summarised. This executive summary has four sections. In section 3.1, the data collection and processing methods will be explained. Results of an inventory into 10 different grassroots development initiatives concerning their direct and indirect support and facilitation for learning and innovation received throughout their evolution will be presented in section 3.2. Grassroots development initiators were asked to do an evaluation of the available forms of direct and indirect support and facilitation for learning and innovation. Section 3.3 presents the results of this evaluation by using the answers of the initiators we have interviewed. From this evaluation conclusions are drawn in section 3.4 with regard to the operational quality of the direct and indirect forms of public support and facilitation of joint learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in The Comarca.

3.1 Data collection & processing

Between January 2010 and January 2011, the researcher has travelled several times to the case study area in order to interview different local stakeholders (comprehending initiators related to farming, non-farming activities, NGOs and other associations). In this way the researcher was able to map following the goal of Milestone 4.3 Part I important grassroots development initiatives in The Comarca linked to different domains of local (rural) reality: rural economy, agriculture, agriculture combined with nature and landscape protection, and culture and traditions have been mapped.

Initiators from 10 grassroots development initiatives have been identified. For about two hours they were asked under a semi-structured interview about general information of their activity, its evolution, and support and facilitation they have received. With their permission, conversations were recorded using a mp3 IC recorder device, and later they have been translated from Galician and Spanish into English. In two cases the interviewee did not want to be recorded, so the researcher took notes. Additionally, a picture was taken of the initiator or the place where they carry out their activities. Some of the initiators have been interviewed two times considering its importance for the next step of the project

and taking profit of the visit of a researcher responsible for the case study of the Westerkwartier (The Netherlands). This gave the possibility to exchange knowledge and experience from the Dutch case study. In some cases initiators from two different initiatives joined the meeting which enables a higher interaction and exchange of opinions about the different analysed grassroots initiatives.

The semi-structured interview was divided into four parts:

1. General information about the goal, organisation, participants activities and evolution of the development activity was identified.
2. The support they received to carry out their activities from public administration was inventoried and evaluated.
3. Support and facilitation for activities from knowledge facilities were inventoried and evaluated.
4. The initiators were asked about their future goals.

First interviews were set up by direct telephone calls. Others were possible thanks to the first interviewed initiators who act as key informants about other. In every interview the researcher introduced the general goal of the DERREG project and the theoretical framework developed by the DERREG WP4 research team as well as the main outcomes –especially those related to the different arrangements, found in D4.1. The interviewees were asked if their position into the framework was correct. Thereafter, they were asked to get more in depth about the goal and evolution of their initiatives as well as of support/facilitation received. For additional information, the initiators were asked permission to be contacted by phone or email, if needed, about extra and more detailed evaluations of their interactions with the identified arrangements and informal networking activities. They have all fully collaborated with the project showing great interest in it. Their answers are reproduced along this deliverable and quotes are marked in *italic*.

Data processing

The recorded interviews were saved as mp3 files on the computer and typed out into word documents. As said the word documents were translated from Galician or Spanish into English. Based on the information provided, a matrix with the following columns was designed to capture and synthesise the key

characteristics of support and facilitation within the different grassroots development activity inventoried, including the following items:

5. Name; Type of organisation; Goal; Participants
6. Activity
7. Type of support/facilitation received from public/private administration;
From whom;
8. Type of support/facilitation received from knowledge infrastructure, From whom

The evaluation of the support and facilitation received is summarised in a table (see Annex 1). The available form of support/facilitation which was identified in M4.3 Part 1 was filled into the column 'Available form of support/ facilitation'. Next, M4.3 Part 1 was scanned for arrangements mentioned by the grassroots development initiators to provide the different forms of support. These were noted in the respective cells in the column 'How is support/facilitation arranged?' Finally, M4.3 Part I, M4.1, M4.2, and interviews were scanned for information regarding the evaluation of support and facilitation received. The evaluation of the different forms of support and facilitation received was summarised in text form, using the different forms of support and facilitation received as headings. Thereafter, key words describing the different points of evaluation were added to the column 'Evaluation of support and facilitation received'. Although intended, the evaluation does not always refer specifically to the arrangements found but to the different forms of support and facilitation received in general.

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
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3.2 Inventory of support and facilitation for learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in the Comarca

In The Comarca, 10 active grassroots development initiatives were mapped. They cover different domains of the reality of The Comarca: rural economy, agriculture (combined often with nature and environment protection), and civic and culture. Most of them are directly or indirectly related to farming, because of either production or commercialisation. However those that are mainly focused

on commercialisation have been classified within rural economy. Before continuing I would like to make some clarifications. There is one initiative listed that is not strictly a current grassroots initiative, since the initiator is from one century ago, but the socio-economic significance of the sector where it belongs to (mineral water), and its relation to current projects as the *Eurocidade Chaves-Verin* listed in M4.2 financed by the European commission, leads us to decide to map it here. This is the case of one of the most important bottling plants in Spain (*Cabreiroá*). We must clarify that the mineral water sector in The Comarca, which with a high potential not yet developed, especially as regards thermal tourism, comprises three bottling plants belonging to three different enterprises: *Cabreiroá*, *Fontenova* and *Sousas*. We have chosen the biggest in socio-economic magnitude as regards employment generation, economic value added and significance in environmental terms (it has one of the most valuable botanic parks in Spain). Another sector of significance for the area was the textile by the hand of a famous fashion designer who would have been an important initiator within the scope of this project. However, these activities stopped some years ago because of a problem that is repeated all over the interviews we have carried out: the fight among different political fractions in the area that are limiting the local development in the area in one way or another. Next an overview of activities within the grassroots development initiatives is presented, followed by a description of the forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation received.

Overview of activities within grassroots development initiatives inventoried

As said above, different domains of the reality of The Comarca have been considered when inventorying the different grassroots development initiatives: 1) rural economy; 2) agriculture and management of natural resources and 3) civic and culture. The key characteristics of the different grassroots development activities and the different types of support and facilitation received from public administration and knowledge facilities are summarized in Table 3.1. The inventoried initiatives started to emerge in the beginning of the nineties in close time reference to the arrival of the first LEADER in the area, which gives a first idea of the impact of political, operational and financing support of the European Union. We must reckon that Spain has only joined the EU in 1986.

Moreover, in The Comarca the grassroots development initiatives can be classified according to three aspects: 1) a time line; 2) different processes aiming at individual or collective development goals and 3) the domain the initiatives are primarily having an impact.

Ad 1). There is a time line that pops up when interviewing the initiators as well as the involvement of some of the initiators itself. Thus, we can consider two periods, the one of the first and second LEADER initiatives between 1991 and 1999 and the time of the third (LEADER+) and especially fourth LEADER. In the beginning of the nineties an important process of development started up, fostered by European Funds. As said above LEADER had a significant role, but also many other subsidies with the aim of promoting agriculture, especially those destined to improve infrastructures and young farmers keeping the line of, in that time, the National Ministry of Agriculture (today *Ministerio de medio ambiente, medio rural y marino*, MARM), FEDER, FSE etc. foster development process to a larger or smaller extent. In any case, the early nineties is the time when the NGO *Portas Abertas*, that we have considered currently as a mediator initiated its initiatives. In that time, this NGO jointed a group of people lead by a catholic priest and set up the basis of many of the current grassroots development initiatives we have considered and for some of today's mediators. Most of the grassroots development initiators have been linked in one or another way to that NGO. *Portas Abertas* managed LEADER I and II in The Comarca, was a collaborator (part of the LAG but without right to vote) in LEADER+ and is out in LEADER 2008-2013. Thus, it seems that according to most of the initiators opinion, as well as some mediators and key actors from the knowledge infrastructure, during LEADER+ and afterwards the inrush of politics and power struggle (except for one person, this is referred to as the '*politization*' of LEADER) have marked the current development processes at a local level, putting aside some of the most important development initiators of the first period by putting aside the NGO *Portas Abertas* participation. The process of *politization*, meaning that depending on which political party is in the local government different individuals and initiatives would be supported or not, is having an impact on people's mind. Everybody speaks about it independently from the 'side' they belong to although of course everybody defends their time in power as it was the best. More difficult would be to evaluate, in the context of this project, who is more or less right. The exception contradicting the existence

of this process comes from the current manager of the LEADER (also manager in LEADER+) who thinks that "*this process does not take place at all*".

2. Another line of classification is the one that differentiates those initiatives pursuing individual or collective development. In this respect, we have SMEs on the one hand and Cooperatives or members of Cooperatives on the other hand. Moreover, the current LEADER configuration seems to have some sort of impact in this question by promoting individual and collective projects. This differs from other countries (i.e. The Netherlands) where individual projects are not subsidised and the goal is fostering the creation of networks with similar goals. The current LEADER in The Comarca has for example finished the entire budget destined to non-productive projects that are those destined to *common good* or public in general; while the productive projects are scarce. In this respect the GDR MONTEVAL is making promotion of the programme. In the rural Galician context, where cooperation is currently rare, it could be a good strategy to promote a specific line of projects aiming at the creation of cooperation and/or networks. Fostering individual projects should not be avoided giving the individualism in the area and the difficulties of convincing people to join common activities. Another problem highlighted by the manager of the LEADER is the current financial crisis and the difficulties to get financing. The GDR MONTEVAL in The Comarca finances non-productive projects up to 80% and individual projects up to 45%. The limit in any case is of 125,000 euro per project (half of what the regional ministry proposes, and "*one of the few competences of decision the GDR still has*"). The problem is that for individuals it is rather difficult to get a project financed by banks (restrictions to loans are harder nowadays); moreover the projects need to ask for 100% of the budget since LEADER funds only arrive 4-5 months after the approval of the project. Summing up, two problems stand out in this line, the lack of individual productive projects and the high petitions of non-productive ones, and lack of a line to foster projects enhancing cooperation.

3. The third way of classification is a simple one and not linked to the specific context but to general domains of reality. Thus, grassroots development initiatives have been classified attending their primary goals and most possible impact over a specific realm. As pointed out above in the case of The Comarca we cover three: rural economy, agriculture often in combination with a sustainable management of the natural environment, and civic and culture. The

table in Annex 1 summarises all the grassroots development initiatives mapped in The Comarca following the classification according to the domain they belong or are closer to. Here we would like to highlight that despite the lower significance of the primary sector in The Comarca in social and economic terms, most of the initiatives are somehow related to it. Applying the classification, below the 10 grassroots development initiative are listed in the same order as in Table 3.1 on the next pages:

Rural economy

- 1 Cooperative of organic meat commercialisation *Biocoop*
- 2 Cooperative of wood Kitchen Doors *A Xuntoira*
- 3 *Ecoagro-Viveros S.L.*
- 4 *Agroalimentaria Antonio Martin S.L.*
- 5 *Aguas de Cabreiroá**

Agriculture

- 6 Farm *O Souto* in *Riós*
- 7 *Quinta da Muradella* (wine)
- 8 *O Souto* Chestnut tree Association

Civic (cultural) development

- 9 *O grelo Verde* NGO (organic school meals project)
- 10 *Cigarrón* Carnival Association

Table 3.1: Overview grassroots development initiatives inventoried in the Comarca the Verín

Grassroots development initiatives						Private/Public Administration		Knowledge Infrastructure	
Name	Start	Type of Org.	Goal	Participants	Activities	Type of Support	From whom	Type of Support	From whom
Biocoop	1998 2001	Cooperative First organic certifications	Network of organic meat producers to foster organic production, foster cooperation commercialization and promotion of autochthonous and local breeds and in danger of extinction Increase size to increase power Advice to farmers about organic farming as well as for applying for subsidies	Organic meat farmers (30 members with right to vote and another 30-40 without but buying fodder and using channels of commercialisation , Technicians (Biologist and Agronomist)	Initiation Engage famers Providing organic fodder, Advice on organic farming Disease control Organising courses, training Facilitate administration to apply for subsidies	Infrastructure subsidies for autochthonous breed participation in fairs, organisation of courses Cooperative office in the centre of cooperative development Agri- environmental Measures (pasture, meadows, breeds in extinction)	Regional ministry of agriculture Regional government Europe funds National ministry European (Interreg) National agriculture ministry, regional ministry CAP	Attendance to fairs, symposiums, courses Create cooperative Autodidact Homeopathic medicine and organic farming techniques project i+d to trace meat publications students economic assessment	Expertise from universities, centres of research AGACA (association of Galician cooperatives) Biocoop gives advice Expertise from France and Germany University of Vigo University of Santiago de Compostela
A Xuntoira	1991	Start: family enterprise Cooperative	Fostering rural / village economic development to fix population Employment (up to 80 workers, now 60)	People mainly from the village of Berrande	Producing kitchen wood doors Commercialization at national and International level	Subsidies for infrastructure, machinery, technology, training	LEADER I and II	Technical support for subsidies	Portas Abertas
Ecoagra-Viveiros S.L.	1993 2001	Cooperative 10 members Cooperative 2 partners	Socio-economic development in the area	People from the area	Plant nursery Distribution Create employment	Project Infrastructure Land infrastructure	1993:LEADER I Regional ministry agriculture	Vis a vis relation	Other producers of out of the area

Agroalimentaria Antonio-Martin S.L.	1994 1.Familias de negocios de abuelos 2.1994	Sociedad Limitada (Limited company)	Socio-economic development in The Comarca	Entrepreneurs	Pork ham salting and distribution Chestnut distribution	Infraestructure Enlarging business	LEADER II	Exchange information magazines	Own, from family traditional business The sector itself
Cabreiroá	1906/ Dec 2007	Ltd Hijos de Rivera Ltd	Entrepreneur Business-socio-economic development	Entrepreneurs	Bottling plant Support to local socio-cultural and sport activities, Certification: ISO 9000, 14000, 22000, 18001; BRC e IFS agri-food certification Create employment Protect water resource and environment, maintenance and improvement of the botanic garden	---	---	Participation in projects	Eurocidade Chaves-Verin
Outeiro Farm	1998	SAT: Agrarian society of Transformation	Fostering organic farming and sustainability	Farmer and family and one fix worker	Producing organic meat from autochthonous breeds Recovery of productive areas, namely monte to foster an integrated farm management closing cycles Prevent climate change Recovery of autochthonous breeds Producing healthy products	Visit to European farms (1998) Infraestructure, setting up activity Subsidy for autochthonous breeds	National ministry of agriculture European funds, and national ministry of agriculture Regional Ministry of agriculture / rural environment	Autochthonous breeds Attendance to international fairs Local knowledge about monte management Receiving students	(Research) Centre of breed recovery in Fontefiz (Ourense) Other farmers and technicians Farmers in the area Vigo university

					Initiator of Biocoop cooperative, almatr and president				
uinta da Muradella	1991 POD	Winery SME	Wine production Study of wine history		Producing wine recovering local varieties Preserve traditional knowledge Fostering environmental sustainability Producing wine for the PDO	Extension agrarian (now OAC courses) Investment in infrastructures, machinery Replanting Commercialization And transformation	Regional ministry of agriculture LEADER II and Interreg FEDER EAGGF	Master in enology Knowledge about sector Attendance to fairs around the world Exchange of knowledge on development (was a local development agent) Technician Local knowledge Courses enology	Torres winery Producers Other wine cellars in the area Portas Abertas Enologist Wine farmers from the area Vigo university
O Souto	2001	Association	Engage chestnut tree owners Foster local profit of the chestnut tree and fruit as economic and environmental product	60-70% of chestnuts owners	Foster cooperation Training Census of chestnut trees in the area Improve quality of the fruit Fulfil IGP (Protected Geographical Designation) requirements	Infrastructure (rooms for meetings, announcements) Expertise	Local government	Training Expertise Chestnut treatment	Vigo University

O Grelo Verde (first stage)	2001	Non-profit organisation	Foster environmental sustainability, organic farming knowledge and sustainable development	15-20 members, producers, biologist and agronomists	Fostering organic farming consumption in the schools	Subsidy for project organic school meals European project RAFAEL	Regional government (Agri-food quality ministry) INTERREG	Fairs	Organic producers
Cigarrons de Verin	1995 current association 2007 (the interview)	Cultural Association	Promote and maintain Carnival tradition Protect traditional culture	Open to everybody to become a member (about 500)	Carnival Parades Obradoiros to teach how to make the wood masks and suits Protect the typical Cigarron suit	Infrastructure For the obradoiros Place for exhibitions Posters / Marketing of events	Local government Cabreiroa Trade associations Local government	Exchange of members for/visits to other carnival parades	Similar associations in Europe

Direct and indirect forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

The different grassroots development initiatives received to greater or lower extent some support and facilitation for learning and innovation. As figure 1 shows, support and facilitation can be provided directly through (policy) arrangements between public administration and grassroots development initiatives. Public support and facilitation for learning and innovation can also be provided indirectly (knowledge arrangements) through enabling public knowledge institutes and public or private agencies to get engaged with grassroots development initiatives. Figure 3.1 summarises this question.

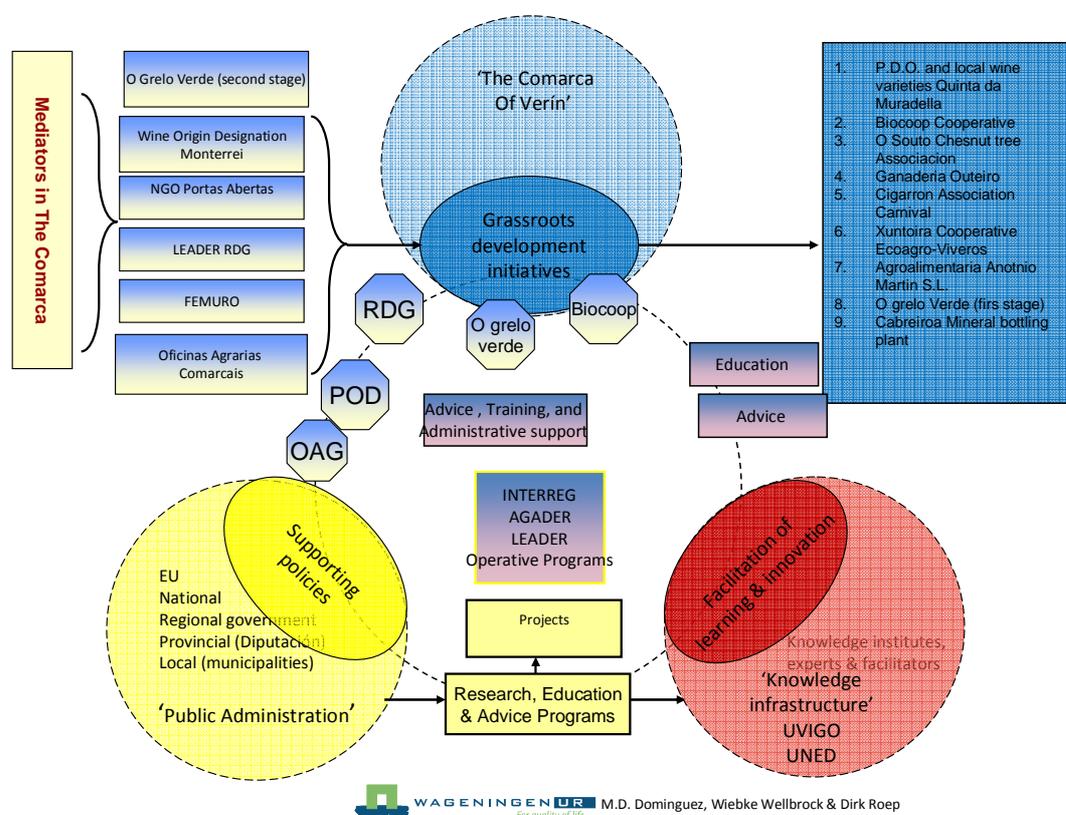


Figure 0-1 Arrangements to facilitate and support learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in the Comarca de Verín

Direct forms of public support and facilitation

Public administration supports grassroots development activities in The Comarca through different lines, mainly initiation, advice, expertise and facilitation and finances. These forms of support and facilitation appear to be particularly relevant regarding the general focus of developing and pursuing a collective development aim.

In general, the support provided for grassroots development initiatives inventoried is coming from three main sources: EU funds, Regional Ministry of

rural environment (before agriculture) and National Ministry MARM (before agriculture). Support from local government goes to the cultural association *Os Cigarróns*, and in the case of *O Souto* chestnut tree association given that the major and another member work for the municipality, they provide rooms for meetings, announcements, and so on. LEADER has played an essential role for most of them and in the current times is benefitting localities through financing of the non-productive projects.

Initiation

Funding from the EU first (especially through LEADER) and from the regional and national government has been basic to set up all the grassroots development initiatives with the exception of the *Cigarróns*, and *Cabreiroá*. For example, the president of *Biocoop* and initiator of the Farm *O Outeiro*, Jose Luis Vaz, highlights that his idea was fostered by a travel organised by the National ministry of agriculture to visit other European farms:

I joined a travel organised by the Ministry of Agriculture to Europe, in order to visit other sort of farms, organic farms. Nobody knew about organic here. They chose me for this travel of young farmers and it confirmed my vision (about setting up an organic farm)(...) I started with 6 cows, then I did an Improvement Plan, got subsidies, loans, to improve the infrastructure, buildings, machinery. Without subsidies there would not be organic farming, neither conventional!

Or the case of Jose Luis Mateo, the wine producer:

(...) when I started to make up my mind about becoming wine producer (1989-1991) I went to look for information to the INDO (National Institute of the Origin Designation), in Madrid; locally I got helped by the extension agrarian service (today OAC), later the Xunta (regional government), people I knew put in me in contact with other people in the administration (...) I always got helped by the public administration (...) For example I got subsidies from LEADER II to invest in building and machinery, also from INTERREG to do investment.

Ecoagro Viveiros S.L. is the result of an initiative (*Ecoagro sociedad cooperativa*) started thanks to the LEADER I in 1993. Nowadays it is a small enterprise with

two partners with 4 fixed workers and 4-5 seasonal workers. Francisco Pérez, one of two partners of this enterprise, explained that:

In year 1993 we started, I was a village councillor in the municipality and there was this project approved to be subsidised by LEADER I and nobody wanted to take it. So I did. People did not want to do it because there was an initial investment so I convinced 10 people to form a cooperative. Finally it did not result because people did not want to keep on investing, only to share benefits. In 2002 we formed this limited company. The role of local government and the LEADER was vital for this initiative.

What this people described here is what has happened in general in the last decades as regards initiation. In Galicia there has been a strong process of transformation to set up and scale farms, with the need of strong investments in infrastructure and machinery. These investments have been generally financed by European funds, but in the case of The Comarca as regards the initiatives mapped LEADER programmes have played a key role.

Local administration seems to have a smaller role in the initiation of these activities except in the case of *O Souto*, and *Ecoagro*. In the case of the first one, the municipality plays an active role to foster the association providing all the means at reach: infrastructure, announcements for meetings and financing if applicable. Other initiator highlighted that *there were better times* as regards the collaboration with the municipality. Nowadays the relation is broken because of conflicts of interests and power struggle.

Advice, Expertise and Facilitation

Grassroots development initiatives started to seek contact with public administration in their aim to look for information about the possibility of financing, normative and measures of support (see José Luis Mateo above). In other cases, public buildings are used as meeting place. It is the case of the *Cigarróns* who have a room given by the municipality of Verín to give courses (*obradoiro*) about how to make your own *Cigarrón* suit and mask, or the case of *O Souto* in the municipality of Vilardevós. Further on, *Biocoop* is using an office in the Centre of cooperative development created in Verín with funding from different European and national and regional fund. They are in fact the only permanent users of the whole installation.

Every initiator was very keen on the role played by the old Agrarian Extension Service (nowadays *Oficinas agrarias comarcales OAC*). They highlighted the job Extension service did providing information, technical advice and courses. In LEADER I and II the OAC was an external advisor and played an important role in the programme. Nowadays they follow separate trials since the OAC must cover lines that are not covered by LEADER (from interview with Castor Gago, director of the OAC in The Comarca).

Financing

As said above we must highlight the role of LEADER in financing the grassroots development initiatives in The Comarca. The function of these programmes through LAG, GDRs, *Portas Abertas* and OAC in the first two programs has been very significant in the area. Associations and cooperatives also have membership fees and fees for activities in order to generate an own budget.

In the light of the current crisis and as it was highlighted by Ana Villarino, the current LEADER manager, a new scenario opens. With the restrictions of banks to give loans, new initiatives are being cut since the start, even when their projects are already accepted by the program. Jose Luis Vaz posed an interesting question as regards the coming CAP discussions about what is going to be subsidised:

The new CAP will foster climate change mitigation, nature care (...) everybody is becoming green because of that (ironic). In this field, our cattle play an important role: extensive management, low greenhouse emission, healthy products... all this is going to frame the new subsidies in 2018-2020

Indirect forms of support and facilitation

In general, support and facilitation from the knowledge infrastructure is very relevant in the initiative's focus on acquiring joint learning and innovation capacities to jointly achieve a development goal. When asked, interviewed initiators stated to get information about available expertise through informal talks with other members, through lectures giving by professors and technicians who came to the area or attending courses organised by private enterprises or the university. This also served to receive suggestions about potential knowledge facilitators.

In some cases, the initiator had to look for this support out of the community and even nation. Thus, in the case of organic farming, Galicia suffers a big delay compared to other Spanish communities and European countries. *Biocoop*, for example had to use private knowledge facilitators such as experts, advisors or professionals with specific knowledge on certain topics from Denmark, Germany, France or Switzerland. We also want to stress the case of Mateo who is following his goal of recovering local wine varieties. He started to meet old wine producers, asking them to take samples of their wine stocks and to learn about the way they elaborate their wine. The outcome could not be more successful in personal and economic terms. Firstly, he discovered he was learning from those people recovering ancient knowledge about their way of doing wine. Secondly, in collaboration with an old man and technician he elaborated a wine that has been recognised worldwide. A further, significant, example within the Comarca is the case of the NGO *Portas Abertas* that was able to create a network of personal contacts that survives until today. Whether belonging or not belonging to the NGO, its importance as a network pops up once and again when speaking about fostering, promoting, and starting grassroots development initiatives.

One could argue that besides necessary personal contacts within the knowledge infrastructure, a grassroots development initiative also needs to have access to necessary funds in order to be able to engage with knowledge facilities. Many of our initiators argue that being a real initiator means that you would pursue your initiative, even without subsidy and looking for the necessary knowledge formally and informally.

3.3 Evaluation of direct and indirect form of support and facilitation received by grassroots development initiatives

The initiators in The Comarca were asked to evaluate the support and facilitation they received to set up and develop their initiatives. Following the scheme of the former section we reproduce answers about the evaluation of direct and indirect forms of public support and facilitation as well as some opinions about the different forms of support. To secure privacy, since opinions are in this case rather personal, we do not show the name of the interviewee; we just write initiator. We also include the opinion of some mediators that confirm or disagree with the interviewees' opinions.

Direct forms of public support and facilitation

The positive evaluation of public support is normally linked with the support given for starting an initiative, the advice and information of available supportive measures and its financing and the facilitation to apply for those measures.

(...) I always got helped by the public administration but I think that initiatives come from individuals and the only thing I ask administration to do is not to give me problems (initiator).

(...) I got support as a young farmer and the first course I did with the Agrarian Extension service was all for free. They were very well organised and had very good technicians (initiator).

(...) In general, if we consider a historical perspective, 30 years ago, the situation of Galician farming was worse. People had to emigrate, there was not enough to live from and give studies to your children (...) there was no help from anywhere, neither Europe nor Spain... so everything is relative. Since 1986 Galicia could get European funds, although they arrived later than in other communities. They were important for development of our region (initiator).

On the contrary, a negative evaluation is given about the current way of understanding development processes which in the end might jeopardise projects that are in process or future projects. This is a consequence of the increasing power of local governments within the different programmes of development. As a consequence, this pessimism extends to some initiators about the future development of the area. Public support or the lack of it is criticised also regarding some policies related to the structure of the land, this being a limiting factor in the area (and most of the Galician region). The lack of decision to implement a clear policy that helps abandoned land to re-enter in the productive system seems to be closely related to the possible negative consequence in terms of re-election.

A different thing is to make a good use of them (of the subsidies) (...) here the land structure is much atomized, many plots, small. We need a real revolution. This is due to the heritage system (...) and to the lack land restructuration (...) that nobody wants to implement (initiator).

The bank of land (an initiative from the regional government to get abandoned land into productive circuits again) is working since years, but

I would be much more aggressive. If you own land but you do not use it, rent it, or clean it, you have to pay taxes (higher than now) and be responsible in case of fire... but this is not politically correct ... there are majors who tell me this costs votes (mediator).

Bad management of the funds is also pointed out by most of the initiators. Funding seems to be mostly oriented to activities that generate only punctual benefits (employment, good image in front of the community) and are not really fostering a more long-term development. Some also pointed out that subsidies should be in fact loans without or with lower interest to avoid misuse.

The idea of what rural development is, it is distorted. European funds are being destined to non-sense: swimming pools, indoor soccer... they are fine, but this is not rural development. Why do LEADER funds go to forest ways, houses, and NOT to enterprises...? Before the funding was better addressed... (initiator).

Rural development is a joke. Not even politicians believe in it. If we want development we have to make this profitable... we cannot even plant trees because our neighbours do not want them... we need a territorial basis (initiator).

Subsidies are positive to give in the first step, to overcome indecision, it is a support but I am in favour of paying them back. Many people took profit of development funds for private investments that had nothing to do with development. We (initiators) would have done it anyway, with or without subsidy, because we had the initiative (initiator).

When people get things for free, they do not value them. So I do not believe in subsidies forever (mediator).

Other demographic and economic factors (infrastructures, lack of services) as well as a lack of training and education are argued to be jeopardising development without regional or local institutions doing something.

There was never so much money to develop rural areas as now... but what if you do not have services, a good road, a school (initiator).

Training within the public administration is deficient because the technicians were formed in different methods, in another time, so they do not know about how to produce without polluting (initiator).

Interviewees also remarked that public administration provides good and clear communication about their requirements to give out subsidies. However, provision could be faster especially in the current context of crisis.

Indirect forms of public support and facilitation

Knowledge infrastructure provides support and facilitation by expertise, seminars, training, and skill development. When asked some initiators deny in the beginning having had indirect forms of public support. In the course of the interviews, however, it popped up that practically all of them had used this sort of support at least in the beginning of their activity (for example, *Quinta da Muradella, Biocoop, O Outeiro, O Souto*). It was either through attending courses organised by the university or when some mediators brought experts to the area to give conferences. In some cases, visits of students to farm or installations of the initiative were organised to make them aware of it and to encourage an exchange of knowledge, new ideas, etc.

This made us think about the disconnection between public knowledge institutes (education, research and consultancy) and society, especially in rural areas. Universities are still seen as something out of their scope, distant, and with no use, although it is present. As an interviewed professor said *the connection is lost when we left, or when the course is finished*. Some initiators also commented that they had participated already in other interviews for European or national projects, or have given information about their enterprise but in the end, they do not see any improvement from it. In these cases, I explained how this project would use this information, what they could expect or could not expect from us.

Another important way of informal support is the assistance to go to fairs or meetings because *they give the possibility of exchanging experience and knowledge*. The contact with occasional encounters and informal networks are also important: *I met Isaac (Xuntoira), Jose Luis (Biocoop)... I must thank them because they gave the sensitiveness to give value to the area... .*

The public administration OAC, despite being a public organism, is stimulating informal networking opportunities by creating needs of cooperation: *we create the need, for example if somebody comes here saying that they cannot sell their tomatoes, we tell them that these and those people have the same problem and*

that they might create a cooperative to increase their possibilities of commercialisation for example.

3.4 Conclusion

Individual or cooperative grassroots development initiatives are both able to foster local development, although cooperation reinforces their power of negotiation. In some cases, development reaches only one socio-economic domain while in others environmental or traditional knowledge and culture are part of the equation, too. As the interviewees stated, individuals are the key of these initiatives but often different forms of support and facilitation are needed, especially to set up the project, to broaden the scope of the activity and to enlarge its scale.

Grassroots development initiatives in The Comarca obtain direct support from public administration. In general, there is a positive evaluation of this support, normally linked to the start of the initiatives, the advice and information of available supportive measures and its financing and the facilitation to apply to those measures. Some public organisms were highly valorised. For example, every initiator was very keen on the role of the old Agrarian Extension Service (nowadays *Oficinas agrarias comarcales OAC*). They highlighted their job of providing information, technical advice and courses. Adapting to the development process in the region, today the OAC continues to give advice about what activities adapt better to the area, from which measures they can get subsidies, and to help with administration. They also organise courses in the whole region. However, OAC is no longer participating in programmes like LEADER, and LEADER is no longer providing help to projects linked to agricultural activities. The GDR is also playing a significant role on helping initiators to apply for (off-farming) projects (memories, project proposal). In both cases (OAC and GDR) the help is for free, so people can avoid private consulting which is often expensive.

A negative point is the current way of framing development processes in public administration; this often jeopardise projects that are in process or initiating. Initiators see this as a consequence of the increasing power of local governments within the different development programmes. Public support, or rather the lack of it, is criticised also regarding some policies related to the structure of the land, being this a limiting factor in the area (and most of the Galician region).

Interviewees remarked that the public administration provides good and clear communication about the requirements for granting subsidies. However, they think provision could be faster especially in the current context of crisis and the difficulties to get loans. In general the initiators are not defending a permanent flow of financial support, although they considered it is helpful in the beginning. What they stress is that applying for public support should be made less hard to do, because of bureaucratic reasons, and delays in the payments.

Public knowledge institutes and (private) agencies provide support and facilitation by expertise, seminars, training, and skill development. Despite there exists a relation between knowledge infrastructure and initiators, they tend to forget it the first time we asked them. We conclude therefore that there is a still an important disconnection between public knowledge institutes and society, especially in rural areas.

Important ways of informal support are the assistance to fairs and meetings because they give the possibility of exchanging experience and knowledge and the contact with incidental encounters and informal networks.

The operation of direct and indirect forms of public support and facilitation of learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in The Comarca is good but could be improved.

Most of the initiators are of opinion that local governmental institutions are currently limiting real development because local politicians have taken profit of European, national and regional funds to finance their re-election: "*to buy votes*". It seems that after LEADER+ the inclusion of majors within the LAG has caused the appearance or reinforcement of power struggle, making the perpetuation in power positions a primary (political and personal) aim. So support is not always granted to the most appropriate development initiatives.

As regards regional, national or European levels, the initiators do not see significant problems *even when they are from different political colours*.

The future perspectives of the initiatives mapped are generally good, despite the structural permanent problems related to rural areas that keep on reproducing in The Comarca over the last decades: ageing, low employment levels, inadequate land structure and difficult to access land.

4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 'DRESDEN (G)' MICHAEL KRISZAN, ROBERT NADLER AND JOACHIM BURDACK

This deliverable summarizes the findings of the WP4 Task 4-2. The aim of this task was to map and analyse regional development initiatives in the case study area Direktionsbezirk Dresden. We chose to focus only on a specific part of the Direktionsbezirk Dresden, namely the two Counties of Bautzen and Görlitz. These two counties form an interrelated 'region', whereas the Direktionsbezirk Dresden is rather heterogeneous and too large to study in detail (nearly 8,000 sq kms, compared to 374 sq kms in Westerkwartier). This region is called Oberlausitz (Upper Lusatia), and it covers ca. 4,500 sq kms of the Direktionsbezirk Dresden, situated east of the Saxon capital Dresden. In the North it adjoins the Bundesland Brandenburg; in the East the Polish border; and in the South the Czech border.

The current economic situation is characterized by both stabilization and decrease of the developments. Table 4.1 indicates that the demographic development of the region is still very critical. The population decline is faster than the national average. When leaving out the City of Dresden, the Direktionsbezirk would even be positioned much worse. Only the southern territories of the County of Sächsische Schweiz-Osterzgebirge decline slower than the Saxon average. Furthermore, the population is aging rapidly in the Direktionsbezirk. Though in 2008, still having a slightly smaller share of elder people (older than 65 years) than Saxony, the growth of this percentage is more dynamic in the Direktionsbezirk. Especially, the rural counties explain this rapid aging of the local population. The GDP per capita has to be interpreted as showing the character of a development of convergence of the economic power to the German average level. The growth in the decade 1997-2007 is more dynamic than in Germany, but nominal values of the GDP per capita are still below Germany's national level. However, due to the above average performance of the City of Dresden, the Direktionsbezirk has a GDP per capita which is above Saxon average. When it comes to the available net income per capita, as a result of the economic activities, the pattern is similar. The income level in 2007 was still below the German equivalent, but the growth rates since 1997 are much higher than in the national average. Here, especially the rural counties could profit from this development much better than the City of Dresden. As an example for the decline of agriculture, forestry and fishery as

basic economic activity in the rural counties, the change rate of the number of the active labour force is listed for the period 1997-2007. It is obvious that – apart from the county of Bautzen – the labour force declined nearly three times as rapid as in the German average. Even compared to the Saxon level the decline has to be considered more dramatic.

It could be concluded that the Direktionsbezirk Dresden is a case study region which is marked by an on-going process of economic catch-up to the German national level. Furthermore, after a period of economic down-turn in the early 1990s and a consequent out-migration towards more prosperous regions in Germany, today the Direktionsbezirk Dresden struggles with above average shrinking and aging of its population. In addition, the first sector activities (agriculture, forestry, fishery) are declining more rapidly than in other regions in Saxony and in Germany.

Table 4-1 Socio-economic statistics Direktionsbezirk Dresden; source: Destatis; AK VGR; Landesamt für Statistik Sachsen; own calculations, 2010

		Population in 1,000	Share of population 65+ in %	GDP capita in €	Available net income per capita	Labour force in 1,000 in agriculture, forestry & fishery
		2007 (since 1997)	2008 (since 1998)	2007 (since 1997)	2007 (since 1997)	2007 (since 1997)
Germany	total	82,262.6	20.4	29,453.0	18,411.0	845.0
	change	0.3		26.2	22.5	-11.2
Saxony	total	4,234.4	24.1	21,903.0	15,291.0	41.9
	change	-6.7	38.0	36.2	23.6	-28.1
Direktions- bezirk Dresden	total	1,651.7	23.9	22,315.0	15,345.0	16.6
	change	-5.8	42.3	37.5	23.8	-30.8
City of Dresden	total	506.0	21.9	30,320.0	15,592.0	1.3
	change	3.9	31.1	40.8	18.7	-36.6
Bautzen	total	335.9	24.2	19,396.0	15,206.0	3.8
	change	-10.2	51.2	31.8	25.3	-15.4
Görlitz	total	290.7	26.1	18,329.0	14,614.0	3.3
	change	-14.3	49.0	36.9	24.6	-35.4
Meißen	total	260.5	24.6	20,926.0	15,545.0	3.9
	change	-6.9	44.9	36.5	28.1	-31.7
Sächsische Schweiz- Osterzgebirge	total	258.7	24.5	16,327.0	15,663.0	4.3
	change	-5.2	42.7	22.7	25.1	-35.3

Within this region, the aim of Task 4-2 was to identify an exemplary inventory of regional development initiatives (see section 4.2); to describe the forms of direct and indirect public support for learning and innovation that is given to these

initiatives by the regional political stakeholders as well as by regional knowledge institutions (see section 4.3); and to analyse how good or bad these initiatives evaluate the given forms of public support. To understand the methodological approach of this Task 4-2, section 4.1 will introduce the conceptual framework, used as a map to project initiatives and arrangements. Section 4.4 in conclusion will discuss current problems but also good examples of operational arrangements of public support in the Oberlausitz.

4.1 Data collection & processing

The conceptual and analytical framework in WP4 is based on a three-pillar model of regional learning, in which actors from within a certain region (e.g. regional development initiatives) interact with the public administration (policies; public stakeholders) and the regional knowledge infrastructure. In the best case, this interaction is based on mutual understanding, transparent communication, power symmetries and trust, and could thus provide a certain regional milieu which fosters regional learning and innovation. Figure 4.1 demonstrates how Roep & Wellbrock conceptualize the three pillars and their interrelations in form of arrangements between actors from the different pillars (blue – the regional society; yellow – the regional policy makers; red – the stakeholders of regional knowledge institutions). This conceptualization is used during DERREG field work in order to reflect about the governance of support to regional learning and innovating in development initiatives.

Task 4-2 of the DERREG WP4 (the blue pillar 'your region') was preceded by the description of the yellow and red pillars (Task 4-1), namely the identification of the regional policies and governmental strategies to foster innovation and regional learning as well as the mapping of regional knowledge infrastructure (vocational training, higher education, research and development activities, etc.). In Task 4-2, the blue pillar has to be analysed more in detail. A first step in mapping the regional development initiatives in the Oberlausitz consisted of an internet research in order to identify initiatives that are active in the Oberlausitz. This step was carried out in February/March 2010. All available data had been recorded into an inventory of initiatives. Among the mapped initiatives, we chose a set of about 20 initiatives to be studied in detail. Given the size of our case study area 'Oberlausitz', this amount of initiatives could only be considered as leading to exemplary results.

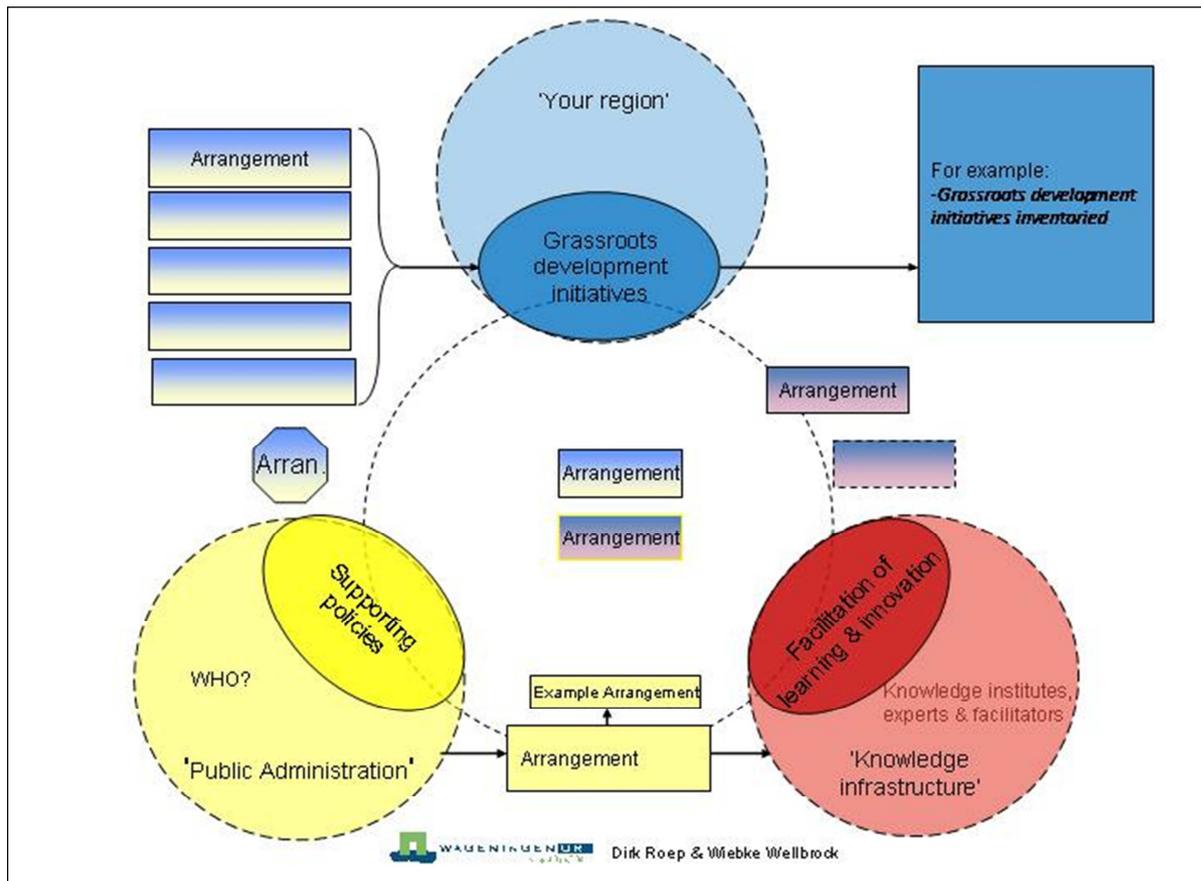


Figure 4-1 DERREG three-pillar model of regional learning (source: Roep & Wellbrock, UR Wageningen)

The vast majority of activities in this region were not further looked at, as resources for research were limited. The chosen 20 initiatives were selected according to the criteria (1) that they had to be active by the time of studying them, (2) that they should have a certain history in terms of contact to the public administration and/or knowledge infrastructure, and (3) that they should have a regional, not only local, impact. However, internet research alone does not provide a deep insight into the initiatives interrelations with the two other pillars of the DERREG regional learning model.

Thus, in a second step we contacted these 20 chosen initiatives in order to gather more information about their activities, their regional embeddedness and their links to the public administration and knowledge infrastructure. The relevant information was collected during face-to-face interviews at the development initiative's offices in the Oberlausitz in April 2010. As not all of the initiatives were available for interviews by that time we chose to approach other initiatives after the summer holidays, in September 2010, using e-mail and telephone interviews.

In the end 13 initiatives remained in the inventory of regional development initiatives, where we were able to get information on the relevant issues as defined for Task 4-2. These issues are mirrored in the interview guideline: a first part focussing on general information about the initiatives activities (history of implementation, problems addressed, aims of initiative, description of single activities, general opinion about impact of globalization on regional development, integration in regional networks and cooperation structures, relation to political partners and public authorities); a second part focussing on learning processes in the Oberlausitz (initiative's role in regional learning system, target groups, possible cooperation with private companies and financiers, cooperation with knowledge institutions, cooperation and networking with other regions in EU).

The information collected during the interviews was analysed using the templates provided by WP4 lead partner Wageningen University. Based on the templates for single initiatives the inventory (M4-3 Part I, section 4.2 of this report) was developed. Then 4 initiatives were selected in order to exemplify how learning and innovation arrangements in the Oberlausitz are evaluated by the initiatives (M4-3 Part II, section 4.3 of this report). Finally, a workshop was organized in December 2010, where all interviewed representatives of the initiatives had been invited to discuss our preliminary findings. The discussion in this workshop was recorded in form of a protocol and was used to revise the conclusions for this executive summary.

4.2 Inventory of support and facilitation for learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in the Oberlausitz

4.2.1 Inventory of development initiatives studied

In M4.3 Part I, 13 grassroots development initiatives currently active in the Oberlausitz were mapped and described. Table 4.2 summarizes the inventory according to the history, organizational forms, aims, participant structures, activities, and the initiatives' relations to public administration/private companies as well as to the regional knowledge infrastructure.

Table 4-2 Overview (grassroots) development initiatives inventoried

(Grassroots) regional development initiatives						Public administration/ private sector		Knowledge infrastructure	
Name	Start	Type of Organisation	Goal	Participants	Activities	Type of support	From whom	Type of support	From whom
Domowina - Bund Lausitzer Sorben e.V.	October 13, 1912 (refounded in 1945)	Registered (umbrella) association	Pushing forward Sorbian minority interests; preservation of Sorbian cultural heritage	Individuals; several Sorbian cultural and economic associations; Catholic church	conservation of Sorbian cultural and linguistic heritage; organisation of cultural events (e.g. International Sorbian Folkloristic Festival); promoting Sorbian Studies; running own companies (schools, theatre, museum, publishing house for Sorbian culture, language centre, etc.); protection of Sorbian interests against German discrimination	acknowledgement of Sorbs as official minority in Germany; providing certain advantages in terms of cultural autonomy (e.g. in the field of schooling); annual institutional funding for Sorbs/Sorbian heritage/ <i>financial contributions, material support, ideological support private individuals, private companies; also Sorbian diaspora (e.g. USA, Australia)</i>	Federal Government and Länder Saxony and Brandenburg/ <i>private individuals, private companies; also Sorbian diaspora (e.g. USA, Australia)</i>	language training; intercultural training; historic seminars	Institute for Sorbian Studies, Uni Leipzig; Sorbian Institute Bautzen/ <i>private education providers running schools in the region</i>
Krabat e.V.	March 21, 2001	Registered association	develop business plans to exploit the Sorbian heritage and provide regional employment	Individuals, municipalities, cultural associations, private and public companies	Krabat saga figure as registered trademark; (re-)construction of touristic sites in Sorbian territory; Sorbian product lines: KRABAT milk & cheese; KRABAT beer & liquor; KRABAT cycling path; KRABAT mill; KRABAT stones; tourism sector; renewable energies	projects financed/ <i>financial contributions to Krabat association; help with business knowledge/marketing</i>	LEADER programme; ESF; ERDF/ <i>"Ostsächsische Sparkasse Dresden; ewag kamenz; Energie und Wasserversorgung AG; other private companies and entrepreneurs as members in the association</i>	provision of trained staff for KRABAT touristic offers; development of new touristic services	Europäisches Institut für postgraduale Bildung an der TU Dresden e. V./ <i>Kamenzer Bildungsgesellschaft</i>
Umgebindel and	June 11, 2003	Cooperative network	establish regional	German, Polish and	establishment of monitoring	projects financed; institutional funding	Gemeinschaftsaufgabe (GA) "Verbesserung	Umgebindel Information	University of Applied

		(Kooperation sverbund)	timbered house construction method 'Umgebinde' as regional brand and anchor for regional identity	Czech counties; Euroregion; Regional Planning Authority; Monument Conservation; Saxon Rural Youth Association	committee & expert group; database about history and method of Umgebinde construction; integration of regional craftsmen into business cycles; real estate website to find extra-regional buyers for vacant Umgebinde houses; regional development concept 'Umgebndeland'; touristic offers & cultural events	(office employee)/ <i>help with expertise and business knowledge</i>	der regionalen Wirtschaftsstruktur"; LEADER+; Regionen Aktiv; Ziel3; Saxon Government; County of Görlitz; formal cooperation with involved counties in CZ, D, PL; also regional development stakeholders; municipalities/ <i>regional companies involved in construction sector and crafts; real estate developers</i>	Centre (informing on technical and historic issues related to Umgebinde houses)	Sciences Zittau/Görlitz
Clusterinitiat ive Forst & Holz Sachsen	June 1, 2008	Cooperative (research) project	better exploitation of wood from regional forests in regional economic cycles	Private companies, forestry associations, University of Applied Sciences Zittau-Görlitz, Steinbeis foundation	feasibility study; network meetings for regional wood industry; establishment of different work groups on different regional economic cycles (renew. energies; eco- house; innovative wood products; semi-finished products of saw mills; scientific study on cluster wood and paper)	financial funding of the implementation stage of the cluster/ <i>cooperation in the field of developing a cluster; networking amongst each other</i>	Saxon State Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture's research and development programme; link to public bodies in the region (in particular business development departments); public bodies as forest owners / <i>private companies in the wood industry (saw mills; forest owners; producers of wood products and paper; renewable energy suppliers)</i>	Dresden TU: joint research work group 'wood& paper'/ <i>Steinbeis foundation: educational offers</i>	Dresden Technical University; University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz/ <i>Institut für Holztechnolog ie (private R&D facility of the regional wood industry); Steinbeis foundation</i>
Pontes	April, 2005	Agency / Network	establish an inventory of regional education offers, reduce	Private companies, education institutes, socio-cultural associations,	web-based inventory of educational offer in Euroregion (bildungsmarkt- neisse.de);	projects financed; also institutional funding/ <i>cooperation in providing education offers</i>	national programme Lernende Regionen; County of Görlitz; ESF; ERDF; Saxon government; links to public bodies	common education offers; change education offer	"IHI Zittau; University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz; Chemnitz TU;

			redundancy in offer, bring together demand and offer; stimulate joint learning across borders	schools, universities, public authorities	development of own certification system for tri-national cultural competencies; active in acknowledgement processes of foreign education degrees		in the region; participation in regional development agenda; link to Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa; link to public schools/ private companies (in particular from education services: schools, vocational training, cultural institutions)	towards international acknowledgment; link demand and offer (website bildungsmarkt-neisse.de)	Liberec TU; University of Leipzig/ several private education providers "
Bioenergiegemeinde Radibor	2007	Pilot project	develop own energy production facility using the dairy's biomass	Local private engineers, dairy farm, mayor of Radibor, mechanical engineering company	first, a feasibility study was elaborated; then, facilities for energy production installed	financial funding of the feasibility study/ expert knowledge; project partners	LEADER programme/ engineer office from the village; local dairy farmers; regional plant construction companies		
Firmenausbildungsring Oberland e.V.	1999	Registered association	develop a joint vocational training infrastructure; establish vocational training cooperation between SMEs (Verbundausbildung)	Private companies, chamber of industry and commerce	mediation between job centres and member companies for integration of youth into labour market; administrative services for member companies related to vocational training; mentoring trainees; running own college	indirect: social security, unemployment benefits; direct: subsidies to companies who train staff; support to operation of professional college/ financial contributions to the association; institutional funding	link to Municipality of Neugersdorf; County of Löbau-Zittau; and to public job centres/ 120 member companies; Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Chamber of Crafts	operation of joint professional college	Zittauer Bildungsgesellschaft gGmbH
UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft	1994 (1996)	Organizational unit of state-owned company Sachsenforst	protection of the landscape; combine protection with sustainable economic exploitation	Actors from regional landscape conservation; private companies (forestry, agriculture, tourism, fishery); scientists	after implementation of biosphere reserve structures, today stronger involvement in regional development: sustainable regional products (organic carp fish, eco-tourism, regional	Saxon State Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture's organizational structure/ cooperation with the biosphere reserve in terms of supporting the development concept; programme Biosphärenwirt (biosphere host) &	SMUL/ regional companies in the field of tourism, hotellery, and fish production	with the universities: research projects in sciences like biology, ecology, geography/ with the Förderverein : joint programme	University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz; Dresden TU; University of Cottbus; University of Freiburg; etc./ Förderverein für die Natur der

					products markets...); elaboration of development concept for the UNESCO programme Man and Biosphere	<i>programme: Biokarpfen (organic carp fish)</i>		<i>with educational offers for broad public (excursions, seminars, etc)</i>	<i>Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft e.V. (association supporting the UNESCO biosphere reserve)</i>
WIR - Mobiles Beratungszentrum Wohnen	April 1, 2009	Pilot project	improve the quality of life of elderly and disabled people in remote areas with low pop. density	Regional housing companies, public authorities, Geriatric care companies, socio-cultural associations, Private individuals	Information events, at-home consultancy service, networking between housing and geriatric care companies as well as public authorities, Bürgerlotsen programme	support to project's personnel and implementation costs/ <i>cooperation in the development of strategies and pilot activities</i>	Saxon State Chancellery's 'Demography' programme; County of Görlitz; Municipalities of Weißwasser, Bad Muskau, Boxberg, Krauschwitz, Schleife, and Rietschen/ <i>housing companies; craftsmen; service companies; infrastructure providers</i>		
Mentoringnetzwerk Lausitz	February 2010	Pilot project	bring together graduates and potential employers; make graduates stay in the region by employment	University of Applied Sciences Zittau-Görlitz, IHI Zittau, regional companies	moderation of the mentoring process during the semestre; final evaluations; mentor-mentee-matching; development of guidelines for mentoring process	financial funding for staff costs to manage the network/ <i>participation in the mentoring programme as mentors</i>	Saxon State Ministry for Science and the Arts' directive 'Universities and Research'; County and Municipality of Görlitz; public companies in the region/ <i>private companies in the region; socio-cultural associations</i>	joint development of the mentoring programme; provision for students of both institutions	IHI Zittau; Dresden TU/ <i>Fortbildungsakademie der Wirtschaft (FAW) GmbH</i>
Bürgerwerkstatt Bad Muskau	December 2007	Pilot project	involve citizens in local and regional development ; enhance civic engagement and identification	Private individuals and entrepreneurs from Bad Muskau	internet courses for elderly; cultural projects (research about regional history and identity); cross-border projects (Sorbian-Polish-German); debate circles with the	financial funding for staff costs to manage the network/ <i>lose cooperation and knowledge transfer</i>	Saxon government's Rural Development programme (ILE) & 'Demography' programme; Municipalities in the region/ <i>socio-cultural associations</i>	TRAWOS studies the Bürgerwerkstatt scientifically	University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz (TRAWOS)

			; provide platform for citizens to meet		Mayor; in future: Civic Foundation				
Strategisches Netzwerk „Zukunftschancen im ländlichen Raum der Modellregion Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien“	April 1, 2009	Network	improve the quality of life by maintaining public service infrastructures	Public authorities and regional associations	regional conference 'strategies to deal with demographic change'; development strategies for fire protection and schooling; think-tanks on scenarios of regional development	support to project's personnel and implementation costs	Saxon State Chancellery's 'Demography' programme; County of Görlitz; regional planning authority; municipalities; public service providers	exchange of scientific and practical knowledge	University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz; von-Thünen-Institute
Netzwerk Kulturelle Bildung im Kulturräum Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien	Dezember 2006	Network	combine the improvement of school education and the protection of cultural offers for youth	Public schools, socio-cultural association, cultural area agency, theatres	various school projects: afternoon cultural offers (theatre groups; language training; school clubs with focus on literature)	30 % funding of cultural expenditure in the Cultural Area OL-NS/ <i>Cooperation in the implementation and provision of offers in schools</i>	Saxon State Ministry of Science and the Arts' Cultural Area Act (Kulturräumgesetz); County of Görlitz/ <i>Cultural pedagogues; theatres; one socio-cultural association</i>	Cultural afternoon programme in schools: Theatre, language, literature	Public schools in the region

The presented initiatives mirror the broad range of characteristics among the regional development stakeholders. Some stem from economic problems and work in close relationship with local companies on the solutions in the economic field. Others have their origins in regional cultural settings and pursue socio-cultural concerns. Then, there is a range of initiatives that focus on ecological issues. Also demographic problems are dealt with. However, it has to be mentioned that all initiatives could not only be related to one of the CAP axes (agriculture-oriented; nature; economy; sociality and liveability). Rather, each of the initiatives that we have found deal in an integrated way with the development problems of the case study region Oberlausitz.

It could be observed that many initiatives are more or less directly involved in finding answers and strategies to demographic challenges in the region as described in the introduction. The shrinking population, caused by massive out-migration, low fertility rates and rapid ageing, seems to be the dominating issues in the region. The initiatives respond to this problem in two different major fields: the economy-related and the sociality-liveability-oriented types of initiatives. The first type of initiatives deals with the directly economy related consequences of the demographic change. This is first of all the increasing shortage in skilled labour force which already starts to threaten the productivity of regional companies. These initiatives aim at retaining the young and skilled in the region and bind them to regional companies. On the other hand, the initiatives being oriented at sociality-liveability issues often deal with general social consequences for the rural population, such as a shrinking infrastructure, the difficulty to maintain good quality education, or sufficient cultural offers. All this initiative work is rather reactive to existing problems. Only a few initiatives try to develop proactive, new and innovative solutions. If they do, it is mostly in the form of the development of sustainable regional business cycles, or integrating whole value-added chains.

Furthermore, it becomes evident, that a large portion of development initiatives in the Oberlausitz heavily rely on public funding. A great deal of initiative work could only be initiated because of a public funding scheme was available. This means that self-sustaining initiatives are the exception. This fact might be a consequence of the small equity base of regional companies and the limited availability of private capital for community work. The dependence on public co-financing leads to problems with the liberty to design own contents of initiatives

as public funding programmes often limit the thematic orientations of candidate initiatives. On the other hand, the public funding is essential for the whole Direktionsbezirk Dresden's rural regions because without them there would be even less activities for regional development.

Also the regional academic institutions play a significant role in the regional development scene. Especially, the University of Applied Sciences Zittau-Görlitz, the IHI Zittau and Dresden Technical University are scientific partners for a lot of regional development initiatives or even create own development projects. Furthermore, the education sector in the region is increasingly networked because a shrinking market makes it more necessary to cooperate when it comes to designing educational offers. Education is both an important regional development topic as well as a big economic sector in the region. Therefore, the cooperation between regional development initiatives and knowledge facilities is working well – somehow like an arranged marriage.

Finally, it could be concluded that region-specific and unique topics are only partially involved into the activities of the regional development initiatives. The Umgebende houses and the Sorbian cultural heritage are examples for this. However, a larger proportion of initiatives deals with topics that are urging the region, but could also be found in other peripheral rural regions in Europe (e.g. out-migration, shortage of skilled labour, ageing, etc.).

4.2.2 Public administration: forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

Finances: The major form of public support is the provision of public money for development projects. As described above this is one of the most important groundings for the existence of regional development initiatives, apart from the engagement of the development initiatives' stakeholders. Here, the Saxon Government has established the Saxon Development Bank (Sächsische Aufbaubank) as a distributor of European Money (e.g. ESF). Initiatives could use the Saxon Development Bank as a one-stop agency to get consultancy about the best funding source. Also application procedures are handled by the Saxon Development Bank. However, the Saxon Ministries also develop own funding programmes (e.g. 'Demography'; 'Cultural Area Act'; 'University and Research') in which own tax revenues as well as federal and European money is distributed. The Saxon state-level is the most important for public funding as the federal

programmes and direct funding by EU includes complex bureaucratic procedures that are not manageable for the often small development initiatives. In addition, the competition on the federal and European level is much stronger, whereas at the Saxon level 'become known' in the financial offices of the public administration is still realistic.

The Counties and Municipalities play only a minor role as financiers as they have to design their annual households in rather restrictive ways in order to reduce the financial costs of their debts.

The LEADER and ILE (Integrated Rural Development Programme) of the Saxon Government have to be mentioned, too. The approach consisted in a competitive model, in which municipalities and regional development initiatives could form consortium which presented rural development concepts to the Saxon Government. Then the best were picked as LEADER-regions which have higher subsidy rates as the regions classed Saxon ILE region. However, both LEADER and ILE regions could use money for rural development more or less autonomous within their territory.

Policy frameworks: This type of support is often linked to financial funding. But it might also function supportive without financial subsidies. In case of the 'Demography' programme of the Saxon State Chancellery or the Saxon State Ministry of Science and the Arts' 'Cultural Area Act' political agenda is combined with money given to implementers. However, policy frameworks could also enable development without financing its implementation directly. Certain revisions of laws defining standards in the provision of public services could work facilitating to social and economic revival of the region. For example, taking health care or the care of elderly as a public service, changing the laws defining how close/accessible a person with need for care should live to the location of the care institution might make a big difference in the liveability of rural villages. If the distance is somewhat enlarged, elder people might be able to remain in their villages for longer time and keep the villages alive. The same accounts for the provision of emergency assistance in the border region. Here, the problem is that municipalities have problems to finance services such as fire protection or first aid, although on the Czech and Polish neighbouring towns such services would potentially be available as well. Some initiatives engage in the revision of such laws in order to use resources and infrastructures in the rural areas more

efficiently. The Saxon Government is open for dialogue in this field. But also the level of Counties and Municipalities is cooperating with development initiatives in order to enhance certain changes in antiquated administrative and social routines.

Indirect support: This form of support concerns, on the one hand, the right to use a public administration's infrastructure. Examples were the County of Görlitz which offers its administrative structures to the Umgebndeland initiative and the Pontes Agency, or the Saxon State Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture (SMUL) which offered the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve to run its administrative office as an organizational unit of the Sachsenforst state-owned company.

On the other hand, indirect support might also be found in the form of the exertion of influence as a shareholder. For example, the WIR network profited from the County of Görlitz' and different Municipalities' influence on public housing companies and made them support the WIR network's implementation.

Third, public authorities might be active members or participants in regional development initiatives. For example, looking at the members' list of the Krabat e.V., a large number of regional Municipalities and the County and its public companies (e.g. TGG) become visible.

These indirect forms of support are a more reasonable form of support for Counties and Municipalities as they concern geographical and social proximity. The often complex organizational structures and arrangements need social trust between the cooperating partners as well as an understanding of regional specificities. On the other hand, there is no need for large financial engagement, and the indebted Counties and Municipalities could become active without having to pay.

Networking: Most of the larger public funding programmes are framed by a mediated networking process in which the governmental funding offices initiate get-togethers and meeting between funded initiatives during the funding period. For instance, this is the case for the participants in LEADER/ILE, where Saxon and national networks were established (DVS Netzwerk Ländliche Räume). Also the Saxon governmental directive 'Demography' is accompanied by an internet platform (www.demografie.sachsen.de), an electronic newsletter, and an award for the best project.

4.2.3 Private sector: forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

Finances: Also the private sector supports the regional development initiatives and their learning and innovation by financial means. These financial contributions mainly consist of membership fees in initiatives organized as associations or also of donations to the initiatives. However, the private equity base of regional companies is rather underdeveloped. This is mostly due to the economic structure of the Oberlausitz, with a lot of SMEs and less large, multinational companies. Furthermore, the companies are often branches of larger industrial groups which have their headquarters elsewhere. Thus, profit from within region often has to be transferred outside the region. The availability of private financial capital is very limited for regional development initiatives. Examples are the 120 member companies of the Firmenausbildungsring or the private members of Krabat.

Provision of services or products or infrastructure: However, some initiatives are supported by the private sector in the form of services, products or infrastructures that are provided for free or at reduced prices. This would be the case for example in the Clusterinitiative Holz, in which private forestry companies provide their office infrastructures and analytic services.

Indirect support: Also ideational and conceptual input through being an active member (as opposed to passive membership with financial contributions) in a development initiative is an important form of support. In particular, the expert knowledge of private companies and also individuals is an essential asset for successful implementation of development goals. Examples are the Umgebndeland initiative and the participating craftsmen and construction companies; or the Bioenergiegemeinde Radibor, which is based on the private engagement of local engineers and dairy farmers. Also the Mentoringnetzwerk provides a good image of this form of support.

Being a business partner: Finally, one could also consider the mere involvement of a company as business partner as a form of support. Often, development initiatives have the problem to find partners in the private sector, which are willing to provide resources for the initiative's agenda. If this engagement is not available, or only temporary available, then making private companies business partners could secure their involvement and thus often the initiative's existence.

In this sense, Krabat relies also on business relations to dairy farms, tourism agencies and a brewery, in order to make its KRABAT trademark well-known. Or the Bioenergiegemeinde needs to find a way of providing profits and thus a value-added for the involved dairy farm. The same accounts for forestry companies, wood processors and paper mills in the Clusterinitiative Holz. Also the fishermen and landlords of the Biosphere Reserve want to stabilize business relationships by participating in the initiative. In the long-term this aspect becomes more important for an initiative. In the beginning companies might engage in an initiative without an immediate return-on-investment. But in the long-term they expect some financial value-added.

4.2.4 Knowledge infrastructure: forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

Provision of skilled labour: There are two main ways in which the regional knowledge sector supports the development initiatives. The first is to send students to the development initiatives as interns / or when writing degree theses. These students are a well-educated and cheap labour force for the initiatives. In addition, they bring in state-of-the-art scientific knowledge about processes and approaches in relation to the initiatives' issues. The Biosphere Reserve hosts intern students from biology, ecology or environmental education from all over Germany.

Provision of scientific knowledge: The second way of providing support to learning and innovation consists of the provision of latest scientific knowledge. Here, the role of professors/scientists is more important than the role of students. The experts often have positions in the advisory board of initiatives or act as external experts in the organisational structures of the initiatives. Another form of this support is the authoring of scientific expertise by order of an initiative.

Being member / founder / partner of initiative: On the other hand, knowledge experts or institutions might also be active parts of the initiative. This could occur in the form of knowledge stakeholders being founders of an initiative, as is the case for the University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz and its Mentoringnetzwerk, or the ADO Netzwerk, which was not portrayed in this inventory. Furthermore, knowledge stakeholders are also partners or active members of the initiative, who contribute in terms of fulfilling certain tasks or

providing conceptual input. This is the case for the Umgebndeland initiative, where the Umgebnde Information Centre (informing on technical and historic issues related to Umgebnde houses) was installed at the University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz. Also the Domowina and its relations to the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen and the Institute for Sorbian Studies at the University of Leipzig are exemplary for such relations. Finally, the Netzwerk Kulturelle Bildung is based on the formal partnership with schools that are the initiative's main target group.

Provision of access to scientific publicity/networks: A final, but rather subordinated aspect of support might be considered the involvement of development initiatives into scientific or knowledge institutions' debate and internal publics (academia, scientific networks). For example, the Bürgerwerkstatt Bad Muskau is studied scientifically by researchers from the University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz, as an example for civic engagement in conditions of demographic transition. This provides the opportunity to become outreaching publicity in the academia and thus in other regions of the EU. Also initiatives like Augen auf and Aktion Zivilcourage (both not listed in the inventory), that work in the field of political education of the youth, also send initiatives' members to the universities and schools in the region in order to present in workshops and seminars. This makes them and their issues known and raises awareness for certain topics in the regional public.

4.2.5 The current framework of regional learning in the Oberlausitz

It can be concluded that the support of learning and innovation processes of regional development initiatives has three main pillars: the public sector, the private sector and the knowledge infrastructure. Amongst these three, the most important for the Oberlausitz development initiatives is definitely the public sector, and here mainly the financial subsidies. A specific situation – due to high rates of unemployment – is that people do have sparse temporal capacities for civic engagement. The development initiatives in the Oberlausitz are mostly staffed with professionals who earn their income with engaging in the initiative, often because there were no other jobs available and the engagement in a development initiative provides perspective for a (public sector) job. Hence, in the Oberlausitz the public sector support (in particular the financial subsidies) play an important role for keeping initiatives active and provide them with

motivated labour force. On the other hand, private equity bases are very weak among the Oberlausitz private companies. Thus, there is only limited opportunity to demand a stronger engagement of private actors in the field of development initiatives.

This also leads to the common pattern that in the Oberlausitz the thematic orientation of development initiatives is focused on the contents and design of public funding programmes. In particular the Saxon Government thus has a very strong influence on what actually will happen on the regional and local level, as they are the major public financiers in the Oberlausitz. Many development initiatives were initiated because a certain call for proposal was published for public funding. Structures and contents of initiatives are then adapted to the needs of the call. Thus, organically grown, grassroots development initiatives, which practice autonomous agenda setting, are scarce. They mostly act on a smaller geographical scale, e.g. within one rural town or village, but not on the regional level. Regional level initiatives depend strongly on public support from superior levels.

The knowledge sector is a stable pillar in the regional learning processes of the Oberlausitz. However, for regional development initiatives it plays only a minor role compared to the public administration. Knowledge institutions are mostly tied rather loosely to the development initiatives. In some cases, they only participate temporarily; in others they are part of the continuous organizational structures but become active only if there is the need for their involvement. In sum, they also have a low importance in transferring new knowledge to the regional development initiatives. Most initiatives reported that they do not have specific interest in intensified relations to the knowledge institutions, and they look for new knowledge preferably in peer networks, i.e. exchange with other development initiatives. Nonetheless, students are important actors building bridges between the regional development initiatives and the knowledge institutions (interns, theses writing, double affiliation in knowledge institute and development initiative).

Figure 4.2 is an example of how the three-pillar model of regional learning might be filled with actors from the LEADER region 'Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft' (OHTL), with a size of 657 sq kms, thus comparable to the Westerkwartier. In LEADER regions, the regional managers / LAGs are very important drivers of development. Also in the LEADER-OHTL, the regional

management office is one key actor channelling information and keeping the individual activities together under the umbrella of the LEADER region's topic. The LAG is formalized as an association called 'Verein zur Entwicklung der Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft'. In the LAG's member board all municipalities within the LEADER region as well as different private companies, single development initiatives, public companies from the County of Bautzen and private persons are represented. They decide jointly about the general orientation of the LEADER programme in the OHTL. The LAG association instructs the regional management and pays its staff and infrastructure (e.g. office). The regional management provides feedback about the general development of the OHTL to the LAG, so that the LAG could revise its orders to the regional management. The single member development initiatives try to lobby for their issues within the LAG and at the regional management office in order to be supported by OHTL's LEADER funds.

Other public partners are the EU organizations, the Federal Ministries, the Free State of Saxony (especially in LEADER: definition of Saxon implementation guidelines), surrounding counties (through cooperative projects with County of Bautzen, e.g. joint regional planning). Also the UNESCO plays a role in terms of providing the UNESCO Biosphere status to the OHTL's Biosphere Reserve.

The knowledge infrastructure – next to public schools and vocational training institutions – consists mainly of the University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz at the Polish border, and the Dresden Technical University. The County of Bautzen does not have any universities. Only the Sorbian Institute in Bautzen might be mentioned as a partner for all initiatives that deal with Sorbian issues. An exemplary arrangement between knowledge institutions and public sector might be the Sächsische Bildungsserver, an online platform developed jointly by the Saxon Ministry for Cultural Affairs and the Dresden TU, which provides information about all educational offers in Saxony. Arrangements with the regional development initiatives focus on formal and informal agreements to involve development initiatives into the curriculum of the universities and schools (theme days, workshops in knowledge institutions; student interns, thesis topics in development initiatives).

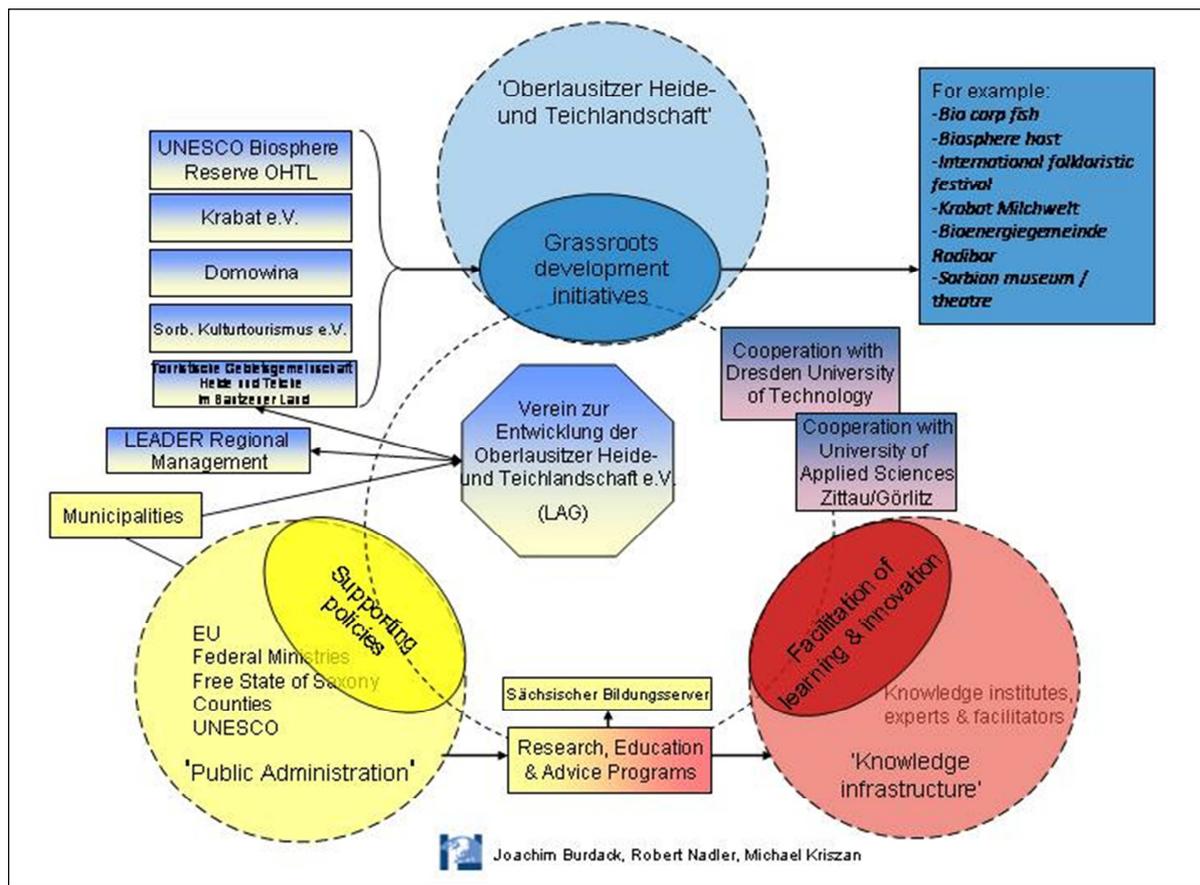


Figure 4.2 LEADER region Oberlausitzer Heide- und Teichlandschaft three-pillar model of regional learning (source: IfL, 2011)

However, the IfL team decided not to focus only on this LEADER region as successful development initiatives are difficult to find within the Oberlausitz. Thus, we also integrated the County of Görlitz. In both counties about 10 different LEADER & ILE regions are active. Using this larger geographical scale, we were able to identify promising regional development initiatives also in the County of Görlitz, such as Umgebndeland & Pontes. These initiatives have an impact in the whole Oberlausitz and might become more relevant in the future development of this region.

Figure 4.3 is an attempt to describe the three pillars of regional learning for the whole Oberlausitz. Obviously, this figure is not exhaustive but has an exemplary character. Basically, this figure equals the design of figure 4.2. However, we suppose to consider the pointed circle as defining the 'region'. Thus, our blue pillar is completely within this pointed circle as it is composed of regional social & economic actors (we would not term this pillar 'region' as it does not refer to THE region, but regional actors). Second, actors from the public administration and knowledge infrastructure pillars, that are from within the region, we have

located within the pointed circle too. In the Oberlausitz, this refers to the involved two Counties of Bautzen and Görlitz as well as to the involved municipalities. In the knowledge sector, e.g. the University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz or the IHI Zittau are important regional actors whereas actors from outside the region are mostly linked to the Saxon government.

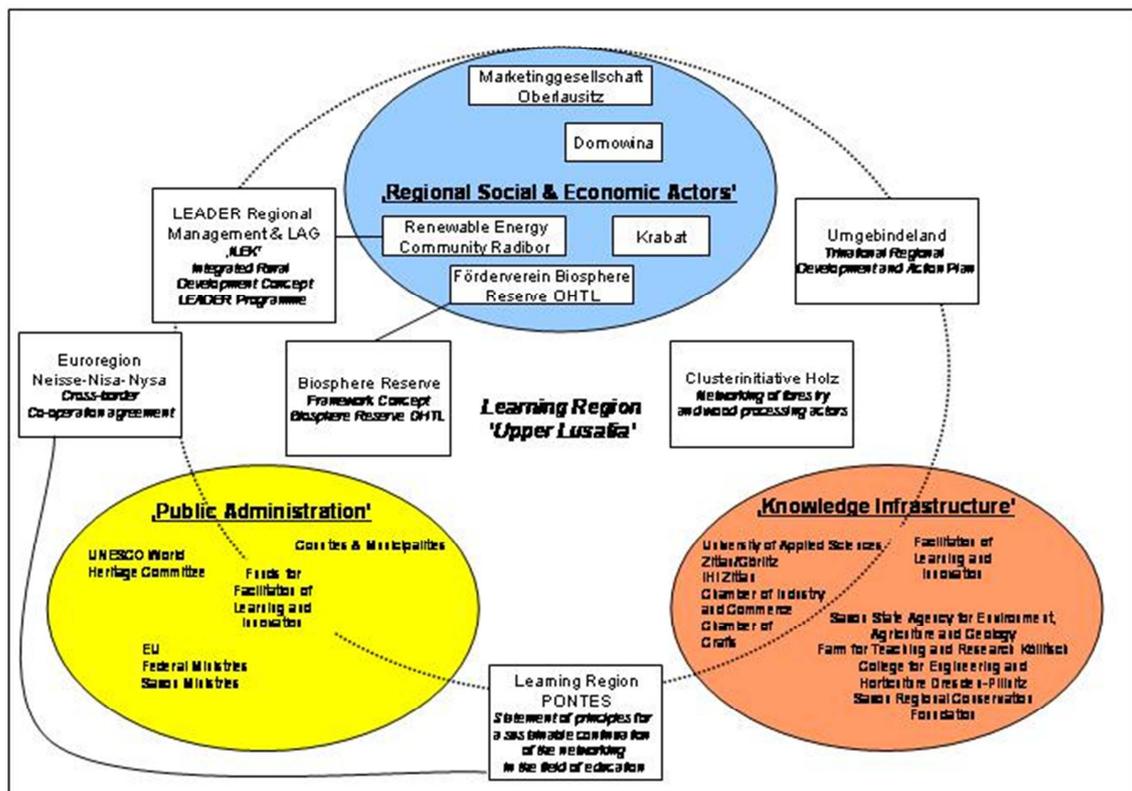


Figure 4.3 Three pillar-model of regional learning in the Oberlausitz

Third, we have placed some of our studied initiatives according to their positions between these pillars. The Umgebndeland stands between the regional actors and the knowledge actors, as it could be considered an arrangement between regional actors and the University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz (e.g. Umgebndeland Information Centre at the University). The Learning Region Pontes is rather situated between the knowledge infrastructure and the public administration. It acts in-between these two pillars as it was created based on a federal public programme to stimulate regional learning processes, and it includes the regional knowledge infrastructure. We have added the link to the Euroregion, which is a cross-border cooperation agreement between regional municipalities and counties in the German, Czech and Polish parts of the border region. The Euroregion defines the geographical range of activities of Pontes and

it thus provides also an institutional frame for Pontes. Other initiatives such as the Biosphere reserve of the Clusterinitiative Holz could be placed in the centre of the figure as they address issues related to each of the three pillars.

4.3 Evaluation of direct and indirect form of support and facilitation received by grassroots development initiatives

In this part, the evaluation of support forms will be presented. The interviewed development initiatives in the Oberlausitz were asked to evaluate the functionality of and the satisfaction with the support they get from the public sector and knowledge infrastructure. Table 4.3 presents a summary of these statements.

Table 4.3 Evaluation of support forms

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
Public Sector: Finances	Formal subsidy contracts; often arranged by Saxon Development Bank	+ most important form of support in the region - too short term, too bureaucratic application & reporting - cognitive distance to superior public authorities
Public Sector: Policy framework	Legal framework; user guidelines for public expenditure; contests for best practices	- not enough used, public bodies do not see their role as facilitator but as controller
Public Sector: Indirect support	Right to use a public administration's infrastructure; exertion of influence as a shareholder in public companies; active members or participants in regional development initiatives	+ very important form of support, facilitates a lot - often only for certain funding period, too short term
Public Sector: Networking	Establishment of networks mediated by public authority	+ positive, as facilitates knowledge transfer - not sustainable networks, no self-interest of partners to run networks, artificial character
Knowledge Infrastructure: Provision of skilled labour	Internships, thesis writing; mostly, students	+ helpful as cheap and high-skilled labour + new knowledge - short-term, as often leaving after personal project finished - need for induction
Knowledge Infrastructure: Provision of scientific knowledge	Professors, scientists as external experts available for initiative	+ availability of latest knowledge & expertise + external opinion - often too scientific, not applicable in everyday work
Knowledge Infrastructure: Being member / founder / partner of initiative	Knowledge institutions as active member of initiative	+ good link to knowledge pillar - difficulties with approaching private sector and regional public, if initiative becomes too scientific
Knowledge Infrastructure: Provision of access to scientific publicity/networks	Initiative as object of scientific study; initiative's presented in academia	+ efficient awareness raising, access to multipliers - high costs of resources for initiative

The main form of support in the Oberlausitz is the provision of public funding. The regional development initiatives in the OHTL appreciate the financial engagement of the public bodies, mainly the Free State of Saxony. They state that there would not be as much initiative work if the public financing would be lower. In the OHTL there are no other financial sources (e.g. bank loans, private

donations, etc.) available. Public finances are an essential asset. However, this form of support includes difficult bureaucratic procedures and long application phases for short funding periods. Also the reporting and financial audit is very difficult to handle for the often small initiatives, which do not dispose of own financial control units.

Furthermore, the development initiatives report a cognitive distance to the superior levels of public administration. Whereas one could easily maintain personal contact to representatives of the Municipalities and County administration, it is more difficult for initiatives to get contacts to the Saxon and federal Ministries as well as to EU officials. Thus, the distribution of public money from these superior, extra-regional levels is often an incomprehensible and rather abstract process from the perspective of regional initiatives. Also, a simple thing such as arranging appointments with officials from superior public bodies is considered difficult. Initiatives' representatives always have to travel to the capital cities (which produces costs) and once they are received, the discussion time is limited and the officials do not pay enough attention to the initiatives' issues.

Another problem arises from the short funding periods that initiatives have to deal with. As public funding is the main financial source for the initiatives they frequently have to re-orientate their own activities according to the revision of topics for funding programmes. Therefore, the content of initiatives' work depends to a large degree on political agenda setting. Development initiatives are not free to define their own topics. On the other hand, the short funding periods are a major problem as funding finishes mostly when project structures are set up and first trust among project partners has been established. The implementation of the projects' actual content then often falls short. In addition, this continuous revision of public policies prevents regional structures between development agents to be stabilized. The organizational setting of regional development initiatives is subject to on-going change induced by political actors. Then, financial subsidies often only are approved for expenditure in Germany. Thus, the important establishment of a tri-national cross-border region PL-CZ-D lacks financial resources. The initiatives would prefer more flexible cross-border arrangements. Also financial resources are cut in the last years. This leads to the problem for regional initiatives to ensure their services.

A final problem is the orientation on 'hard investments'. Public programmes are often focussed on subsidies for infrastructure investments, e.g. new road connection, physical appearance of rural villages, buildings for public services. Most regional development initiatives mention that this is rather inefficient, as the long-term operating costs could not be financed by the rural communities as population and tax revenues are shrinking rapidly in the Oberlausitz. Thus, the initiatives would prefer soft investments in social relations and innovative solutions of cost-efficient and sustainable public service provision or social integration. These are the important issues in the Oberlausitz, not the installation of more 'hard' infrastructure. However, for funding public bodies hard infrastructure is a visible and measurable good, which proves the 'good policy' made.

Concerning the design of the policy framework, the initiatives bemoan that the public administration does not understand itself as a facilitator in the sense of providing a service to the tax payers, but it considers itself a mighty controller protecting the citizens from their selves. In particular, the level of Counties and the Saxon government are accused for defective internal communication between the different departments. While there is a major intent to organize policy design more and more in an integrated, comprehensive way, including all special departments, the political practice still looks different. The single departments compete for budgets and communicate with each other only if necessary. Therefore, public financial resources are often spent in a redundant way for the same issue by different departments. One interview partner mentions: *„This is another point that the departments and the ministries and the responsible posts do absolutely not communicate with each other. This is a very large handicap. It starts at the level of the County, where single departments don't talk to each other. Then it is very bad at the Free State government; its ministries do neither talk to each other. They might have ten times the same responsibilities...“* (Interview partner 4).

For regional development initiatives it would be more efficient to have one agency managing the public funding programmes of all departments in a comprehensive way, with standardized procedures of bureaucracy.

Also a problem is seen in the periodicity of policy making, which is related to legislators' terms. This leads to the fact that politicians and administrative clerks do not support regional development initiatives' long-term visions and

development ideas for their region. Public administration oriented at election periods is short-term (4 to 5 years) and thus could never adapt the long-term strategies that development initiatives elaborate. The risk to lose voters inhibits politicians to take unpopular decisions that might develop positive effects for the region only in the long run. Thus, development initiatives – from their external perspective – could identify errors in the political framework that are often causal to negative regional developments but they are not supported by regional politicians to improve the political framework, if it might bear the risk of losing the next election. One interview partner mentions: *„It is not that policy makers do not support that [the initiative’s concerns]. But I have the impression that the County Commissioners and all subordinated elected positions, the Heads of Departments and the Head Officials are so harassed by their everyday problems, that they pay less attention to the great visions and things, which will not succeed overnight and which will not have a good press“ (Interview partner 6).*

Concerning the indirect forms of support such as the right to use public administration’s infrastructure for the purpose of the initiative, the interviewees state that this is a very helpful form of support. However, it is also a rather short-term orientated model. Contracts or arrangements are often only thought of as being an initial help for a development initiative. From the public decision takers’ perspective, initiatives should become self-sustaining in the long-term. However, from the initiatives’ point of view, this is often impossible. They cannot abandon these forms of support.

Public networking is a form of support which the development initiatives evaluate as a positive intent of public administrations. However, they do not think that these forms of artificial networks have significant impacts. As they often bring together actors that are geographically distant and do not have contact in the everyday life, these networks are interesting spaces for knowledge exchange, but they do not facilitate the everyday work in the region. According to the initiatives, networks only work well if participants join voluntarily, with the individual perspective to have a certain value added through joining this network. Furthermore, network participants have to know each other in order to develop trust and mutual solidarity. This works better on a small geographic scale. Also structures of a network need to be flexible, and the network needs to be managed by a lead participant. This is often not the case for political networks that are part of funding programmes. Nonetheless, these political

networks are a necessary means to discuss contents with politicians, as one interviewee states: „You can say that, if there would not be this exchange, we would have a lot more difficulties in working with our governing officials.“ (Interview partner 4).

The second large pillar in the DERREG learning region model is the knowledge sector. Regional knowledge institutions are linked to the regional development initiatives in the Oberlausitz. However, they play a rather minor role. In table 3 different forms of support for learning and innovation as provided by knowledge institutions have been listed. However, evaluations are not explicated that directly by the interviewed regional developers in the Oberlausitz. Knowledge institutions are often only subordinate or even external partners to development projects. Thus, malfunctions in the relationships were not perceived as directly as with the more intensive everyday relations to the public administration sector. Evaluations showed up rather indirectly during the interviews. For example, the provision of students is evaluated as positive side-effect. However, the central issue linking the knowledge sector to the regional development initiatives is the topic 'demographic change' in the Oberlausitz. In particular two fields become more and more important here: first, guaranteeing a high-quality school education in depopulating rural areas; second, the establishment of efficient links between school graduates and private businesses offering vocational trainings in the region. In future, the lack of skilled labour will affect regional economic productivity. It is thus essential to keep the young people in the region after school graduation. Here, the development initiatives see fields that should be worked at in cooperation with the knowledge sector as well as with private companies. According to the interviewees, both partners, knowledge institutions and private businesses, have already realized this necessity. Yet, so far efficient networks and work structures have not been established and first attempts of collaboration are tested currently. One could thus expect, that in the Oberlausitz the knowledge sector will have a growing role in the near future.

4.4 Conclusion

Generally, one has to recall the conditions in the Oberlausitz, shrinking and ageing population, brain-drain of the young, well-educated, high unemployment, in order to understand the regional learning and innovation system. It is not supported by a strong dynamic of the private sector. It is affected by strong dependence of the shrinking public subsidies. And it has the main problem of

shrinking social capital. Even, if today efficient networks and links between the three pillars of the DERREG learning region would exist, they would be endangered by a social perforation, as more and more potential stakeholders leave the region. Various interview partners have stated, that developing the region and making it competitive for the future suffers exactly from this problem of finding new collaborators: *"It is exactly like this, if one calls up new projects, one knows nearly everyone [who wants to participate], i.e. only very few join as new participants"* (Interview partner 1).

"The funny thing is you always meet the same people in the work groups. You know each other, and if I have an incoming email, which might be important also for others, I forward it. In this sense, our region is so small that the information flows efficiently. We have also learned that it would not work otherwise. It only works if we share relevant information ... being connected with each other. In the rural areas it wouldn't serve anyone, if everybody would do one's own thing" (Interview partner 3).

This limited pool of social activists has positive and negative effects. On the one hand, work relations between certain actors are based on mutual trust and informal work routines. However, these positive effects only provide advantages for the ones involved. The interviewees mention that there are always the same people being involved as no others are present in the region or do not immigrate as new actors. Nonetheless, we have witnessed during the field work in the Oberlausitz that the region is too large for individual actors to know all other potential partners for development issues. The activity range of individual development initiatives is still smaller than the Oberlausitz in total. Thus, there is still potential for new links and new development partnerships.

Yet, building new partnerships is impeded by the fact that the regional development initiatives compete for the limited public funding. Thus, own development projects and ideas are kept secret within the already established partnerships. There is a latent fear that actors outside the own established networks might copy the own idea and receive public funding for it. One interviewee describes: *"Once you develop concrete things, project ideas, initiatives, you have to approach partners very well-directed and in the beginning you have to keep information secretively, shut away, so that it won't be copied or the idea is copied ... you have your established cooperation partners"*

with whom you work in the rural areas; first of all you know your people” (Interview partner 9).

Another problem related to the size of the Oberlausitz is the lack of a common regional identity. Identification works on a level below the area of two Counties of Bautzen and Görlitz. Even in the County of Görlitz the people in the largely flat and sandy areas in North, characterized by brown coal mining, have a different understanding of what the Oberlausitz is than the people in the County’s South, which is characterized by hilly forests and tourism industry. Equivalently there is no common regional development agenda or strategy which would unify the single initiatives from the different parts of the Oberlausitz. Furthermore, there is no mutual solidarity between the various networks in the different parts of the Oberlausitz. This might also be related to the fact that the Oberlausitz is divided in two counties which have strong influence on regional development funding within their different territories.

Nonetheless, from an external perspective the Oberlausitz could be a single region. In the perception of Saxons and Germans from outside the Oberlausitz, this region is referred to as the rural parts East of Dresden and reaching to the Polish and Czech border. Thus, the internal conflicts of development initiatives (competition for public resources, missing cooperation across county borders) might have hindering impact for the future development of the Oberlausitz. It is very important to create an internally shared identity and development strategy for this area situated in the German periphery but in the middle of Central Europe. Only bringing all actors and initiatives together and working cooperatively in an agreed direction, the Oberlausitz might become a learning region. First attempts might be seen in the joint regional planning by the two County administrations, or the shared cultural area according to the Saxon Cultural Area Act.

5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 'ROSCOMMON (I)' MARIE MAHON AND MAURA FARELL

In the following, the research findings of the Roscommon case study area are summarised. In M4.3 Part 1, 10 grassroots development initiatives were inventoried in order to identify various kinds of support and facilitation for learning and innovation. As with other WP4 partner examples, support from public administration in terms of formal support is mainly in relation to a) programme or project start-up; b) advice, expertise and facilitation; c) finance. Support from the knowledge infrastructure is based mainly around provision of training and expertise. Section 5.1 outlines the methods of data collection. Section 5.2 discusses the details of an inventory of 4 particular grassroots development initiatives, outlining the forms of direct and indirect support and facilitation for learning and innovation received throughout their evolution. Section 5.3 discusses the evaluation by the grassroots development initiators of the available forms of direct and indirect support and facilitation for learning and innovation. Section 5.4 presents some main conclusions on the nature of direct and indirect forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives. These will form the basis for the next Deliverable D4.3 in which good practise examples of support and facilitation will be described.

5.1 Data collection & processing

A range of data was compiled over a period of months, mainly from May to September. Primary data collection included interviews and focus group meetings with project initiators and relevant local agency representatives. The interview schedule was adapted from the template provided by WUR and focused on a) the reasons behind each organisation's establishment, the form and structure of the organisation, its evolution, and the participants; b) the nature of support received from public administration; c) support and facilitation from knowledge facilities; d) future goals of the organisation. Secondary data included internet searches, as well as reports, newspaper articles, brochures and promotional material, and other archival material to develop as comprehensive a profile as possible of groups and individuals who were involved in regional development in the County. Ten grassroots initiatives were initially identified, and from this, four examples were chosen for in depth study. All individual and

group interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data was transferred first into the matrix template devised by WUR. Evaluation of support and facilitation received was then summarised in table format, drawing upon the interview data as well as other secondary sources such as reports produced by or for the organisation, or other documents.

5.2 Inventory of support and facilitation for learning and innovation within grassroots initiatives in County Roscommon.

In M4.3 Part 1, 10 grassroots development initiatives active in County Roscommon were mapped and described. This section outlines an overview of activities within these organisations, including the forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation. The initiatives in question can be divided into 3 main development aspects, including a) rural tourism; b) food production; c) community development.

In relation to rural economy, the first initiatives are dated from 1990, reflecting in large part the new availability of various sources of European funding. Initiatives relating to community development commenced in 1991, and those involved in food production commenced in 1995.

As with other partner examples, two main purposes could be identified, i.e. 1) developing and pursuing a collective development aim, and 2) acquiring joint learning capacities to realise that collective aim.

Ad 1) **Collective development aim:** In terms of developing and pursuing a collective development aim, these also followed a particular set of activities:

- **Initiation of development idea:**
This involved a group of people with a set of shared interests in a common development activity or who have identified a specific development need, or an individual who puts forward a development idea and seeks to recruit similarly interested individuals. Discussions related to exchange of ideas and opinions, establishing common development goals, communicating the specific nature of benefits to be gained from the project, the feasibility of achieving those goals.
- **Development of joint activity plans:** setting out the strategy for achieving the development goals, (e.g. feasibility study, business plan).

All of the initiatives with the possible exception of Gleeson's Townhouse and Artisan Foods, started with the formation of a network of individuals

(who may have also been part of other development groups) with a shared development interest in the initiative in question. Various kinds of activities were engaged in when it came to development of joint development plans. These included the formal establishment of the group, securing and developing premises and facilities in which to house the initiative where necessary, securing of staff where necessary, and identification of various sources of finance.

2. Acquiring joint learning capacities: As with other Project Partners, this process also reflects two main categories of activity:

- **Acquire information and knowledge:**
All groups reported on the importance of information needed to move them towards their development goals. For the most part, the regional dimension was not reflected in identification of information needs; rather, the focus was on the local scale; in the case of some groups involved in rural economy or food development, there was an international dimension (e.g. in terms of identifying market opportunities) that was clearly of importance in relation to fulfilling development goals. Ongoing activities in this regard include identifying development problems, adapting to changing circumstances (particularly in relation to funding), designing and redesigning/adapting projects, holding strategic discussions, evaluating progress.
- **Develop skills to realize collective development aim:**
Most of the groups had identified the necessity of acquiring skills and knowledge to achieve their development goals. The range of activities engaged in across the groups is evidence of this – use of training programmes such as business mentoring, payroll and accounts training, food technology, organisation of workshops, information seminars with outside expert speakers, specific skills training (Table 1). For others, it is not clear whether the necessity for such knowledge ‘interventions’ has been identified or acknowledged. The nature of these knowledge interventions is very much dependent on the stage to which the initiative has progressed. For some, the necessity of acquiring certain skills is apparent from the outset and strongly linked to the achievement of development goals; for others, particularly those involved in community development, the identification of skills needs and acquisition of same is

predicated upon the particular development objective in question at that moment in time, and reflects a more gradual, cumulative process of skills and knowledge development. There is also strong evidence of reacting to funding opportunities, which also dictates decisions around knowledge and skill requirements.

5.2.1 Direct and indirect forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

Figure 5.1 outlines the different sources of direct and indirect support for learning and innovation through both public administration and through supporting knowledge facilities to engage with grassroots development initiatives.

Direct forms of support and facilitation:

Public administration provides support for grassroots development activities in the Roscommon area in relation to initiation, advice, expertise and facilitation, and finance. These forms of support are considered extremely important for the actual realisation of development initiatives, to move them beyond the stage of identifying the development issue towards that of implementation of action. Support in the form of funding is received through a range of levels including the local, regional and national, and from a range of sources, with knowledge and facilitation sources being mainly sourced at the local level, although in some instances this might be through the local co-ordinator of a national level funding programme. This depends on the nature of the grassroots initiative; community development initiatives are supported by a mix of national and local funding programmes; those relating to the rural economy and food production may draw on some of the same funding sources, but also seek specific knowledge and advice from more expert bodies.

Table 5.1 Inventoried grassroots development initiatives in County Roscommon

Grassroots development initiatives						Public-private		Knowledge infrastructure	
Name	Start	Type of organization	Goal	Participants	Activities	Type of support	From whom	Type of support	From whom
Crossna Community Co-operative	1994	Community co-operative	Promote local social and economic development	Shareholders - Local community members	Establish organic production, promote local tourism, tourism, set up community resource centre	Finance Advice Facilitation	FAS Pobal Roscommon County Council	Expertise	Pobal Informal network of organics growers
Kilbride Community Resource Centre	1991	Community co-operative	Promote local social and civic development	Local community	Establish range of community-based facilities, e.g. community and leisure centre, childcare facilities, sheltered housing	Finance Advice Facilitation training	FAS Pobal RIDC CEB VEC Govt. Departments Local Banks	Expertise and advice for plans/applications	RIDC Roscommon Co. Co. Informal networks of acquainted experts
Úna Bhán Tourism Co-operative Society	1990	Tourism Co-operative	Promote development of rural tourism	Shareholders - Individuals and groups involved in rural tourism in the county	Establish tourism centre and craft shop; provide services for members; promotional activities	Finance Advice Facilitation	LEADER FAS Teagasc Faihte Ireland Pobal Local Banks	Expertise and advice	Teagasc Pobal Network of associated groups
Local Food & Roscommon Farmers' Market	2006	No legal status	Promote local produce	Local farmers and food suppliers	Establish a platform for promotion of local produce; raise awareness of quality local foods	Finance Advice Facilitation Strategic evaluation Workshops	RIDC Teagasc Westbic IFA CEB WDC	Expertise and advice	Network of food suppliers RIDC Teagasc IFA Gleeson's Townhouse & Artisan Foods
Gleeson's Townhouse & Artisan Foods	1995	Private	Promote development of local and artisan foods in the county Promotion of farmer's market	Proprietors	Establishment of Artisan Food Shop; providing a platform for locally-produced foods through the shop and restaurant/café Development of Food Hub for county	Finance Advice Facilitation Feasibility study Development Plan	RIDC BMW Good Food Ireland St. Angela's College Local Banks	Expertise and advice	RIDC Roscommon County Council Good Food Ireland network Informal networks
Roscommon Home Services	1996	Co-operative	Provide affordable care services to clients	Shareholders	Provision of a range of care services within the county, by professionally trained	Finance Advice Training	Pobal FAS BMW Teagasc	Expertise, advice	Informal networks; Pobal BMW HSE

			directly in their homes		staff, including home management; meeting an observed gap in service provision		VEC Local Banks		
Roscommon Women in Business Network	2006	Limited company	Provide an information support structure	Members of the network	Provide forum for women to exchange information and experience on business/professional-related issues	Advice Facilitation Workshops Training seminars	CEB RIDC VEC	Expertise, advice	Part of formal network 'WIN Ireland' (Women in the Network).
Suck Valley Development Co-operative	1991	Community co-operative	Develop and promote tourism in the region	Shareholders – individuals and groups involved in rural tourism	Develop tourism resource centre; angling and walking	Finance Advice Facilitation training	RIDC FAS Failte Ireland Pobal Roscommon County Council CEB	Expertise and advice for development plans, development of walks	RIDC, Roscommon County Council
Roscommon Higher Education Centre	2003	Educational institution	Provide third level education and training	Consortium of education, training and business interests	Provide an outreach centre to enable access to third level education and training in the county	Finance Advice	VEC CEB BMW	Expertise advice	VEC BMW CEB
Lough Key Forest & Activity Park	2007	Public/private Joint venture	Develop a tourist park/amenity	Roscommon County Council, Coillte	Develop a natural tourist amenity based around the forest	Finance	Failte Ireland		

Initiation:

The majority of the grassroots projects were not initiated on foot of funding opportunities per se. The two possible exceptions are the Local Food Initiative and the Roscommon Higher Education Centre. The Local Food Initiative was promoted initially by Roscommon Integrated Development Company (RIDC), supported by WestBic, Bord Bia, St. Angela's Food Technology Centre, and Teagasc. As such, the perceived need, or niche for development, was identified by RIDC. RIDC represents the amalgamation of Local Action Groups and other partnership companies within the county which would have previously delivered the LEADER programme as well as programmes tackling social and economic exclusion. Since the first launch of the Local Food Initiative, there has been a refocusing of effort in this regard, with a collaborative project currently underway with Gleeson's Townhouse and Artisan Foods. The Roscommon Higher Education Centre was first promoted by a consortium of education, training and business interests in County Roscommon, with the lead partner being Roscommon Vocational Educational Committee (identified in M4.2 as one of the established learning and knowledge institutions in the County, and funded by the state). Although it is a requirement for certain funding sources that groups be set up as legal entities, it was not referred to as a motivating factor for organising on the part of any of the initiatives reviewed here.

Advice, expertise and facilitation:

The majority of initiatives first made decisions around the most suitable outside organisations that could be approached to lend support to their initiative. In certain cases, these were approached to become stakeholders in the initiative, for example, being a member of a board of directors or an advisory board (Roscommon Home Services, Una Bhan Tourism). In such cases, advice and guidance is an on-going arrangement. In many cases, support was by way of providing a meeting place, or sourcing relevant expertise and mentoring (e.g. Roscommon Women in Business Network is supported by Roscommon County Enterprise Board in all of these regards). Initiatives such as Suck Valley Development Co-operative have received support from RIDC in the development of business plans. Initiatives such as Kilbride Community Resource Group would seek more specific interventions such as information seminars on particular

aspects of development initiatives; for example, tax refund schemes as part of certain development projects.

Financing

All initiatives drew on various sources of public funding, with others availing of both public and private sources. Many of these were from the LEADER initiative, which was administered through RIDC. Funding sources changed over time; such changes were mainly associated with restructuring at the level of national government Departments, and the reallocation of certain responsibilities. For example, funding for a scheme that enables initiatives to take on and pay for a small number of employees who have been registered as unemployed and in receipt of state support, was moved from FAS (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment) to Pobal (Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs). This also changed the remit of this funding, which has presented certain challenges to initiatives to meet altered development objectives. Those initiatives that are also set up as co-operatives normally charge a membership fee. This entitles members to access certain services provided by the projects at reduced rates (e.g. Roscommon Home Services) or to receive some other form of advantage from being part of the co-operative (e.g. increased tourism business). However, for the majority, funding through LEADER and Pobal is regarded as hugely important for the foreseeable future. Exceptions here might be Kilbride Community Development Group, whose focus on civic initiatives places the economic significance of developments secondary to the achievement of quality of life objectives, and Gleeson's Townhouse and Artisan Foods, along with Roscommon Home Services, where the economic dimension is prioritised through charging for services and products that can be clearly identified and measured as consumables. Recent funding cuts resulting from Ireland's current economic difficulties, particularly at the level of local agencies, has given rise to an increasingly difficult environment for local development, with concerns expressed on the part of agency personnel as well as project promoters about the future survival of certain initiatives. In cases where grassroots initiatives can replace the local state in terms of service provision, the prospects are seen to be more optimistic.

5.2.2 Direct and indirect forms of support and facilitation:

A strong level of on-going direct and indirect support and facilitation from national and local knowledge institutes and agencies is reported. The local Pobal facilitator is particularly referred to by all initiatives in receipt of this source of funding, in relation to direct on-going advice and guidance on achieving development objectives, on self-evaluation of the process, on organisational issues and on required training or specific support needs. Other initiatives have cited the valuable input of organisations such as Teagasc (Una Bhan Tourism Co-operative, Roscommon Home Services), RIDC (Gleeson's Townhouse and Artisan Foods, Suck Valley Development Co-operative, Kilbride Community Development), FAS (Crossna Community Co-operative; Una Bhan Tourism Co-operative). Several initiatives have referred specifically to the composition of their Boards of Directors as key sources of knowledge and guidance, particularly where these are also members of staff of statutory agencies.

Indirect links are frequently made to sources of support and facilitation through those involved in initiatives who also have involvement with other organisations and agencies. For example, members of grassroots initiatives may also be members of the Board of Directors of other local groups and initiatives, or on the boards of local development agencies such as the County Development Board, RIDC, or the County Enterprise Board. Along with their official remit, these groupings constitute informal networks for exchange of information, and meetings of these groups provide face to face opportunities for access to and discussion with agency officials who can clarify the most up to date situation, particularly with regard to official development policy and funding issues.

Some initiatives have made use of private knowledge facilitators, for example, to carry out feasibility studies or to provide a lecture or seminar on a specific area in which their expertise is lacking. At least one group states that it pays for training of staff as it is required, because it is viewed as more cost and time effective than taking on the responsibility internally. Others however would operate on a more informal basis, conducting in-house training where required as a form of exchange of internal knowledge and expertise. In other cases, this is facilitated or seen as an added advantage of the Social Economic Programme, where an employee may come with a range of skills that can then be passed on to other members of the organisation, and where that employee is in turn provided with certain knowledge and skills held by those already within the

organisation. Apart from Gleeson’s Townhouse and Artisan Foods, which availed of a mentoring programme via St. Angela’s College, Sligo, there is little evidence of any direct links with third level education institutes within the region on the part of the other initiatives.

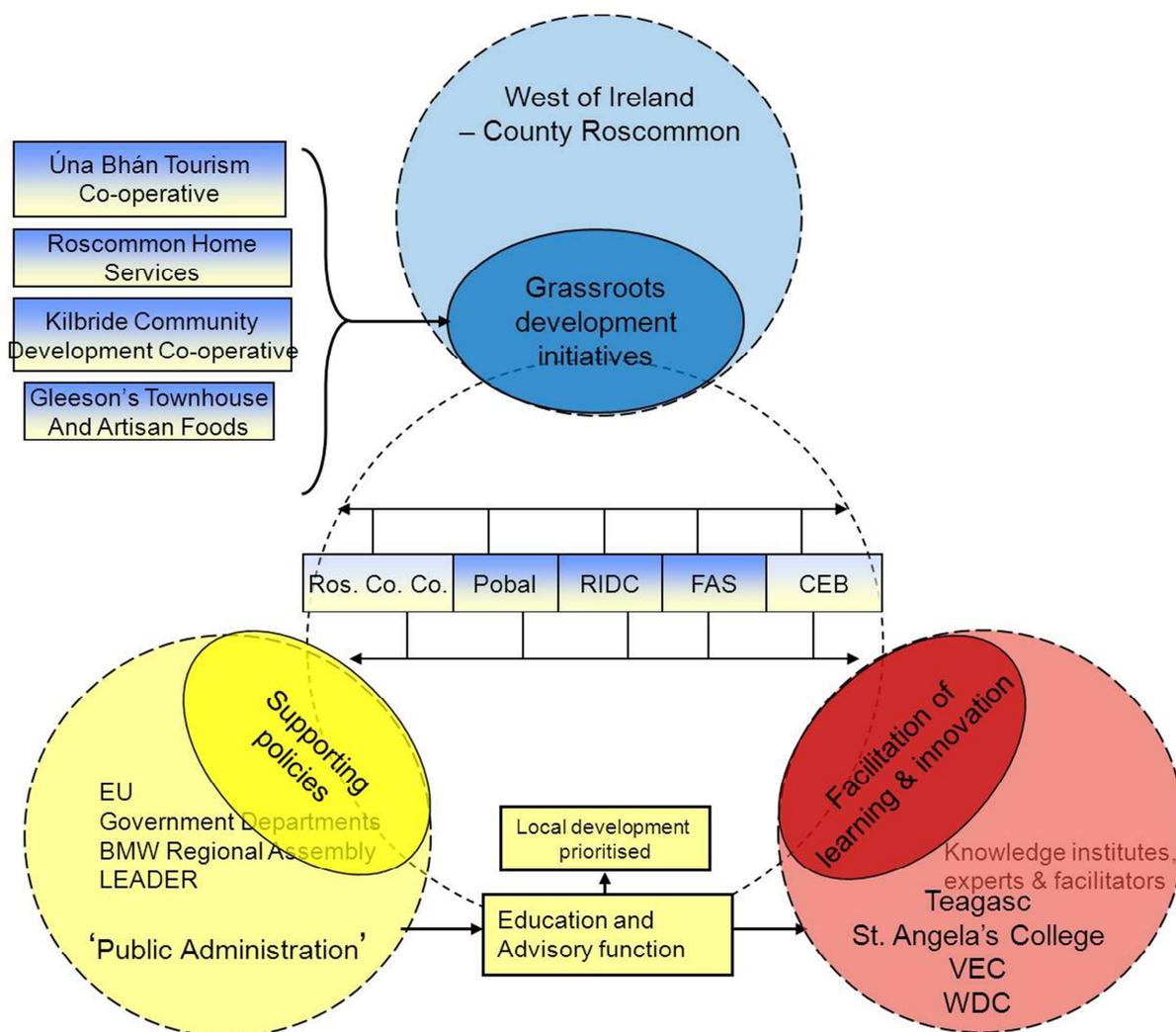


Figure 5.1 Arrangements for support and facilitation of learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives in Roscommon

5.3 Evaluation of direct and indirect forms of support and facilitation received by grassroots development initiatives – 4 selected case studies

This section further develops the discussion on the forms of direct and indirect forms of support and facilitation, drawing on the more in-depth findings of the 4 selected case study initiatives: Kilbride Community Development; Una Bhan Tourism Co-operative; Roscommon Home Services; Gleeson’s Townhouse and Artisan Foods.

5.3.1 Direct forms of support and facilitation

These are evaluated along two main headings: 1) advice, expertise and facilitation, and 2) provision of finance. Initiation of projects is not noted as predominant.

Initiation:

Setting up initiatives and continuing to provide them with momentum is described as very demanding. However, none of the four initiatives in question here used funding or the intervention of public agencies to initially become established, but first organised themselves and then made decisions around their development aims and objectives, how assistance ought to be sought, and from which agencies.

Advice/expertise/facilitation:

Once they had become established, the initiatives approached different agencies for support and advice, depending on their development objectives and what the different agencies provided. It was felt that a lot of support was readily available from the agencies, in the form of help for example, for business plans, from the County Enterprise Board, Teagasc, and from LEADER. Two of the initiatives, Una Bhan Tourism Co-operative, and Roscommon Home Services, cited the support from Teagasc, particularly in the earlier setting phase, as being vital. Una Bhan similarly cited the invaluable support they received from FAS and from Failte Ireland. More recently, and as a result of a change at government level in the way funding is provided, Pobal is also cited as an agency that provides excellent support and advice through the local agency representative.

One of the main difficulties cited by initiatives is when government makes decisions to change the structure of agencies, and to reallocate support programmes and responsibility for them to other agencies, or to discontinue certain supports and set up alternatives, but also with somewhat changed remits. One example, cited by Una Bhan, is that of Failte Ireland, which was able to provide excellent support and advice for marketing, and provided space for them on trade stands at conferences, etc. But over time, Failte Ireland's brief changed, and it was not in a position to provide the same kind of specific support. Changes have also occurred in the case of local employment support programmes which have been a very important source of support for grassroots

initiatives. These were originally delivered by FAS, on behalf of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and targeted the long-term unemployed living in the local areas in question; however, over the years, this programme has been changed to include a more specific social inclusion focus. It has also been taken over by another agency, Pobal, on behalf of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs. These employment schemes are reported as being vital to the on-going success of initiatives, as they enable them to take on workers, and reduce the reliance on voluntary effort. It is agreed across the initiatives that reliance on voluntary effort alone is not sufficient to sustain activities in the longer term, and the need for staff who can take on the day to day running of activities is seen as essential. However, the changes with regard to agencies take time to absorb, there is the requirement to become familiar with new rules and regulations, and with new personnel from another agency. It was also mentioned by one interviewee that it is necessary to take account of what may be a changed focus attaching to these programmes, in terms of whether they continue to reflect the aims of the initiative, or draw it in another direction that is not central to these aims: *"The programme moved (Departments) and we moved as well, but we also had to move our focus, as the focus was now on social needs and disadvantage, and so forth"*. The other difficulty is that it may not be possible under the remit of these schemes to look for staff with specific skills needed to support the initiative; this then implies that the initiative must undertake staff training for the person who is taken on. It was reported by all those interviewed that the agency personnel provide as much support possible in helping them to negotiate these changes. The ability to retain staff who can be employed under these schemes is seen as moving the initiatives to a position where they can develop some financial stability through their various activities. The need to maintain a business-like focus wherever possible was also cited as a reality if they were to succeed. It was clear that a voluntary approach alone was not adequate to maintain momentum: *"How effectively can you achieve that (capacity-building) against a background where people on a board (management) are employed, or self-employed with their own businesses and are giving their time on a voluntary basis. If you did not have a staff that were ready to make decisions and move the show on every hour of the day, the project would collapse, because all the board are voluntary, and very busy people, and not here when they are needed"*. As it was, it was felt that the

level of commitment had to be well outside of conventional hours to make an initiative work: *"You have to be fully committed to it, it must be outside of office hours to make the organisation work; if you were only committed to regular hours, it would not work"*. Another side to this related to having a bigger picture perspective on the initiative that did not revolve solely around obtaining funding to stay operational: *"I have been to lots of Pobal managers' meetings, I would meet other managers (of initiatives), doing the same thing, but totally dependent on the funding, not expanding and not going anywhere. You have to run it like a business to make it successful; perhaps that is what is wrong with some of the rural development projects – they are too dependent on the grant system"*. This flagged again the necessity of expanding the capacity of the initiatives so that they could become self-sustainable in the future, but the importance of support that was not necessarily financial for the period of time needed to get to that point.

The provision of adequate information around existing sources of support and facilitation were raised. One interviewee, who had availed of an innovation voucher scheme (provided through the BMW Regional Assembly) said she had heard about it by accident whilst attending a conference out of the country. She conceded that it may have been advertised in the local media, but it had still escaped her attention. She applied under the scheme on her return and was successful in obtaining it. The value of the innovation vouchers lay in the fact that they could be spent on a need that was specifically identified by the applicant, thus raising the potential value of the outcomes.

Finance

There is general overall concern about the future of funding sources in the current economic climate. All agencies that would traditionally provide funding have had their own resources severely curtailed.

All four initiatives have received funding from LEADER. It is regarded as an extremely important source, both in terms of funding, and through schemes such as the Rural Social Scheme which allows them to take on employees. Some reservations are raised about the level of bureaucracy involved in making applications. For example, it was commented that LEADER funding criteria had become extremely onerous, with the need to obtain three quotes for every piece of work to be carried, receipts and tax clearance certificates, even for very small

amounts of work. It was felt that this was proving a disincentive to voluntary groups who did not have the time to pursue all of this, and that there were ways of ensuring transparency that were much more straightforward. However, it was also accepted that these demands were not being imposed in the first instance by the LEADER companies. These changes were felt to be regressive in other ways, in the sense that the trust and integrity around those involved in LEADER on the ground seemed to be under question: *"These companies are comprised of a very high powered cohort of executives and agency representatives – highly responsible people, but they are now very constrained in the way in which they operate"*. The result was that both LEADER and the groups they wished to fund were struggling to achieve the desired development goals on the ground where it mattered. The comment from one interviewee was that when it comes to actually putting enterprises into place, it is almost impossible without access to additional financial support. In the case of sourcing LEADER funding, the project promoter still had to come up with the matched funding, which continued to be a challenge. The Social Economy Programme, provided through Pobal, was also seen as a vital source of funding, but again, the administration attaching to it was seen as extremely onerous: *"The Social Economy Programme – was FAS, and now Pobal – this is the best; but there's a huge amount of bureaucracy. (Name of Pobal area administrator) is excellent. If you get the funding without too much aggravation or hassle, that is the main thing"*.

Every time the remit of funding programmes change, local initiatives must also try and adapt if they wish to continue receiving that funding. This raises the problem around what is incentivising activity, and the extent to which an initiative should alter its core mission in order to ensure a stream of funding. In relation to one particular source of funding, one interviewee described the situation that faced them: *"We had to start looking around in order to stay viable and to continue to access funding, which gives you a message, was it funding-driven, or was it needs-driven...at the end of the day, what we did was, on the one hand, we tried to match in so far as we could, what the funding programmes needed, and how at the same time we could meet the needs of the initiative"*. Another point raised related to a past record of receiving and successfully managing funding: *"What you have done already...been successful....this makes a difference"*.

Concerns were also expressed about the continuation of funding sources. On the Pobal funding, one interviewee commented: *"We don't know how long more we will get this funding. We lost the wages for one worker last year. We kept him on, and paid for him ourselves. This was seen as a positive thing by Pobal that we did this, but we are not sure about the future"*. The wish was expressed that initiatives could become free of this kind of funding, but that initiatives could not manage without it in the early stages. One interviewee stated that they were on the point of closing when they got Social Economy Funding, but that withdrawal of government funding should be balanced with their existing ability to be self-sustaining and to continue providing supports and services to the community. One group, Kilbride Community Development, felt that it was not a good strategy to start out depending on funding from the agencies, and that the best position was to first identify the need, then achieve consensus that it was worth pursuing, and plan to go ahead with or without funding: *"You put an application together, and then you go for grant aid; if you get grant aid, then it is a bonus; you don't start out depending on them; it may take a little longer to achieve but the commitment is there to see it through"*.

Table 5.1 Evaluation of available direct support and evaluation

Available form of (direct)support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
Initiation	n/a	n/a
Advice/expertise/facilitation	RIDC (LEADER) POBAL (Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs) Teagasc FAS County Enterprise Board VEC Failte Ireland BMW Regional Assembly	Advice is forthcoming and extremely important. Changes in agencies' remits resent difficulties Agencies' ability to guide initiatives through policy and programme requirements Availability of tailored supports, e.g. training and mentoring
Finance	LEADER (administered by RIDC) POBAL (Dept. Of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs) Dormant Accounts Fund BMW Regional Assembly (Innovation Voucher Scheme) Lottery Funding Failte Ireland FAS BMW Regional Assembly	LEADER funding is vital, but increasingly difficult to access and manage Knowing about the different sources of funding is a problem. Sourcing matched funding a major problem, particularly in current economic climate Problems in dealing with funding programmes' changing remits, e.g. when no longer core to the goals of the initiative. Fears about whether the funding will continue, particularly under current national economic conditions

5.3.2 Indirect forms of support and facilitation

Developing formal and informal information networks was considered vital. All of the initiatives had representatives of their own organisations on the boards of various agencies or their subcommittees, or had developed close working relationships with them over the years. One interviewee from Una Bhan Tourism Co-operative described being on the RIDC subcommittee on rural sustainability, a local walks network, and the Roscommon Community Tourism network, among others: *"We know networking it is the way forward, you build partnerships and recognition, and now people are coming to us for advice and asking us if we will sit on these committees and be part of them"*. According to one interviewee from Kilbride Community Development: *"We have built up a good relationship with the agencies; being part of the Board of a couple of agencies is how we built up (a connection) with them"*. However, the cost in terms of time and energy was also remarked upon: *"You have to keep your eye on the ball, that you gain some benefit; you could be at a different meeting every night of the week; but it is like a lot of little dots that will eventually join up and you will get something out of*

it; you will always get an opportunity that will come out of one or other of these organisations". Having key personnel on the management committees or boards of initiatives was also considered extremely important. This could include individuals from the agencies, who in turn can advise on issues from a wider development perspective but which also have an impact on the initiative. They also helped to keep initiatives focused on their development objectives and operate in an efficient and business-like way.

The need to embrace a learning curve when it came to finding out about existing supports and opportunities was made. One of the observations made about initiatives that had not been successful was that certain communities had been left behind, but through their own fault: *"This last 10 years has seen more funding put in than we have ever seen for community initiatives; but too many people, too many communities, have not gone out and learned; there was a learning process there for everyone; get out, get involved, know what's down the line; any of the communities that have done this, you can pick them out in any county, the communities that are involved"*.

Another, related point of contention around support was directed at those within communities, including other groups and initiatives, who failed to see the value in local initiatives and did little to give them support and assistance: *"We wonder sometimes if there is a 'rural' psychology out there; that local initiatives and businesses are local, that they are 'there', and that the local people don't have to support them as much – that they would nearly hope we would not get on, but wouldn't not want us to fail either; but they don't see their role in helping us to stay well and thriving by coming in and supporting us – sometimes we wonder if we have to spell it out to people that everything we do stays local, is for the locality, that we are there to support them and that they need to support us in turn"*. This reflected a perceived resentment towards local leaders who took an initiative that would support a local area in terms of providing facilities, services and employment. The comment was made that *"you have to keep going on and on about the local, raising awareness, making the benefits of supporting it obvious"*. In the case of Gleeson's Townhouse and Artisan Foods, the point was strongly made that the major supermarket chains did little to promote wider local benefits; whereas, in their case, their core goal was to build a reputation on the use of locally-produced foodstuffs; stocking and using locally-produced foods in their restaurant and artisan food shop, contributing sponsorship and support

to local civic initiatives, creating local employment, putting money directly back into the local economy. However the local population seemed to have difficulty in appreciating these points, making the success of local initiatives much less assured. There was felt to be a significant gulf between what local people saw as the problems in their own rural areas and the potential solutions being offered by many local, grassroots initiatives. In this sense, an important potential source of support that would improve overall capacity of these initiatives was being identified, but with more questions than answers about how this situation could be improved. In the case of the Kilbride community, the importance of these dimensions of local support were also clearly understood, and felt to be a key contributing factor to the success of their range of projects.

Expertise/seminars and training/skills provision

The agencies provide on-going facilitation and support in the form of advice and training. This can be tailor-made as required, for example, specific training can be organised by the County Enterprise Board, RIDC or the VEC. One interviewee described the way support is provided via the County Enterprise Board: *"I approached them about mentoring (for her staff) and they paid for that. They gave me a list of people, I picked one; he came in and gave a half day, going through different issues with them"*. Others had also gone for management training with the County Enterprise Board and the VEC. These were programmes that were advertised, and which had to be paid for, but the point to be made is that these facilities were in place and could be availed of locally. Other forms of support include the provision of venues to hold meetings, particularly through the County Enterprise Board, and organising speakers on specific issues when these are requested. Another important factor is that the management boards of agencies in County Roscommon share representation, in other words, a representative of RIDC sits on the board of the County Enterprise Board, while the manager of the County Enterprise Board is also a member of the RIDC board, etc. This greatly improves information-sharing not only about initiatives, but also leads to a valuable pooling and maximising of ideas and resources which work to the benefit of initiatives.

Research and consultancy

All of the initiatives have paid for research and consultancy at some point from private knowledge facilitators. This might be in the form of a feasibility study, or other plan preparation. However, the cost is always an issue here, and it would only be undertaken as part of achieving a key development objective, or, in the case of feasibility studies, as part of preparing a larger funding application.

Table 5.2 Evaluation of available indirect support and facilitation

Available form of (indirect) support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
Expertise/seminars/meetings	RIDC (LEADER) POBAL (Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs County Enterprise Board VEC Teagasc BMW	Main form of indirect agency support through networking activities Arrangements via various membership of management boards ensures a formalised networking platform Indirect, informal access to expertise through contacts built up with key agency personnel Contacts with individuals involved in initiatives over an extended period – expertise and knowledge Informal encounters at funding information meetings, e.g. Pobal.
Research/consultancy	Various private providers	Has been availed of, but not widely, mainly due to cost constraints, or due to use of agency alternatives (e.g. RIDC).

5.4 Conclusion

Direct forms of support and facilitation:

None of the initiatives surveyed could operate without funding supports. However, there is an observed need for more flexibility in interpreting the way in which funding can be applied. Certain conditions and parameters attaching to funding, that may be driven by national imperatives, can have the effect of diluting the core aims of the initiatives as they make decisions to trade-off between securing funding that will keep them operating, or trying to go alone without support.

The level of paperwork and perceived 'red-tape' around applying for funding could be better streamlined to reflect the voluntary nature of the initiatives, which would still maintain the transparency of the process and reflect a greater level of trust in both the funding bodies and in their own organisations.

The need to run initiatives in a business-like way is seen as vital for survival. This means realising that voluntary effort alone will not suffice, and that staff must be in place to ensure the day to day running of initiatives will be effected. This need in turn must be reflected through funding conditions, where staff that are taken on can focus on the core aims of the initiative, and not be side-tracked into fulfilling non-core, funding-led requirements.

Indirect forms of support and facilitation:

Formal and informal networking is vital for exchange of information and developing systems of mutual support and facilitation. This could be separated into three categories:

- a) The on-going involvement of agencies - this is a core part of the value in this networking, through their ability to act as interface between initiatives and government, which is ultimately the main provider of finance. They are in the position to provide key information and advice on funding and other capacity-building opportunities such as training, or to guide initiatives in the case of major policy changes. They also provide more informal support through their ability to link initiatives with each other or with other agencies. The fact that agencies in County Roscommon have representatives on each other's management boards facilitates this on-going flow of information and knowledge, to which initiatives must also (ideally) have access;
- b) linking initiatives (through their representatives) into networks which involve agency representatives, either through having them occupy places on agency boards of management, or through having agency representatives on their own (initiatives) boards of management;
- c) networks of initiatives, also through mechanisms such as membership of management boards.

Links between the initiatives surveyed and third level institutes are almost non-existent. Support from within local communities for local initiatives is regarded as an important dimension that would ultimately help to build capacity and ensure success. However, it would appear that levels of local awareness and support vary and are not by any means assured. If there is not support and buy-in from the local community, then an important layer in the knowledge and capacity-building process is missing.

6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 'SAARLAND (G)' WIOLETTA FRY S AND BIRTE NIENABER

6.1 Data collection & processing

Several regional learning initiatives and regional development initiatives exist throughout the Case Study Region 'Saarland'. By deep and intensive internet and literature review combined with e-mail and telephone inquiries with the responsible persons of the initiatives, USAAR identified ten initiatives with different topics, target groups, financing systems and founding years as well as of different regional levels inside the Saarland (from local, to regional and also state level).

For the in-depth analysis four different initiatives were identified and in the time period from October 11 to December 8, 2010 expert interviews were carried out with several representatives of these initiatives. Altogether, the following institutions were included:

- Biosphärenverein Bliesgau e.V. (früher: Freunde der Biosphärenregion Bliesgau e.V.) [Association of the Bliesgau Biosphere, formerly known as: Friends of the Bliesgau Biosphere Region]
- Integriertes Ländliches Entwicklungskonzept (ILEK) Region Illtal [Integrated Rural Development Concept Region Illtal]
- Kulturlandschaftsinitiative St. Wendeler Land [Cultural landscape initiative St. Wendeler Land]
- Landesverband SaarLandFrauen e.V. [Saar Countrywomen's State Association]

The interviewees hold leading positions in fields, which affect the Work Package 4, and who therefore represent important sources for the acquisition of information within the context of research. According to the guidelines, all interviews were recorded with the respondents' consent. The semi-standardised expert interviews take averagely one hour. In order to protect the intended, but also desired anonymity of the informants, their statement is given without identifying the names of the persons cited.

6.2 Inventory of support and facilitation for learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in Saarland

In the following pages the matrix with characteristic of all ten initiatives identified in the case study region Saarland is presented.

Table 6.1 Overview grassroots development initiatives inventoried

Grassroots development initiatives							
Name	Start	Initiator	Perceived problem	Goal	Development	Activities	L&I Component
'Hilfe zur Arbeit' (Help for Work) - Saarpfalz district	1984	first Saarpfalz district, later since 1990 Company for Work and Qualification, Ltd.	lack of support for persons who receive unemployment benefits as well as income support	qualification and job-creation scheme for persons who receive unemployment benefits as well as income support	the initiative of Saarpfalz-Kreis 'Arbeit statt Sozialhilfe' (Work instead of Social Benefits) started in 1984; in 1997 the charitable organisation for work and qualification in Saarpfalz-Kreis was formed from this	provision of programs to learn experiences and skills for social and vocational reintegration	provision of projects which impart practical knowledge in the fields of gardening, landscaping and crafts (individual learning)
Kulturlandschaftsinitiative St. Wendeler Land (Cultural landscape initiative St. Wendeler Land)	1994	union of several institutions and associations	increasing consumption of landscape	preservation and development of the artificial landscape in the region of St. Wendel, realisation of the regional development concept "Lokalwarenmarkt St. Wendeler Land 2015+" (Market of local products)	first development of the concept "Lebendige Kulturlandschaft" (Living Cultural landscape), since 2003 the concept became more important, development into a charitable association, bundling of the activities in the development concept "Lokalwarenmarkt St. Wendeler Land"	creation of awareness, environmental education, regional marketing	seminars on "localization/globalization"(individual and collective learning), establishment of an information centre for the nature protection area (individual learning?), installing a regional network of educational trails (collective learning), foundation of the association "Schulbauernhof Walhausen e.V." (Walhausen educational farm) (collective learning), project "Qualifikation Gastgewerbe im Lokalwarenmarkt" (Qualification for the catering industry on the market of local products (individual learning)
LAG Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau e.V. (Local Action Group (LAG) Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve)	2007	Bliesgau biosphere's joint body	increasing land consumption	promotion of a sustainable regional development in the Bliesgau area and the preparation and realisation of the LEADER development strategy; protection of the biosphere reserve	defining the structure of the organisation, scopes of action and main focuses of the LAG in the first meeting on 26/09/2007, inaugural meeting on 23/10/2007, vote on leading projects and financing on 06/11/2007		training courses to become a certified nature and landscape guide (individual learning), project "Lebensadern Wege" (Paths as veins of life) (individual learning), establishment of multi-generational meetings (collective learning)

Bürgerkraft werke Saar e.V. (Saar Citizens' power stations, registered association)	2005		low sensitivity concerning the dealing with energy and raw materials	sensitisation of the population concerning the dealing with energy and raw materials, as well as the use of regenerative energies	2005 establishment of the first citizens' power station on the roof of the Ensheim primary school, other projects followed in Dudweiler and Herrensohr, 2009 start of construction of a photovoltaic plant in Friedrichsthal	environmental education, energy counselling, initiation, planning and accompaniment of citizens' power stations, installation of energy network	trainings and information events on regenerative energies (individual and collective learning), installation of energy network (collective learning)
Freunde der Biosphäre Bliesgau e.V. (Association of the Bliesgau Biosphere, formerly known as: Friends of the Bliesgau Biosphere Region)	2001		implementation of a biosphere region needs citizen participation in terms of a supporting association	initially: promotion of the idea and implementation of a biosphere region in the Bliesgau area, protection, conservation and development of the cultural landscape, creation of an integrated development concept, new focuses: further development of the objectives of the biosphere, creation of acceptance for the idea of the biosphere	Renaming of the association (Biosphärenverein Bliesgau e.V.(Association of the Bliesgau Biosphere)) and of the association's aim after the designation of the Bliesgau as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2009	public relations, environmental education, regional marketing	excursions (individual and collective learning), information events (individual and collective learning)
Historischer Verein zur Erforschung des Schaumberger Landes - Tholey e.V. (Historical Association for the Exploration of the Schaumberger Land - Tholey)	2002		little knowledge about specific topics of the region's history	exploration of the history of the Schaumburg Administrative Office and the Abbey of Tholey, genealogical research, monument preservation, building research, public relations		public relations, research, establishment of a historical museum	lectures (individual learning), excursions (individual and collective learning), research (individual learning), Einrichtung eines historischen Museum (individuelles Lernen?)

ILEK (Integrated Rural Development Concept (German abbreviation: ILEK)) Region Illtal	2007-2008	project management carried out by the Zweckverband Illrenaturierung	high need for development in the Illtal region due to economic structural change and demographic development	strengthening and extension of the regional identity, extending the region's strengths, networking, increasing of the regional value added, improvement of the living quality of the region		environmental education, public relations, regional marketing, citizens' activities, establishment of an environment centre, measures and offers of education for children and adolescents	excursions (individual and collective learning), guided tours (individual learning), nature study camps (individual and collective learning), citizens' activity for measures of plants (collective learning), environment centre (individual learning), Forest Experience Path (individual learning), youth workshop (individual learning), cooperation
Bietzerberg - miteinander - füreinander e.V. (Bietzerberg-together-one another, registered association)	2008		structures requiring extension for the support of needy citizens, communication requiring support between generations	promotion of the care of the elderly, of the handicapped and youth welfare, communication between generations, extending responsibility of the village community for social questions	foundation in 2008, 2009 embedding the project "Mehrgenerationendorf Bietzerberg" (Bietzerberg multi-generational village) into the association, project has been supported and scientifically monitored as a beacon project from January 2009 to December 2011	social counselling and possible care of needy people, training of citizens so that they can carry out care, initiation of self-help groups, environmental lessons	measures of training and further education on care (individual learning), establishment "Freiwilligenakademie Bietzerberg ('Bietzerberg Volunteer Academy') (individual learning), individual specialised counselling (individual learning), offering environmental lessons for children (individual learning), cross-generational services (collective learning)
Verband Landfrauen im Saarland (Saar Countrywomen's State Association)	1957	Beate Koch	little representation of the female farmers' interests and a low number of further education offers in rural areas	stronger representation of the female farmers' interests, measures of further training in the fields of children, adolescent and adult education	strong increase in the number of members since the foundation in 1957 from 28 women to more than 5 050 members in 2002, renaming of the "Landesverbandes der Landfrauen Saar e.V." (State Association of the Saar Countrywomen) within the framework of the assembly of the delegates on 07/05/2006 to "Landesverband der SaarLandFrauen e.V.", by the time of the foundation, the target group of the association consisted primarily of women employed in agricultura, the objective of today is open to all women in rural areas	measures of further training in the fields of children, adolescent and adult education, establishment of the "Countrywomen's Educational Institution"	Carrying out the school projects "Fit mit Milch" ("Fit with Milk") und "Gesundes (Pausen-) Frühstück" ("Healthy breakfast/packed lunch") (individual learning), cookery courses with regional products for adolescents (individual learning), training of Countrywomen within the framework of the "aid-license for nutrition" (individual learning), Countrywomen's Educational Institution (individual learning)

Verband Landjugend Saar (Saar Country Youth Association)	1953		limited offer, especially for the Country Youth	measures of further training in the fields of youth and educational policy, leisure-time and social events	its commercial operations are carried out by members of the Saar Farmers' Association, in 2006, the association had 131 members	measures of further education, political work	excursions (individual and collective learning), measures of further education in the field of agriculture (individual learning), measures of further training in the fields of rhetoric and conflict management and cookery courses (individual learning)
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Table 6.2 Overview of the support the grassroots development initiatives inventoried

Name	Support from public sector				Support from private sector			Facilitation from knowledge infrastructure					
	Policies	Finances	Advice	Arrangement /Partnership	Actor	Type	Private partnership	Public facilitators	Private facilitators	Activity in development initiative	Type of learning facilitated	Arrangement/Partnership	Type of arrangement
'Hilfe zur Arbeit' (Help for Work) - Saarpfalz district		ARGE Saarpfalz, European Union, Ministry of Economy and Labour, employment office of the Saarpfalz district, cities, municipalities, institutions and associations of the Saarpfalz district							artists, experts (from the fields of gardening and landscaping)	provision of projects which impart practical knowledge in the fields of gardening, landscaping and crafts, project "Kunstpunkte"	individual learning	ARGE Saarpfalz, Employment Agency, Saarpfalz district	non-formal learning
Kulturlandschaftsinitiative St. Wendeler Land (Cultural landscape initiative St. Wendeler Land)		LEADER +		LAG	diverse small enterprises	Finances			experts (in the fields of history, economy, culture, social issues, ecology)	protection area (individual learning?), installing a regional network of educational trails (collective learning), foundation of the association "Schulbauernhof Walhausen e.V." (Walhausen educational farm) (collective learning), project "Qualifikation Gastgewerbe im Lokalwarenmarkt" (Qualification for the catering industry on	individual and collective learning	Berschweiler Schullandheim, association "Schulbauernhof Walhausen e.V." (Walhausen educational farm)	non-formal learning, informal learning (networks)

										the market of local products (individual learning)			
LAG Biosphärenreservat Bliesgau e.V. (Local Action Group (LAG) Bliesgau Biosphere Reserve)		LEADER		LAG	citizens	Finances		Adult education centre of the biosphere	experts (fields of social issues, gardening and landscaping, environment)	training courses to become a certified nature and landscape guide (individual learning), project "Lebensadern Wege" (Paths as veins of life) (individual learning), establishment of multi-generational meetings (collective learning), regional marketing	individual and collective learning	banu, Geography without Borders, Blieskastel youth workshop	non-formal learning, informal learning
Bürgerkraftwerke Saar e.V. (Saar Citizens' power stations, registered association)					citizens	Finances			experts (field of renewable energy)	information events, training for professionals in the field of solar energy, lessons on renewable energy, project days	individual and collective learning	environment centre of the Chamber of Crafts	non-formal learning, informal learning
Freunde der Biosphäre Bliesgau e.V. (Association of the Bliesgau Biosphere, formerly known as: Friends of the Bliesgau Biosphere Region)		Ministry of Environment, Ministry for Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer's Protection			citizens, Saartoto, diverse small enterprises	Finances			experts (fields of environment and regional marketing)	information events, excursions, measures of environmental education	individual and collective learning		informal learning
Historischer Verein zur Erforschung des Schaumberger Landes - Tholey e.V. (Historical Association for the Exploration of		Ministry of Environment, LEADER +			citizens	Finances			experts (historical fields)	lectures, excursions, research, establishment of a historical museum	individual learning	Landesverband der historisch-kulturellen Vereine des Saarlandes (State Association of the historical-	informal learning

the Schaumberger Land – Tholey)												cultural Associations of Saarland), Historischer Verein für die Saargegend (Historical Association of the Saar area), Saarländischer Museumsverband e.V. (Saarland Museum Association)	
ILEK (Integrated Rural Development Concept (German abbreviation: ILEK)) Region Illtal		European Union (European Regional Development Fund and European Regional Fund)		ILEK					experts (fields of environment, forestry, crafts, economy), artists	excursions, guided tours, nature study camps, information panels, establishment of the environment centre "Finkenrech", Forest Experience Path with information on flora and fauna, youth workshop (qualification, among others, in the fields of EDP, metalworking and wood processing), cooperation with enterprises, cookery courses with regional products	individual and collective learning	Saarforst, Finkenrech Centre for Environment and Leisure Time, schools, adult education centres, institutions of higher education, enterprises	non-formal and informal learning
Bietzerberg-miteinander-füreinander e.V. (Bietzerberg-		Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens,		ILEK Region Saar-Primsbogen	Citizens	finances		CEB e.V. Merzig (responsible	experts (field of social issues), volunteer	regular information, accompaniment and further education of volunteers at the Bietzerberg Volunteer	individual and collective learning	CEB e.V. Merzig	non-formal and informal learning

together-one another, registered association)		Women, and Youth						body of adult education)	s	Academy, specific seminars, specific counselling, environmental lessons for children, pottery courses, cross-generational services			
Verband Landfrauen im Saarland (Saar Countrywomen's State Association)		Saarland, Ministry of Environment, Saarland state chancellery, Centrale Marketing-Gesellschaft der deutschen Agrarwirtschaft mbH (Central marketing society of the German agricultural economy, Ltd.)			citizens	finances			experts (fields of Bereiche aid-specialist, social issues), volunteers	school projects "Fit mit Milch" ("Fit with Milk") und "Gesundes (Pausen-) Frühstück" ("Healthy breakfast/packed lunch") (individual learning), cookery courses with regional products for adolescents (individual learning), training of Countrywomen within the framework of the "aid-license for nutrition" (individual learning), Countrywomen's Educational Institution (individual learning)	individual learning	schools, kindergartens	non-formal and informal learning
Verband Landjugend Saar (Saar Country Youth Association)									experts (fields of agriculture, politics, rhetoric)	excursions, measures of further education in the field of agriculture, measures of further training in the fields of rhetoric and conflict management and cookery courses	individual and collective learning		non-formal and informal learning

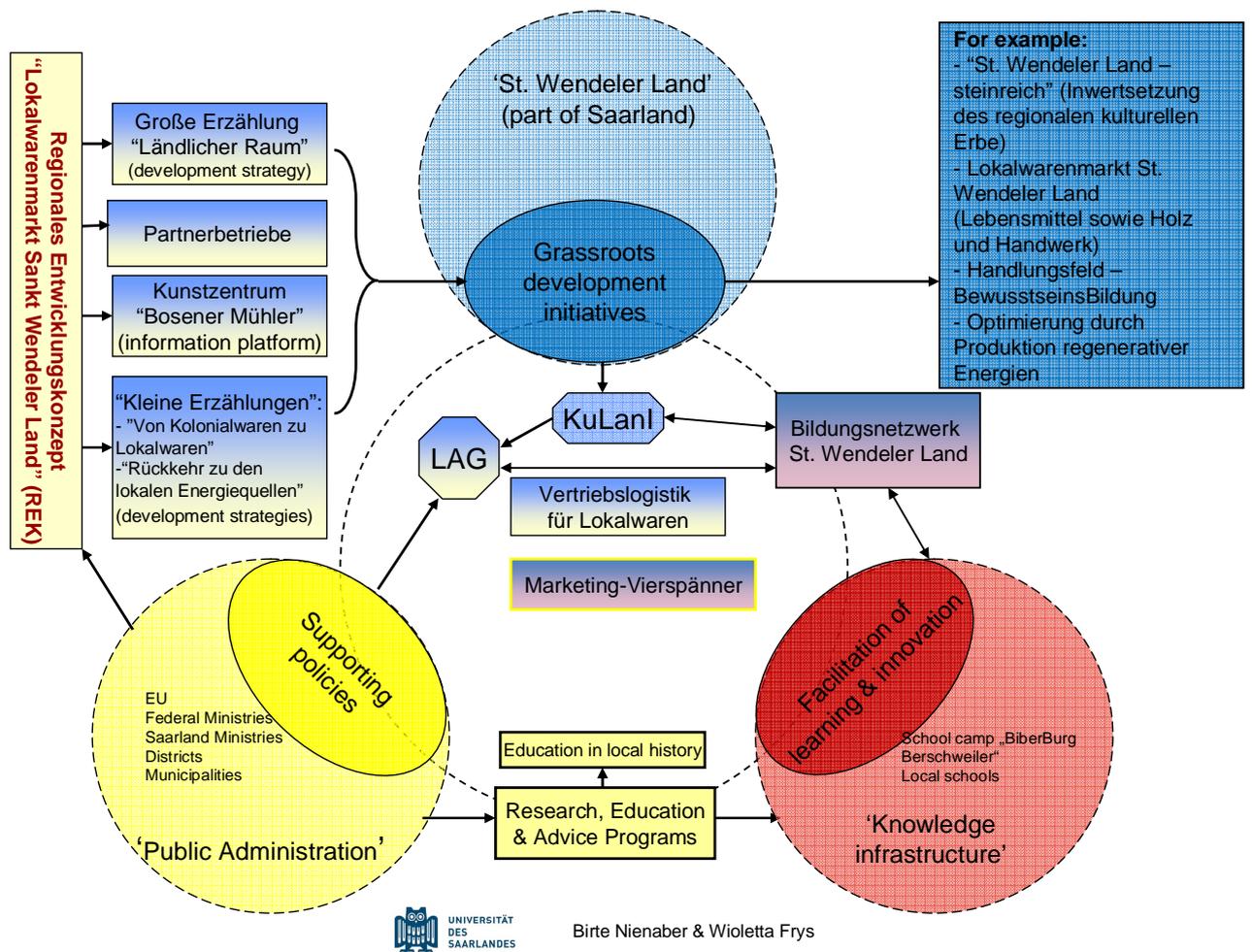


Figure 6.1 Forms of support in CS region on example of KuLanI

6.2.1 Support from public administration

The identified initiatives have been predominantly founded and developed by stakeholders of the administrative sector. Thus the association Landesverband SaarLandFrauen e.V. [SaarCountryWomen's State Association] from Saarland evolved from the agricultural school which has been in charge of education and which worked together with the Saarland ministries. The idea consisted in supporting those women that were mainly employed by agricultural holdings. Due to the bad accessibility of the villages the women, which were not mobile, received education on site. They got the opportunity to continue their education in various fields. Hence one offers them contents that are both beneficial for the agricultural holding and simultaneously advance the individual progress as well as the growth of personality. Nowadays the women have become more mobile

but there are still some referees that go straight into the villages and offer presentations on site, mostly at club houses.

Public authorities have consistently supported the voluntary employees of the association 'SaarCountryWomen' over the years. Therefore they received support by the Chamber of Agriculture, the agricultural adult education and by a ministry, depending on the responsibility of the federal state government the support came from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science or from the Ministry of Economics. During the research period the initiative has been attached to the Ministry of Education and will be supported by political members of parliament.

Some initiatives demand public subsidies due to their kind of organization. For that reason the special purpose association 'Renaturation of the Ill' applied for becoming an 'Integrated Rural Development Concept (ILEK)' -region. It succeeded to manage this effectively in cooperation with four communities. In the first instance the aim was to continue the successful work of the special purpose association due to regenerating appropriate subsidies in order to promote further projects).

Therefore 'Integrated Rural Development Concept (ILEK)' offered a new financial base. Because of the disposition as an ILEK-region, the initiative has been supported referring to the ILEK subsidies directives of Saarland. As a result, the development of the concept has been sponsored up to 75 %. Furthermore there also has been ideological support by the regional management, which is also supported with a funding rate up to 75 % by the state. Likewise, the initiative is co-financed by the four involved communal statutory corporations.

From this research it follows that the identified initiatives benefit from a high social reputation. Accordingly, they are also supported by politically independent circles. Such a support is being expressed for example through the personal presence of political representatives at special occasions. There will be further quest for future political support concerning different subject areas like agriculture, regional development, education, environmental protection.

Certainly there will be a demand for additional support, for example by charitable foundations. This could assume the shape of cooperation. Though a definite know-how is the condition for a successful collaboration as well as the consideration of further cooperative domains with other organisations or institutions.

One important support refers to the acquisition of new members who would join just because of the project itself. Moreover the acceptance of the population is of great importance at all. Depending on the topic the initiatives implement regional identity which can only be recognised seriously through acceptance. To receive this support the initiatives require the encouragement of public institutions in order to appeal potential cooperation partners and members by public campaigns.

Table 6.3. Support from public sector

Name	Finances
Biosphärenverein Bliesgau e.V. (früher: Freunde der Biosphärenregion Bliesgau e.V.) (Biosphere Association Bliesgau, earlier: friends of the biosphere region Bliesgau, registered association)	Ministry of Environment, Ministry for Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer's Protection
ILEK (Integrated Rural Development Concept (German abbreviation: ILEK)) Region Illtal	European Union (European Regional Development Fund and European Regional Fund) Municipalities Saarland state
Kulturlandschaftsinitiative St. Wendeler Land (Cultural landscape initiative St. Wendeler Land)	LEADER +
Verband Landfrauen im Saarland (Saar Countrywomen's State Association)	Saarland Ministry of Environment, Saarland Ministry of Education, Saarland Saarland Ministry of Science, Saarlands Ministry of economics, state chancellery, Centrale Marketing-Gesellschaft der deutschen Agrarwirtschaft mbH (Central marketing society of the German agricultural economy, Ltd.)

6.2.2 Support and facilitation from knowledge infrastructure

Among the chosen initiatives there occurs a process of learning from each other as well as a mutual exchange. This can be noticed both in theory and praxis. It is project oriented learning. Within small teams in single projects rises a project oriented development of one's own skills. Apart from that the contents of the project are transferred to the cooperation partners and those involved in the project. Moreover the members' learning process includes not only the work within the own initiative but also the cooperation with partners of other projects, whether established or potential ones. For this reason it is also a question of a learning process in which the participants can broaden their horizons and where they can casually proof which new cooperation partners are good to work with (e.g. other communes).

Apart from this fact the employees and members join different advanced training courses, meetings, conventions or skill enhancement workshops. One example are the strategy meetings which are organized every half year by the regional manager (cooperation partner of the initiative).

One of the initiatives is supported by the University Kaiserslautern. This assistance is project oriented and based on specialist counselling and a research project.

There are also trainings, workshops, meetings with experts and referees, etc. for the members of the initiatives concerning certain topics, e.g. medical science, insurances, communication or legal matters. Then the acquired knowledge is passed to other members.

Furthermore, according to the initiative, there exists support from their own ranks, e.g. the governing body in Berlin promotes the Saarland Country Women's Association. There is an exchange at federal level, too. Annually, there is a conference of the chief executive officers where all the managers of all associations converge. This takes place at the national party headquarter where current topics are discussed. For this purpose different subject specialists are engaged. The exchange as well as the skill enhancement has already included varied, relevant topics, e.g. common public interest, the foundation system, the constitution of association articles corresponding to the request of the legislator, fiscal matters that affect associations and organisations, the acquisition of members, etc. In this respect the association at the federal level considers itself as a service provider for the regional association. It offers a kind of intern skill enhancement management, among other things to cope with the developments of the recent years.

Another example from a different initiative is the subject energy. Therefore the economy and the "Saarland Energieoffensive" give support in terms of expert discussions in order to generate topics that are related to the aggregate of renewable energies. This kind of support on the part of the economy is provided gratuitously.

Oftentimes, the knowledge institutions offer an advisory support free of charge, e.g. by means of the already mentioned research project and the supervision via the professors of the University Kaiserslautern. Something similar applies to varied stakeholders from other knowledge institutions of public authorities. The consultants at the federal state level (e.g. at the ministries) render their work for the initiatives gratuitously, too, because they are paid by the state within the scope of their position.

Finally it has to be noted that the thematic oriented training, meetings with experts and referees as well as the educational advancements are determined by

daily routine respectively the spatial location and the project obligation. It is of great significance to incorporate the professorship of Kaiserslautern which will accomplish a specific research project. Furthermore a continuous search for new ideas is as important as to follow up mentioned wishes. Thus the selection of topics is carried out in a system-oriented, project-oriented and territorial-oriented way.

Table 6.4 Support and facilitation from knowledge infrastructure

Name	Private facilitators	Activity in development initiative	Type of learning facilitated	Arrangement /Partnership	Type of arrangement
Biosphärenverein Bliesgau e.V. (früher: Freunde der Biosphärenregion Bliesgau e.V.) (Biosphere Association Bliesgau, earlier: friends of the biosphere region Bliesgau, registered association)	experts (fields of environment and regional marketing)	information events, excursions, measures of environmental education	individual and collective learning		informal learning
ILEK (Integrated Rural Development Concept (German abbreviation: ILEK)) Region Illtal	experts (fields of environment, forestry, crafts, economy), artists	excursions, guided tours, nature study camps, information panels, establishment of the environment centre 'Finkenrech', Forest Experience Path with information on flora and fauna, youth workshop (qualification, among others, in the fields of EDP, metalworking and wood processing), cooperation with enterprises, cookery courses with regional products	individual and collective learning	Saarforst, Finkenrech Centre for Environment and Leisure Time, schools, adult education centres, institutions of higher education, enterprises	non-formal and informal learning
Kulturlandschaftsinitiative St. Wendeler Land (Cultural landscape initiative St. Wendeler Land)	experts (in the fields of history, economy, culture, social issues, ecology)	seminars on 'localization/globalization'(individual and collective learning), establishment of an information centre for the nature protection area (individual learning?), installing a regional network of educational trails (collective learning), foundation of the association 'Schulbauernhof Walhausen e.V.' (Walhausen educational farm) (collective learning), project 'Qualifikation Gastgewerbe im Lokalwarenmarkt' (Qualification for the catering industry on the market of local products (individual learning)	individual and collective learning	Berschweiler Schullandheim, association 'Schulbauernhof Walhausen e.V.' (Walhausen educational farm)	non-formal learning, informal learning (networks)
Verband Landfrauen im Saarland (Saar Countrywomen's State Association)	experts (fields of aid-specialist, social issues), volunteers	school projects 'Fit mit Milch' ('Fit with Milk') und 'Gesundes (Pausen-) Frühstück' ('Healthy breakfast/packed lunch') (individual learning), cookery courses with regional products for adolescents (individual learning), training of Countrywomen within the framework of the 'aid-license for nutrition' (individual learning), Countrywomen's Educational Institution (individual learning)	individual learning	schools, kindergartens	non-formal and informal learning

6.3 Evaluation of direct and indirect form of support and facilitation received by grassroots development initiatives

In this chapter, the evaluation of support forms in Saarland will be presented. The evaluation was carried out on the basis of interviews with the key actors of the development initiatives identified in Saarland. The experts were asked to estimate the evolution of the initiatives concerning the support they get from the public sector and knowledge infrastructure on the one hand. On the other hand the representatives of the development initiatives were asked for support and facilitation they provide their members. Therefore it was possible to identify the afford input for the people in rural Saarland. Finally besides the satisfaction with the own activities the implementation of 'bottom up' versus 'top down' concerning the support activities were evaluated. Tables 6.5 and 6.6 present a summary of the support forms, which were identified with the help of interviews. The support forms are similar to support forms of case study region Saxony because there are similar state rules and analogies between the two German regions.

Table 6.5 Evaluation of support forms from public administration

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal subvention contracts, e.g. LEADER, ILE 	+ partly relevant form of support + nearness to superior public authorities - too bureaucratic
Policy framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal framework • administrative guidelines / guidelines for public expenditure • contests for best activities 	+ advantages of statutory framework and regular guidelines as well as contests for best practices - written very complex and therefore too complicated for user - control function of public bodies
Indirect support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usage admission to the infrastructure of public administration • influence as a public companies' shareholder • regional development initiatives 	+ active members and participants of regional development initiatives + very relevant, facilitating support form - often only for specific funding period, too short term
Information and advisory service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing information on educational opportunities, e.g. by database or educational portal in internet 	+ high accessibility + availability of new information - restricted possibility of an individual advisory service - partly complex and difficult for user
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • networks mediated by public authority being established 	+ knowledge transfer + dissemination of support forms + sustainable networks - partly artificial character of networks

The Table 6.5 shows the evaluation of support forms from public administration in rural Saarland.

The important and really effective form of facilitation is the financial support by means of formal subvention contracts, e.g. LEADER, ILE as by the Cultural landscape initiative St. Wendeler Land and the Integrated Rural Development Concept Region Illtal. The nearness to superior public authorities (mainly to the Saarland ministries and the Saarland government) will be appreciated by the initiatives. Thus not many grassroots initiatives and operational interfaces in the CSA use this form of support as it is evaluated as too bureaucratic. Also administrative guidelines and guidelines for public expenditure appear to be very complex and therefore too complicated for user, especially if different ministries bring out various guidelines which are contradictorily. The regional initiatives fear control of public bodies in the region because the public bodies with their policy framework are seen as controller e.g. by LEADER projects.. Indirect support in the CSA is very relevant and evaluated as very successful because of activation of members and participants of regional development initiatives. Regrettably, the facilitating support form suffers from a too short-term and often is adaptive only for a specific funding period (e.g. 2007-2013) with no guarantee to be supported afterwards which hinders long-term innovation processes. Information and advisory service in the region were evaluated as partly complex and difficult for users. Sometimes there are different contact persons in different authorities that all have to be included as each authority has different information strategies and different regulations that have to be followed. The providing information on educational opportunities, e.g. by database or educational portal in the internet brings the drawback of restriction of an individual advisory service. However high accessibility and availability of new information are the most important advantages of this support form available in rural Saarland. The most important and sustainable for regional development initiatives in the future are the establishment of networks mediated by public authority. Even if some networks have artificial character, the networking in the region facilitates knowledge transfer, dissemination of support forms and sustainable development. Most of the networks are evaluated to be very sustainable after being established.

Table 6.6 Evaluation of support forms from knowledge infrastructure

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
Provision of skilled labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students doing internships and thesis writing • highly skilled workforce in initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + high-skilled labour + new knowledge (being up-to-date) - short-term, as often leaving after personal project finished (partly high fluctuation of employees) - low-cost labour
Provision of scientific knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiative carried out by involving professors, scientists as external experts and postgraduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + newest knowledge and experts opinions available + external expert opinion - partly not applicable in common work due to scientific character
Being member, founder or partner of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge institutions as co-operation partners of initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + good knowledge exchange on a not-scientific basis - there are too less co-operations
Provision of access to scientific publicity/networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scientific study concerning initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + professional and efficient + access to multipliers - high costs of research/resources for initiative

The Table 6.6 shows the evaluation of support forms from knowledge infrastructure in rural Saarland. In this field especially universities and academies in Saarland and neighbour regions collaborate with the grassroots initiatives in the CSA, e.g. Saarland University, University of Kaiserslautern or the European Academy of Otzenhausen. In regard to this co-operation especially provision of scientific knowledge and of access to scientific publicity and networks runs successful. The grassroots initiatives appreciate the opinions of external experts which they mostly know personally and the newest knowledge available on this way. Also the scientific studies concerning initiatives are seen as professional and efficient. The high costs of scientific research and resources for initiatives do not allow them to use this form of support very often.

For example, the initiative Integrated Rural Development Concept Region Illtal is supported by the University of Kaiserslautern. This assistance is project oriented and based on counselling specialists and is considered to be a research project. This advisory support is offered free of charge, e.g. as research project and the supervision by the professors of the university. Some universities research grassroots initiatives and operational interfaces within their research projects (e.g. as the Saarland University do it within the DERREG research).

Similar applies to various stakeholders from other knowledge institutions of public authorities. The consultants at the federal state level, for example at the ministries, render their work for the initiatives also gratuitously, because they are paid by the state within the scope of their position.

Skilled labour provided by students which are doing internships and writing thesis is very useful for grassroots initiatives as they receive the newest

knowledge. However, it is a short-term support, as the students often leave the initiative after finishing the project. The partially high fluctuation of employees and low-cost labour (if students work for initiative within their research project and are not paid for that work by the initiative) are disadvantages of this form of support. Even if the cooperation with knowledge institutions, which are official partners of initiatives (as members, founders or partners of initiative) appears very useful due to good knowledge exchange on a not-scientific basis, there are too less co-operations like the mentioned in Saarland.

The analysed support initiatives should solve different problems, depending on the type of the initiative. One of the research cases promotes for example the acceptance of the locals and popularisation of the biosphere for the people outside the region to gain tourists: *"Here come very special people and they have definite expectations. We are not a typical holiday destination. We want to show how cultural landscape was created and then is conserved here"* (Translated according to an interview partner).

The support work of the investigated initiatives cannot be assessed definitively, because most of them are still running. However, the Association of Bliesgau Biosphere did very important and valuable steps towards acceptance of the regional population by organizing and offering workshops and tours for everybody in the region. The responsible persons take part themselves in the trainings to be able to introduce the region to local population. Here especially the training on nature and landscape guide is meant. The plans for the future of the association are also important for the evaluation. The initiative wants to create a network of associations, in which the focal points, competences and skills of the various associations should be bundled to introduce the region better to foreigners.

Another initiative evaluated has in the local commodity market a central focus. The central focus coheres with the knowledge that the region should have a distinct market segment. The separate market segment needs sales logistics too. Thus the initiative tries to connect different regional farms to a local-regional distribution network. So the village shops will be strategically supported with the necessary knowledge: *"The distribution logistics is for us the central key to the further development, for the autonomy and for the expansion opportunity, because each individual operating farm quickly reaches limits, in production, sales, somewhere. We want to mitigate this 'lone fighter' situation and we want*

to give a marketing assistance above the production level through the distribution logistics. Then the farms have much better opportunities to optimise" (Translated according to an interview partner).

This mental and mainly logistic and strategic support for local agricultural producers in the form of informing and developing strategies to connect different regional farms to a local-regional distribution network must be assessed as very positive. Also positive evaluated is the project 'Steinreich', in which different topics (e.g. precious stone, Celts, Romans, Tholey Abbey) are brought together and discussed. In this project, that is entitled 'St. Wendel a very rich country – 2,500 years of European cultural development', the initiative aims to work more closely with the European Academy of Otzenhausen. This collaboration with one of the key knowledge institutions in Saarland also contributes to a positive evaluation of the initiative.

From the perspective of another initiative concerning integrated rural development in a rural part of Saarland can be determined that the involved local authorities, which are organized in the ILEK region, have benefited from the arranged activities. They have benefited because they developed the region in different subject areas. The profit refers firstly to strengthening of the awareness for the region, for the regional environment and for the unifying sense of the river Ill. Secondly, the institutional and organisational support brings benefits, so that the work by the association can continue with financial support: *"That is a change for the members of the initiative, because such a continuity and permanence of the promotion can be conducted in the region"* (Translated according to an interview partner).

Thirdly the initiative brings an ideal chance because of searching for cooperation in other subject areas. Fourthly, it is the value that is reached with the ILEK funding. Different cooperations, various tourist routes and measures for assembling of a newly established marketing chain generated added value in the region. With the financial support of the association jobs could be created and new projects and scientific studies could be initiated. The initiative created an important positive change for the environment and also for the people who live in the region. The plans for the future of the initiative are also commendable, especially the further generation of funds and the implementation of many positive projects that develop the local municipalities and the Saarland.

Especially at the level of the local population several positive changes were evaluated using the example of other initiative. Firstly it created the knowledge support in rural areas of the Saarland. Secondly, the initiative offers a counter-pole to the current development of 'strong anonymity': *"Nowadays there is this trend, so everything is anonymous. Information will be exchanged via email, SMS, data transfer, on electronic ways. A counter-pole will be established there [by the Saar Countrywomen's State Association]. The members of the initiative maintain a personal contact and this personal level is another way of communication. So we go in contrary to the trend in society to do everything in the chat room, on the internet and say: local exchanges to each other strengthen the social network that serves everybody, serves the organisation because this is our elixir. This is basically the database; the personal contact is our database. Of course, we have a modern office communication, but it is not possible without the personal connection and I think that's why we are sitting here together on a personal level to get to know. And it binds and that's the goal that this bond is estimated, because it supports each other. So, the members support the organisation that can use this support to perform their work (...) and the organisation as a service provider gives something back to the members, (...) e.g. by building a network"* (Translated according to an interview partner).

The creation of a network is especially helpful for women in rural areas. They have then the possibility to make collective undertakings and learn from each other: *"Many women shy away from solo attempt and prefer a group for activities, for travel. There is [by the initiative] simply a certain protected, intimate space and I think that this will be an issue [in the society] again: to go out of the anonymity, out of the 'I-company', to go into the group and say: What can we do together? Because together we are strong"* (Translated according to an interview partner).

The ideas for support arise by the analysed initiatives mostly at the level of the members. There are board meetings, where everyone can suggest new proposals. This creates ideas for workshops and trainings, e.g. members suggest what they could offer by knowledge transfer.

Regarding the bottom-up approach it is to say by the example of the initiatives analysed that there are actually bottom-up initiated approaches by the support and facilitation received by grassroots development initiatives in the Saarland. The participation of citizens, associations, churches, private funds and the

agricultural communities is possible through the funding requirement (e.g. by ILEK regions). Besides this, the responsible persons of the development initiatives involve members of all levels by the planning and accomplishment of the regional support.

6.4 Conclusion

In summary it can be said that there is a good support from public administration and knowledge infrastructure in Saarland. There are examples for both good and less good support from the public administration. Sometimes appeared an informal cooperation with decision makers as very successful: *"Then I asked the new district administrator (...) the conceptual approach [to consider] that is our approach for nature conservation that meets the needs of rural areas (...). He took it seriously, even spent for this issue a substantial part of his inaugural address. And that was practically the base. Then I tried a bit to work in the villages, small green tables etc. And then I went from the green tables in villages into the region level to bring together all the forces in the region"* (Translated according to an interview partner).

Finally, a negative example of non-sufficient support in the case study region should be introduced: *"It is remarkable that we receive from higher authorities [too less support]. I do not want to say that we are not supported, we have quite a degree of respect but I could show you half-dozen proposals, that I told the ministry, it could be regional development in Saarland, my view make it highly efficient and attractive – nobody there is interested in. And it lasts already for 5 years. And I've always brought it to the highest instances, whether unit, whether department, whether ministry, whether ministerial level, whether state secretary level; nobody was obviously interested in; maybe they did not realise it, I do not know. It used to upset me, in the meantime I say that does not interest me anymore. I participate if I'm asked in person, at no more competition, because it is too stupid for me. Although we have participated in various competitions earlier and I realize now how I am getting recognition everywhere, so I'm not angry, I just assess it"* (Translated according to an interview partner).

In conclusion it has been recognised that the initiatives in rural Saarland have a good developing progress depending on the acceptance of the stakeholders and other persons being involved. The support from the public sector and knowledge

infrastructure in Saarland that the evaluated initiatives get is very relevant for their developing. Even if more support would mean more efficiency of the initiatives the facilitation is commendable. Besides that, the developing initiatives mostly provide self-support and facilitation to their members as well as to interested inhabitants and visitors. Especially these activities are well evaluated as they account for regional development in the rural Saarland.

7 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 'WESTERKWARTIER (NL)' WIEBKE WELLBROCK AND DIRK ROEP

In the following, the research findings of the case study area 'Westerkwartier' are summarised. In section 7.1, the data collection and processing methods will be explained. In section 7.2, results of an inventory into 10 different grassroots development initiatives concerning their direct and indirect support and facilitation for learning and innovation received throughout their evolution will be presented. In section 7.3, the results of an evaluation by the grassroots development initiators of the available forms of direct and indirect support and facilitation for learning and innovation are presented. In section 7.4, conclusions will be drawn on the quality of the operability of direct and indirect forms of support to facilitate learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in the Westerkwartier. These will form the basis for the next Deliverable (D4.3) in which good practise examples of support and facilitation will be described.

7.1 Data collection & processing

From April until July 2010 and again in September 2010, the researcher installed herself in the rural house of the Westerkwartier to inventory different grassroots development initiatives for M4.3 Part I. Conversations with local stakeholders (such as initiators, municipality and provincial employees and NGO members) and the internet were used to search for formally organised (such as networks, association, organisation and foundations) and informally organised collectives of people active with regional development in the Westerkwartier. Hereby, care was taken to address development activities covering a wide range of development aspects, such as rural economy, agriculture, nature and landscape, and civic (cultural) development. Initiators of the 11 grassroots development activities (or long-term members with administrative functions) were identified and approached for an interview which lasted approximately one hour. The semi-structured interview was divided into 4 parts. First, general information about the goal, organisation, participants, activities and evolution of the development activity was identified. Secondly, the support they received to carry out their activities from public administration was inventoried and evaluated. Thirdly, support and facilitation for activities from knowledge facilities were inventoried and evaluated. Lastly, the initiators were asked to formulate their future goals.

With permission of the different interview partners, conversations were recorded using a SHARP digital voice recorder. Additionally, a picture was taken of the initiator. In cases where no picture was taken, the picture was taken from the internet and the source cited.

In order to study and evaluate the operability of the support and facilitation of the different (formal) arrangements provided in M4.3 Part II, nine grassroots development activities were selected. The initiators (or long term members) were asked to evaluate the support and facilitation received during the interview in M4.3 Part I. In addition, the interview partners of nine grassroots development inventoried were invited to join a workshop together with relevant (formal) supporters and facilitators from public administration and knowledge infrastructure. By holding a workshop, we created the possibility for an interactive evaluation of the present operability of the support and facilitation available in the Westerkwartier. Seven of the nine invited representatives of the grassroots development activities participated in the workshop which had a total number of 18 participants. The workshop commenced by introducing the participants to the theoretical framework and by placing the different arrangements found in D4.1 into the framework. The participants were then asked to position themselves into the framework. Thereafter, the initiators were invited to debrief the others about their activities and support/facilitation received. Subsequently, the initiators and other stakeholders were asked to evaluate the support/facilitation received. The evaluation points were noted down and discussed within the group. Finally, all evaluation points were summarised and briefly discussed by the stakeholders in order to highlight the most important points regarding the quality of their arrangements. During the workshop minutes were written.

For additional information, information of interviews from M4.1 and M4.2 were considered and the initiators were contact after the workshop to give more detailed evaluations of their interactions with the identified arrangements and informal networking activities. Here, initiators were first contact by e-mail with questions concerning the relevant information and asked for a telephone appointment. Some responded by e-mails other were spoken to personally.

Data processing

The recorded interviews were saved as mp3 files on the computer and typed out into word documents. The word documents were translated from Dutch into English and the information ordered according to the different development aspects as mentioned above. Based on the information provided, a matrix with the following columns was designed to capture and synthesise the key characteristics of support and facilitation within the different grassroots development activity inventoried:

9. Name; Type of organisation; Goal; Participants
10. Activity
11. Type of support/facilitation received from public/private administration; From whom;
12. Type of support/facilitation received from knowledge infrastructure, From whom

The evaluation of the support and facilitation received was summarised in a table. The available form of support/facilitation which was identified in M4.3 Part 1 was filled into the column "Available form of support/ facilitation". Next, M4.3 Part 1 was scanned for arrangements mentioned by the grassroots development initiators to provide the different forms of support. These were noted in the respective cells in the column "How is support/facilitation arranged?" Finally, M4.3 Part I, M4.1, M4.2, the workshop minutes and additional interviews were scanned for information regarding the evaluation of support and facilitation received. The evaluation of the different forms of support and facilitation received was summarised in text form, using the different forms of support and facilitation received as headings. Thereafter, key words describing the different points of evaluation were added to the column "Evaluation of support and facilitation received". Although intended, the evaluation does not always refer specifically to the arrangements found but to the different forms of support and facilitation received in general.

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
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7.2 Inventory of support and facilitation for learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in the Westerkwartier

In M4.3 Part I, 11 grassroots development initiatives currently active in the Westerkwartier were mapped and described. In the following, first the data collection method will be outlined, followed by an overview of activities within the grassroots development initiatives inventoried and a description of the forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation received.

Overview of activities within grassroots development initiatives inventoried

When inventorying the different grassroots development initiatives in the Westerkwartier, care was taken to inventory grassroots development initiatives related to different development aspects, such as 1) rural economy, 2) agriculture, 3) nature and landscape and 4) civic (cultural) development.

The key characteristics of the different grassroots development activities and the different types of support and facilitation received from public administration and knowledge facilities are summarized in table 7.1. Within the development aspects of rural economy, agriculture and civic (cultural) development, the inventoried initiatives started to emerge between the years 2006 and 2009. Within the development field of nature & landscape management, development activities started between 1997 and 2006, thus earlier than in other development fields.

The number and kind of activities vary between the different grassroots development initiatives, depending on their age and purpose. Nevertheless, within all grassroots development initiatives, two different phases can be identified, namely a) developing and pursuing a collective development aim and b) acquiring joint learning capacities to realize the collective aim.

a) With regard to the phase of developing and pursuing a collective development aim, two different processes were identified:

- Initiation: Creating a group of people with a shared interest in a common development activity. Activities in this category include the gathering of people with a shared interest in a common development issue, initiating discussion and exchanging development visions, ideas, opinions and values in order to create common development goals.

- Joint activity plan: Formulating a joint development goal and creating a detailed plan of actions to jointly reach the formulated goal (for example business plans).

Looking at table 7.1, all grassroots development activities (except Punt 1) started by forming a network or other kinds of groups of people with a shared development interest. With regard to creating joint development plans, the grassroots development initiatives inventoried showed various kind of activities such as creating activity/business/future plans, securing financial capital through seeking advice on subsidies and applying for subsidies as well as creating space for the grassroots development activity to gather.

b) With regard to the phase of acquiring joint learning capacities to jointly achieve development goal, also two different processes were identified:

- Acquire information and knowledge: The group needs to learn about regional problems and opportunities that could be helpful or hindering in the group's aim of reaching their development goal. The group further needs to acquire joint and individual knowledge about how to deal with potential problems and how to use possible opportunities for their benefits. Activities include identifying development problems, investigating into problems and opportunities, designing projects, holding strategic discussions and evaluating progress.
- Develop skills to realize collective development aim: The group needs to learn what kinds of skills are needed to realize their activity and development goals and they possibly need to acquire lacking skills. In this category, one can arguably consider activities such as organizing workshops, meetings, lectures, study groups, information evenings, symposia and courses. This category could arguably also include practical activities such as the organization of cultural evenings, youth activities, managing and buying land for landscape, nature and meadow bird protection or making marketing plans, to name a few examples listed in table 1.

Even though often the different activity phases seem to be occurring in successive order, it is important to note that the sequence is not rigid. Looking at table 7.1, the agricultural nature association "De Eendracht" already engaged in research activities with students when the association was founded and a development plan established. Also, after this period, the association appeared

to be highly involved in research activities. On the same lines, also the initiators of the touristic platform engaged in research activities in order to create a marketing plan while establishing the grassroots development activity. The different fields of activities can thus occur in parallel, repeatedly or in different orders.

Table 7.1 Overview grassroots development initiatives inventoried

Grassroots development initiatives						Public/private administration		Knowledge infrastructure	
Name	Start	Type of Organisation	Goal	Participants	Activities	Type of support	From whom	Type of support	From whom
WichterWest	2008	Part of foundation	Create network for knowledge exchange	Rural business women	Establish network; Meetings; Workshops; Establish foundation; Creating website; Education programme	Finance	Province (VGD), RABObank, LEADER requested	Expertise for workshops	Informal network of acquainted experts, RABO bank
						Initiation, Advice	VGD		
Touristic platform	2008	No legal status	Stimulate economic development	Touristic entrepreneurs, NGOs, others	Establish platform; Integrate development; Workshops; Evaluation; Meetings; Marketing plan; Research	Finance	LEADER	Research, recommendations	Stenden Uni.
						Initiation	Touristic catalysts		
						Advice	Core team		
						Facilities	Countryside house		
Inboeren Middag-Humsterland	2009	No legal status	Network of touristic activities on farms	Active farmers Northern Westerkwartier	Initiation; Engage farmers; Create programme; Seek advice; Apply for subsidies; Make future plan; Train farmers	Finance	Request for LEADER	Expertise for schooling farmers	Dairies
						Advice	Touristic catalysts, Countryside house		
MEI	2008	Network	Strengthen agricultural sector	Farmers	Problem identification; Seek advice; Design projects; Study groups; Excursions; Lectures	Finance	LEADER, LTO, B&N ZWK, De Eendracht, Fees	Lectures, Expertise	Informal network AVESTURA and Farmers (universities, experts)
						Advice, Facilitation	AVESTURA		
Paardenkwartier	2009	Foundation	Strengthen the horse sector with regard to sport & tourism	Horse stable owners	Organisation of entrepreneurial cafés; common PR activities (such as website); development of route network for horse riding; realize an education centre for the horse sector	Finance	Province Groningen, LEADER, RABObank	Seminars, workshops	Informal network (experts, own members)
						Initiation & Advice, Facilitation	Programme manager national rural development programme; national farmers union (LTO Noord)		

Boer & Natuur Zuidelijke Westerkwartier	2004	Association	Nature and landscape management	Farmers & private persons in Southern Westerkw.	Form association; Hedgerow and meadow bird conservation; Advise on subsidies, Symposia, Courses & lectures	Finances	Ministry (SANO, SNL), Province (SNL) (through DR), Fees	Research, Expertise	Brug toekomst (WUR, VHL), Landschapsbeheer Groningen, Experts
						Advice	SBB, Province		
De Eendracht	1997	Association	Meadow bird protection	Farmers in Southern Westerkw.	Start of association; Investigations; Nature management plan, Sign collective management contract; Meadow bird protection plan; Lectures	Finances	Ministry (SANO, SNL), Province (SNL), Fees	Research	Students through network of farmers; Brug toekomst; VHL
						Monitoring	DLG	Lectures	Experts
						Contract	Province		
De Dotterbloem	2006	Foundation	Landscape management	Members B&N ZWK, De Eendracht	Financial risk assessment; Start foundation; Create operational plan; Purchase land; Meadow bird protection; Conservation rare grass species, Meetings; Rent land; Meadow bird farm (future)	Finances	Ministry (SANO, SNL), Province (SNL), Fees	Operational plan	Advice bureau
						Land	DLG		
Mien Westerkwartier	2007	Foundation	Promote use of local dialect	Artists	Establish foundation; Create & maintain website; Cultural events; Strategic discussion; Produce CDs & DVDs; Newsletter	Finances	Previous: LEADER (Regio Loket); Provincial culture plan	None	None
Punt 1	2006	Part of organisation	Preventive youth care	Youth and youth workers in Leek municipality	Building and maintaining centre; Promotion campaign; Information activities; Courses & Meetings for employees; Student research & internship; Other youth activities	Finances	Leek, Diverse social funds (national), own income	Research, education, expertise	Informal network of Schools, voc. schools, Univ. of Appl. Science, experts

7.2.1 Direct and indirect forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

The different grassroots development initiatives are able to receive support and facilitation for learning and innovation within the different activities identified. As figure 8.1 shows, support and facilitation can be provided directly through arrangements between public administration and grassroots development initiatives. Support and facilitation for learning and innovation can also be provided indirectly through enabling knowledge facilities to engage with grassroots development initiatives.

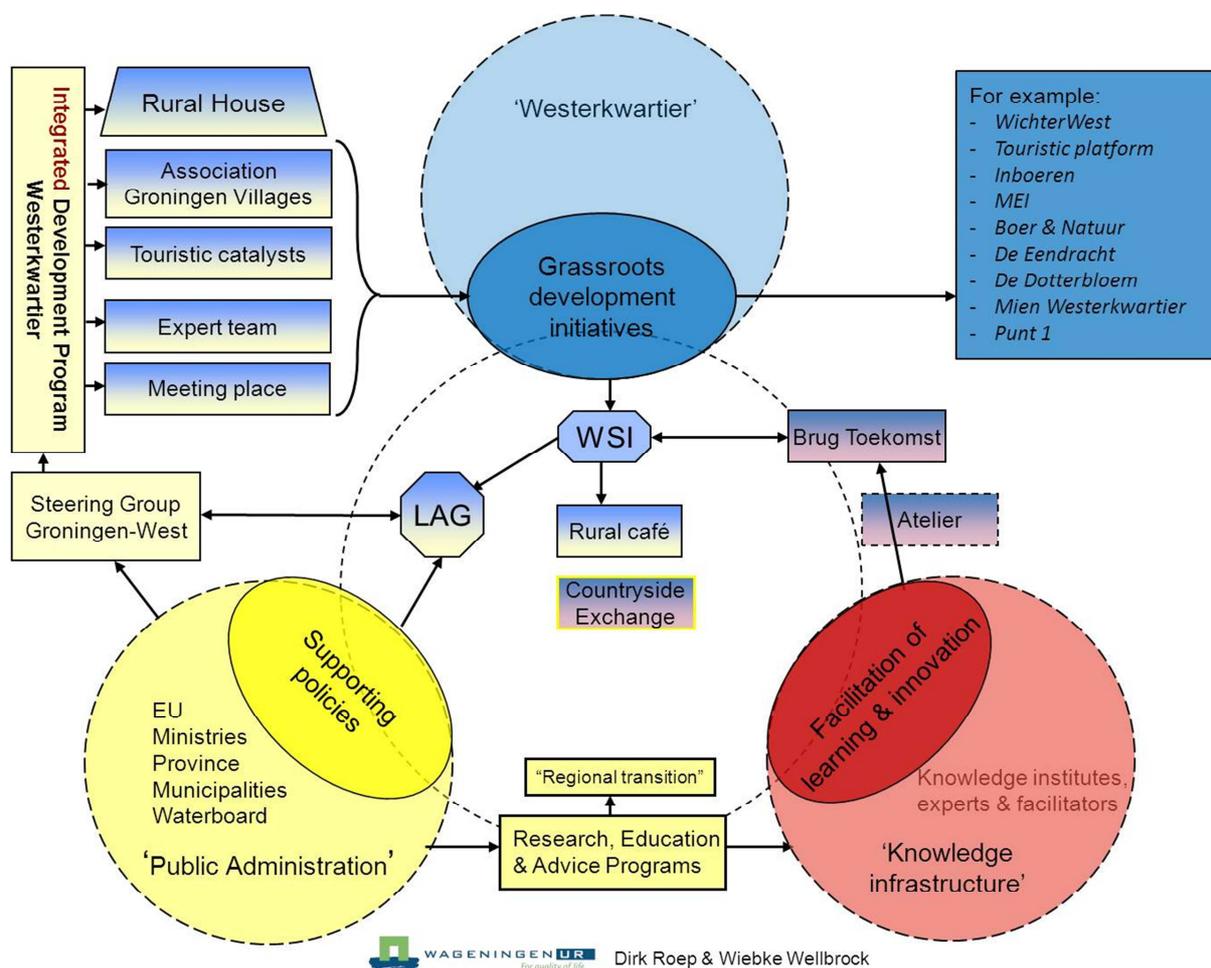


Figure 7.1 Arrangements for support and facilitation of learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives in the Westerkwartier

Direct forms of support and facilitation

Public administration supports grassroots development activities in the Westerkwartier along three lines: **initiation, advice, expertise and facilitation** and **finances**. These forms of support and facilitation appear to be

particularly relevant regarding the focus of developing and pursuing a collective development aim. It is further interesting to note that the support provided for grassroots development initiatives inventoried in the fields of economy, agriculture and society are dealt with at provincial and municipal level while support for nature & landscape management related activities are supported by national and provincial levels of public administration. Grassroots development initiatives within field of nature & landscape management are consequently also accessing different development funds and receive support and facilitation from different arrangements (e.g. DLG, SANO, see D4.1).

Initiation

Four of the grassroots development activities inventoried received help in the initiation phase of their grassroots development initiative. Here, different arrangements of public administration acted as initiators.

For example, the network of rural entrepreneurial women *WichterWest* was initiated by the **Association Groningen Villages** (see figure 7.1). To be able to initiate the network, the association received a budget from Groningen Province and acted as a process manager to set up the network. In the later stages of the development, the association also provided advice on how to form a legal entity and apply for other subsidies.

The touristic platform was initiated by the **touristic catalysts** (see figure 7.1). Also here, the initiators were able to provide funds in order to set up the network. The touristic catalysts were further acting as a facilitator of the group formation process and were driving the platform towards becoming an autonomous, legal entity.

Also within the field of nature and landscape management, grassroots development initiatives were supported in their aim of initiating a network. In contrast to the previously outlined facilitation, here, the intention of forming a network was already given and the initiatives only required advice and guidance in the process. In contrast to the other grassroots development initiatives, help for initiation was provided by the Government Service for Land and Water Management (Dutch: DLG) which first was an arrangement from national level before it turned into an instrument of Groningen province in the decentralization process.

Advice, Expertise and Facilitation

Grassroots development initiatives that initiated their initiative themselves started to seek contact with public administration in their aim to create a joint development plan. In this process, the **Rural house** and **Expert team** (see figure 7.1) appeared to be of particular importance. It was stated as the first contact point by the activity "Inboeren Middag-Humsterland" and argued to provide a **meeting place** (see figure 7.1) for the agricultural nature associations Boer & Natuur ZWK, De Eendracht and De Dotterbloem, WichterWest and the Touristic platform.

Furthermore, the touristic catalysts have provided advice to the initiative "Inboeren Middag-Humsterland" regarding subsidy applications and creating a business plan. Similar advice was provided to WichterWest by the Association Groningen Villages.

The landscape and nature management activities received advice on subsidy regulations, provincial management plans and possibilities to purchase nature protection land by Groningen province, DLG and the national forestry department (SBB).

Financing

Within the developing fields of economy, agriculture and society, all activities, except Punt 1, stated to receive or to be in the process of applying for finances through LEADER funds. These were either administered directly to the activity (e.g. to MEI via the **LAG**(see figure 7.1) and to *Mien Westerkwartier* via the Living Villages Window) or it was administered indirectly by providing money to arrangements with the task to enable the development of grassroots development initiatives (The touristic change agents, for example, used LEADER budget to create touristic platform). The Association Groningen Villages received money from the province of Groningen to create WichterWest.

Social workers working in Punt 1 and its facilities are exclusively financed through Leek municipality. Activities planned by the youth workers of Punt 1 are either financed through Leek municipality or the youth workers apply for funds from social and cultural funds.

Apart from LEADER, several initiators also mentioned other subsidy bodies. For example, WichterWest stated to receive additional subsidies from a local financial institute. MEI is further funded by the national farmer's organization

(Dutch; LTO), De Eendracht and Boer & Natuur ZWK. Furthermore, several grassroots development initiatives have introduced/ are planning to introduce membership fees and fees for activities in order to generate an own budget.

Nature and landscape management initiatives receive national funding to stimulate the collaboration for nature and landscape management (SANO) which was first administered from the national government and, since 2010, is being administered by the province Groningen (now called SNL). These initiatives are therefore dependent on other financial sources than the initiatives within the field of economy, agriculture and society. In the light of the budget cuts of the Dutch government for nature and landscape related developments, it will thus be interesting to see how the grassroots development initiatives inventoried will be able to continue their development activities in the coming years.

Since funds are usually only paid to legal entities, the prospect of receiving subsidies appears to be the driving motor for the development activities to become legal entities.

Indirect forms of support and facilitation

Support and facilitation by the knowledge infrastructure seemed to be highly relevant in the initiative's focus on acquiring joint learning capacities to jointly achieve development goal. Arguably, during this phase support and facilitation from public administration became less important and the relevance of the knowledge infrastructure for the grassroots development initiatives increased.

As shown in table 1, support and facilitation from the knowledge infrastructure was received along four lines: a) Expertise/ Seminars, b) Research & Consultancy, c) Student research training, d) Training/ Skill development.

Within these different lines of activities, grassroots development initiatives inventoried were on the one hand support by publically funded knowledge institutes and on the other hand by private knowledge facilitators.

For example, Punt 1, De Eendracht, Boer & Natuur ZWK and the touristic platform work together with publically funded knowledge institutes (including universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, colleges and schools). The involvement of publically funded knowledge institutes with grassroots development initiatives appeared to be inexpensive for the grassroots development initiatives inventoried. For example, De Eendracht and Boer & Natuur ZWK were involved in the research project **Brug Toekomst**(see figure

7.1) together with Wageningen UR, Van Hall Institute and Larenstein University of Applied Sciences. This project was financed through the **Regional Transition Programme** of the Green Knowledge Cooperation (see figure 7.1). Also the future project Atelier is supposed to be financed through the Regional Transition Programme of the Green Knowledge Cooperation. At the moment of writing, however, the project Atelier has not been approved.

Other initiatives stated to make use of private knowledge facilitators such as experts, advisors or professionals with specific knowledge on certain topics. The touristic catalyts also approached the publically funded Stenden University of Applied Science for a paid research & consultancy assignment in order to establish a marketing and promotion plan. For these services, the grassroots development initiators paid the knowledge facilitators for their services through own resources or budgets taken from subsidies received.

Contacts with publically funded and private knowledge facilitators seemed to be often made through **informal networks and coincidental encounters**. The creation of informal networks and the likelihood of coincidental encounters is supported and facilitated indirectly through public administration. For example, the **WSI** (with financing of the LAG) organizes **rural cafés** (see figure 1) which act as informal networking events. Furthermore, the rural house can be used as meeting spaces to gather and discuss with people.

Several interviewees thus stated to get information about available expertise through informal talks with other members, through visiting lectures or courses and receiving suggestions about potential knowledge facilitators. Furthermore, De Eendracht- which stands out as a development activity that is highly involved with knowledge facilities- has the advantage of having at least one member working for a relevant, public knowledge institute. Through this contact, the research project Brug Toekomst was carried out in the Westerkwartier, providing support and facilitation for learning and innovation to, amongst others, the nature and landscape management initiatives De Eendracht and Boer & Natuur ZWK. In the future, the same person will act as advisor to the foundation De Dotterbloem concerning all research related questions. Punt 1 further stated that it is being approached by public knowledge institutes to carry out research and hence, does not need to seek contact itself.

One can further argue that besides necessary personal contacts within the knowledge infrastructure, a grassroots development activity also needs to have

access to necessary funds in order to be able to engage knowledge facilities. Starting initiatives such as De Dotterbloem and Inboeren Middag-Humsterland thus stated to first needing to secure finances before getting involved with knowledge facilities. Furthermore, the foundation Mien Westerkwartier which is currently not being funded, stated to lack the financial means and contacts to engage with relevant knowledge facilities.

7.3 Evaluation of direct and indirect form of support and facilitation received by grassroots development initiatives

In M4.3 Part II, 7 grassroots development initiatives were invited to participate in a workshop to evaluate the forms of support and facilitation they received for learning and innovation. With additional information of the interviews conducted in M4.3 Part I and follow-up interviews, first the evaluation of direct forms of support and facilitation will be presented, followed by the evaluation of indirect forms of support and facilitation.

7.3.1 Direct forms of support and facilitation

Public administration offers formally arranged support and facilitation for grassroots development initiatives along three lines: 1) initiation of the grassroots development activities; 2) advice, expertise and facilitation concerning the development plans, the application for subsidies and process management and 3) the provision of finances. Table 7.2 provides an overview of arrangements that were mentioned by grassroots development initiators in Part I as having provided support and facilitation. Furthermore, table 7.2 provides an overview of key words to describe the evaluation of the different forms of support and facilitation received by the grassroots development initiators. Hereby, the evaluation refers to the form of support/facilitation received and not necessarily to a particular arrangement.

Table 7.2 Direct forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
Initiation	Association Groningen Villages Touristic catalysts	Initiators necessary to keep initiative running Touristic change agents provide enthusiastic and facilitating support
Advice, Expertise, Facilitation	Association Groningen Villages Core team of experts Touristic catalysts Rural house Staatsbosbeheer Groningen Province (via DLG?)	Advisor necessary to provide help with rules and regulations Rural house needs to be able to provide more direct help and less redirecting of questions Help needs to be provided faster Too much bureaucracy Rules and regulations are a "bottleneck" to rural development Decentralisation process is inefficient Administrative boarders hinder development process Too little cooperation between different municipalities Touristic change agents provide very good advice on how to fill in subsidy requests
Subsidies	RABObank Groningen Province LEADER (administered by DLG) National farmer's organization (LTO) Boer & Natuur ZWK De Eendracht SANO fund (by former Ministry of Agriculture) SNL fund (by Province, successor SANO) Dienst Regeling (DR administers SANO, SNL) Provincial cultural plan Window Living Villages	Subsidy process needs to be faster Too many rules and regulations attached Difficult to write subsidy requests (terminology) Writing subsidy requests takes too much time of volunteers LEADER funds important for social development Becoming a legal entity can potentially hamper the continuation of an initiative Subsidies for nature & landscape only cover compensation and do not cover administrative costs Touristic change agents did not provide good advice on amount of subsidies able to receive
Meeting space	Rural house	

As table 7.2 shows, 16 different supportive and facilitating arrangements were identified. Of these, 11 are providing support and facilitation with regard to subsidies, six arrangements are able to provide advice, expertise and facilitation and two arrangements help initiate grassroots development initiatives in the Westerkwartier. Furthermore, one arrangement provides a physical meeting space for grassroots development initiatives.

Some of the identified arrangements are providing two or more different kinds of support and facilitation to rural development initiatives. For example, the rural house is an arrangement to act as access point to initiators, to give advice, expertise, facilitation and subsidy and a physical meeting space. Furthermore, the Association Groningen Villages and touristic catalysts act as initiators as well as providers of advice, expertise and facilitation.

Overall, it seems that initiators associate public administration mostly with the provision of subsidies. Accordingly, initiators evaluated the process of obtaining subsidies more frequently than the support and facilitation regarding the

initiation of grassroots development initiative and advice, expertise and facilitation provided by public administration.

Initiation

As it was remarked by two of the initiators, setting up an initiative and keeping it running means a lot of work for its voluntary members. Necessary activities involve the securing of funds, making future plans and planning activities. The initiators remarked negatively that these activities take a lot of time from the volunteers and should therefore be compensated.

It was further stated that volunteers are often too busy with their own business so that they do not find time for setting up and keeping an initiative running. An interviewee from the initiative WichterWest (2010) thus states that "*process managers are necessary and they need to be involved at all times to keep the initiative going*".

In the Westerkwartier, this function is fulfilled by the Association Groningen Villages and the touristic catalysts (until November 2010). As an interviewee from the initiative InBoeren (2010) states, the touristic change agents provided enthusiastic and facilitating support during this phase.

Advice/Expertise/Facilitation

One initiator remarked that it is necessary to have a contact person (within the municipality) who is able to give advice on subsidy requests and other regulations. This function is arguably fulfilled by the rural house. In the rural house, initiators are able to receive support and facilitation all under one roof and they do not have to go to communicate with different persons within the region to get support and facilitation. The support and facilitation offered to initiators is further enhanced by an internal knowledge exchange between different stakeholders within public administration. The rural house also transfers knowledge about on-going rural development issues to the municipalities. The people in the Westerkwartier are said to have an aversion against public administration. The low accessibility of the countryside house is therefore a good solution to counteract this aversion. It was, however, remarked that the rural house needs to be more pro-active and that it needs initiative own projects than merely re-directing people (Interviewee De Dotterbloem, 2010).

The interviewee of MEI (2010) remarked that public administration provides good and clear communication about their requirements to give out subsidies. He argues, however, that help could be provided faster and that although a good cooperative tenor was present, the process of receiving support was hampered by too much bureaucracy.

Other initiators agreed with the negative impact of bureaucratic burdens. According to one of the interviewees from the touristic platform (2010, interviewee 1), rules and regulations in the Netherlands create a "bottleneck" for rural development activities. The problem is seen in the addition of European rules and regulations on top of existing Dutch rules and regulations. This is argued to create an elliptical forest of rules and regulations which causes initiators to capitulate and to give up their development ideas. The interviewee (2010, interviewee 1) therefore states *"through all these rules and regulations, we lock up rural development in the Netherlands"*.

Furthermore, administrative boundaries can pose unnecessary obstacles for grassroots development initiatives. A further interviewee of the touristic platform (2010, interviewee 2) explains: *"Everything needs to be more centralised. [...] We have four municipalities and in each of the municipalities there is one civil servant dealing with tourism and recreation. We said this is very inefficient. If we want to have one policy, we will need to do what we are doing with the touristic platform now: change agents, folders, one website. However, you have four civil servants who all have to write a letter to their own boss to get consensus for their action and to ask for subsidies. It would be better to let one civil servant write a letter, this would be very efficient! The municipalities however, do not follow this line. This is about individualism and identity of the different municipalities."*

The boundaries of administrative units do not only slow down requests for subsidies but also the cooperation across borders of administrative units. As an interviewee of the touristic platform (2010, interviewee 2) explains: *"If you speak of a region, you take the perspective of a consumer. You need to think of how the consumer would see the region. The consumer only looks at what the landscape has to offer. It is therefore a question of preference to regard a region as beautiful. Some prefer the mountains; others go to the seaside or the heather fields or something else. It is important to find something that differentiates a region from the rest. There are typical geographical characteristics (...).*

Throughout the world, men work within landscapes but in the Netherlands people do it in a very specific way and that is very special. (...) Everything that nature provided as a basis and that men tried to form according to his needs, the landscape, the structure but also the way of building houses, stones, wooden buildings, stone buildings, all these are ingredients to make a difference between regions (also Friesland). This is culture. This culture is split by municipal boarders. This is annoying, very annoying because if you want to create a nice service and you happen to see that it will be located on the boarder of two municipalities you do not need to discuss with one municipality but you need to discuss with two municipalities. [...] This is bureaucracy. This is the classical difference between regional identity and the image of external visitors. This is a classical area of tension.” A further interviewee adds (2010, interviewee 1) adds: *“There is too little regional collaboration and too much focus on the municipalities”.*

Finance

All grassroots development initiatives inventoried in the field of rural economy, agriculture and civic matters received funds from the LEADER budget. It was therefore argued that LEADER funds play an important role for enabling the development of grassroots development initiatives in the Westerkwartier.

Nevertheless, all initiators stated that the processes of receiving funds from LEADER was difficult. On the one hand, difficulties are related to obtaining shares from the municipalities. According to an interviewee of MEI (2010) it is sometimes difficult for all municipalities to provide money for a project due to different interests or financial restrictions.

On the other hand, the process of applying for subsidies was regarded as difficult too. For example, writing a subsidy request means a lot of additional work to the volunteers of a grassroots development initiative. According to an interviewee of the rural women entrepreneurial network WichterWest (2010), it is a long process and if it takes too long, people will lose their interest in continuing with their initiative.

In order to receive money from LEADER, grassroots development initiatives need to form a legal entity. According to an interviewee from the initiative Inboeren (2010), forming a legal entity has driven some of the members away from their initiative as it becomes too formalized. Requesting money as a legal entity is also

perceived as difficult because first consent needs to be established within the members before a request can be submitted (Interviewee WichterWest, 2010).

An interviewee of the initiative Mien Westerkwartier (2010) further remarked that there are too many rules attached to applying for subsidies. He thus argues "*How should volunteers deal with all these issues?*" According to the interviewee (2010, Mien Westerkwartier), volunteers also need to learn to speak the language of subsidy providers and policy makers in order to be successful in receiving subsidies. For example, instead of stating to plan a CD production it is better to phrase the request as "*using ICT to promote the use of regional dialects*" (Interviewee Mien Westerkwartier, 2010).

It was also said that more funds should be made available from the province. Besides LEADER, the province also provides funds to the Association Groningen Villages to stimulate the development of grassroots development initiatives.

Grassroots development initiatives within the development area of nature & landscape management apply and receive their subsidies at national public administration level. Often, these subsidies only cover the compensation costs for farmers but it cannot cover the hidden costs of administration within the organisation (Interviewee Boer & Natuur ZWK, 2010). Furthermore, the new subsidy regulation SNL which is administered through the province works slower than the old subsidy regulation SANO because it requires the organisation to write a multi-annual action plan in order to receive subsidies (Interviewee Boer & Natuur, 2010). Due to conflicting interests between the national farmer's organisation and the nature and landscape managing organisation, the national farmer's organisation does not provide financial support to these organisations.

7.3.2 Indirect forms of support and facilitation

In contrast to arrangements between public administration and grassroots development initiatives, only two formal arrangements were found between the knowledge infrastructure and grassroots development initiatives, namely Brug Toekomst and Atelier. The arrangement Atelier, however, is not yet approved. Accordingly, most of the contacts between grassroots development initiatives and the knowledge infrastructure are established through informal networks and coincidental encounters.

As indicated in table 7.3, the knowledge infrastructure provides support and facilitation along four lines: a) Expertise/ Seminars, b) Research & Consultancy,

c) Student research training, d) Training/ Skill development. most contacts were established along the line expertise/ seminars, ranging from universities to advice bureaus, public administration bodies to other organisations. Furthermore, for research and consultancy assignments, contact was made with advice bureaus and public knowledge institutes. In the case of nature & landscape management, mostly student research training was used to support and facilitate learning and innovation. This contact was established through the project Brug toekomst. Table 7.3 provides a list of keywords to evaluate the different arrangements between grassroots development initiatives and the knowledge infrastructure. Hereby, the evaluation refers to the form of support/facilitation received and not necessarily to a particular arrangement.

Table 7.3 Indirect forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation

Available form of support/facilitation	How is support/ facilitation arranged?	Evaluation of support and facilitation received
Expertise/ Seminars	Informal network Rabo Bank Chamber of Commerce Marketing network Groningen Universities Experts Landschapsbeheer Groningen Advice bureaus	Costs a lot of energy to establish network High willingness to cooperate since payment is provided Payments can be too expensive for grassroots development initiatives
Research & Consultancy	Assignment	Paid assignment, therefore good
Student research training	Project Brug Toekomst Student research VHL	Difficult to establish contact with knowledge institutes Too much research has been carried out but no concrete development plans have been developed Cooperation important for mutual benefit Not enough energy has been put into creating continuity and structure of collaboration Student supervisors (lecturers) are not compensated adequately for regional involvement, making it unattractive (Costs are too high, need to use free time) Lack of competence amongst knowledge institutes to engage with regional questions Research questions usually posed by knowledge institute and not vice versa Atelier will overcome the mentioned problems Student projects are able to bring people together in the region
Training/ Skill development	Corporate businesses	

Across all lines of interaction between the knowledge infrastructure and grassroots development initiatives it was noted that contacts were established mainly through informal networks or coincidental encounters. As an interviewee of the initiative Boer & Natuur ZWK (2010) states "*Contacts with knowledge infrastructure happen but they are not sought for intentionally*". All initiators

thus stated that the maintenance of informal, regular contacts with the knowledge infrastructure is important. Furthermore, learning and innovation was argued to occur when people meet and start to exchange knowledge and ideas. To stimulate the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people, all initiatives stated to organise network meetings or excursions for their members.

Public administration also stimulates informal networking opportunities by organising themed rural cafés. Also opportunities to exchange informally with visitors from other regions, as organised by the Countryside Exchange, are valued for obtaining new knowledge. According to the questioned initiators, seeing the region through stranger's eyes has helped to stimulate new ideas. In addition to facilitating the establishment of informal networks and coincidental encounters, a number of persons (so called brokers) were identified as being active in the region to establish connections between the region, public administration and the knowledge infrastructure. These connectors were regarded as important to elaborate ideas. The question is, however, whether these connectors are known in the area. In the following, the evaluation of grassroots development initiatives inventoried concerning the different forms of support and facilitation will be described

Expertise/Seminars & Training/Skills provision

With regard to expertise/ seminars and training/skill provision, all grassroots development initiators stated to make use of experts from all kinds of backgrounds. It was thus stated that it does not matter where the expertise comes from, universities, professionals, advice bureaus, as long as the person providing knowledge is an expert in his field (Interviewee from MEI, 2010). These experts are usually drawn from the extended network of the different grassroots development initiatives. An interviewee from WichterWest (2010), however, stated "*It costs a lot of energy to establish a network*". Consequently, at least two initiators regarded the establishment of contacts with the knowledge infrastructure as secondary. The first priority was clearly seen as securing funds.

Research & Consultancy

In order to receive research & consultancy services from private knowledge facilitators, all grassroots development initiators stated to pay the experts for their involvement. Accordingly, the willingness of private knowledge facilitators

to participate is always very high. For the grassroots development initiatives, however, the payment for private knowledge facilitators can be unaffordable (e.g. De Eendracht).

Student research training

Most contacts between the public knowledge infrastructure and grassroots development initiatives occurred within the development field of landscape & nature management. Here, also the project Brug toekomst was active. It seems that many contacts between grassroots development initiatives and the region are established by coincidence. The touristic change agents thus stated that their contract with Stenden University occurred through coincidence. Also the contact with the public knowledge institutes that took part in the project Brug toekomst occurred through coincidence, namely through Arien Baken, member of De Eendracht and lecturer at Van Hall Larenstein.

As an interviewee at De Eendracht (2010) states, also this arrangement was established through informal connections and built on trust: *"Well, it is not a contract but if you say you will do something together, you will also do it!"*

At least three initiators stated that establishing contact with the public knowledge infrastructure was difficult: *"It is hard to find a network. For example, we never made contact with the Hanzehogeschool in Groningen because we do not know anybody there"* (Touristic platform, Interviewee 2, 2010). Furthermore, it was stated that involvement with public knowledge institutes from outside the region is relatively low because universities have a too high level of abstraction. As an interviewee of De Dottebloem (2010) states *"I am tired of research being carried out. So much knowledge available but no concrete plans how to realise the different development plans proposed"*. With regard to using student research results also an interviewee of De Eendracht (2009) argues *"This is a weak point, we have discussed about it a lot [...] Perhaps you need to give more attention to carry out research that is supported by a group of people"*.

Nevertheless, the touristic catalysts agreed that cooperation with the public knowledge infrastructure is important for a mutual benefit. Research projects can, for example, facilitate the collaboration of regional stakeholders: *"[In Brug Toekomst] The knowledge institutes facilitated a lot and made sure that the people got together and when the process came to a halt, they made sure that*

there was again a student who needed to bring the people together and who needed to be supervised” (Lecturer Wageningen University, 2009).

According to an interviewee in De Eendracht (2010) collaboration between a grassroots development initiatives and public knowledge institutes requires good coordination and communication. However, if there are more than one knowledge institute engaged with regional development questions, organisation and communication will often become a problem and projects will not run well. Furthermore, he states that it is very important for students to have structure and continuity, although not enough energy has yet been put into the process of installing a structure and continuity amongst students, lecturers and the region. He continues by saying that the problem occurs when students and lecturers who usually work within school buildings start working outside the school building: *“They think how crazy!”*(Interviewee De Eendracht, 2010).

Furthermore, working outside school structures is costly in terms of money and time. It is necessary to reward lecturer for this extra effort: *“Conducting research in the field often takes more time of the lecturers. [...] As a lecturer, it is of interest to me whether I work for 80 or 100 hours, but the school is not interested in this, only in the final bill. Then, the problem occurs that you are paid for 80-100 hours but you have to work almost double the time to accomplish the work. The costs are too high, lecturers need to invest some of their free time”* (Interviewee De Eendracht, 2010). With regard to Brug Toekmost, a lecturer from Wageningen University (2009) states: *“This [project] was carried out with idealism of the lecturers but actually universities are not able to participate in such a project. As a university lecturer, this is actually a blemish on my career, I would say. It costs money of the university and you will not get any publications in return. [...]”*

Also, often questions are imposed on a region by public knowledge institutes and not vice versa. An interviewee of De Eendracht (2010) thus states *“Within public knowledge institutes, structures for students are created (...) In four years, the students have to learn to think with people working within practise. So each year, deliver research questions need to be delivered to students. This is, however, not always the case (...) The lecturers first need to find students for a particular question. Lecturers are not set to make contact with the external world.”* Also an interviewee of Punt 1 (2010) states that the youth centre Punt 1

is often approached by public knowledge institutes who are searching for a place to carry out their intended student research projects and not vice versa.

The arrangement 'Atelier' (see M4.2) could help to solve the mentioned problems: *"The concept of Atelier is of course helping to overcome this problem. However, a really good structure where 4th year students need to make contact with regions to work on problems cannot be found so often albeit there is need for them. In the past, [research, education and extension were all public funded] and part of what was called the triangle of Research, Education and Extension (Dutch: OVO Onderzoek, Voorlichting en Onderwijs). Extension workers and lecturers were the intermediates between research and practise. They were public funded to transfer the knowledge from the public knowledge infrastructure to the farmers and the question of the farmers to the public knowledge infrastructure. That was a strong constellation. Now, extension has been privatised and the strong interconnection has been lost. Different businesses, entrepreneurs and account managers give advice to people. Also lecturers and researchers try to take over this intermediary role [such as in the project Brug Toekomst]. Through this change, the flow of knowledge from research towards extension is of course less strong since the constellation does not hold anymore. Furthermore, extension workers could no longer be subsidised through public education due to the competitive situation, also in relation to foreign countries and the EU. (...). What we are searching for now, is how we can re-link education and research [through knowledge brokers]. It seems that research reports are lying on the bench but nothing happens with them. This is not practical. We are looking for new ways and forms of organisation to link education with advice, for instance through new networks. This can, for instance, be created in the form of 'Atelier'." (...)* (Interviewee De Eendracht, 2010).

7.4 Conclusion

The inventory and evaluation of different forms of support and facilitation for learning and innovation within different grassroots development initiatives in the Westerkwartier has brought several aspects to the front.

1. With regard to support and facilitation from public administration, one interviewee stated during the workshop: *"We learned to work together in the Westerkwartier."* More coordination between the different grassroots development initiatives is, however still desired.

2. Process managers and initiators are necessary to facilitate and keep an initiative running.
3. The rural house has a regional window function, creating an interface for exchange between initiators and people that work as brokers between public administration, the knowledge infrastructure and the region.
4. The rural house and rural cafés are concrete, accessible meeting places.
5. There is a dilemma between organising structures to support learning and innovation and the informal (coincidental) face to face networks. In order to receive subsidies, a legal person is required but the process of turning into a legal entity is often also regarded as a hindrance by entrepreneurs and initiators.
6. The procedures to request subsidies are perceived as too difficult and the work load entailed as too high for members of grassroots development initiatives who engage in these activities on a voluntary basis in the Westerkwartier.
7. Looking at support and facilitation from the knowledge infrastructure, it appears that most arrangements are made through informal networking activities and are based on informal agreements.
8. Private knowledge facilitation is often too costly for initiatives and therefore not a first priority
9. Publically funded knowledge institutes are not funded sufficiently to engage in regional research questions. Engagement with regional research questions becomes therefore unattractive.
10. Nevertheless, the engagement of the Westerkwartier in research projects was necessary to start collaboration between regional stakeholders.
11. The practical use of research results obtained from the Westerkwartier is not sufficient yet.

8 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The aim of this report is to provide an inventory of different ways to govern joint capacity building within grassroots development initiatives in different rural regional contexts in the European Union. When comparing the results presented in the previous chapters, we need to ask ourselves the question: "*how can public support and facilitation of joint learning and innovation within and between grassroots rural regional development initiatives be arranged best, i.e. how can well-operating interfaces be created between public policies, learning and innovation facilities and grassroots development initiatives considering the contextual differences across the case study areas?* Arguably, it must be accepted that devising best approaches to reaching grassroots development initiatives is highly context-dependent, and an arrangement that appears promising in one case study area (CSA) may not work in another CSA. To formulate common policies it is nevertheless important to distinguish features which are universally regarded as positive for supporting and facilitating learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives in all CSAs and to understand well-operating arrangements in relation to the different regional contexts.

Arrangements to support and facilitate learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives consist arguably of two interrelated parts: 1) a constitutive agreement and 2) an operational interface. In order to compare the results of the different CSAs, we can:

1. analyse the constitutive agreements made within the different CSAs and compare a) the *formal shaping* of the agreement, i.e. who are the beneficiaries, what type of support and facilitation is provided, what are the procedures, rules and regulations to obtain the support and facilitation offered and b) the chosen *scale of governance*;
2. analyse the different operational interfaces and compare a) the *operating (public and private) actors and agencies* and b) their *roles and tasks* through which the agreed support and facilitation is provided to the grassroots development initiatives in the different CSAs.

8.1 Agreements to support and facilitate learning and innovation in different CSAs

Arrangements to support and facilitate learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives consist of two interrelated parts, namely to a certain extent formalized arrangements made by partnerships and operational interfaces through which the support and facilitation is actually provided. With reference to public policies (aims and programmes), these agreements can be quite informal, but more often they are formalised to some extent as an (institutional) arrangement and they can be based on a long-term or short-term shared (political) vision. In this section, agreements to support and facilitate learning and innovation in the different CSAs will be analysed and compared looking at 1) the founding partners, 2) the type of beneficiaries targeted, 3) the type of support and facilitation provided, 4) the procedures, rules and regulations attached and 5) the scale of governance.

8.1.1 Founding partners

With regard to arrangements concerning direct support and facilitation, ministries dealing with agriculture and environment were frequently mentioned as founding partners. Also ministries dealing with civic and community affairs, economy & labour and education were mentioned as founding partners. Together with these ministries, also public authorities (such as municipalities and counties) and local action groups were stated as being founding partners in agreements to provide support and facilitation for learning and innovation. In some cases (e.g. Saarland), also private agents and institutes form part of agreements. Agreements on direct support and facilitation appear to be most commonly related to financial aid and additional procedural support on writing grant-proposals.

Partnerships to enable the knowledge infrastructure to engage with grassroots development initiatives appeared less frequent but more diverse than those concerning direct support and facilitation. In Dresden, for example, the Saxon state launched a directive to enable (public) knowledge institutes to engage in rural regional development questions using ESF money, called the *University & Research (Richtlinie ESF Hochschule und Forschung)*. Furthermore, within the policy frameworks *Demography (Richtlinie Demographie)* and *Cultural Area Act (Kulturraumgesetz)* agreements have been made to facilitate the engagement of the knowledge infrastructure with rural regional development. In the

Westerkwartier, the “Regional Transition Programme” of the Green Knowledge Cooperation (GKC) is an agreement to provide financial aid to joint research projects of (public) knowledge institutes and stakeholders of rural regions in the Netherlands. Also in the Comarca de Verín and Saarland the involvement of public knowledge institutes with grassroots development initiatives were reported. In both cases, the involvement appeared to be initiated by individuals within the public knowledge infrastructure (e.g. centred on particular professorships). In Roscommon County and Alytus County, the role of knowledge institutes is often carried out by state agencies or public advisors institutes. These institutes are cooperating with knowledge institutes and pass this knowledge on to the rural regional grassroots development initiatives.

In addition, it was stated that private knowledge facilitators (e.g. experts, advisors) are also engaged with grassroots development initiatives within some CSAs (e.g. Westerkwartier, Comarca de Verín). These are usually contracted by the grassroots development initiatives directly and paid from their own resources. Partners in these agreements are thus the grassroots development initiatives themselves and private knowledge facilitators. The necessary resources for the engagement of private knowledge facilitators to get involved with grassroots development initiatives can be gathered through private investments, membership fees or through public funds.

8.1.2 Type of beneficiaries targeted

Most inventoried grassroots development initiatives deal with *Nature, Landscape & Environment* and *Civic & Community Development*. Other initiatives deal with *SME support* and *culture & history*. To a lesser extent the inventoried initiatives also deal with (*multifunctional*) *agriculture, agriculture & forestry, tourism, and education, training & employment*. Interestingly, in Lithuania initiatives showing learning and innovation deal almost exclusively with rural economy. Since our exploratory study is only able to give a snap shot of different types of support and facilitation provided, the targeted beneficiaries may not necessarily present the most commonly supported grassroots development initiatives.

8.1.3 Type of support and facilitation provided

Overall, the different grassroots development initiatives inventoried reported 35 different types of support and facilitation which they received throughout their evolution. As table 8.1 shows, these were ordered into five categories, defined as “financial support” (i.e. different kinds of subsidies and procedural support),

“knowledge and skills” (for example advice, facilitation, education and research activities), “physical infrastructure” (for example meeting spaces, biosphere reserves and information centres) and “social infrastructure” (for example in form of network incubation and cluster forming).

Across all CSAs, the most common referred to category was “financial support”, followed by “knowledge and skills”, “social infrastructure” and “physical infrastructure”. It is important to note, however, that in some cases it was not clear whether the support and facilitation for learning and innovation was provided TO the grassroots development initiatives or whether the support and facilitation was provided BY the initiatives inventoried. This shows that in reality the distinction between grassroots development initiatives and operational interfaces may not be very clear and that grassroots development initiatives are integrated into the regional learning processes, being both provider and consumer of support at the same time.

Table 8.1 Type of support and facilitation provided

Category of support and facilitation	Examples of mentioned support and facilitation
Financial support	Subsidies for autochthonous breeds, subsidies to companies, indirect through social security and unemployment benefits, technical support subsidies
Knowledge and skills	Advice, facilitation, training, workshops, practical, commercialisation & marketing, seminars, organic school meals, EU project RAFAEL, developing strategies, afternoon programme at schools, Student research, strategic evaluation, feasibility studies, excursions, expertise
Social infrastructure	Network incubation, Developing clusters, information exchange, knowledge exchange, member exchange, ideological support, projection of interests, cooperation,
Physical infrastructure	Meeting space, business construction, joint professional college, recovery of productive areas, replanting, biosphere reserve, education institution, information centre

8.1.4 Procedures, rules and regulations for obtaining support and facilitation

The results provide little information on procedures, rules and regulations attached to the support and facilitation offered. With regard to financial support, some rules and regulations could be identified. In the Westerkwartier and Alytus County, for example, grassroots development initiatives are only considered for financial support if they form a legal entity beforehand. In Country Roscommon and Dresden, subsidy requests need to be formulated in-line with the development objective of the donor agents and agencies in order to be successful. With regard to rules and regulations to get involved with the knowledge infrastructure, the analysis reveals hardly any information. In the

Westerkwartier, funds through the regional transition programme are only made available if regional stakeholders are involved in writing the subsidy requests.

8.1.5 The scale of governance

As table 8.2 indicates, the Westerkwartier, the Comarca de Verín and County Roscommon are located at a relatively localized scale of governance (LAU I-II), although the Comarca de Verín and Westerkwartier do not refer to an official administrative unit.

Table 8.2 Scales of governance at which the CSAs are located (mapped using the territorial unit for statistics)

Terr. Units for Stat.	Alytus County	Comarca de Verín	Dresden	Roscommon	Saarland	Westerkwartier
LAU II	Elderships	Municipalities <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Comarca de Verín¹</div>	118 Municipalities (61 in Bautzen & 57 in Görlitz)	4 Electoral districts	32 Municipalities	Municipalities: 4 Western municipalities = Westerkwartier ²
LAU I	5 Municipalities	(same as NUTS III)	-----	County Roscommon	-----	(same as NUTS III)
NUTS III	Alytus County	Ourense Province	10 Districts (Landkreise): 2 were chosen for the study: Bautzen and Görlitz = part of Oberlausitz	Roscommon, Sligo, Galway, Leitrim, Mayo	6 Districts (Landkreise)	COROP Region (Westerkwartier + City of Groningen)
NUTS II	----- -	Galicia	Direktionsbezirk Dresden	Region Border, Midland, West	-----	Groningen Province
NUTS I	----- -	North-West	Free State Saxony	----- -	Saarland	Region North Netherlands
Country	Lithuania	Spain	Germany	Ireland	Germany	Netherlands
European Union						

¹ A "Comarca" is an administrative unit used in Spain, Portugal, the South of France, Brazil and Panama and is no official territorial unit for statistics.

² The Westerkwartier is not an official territorial unit for statistics but a subdivision within Groningen Province, comprising the western municipalities Leek, Marum, Grootegast and parts of Zuidhorn.

The Westerkwartier consists of four municipalities in the West of Groningen province which collaborate as a unit together with the province. It has been

identified as a LEADER region in 2007 but does not have any authoritative or regulative powers. A Comarca does not refer to a statistical territorial unit but refers to a traditional Iberian administrative unit (land division unit). In Galicia, Comarca have only limited official recognition and no administrative function. Looking at the other CSAs, Alytus County and the Oberlausitz are located at NUTS level III. Alytus County, however, comprises only five municipalities, and its size is therefore comparable to other CSAs in the Netherlands, Ireland and Spain. The CSAs Oberlausitz with 118 municipalities and Saarland with 32 municipalities are thus the largest CSAs participating.

All CSAs belong to one or more LEADER regions. In addition, they also form part of one or more region-specific rural development programmes. As table 8.3 shows, in addition to LEADER programmes, the Oberlausitz and Saarland form part of the ILE and REK programmes, County Roscommon takes part in the “Local Development Social Inclusion Programme” and the Comarca de Verín in PRODER (National Rural Development Programme).

Table 8.3 Number of LEADER and national funding programme schemes in CSAs

	Alytus County	Comarca de Verín	Dresden	County Roscommon	Saarland	Westerkwartier
LEADER areas	4	1	4 (in parts)	3	2	1
Region-specific schemes	?	1 PRODER region	7 ILE regions (in parts)	1 LDSIP region	5 ILE regions 3 REK regions	-

Abbreviations: PRODER: Rural Development Programme; ILE: Integrated rural development concept region; LDSIP: Local Development Social Inclusion Programme REK Regional development concept region

8.2 Comparison of operational interfaces in the different CSAs

Arrangements consist of constitutive agreements concerning the formal shaping and scale of governance and of an operational interfaces through which the agreed upon support and facilitation is provided to the grassroots development initiatives. An operational interface can therefore be defined as the actual realization of the support and facilitation agreed upon by the founding partners. Depending on the type of support and facilitation provided through the operational interfaces, these can be located anywhere among the three proposed domains of our analytical framework (see figure 1.1 in introduction). In this section, the operational interfaces found in the different CSAs will be analysed and compared regarding 1) their operational agents and agencies and 2) their specific tasks and roles.

8.2.1 Operational agents and agencies

In all CSAs, partnerships take an active role in the arrangements by providing financial resources and in some cases they also provide specific knowledge and skills for procedural support. Apart from this communality, however, the operators that we have come across in this study differ greatly between the different CSAs. Throughout the analysis we have identified different types of operational agents and agencies: state agencies, public institutes, NGOs, private development experts as well as the making of informal arrangements for collaboration to reach a common goal and the construction/provision of physical infrastructures. Also the rules and tasks of the different operating agents and agencies appear to differ between the CSAs. Arguably, the more decentralised the government, the more diverse their roles and tasks. For example, the Westerkwartier is governed under the influence of a decentralising government. Consequently, operators of support and facilitation for learning and innovation are highly diverse, including assigned state agencies, advisors, NGOs and informal collaborations between grassroots initiators.

8.2.2 Operational tasks and roles

The results have shown that roles and tasks concerning the different forms of support and facilitation are often delegated to different operational agents and agencies. Different operational interfaces can thus be found for support and

facilitation such as a) financial support, b) knowledge and skills, c) social infrastructure and d) physical infrastructure. The different operational tasks and roles will be analysed and compared with regard to the different types of support and facilitation provided across the different CSAs.

a) Financial support:

Across the different CSAs, five operational interfaces were found which provide financial support. As table 8.4 shows, these operational interfaces also provide complimentary procedural support (e.g. help to write grant proposals). In the Westerkwartier, the LAG and **Expert team**, a compilation of different national, provincial and local (public and private) operational agents, are able to provide funding to grassroots development initiatives of up to 10.000 Euro from the LEADER budget using their own decision powers. Furthermore, the expert team and LAG meet regularly in order to exchange information, discuss, coordinate and agree on support and facilitation for rural regional grassroots development initiatives. Next to the realization of financial and procedural support and facilitation, the Expert team has thus also a coordinative function to ensure an integrated approach to rural development in the Westerkwartier. Akin to the *Expert Team*, the **Roscommon Integrated Development Company Ltd. (RIDC)** in County Roscommon serves a comparable, coordinative function. It consists of representatives of the communities, local government, national social partners (e.g. trade unions), state agencies (e.g. Teagasc), the environmental pillar and the County Enterprise Board (CEB) and comprises the three Local Action Groups of County Roscommon. It is responsible for the administration of funding programmes such as the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme LEADER, and the Rural Social Scheme, which have both a rural and socio-economic emphasis, and provides procedural support to grassroots development initiatives. On the same lines, the **Saxon Development Bank** has been assigned to administration of all development funds in Oberlausitz. It serves as a contact point for grassroots development initiatives to obtain financial support and provides procedural support for writing grant-applications. All three interfaces are able to coordinate and align different development policies and their associated funds, hence ensuring an **integrated approach** to rural development.

Table 8-4 Arrangements to provide financial support

Name	Founding partners (level)	Agreement				Operational interface	
		Targeted Beneficiaries	Type of support and facilitation	Procedures	Scale	Operational agents	Shape
Expert team	LAG (LAU II)	All initiatives	Financial support, advisors, expertise	?		Public administration; NGOs; Advisors	?
Roscommon Integrated Development Company Ltd	LAGs (LAU I)	All initiatives	Financial support, advice, expertise	?	LAU II	Business sector, Public administration, advisors, NGOs, state agencies, sector representatives, trade unions	Limited company
Saxon State Development Bank	Saxon state (NUTS I)	All initiatives	Financial support	?	NUTS II	Saxon State Development Bank	State agency
Social Economic Programme	Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht (POBAL) (National)	Civic Development	Employment support	?	NUTS I	State agency	Policy Programme
Innovation Voucher Scheme	BMW Assembly (NUTS II)	SME support	Financial support	?	LAU I	BMW Assembly, St. Angela's College	Policy Programme

As table 8.4 shows, financial support can further be operationalized by installing policy programmes such as the **Social Economic Programme** managed by the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht in County Roscommon (now called the Community Services Programme) which aims to support local community activity to address disadvantage and provide local employment opportunities for certain groups of people. It provides funding to community services and community businesses including community services for older people and those with disabilities, rural transport initiatives and environmental projects. The Programme focuses on communities where public and private sector services are lacking, either through geographical or social isolation or because demand levels are not sufficient. Another example is the **Innovation Voucher Scheme** of the BMW Regional Assembly and St. Angela's College in County Roscommon (now mainstreamed by Enterprise Ireland). The objective of the Innovation Voucher initiative (value of €5,000) is to incentivise links between Ireland's public knowledge providers and small businesses in terms of approaches to innovation. The aim is to assist a company to explore a business opportunity or problem with a registered knowledge provider.

b) Knowledge and skills & Social infrastructure

Eight further operational interfaces were identified to primarily provide knowledge and skills to grassroots development initiatives. As table 8.5 shows, in Alytus County, County Roscommon, Dresden, Saarland and Comarca de Verín, for example, local representatives of state agencies (**TEAGASC**, **FAS** and **POBAL** in County Roscommon; Regional managers in Dresden and Saarland and the **Oficinas Agrarias Comarcales** in the Comarca de Verín) are paid to deliver knowledge and skills as mediators or brokers between public policy and the grassroots as part of their job. Due to the increasing privatisation and decentralisation process, however, nowadays state agencies are increasingly replaced by other forms of operational interfaces providing knowledge and skills to grassroots development initiatives. In Saarland, for example, the support and facilitation for knowledge and skills is operationalized through federal umbrella organisations of local grassroots development initiatives. Operational interfaces to provide knowledge and skills can further be realized in project form. In the Westerkwartier, for example, a 4-year project called **Brug Toekomst** involving public knowledge institutes and grassroots development initiatives was designed and partially funded by Wageningen University and Research Centre. Within this project, supervised student research was carried out in the Westerkwartier and the Westerkwartier Initiative Group was founded. Also in other CSAs public knowledge institutes initiated projects to engage with rural grassroots development initiatives, such as the **University of Vigo** in the Comarca de Verín, the University of Kaiserslautern in Saarland or the University of Applied Science Görlitz/Zittau as well as the TU Dresden in Dresden. In addition, projects can be financed through LEADER funds and can be carried out by private development advisors such as **MEI** in the Westerkwartier. In contrast to the other CSAs, in Alytus county the concept of regional learning is fairly new. Public knowledge institutes are thus only involved with grassroots development initiatives through incidental, informal contacts. These contacts are neither funded through research projects nor through LEADER funds. Nevertheless, like in Dresden, knowledge workers have been acting as founders of grassroots development initiatives in Alytus County.

Table 8-5 Arrangements to provide knowledge and skills

Name	Founding partners (Scale)	Agreement				Operational interface	
		Beneficiaries	Type of support and facilitation	Procedures	Scale	Operational agents	Shape of interface
Brug toekomst	Public knowledge institutes (WUR, Van Hall, Larenstein) (National)	Nature, Landscape and Environment	Delivery & supervision of students, Expertise, delivering research questions	?	LAU II	Founding partners, advisor, grassroots development initiatives	Project
POBAL	Department for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht (POBAL) (National)	Civic & Community Development	Advice, expertise, facilitation	?	LAU I	Local POBAL agent	Assigned state agency
Teagasc	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (National)	Agriculture	Expertise, Advice, Training, Research, Counselling, Facilitation	?	LAU I	TEAGASC (Agriculture and Food Development Authority)	Assigned state agency
FAS	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (National)	SME support (?)	Skills training, employment support, enterprise advice	?	Lau I	FAS (National Training and Education authority)	Assigned state agency
Oficinas Agrarias Comarcales	Ministry of Agriculture	Agriculture	Knowledge and skills	?	LAU I	Oficinas Agrarias Comarcales	Assigned state agency
University of Vigo	University, Ministry of education, LEADER		Knowledge and skills	?	LAU I/II	Different research groups within the university	Projects
MEI	LAG, National farmers union; Farmers	Agriculture	Education, advise, facilitation	?	LAU II	Advice bureau	Project

c) Social infrastructure

A further important way of facilitating learning and innovation is through initiating get-togethers where grassroots development initiators can exchange knowledge and information. As table 8.6 shows, the way in which this support is operationalized differs greatly between the different CSAs and are operationalized by various agents and agencies. Get-togethers can, for example, be arranged through state agencies, as for example in Dresden where the Oberlausitz governmental funding offices facilitate networking activities through organising meetings of funded initiatives, launching websites, electronic newsletters or introducing awards for the best projects. Also in Alytus County, informal networking is encouraged by public administration.

Table 8-6 Operational interfaces to provide social infrastructure

Name	Founding partners (scale)	Agreement				Operational interface	
		Beneficiaries	Type of support and facilitation	Procedures	Scale	Operational agents	Shape of interface
Rural café	LAG (LAU II)	All initiatives	Organise themed cafés	?	LAU II	Westerkwartier Initiative Group	Project
National farmers union	Groningen Province, Ministry of Agriculture, Economy and Innovation (NUTS II)	Agriculture	Advisor, process manager, expertise, network incubation	?	LAU II	Farmers Union, Government Service for Land and Water Management	Assignment for NGO
Touristic catalysts	LAG (LAU II)	Tourism	Network incubators, facilitators, advisors	?	LAU II	Advisors	Project
NGO Association Groningen Villages	Groningen Province (NUTS II)	Civic & Community Development	Network incubator, advisor, process manager	?	LAU II/ NUTS II	NGO	Assignment for NGO
Mentoringnetzwerk Lausitz	Saxon State Ministry for Science and Arts (NUTS I)		Networking, Advice, Expertise, Training	?	NUTS III	Private Companies; Public Authorities and Companies	Project
Portas Abertas NGO	LAG in LEADER I and II (LAU I/II)	Civic & Community Development	Networking, incubators, advice, expertise	?	LAU II	NGO national association	Assignment for NGO

Get-togethers can also be organised and networks incubated by means of development projects. Examples for the use of development projects to realize social infrastructures were found in the Westerkwartier. Here, three development workers were contracted to work as **catalysts** to incubate networks of touristic entrepreneurs in the Westerkwartier. Furthermore, the Westerkwartier Initiative Group organises a number of themed **rural cafés** throughout the year where initiators and citizens can meet, discuss and form new development ideas. Both projects are realized using LEADER funds. NGOs are also used as operational agents to operationalize arrangements to support and facilitate the social infrastructure. In the Westerkwartier, for example, the **Association Groningen Villages** and the local representative of the **national farmers union** have both been assigned to act as network incubators. In the Comarca de Verín, the NGO

Portas Abertas was stated as an important operational interface for initiating networking activities amongst grassroots development initiators. Interestingly, in Oberlausitz, County Roscommon and Saarland the engagement of initiative members in political circles and advisory board was further stated as an important source of information.

d) Physical Infrastructure

Finally, learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives can also be supported by providing a physical infrastructure; i.e. places to meet. As table 8.6 shows, in the Westerkwartier for example, the LAG has agreed to use LEADER funds and an empty building of Grootegast municipality to create a low-threshold access point for local initiators to contact public administration. Within this **rural house**, almost all operational agents and agencies operating in the Westerkwartier are represented in a single, low-threshold access point to public administration.

Table 8-6 Arrangements to provide physical infrastructures

Name	Founding partners (scale)	Arrangement				Operational interface	
		Beneficiaries	Type of support and facilitation	Procedures	Scale	Operational agents	Shape of interface
Rural house	LAG; Grootegast municipality	All initiatives	Meeting space, low-threshold access point to public administration	?	LAU II	Expert team	LEADER project
Centre for Coop. Dev.	Regional Government (then INTERREG III and IIIa; ERDF, DESQOOP); GDR MONTEVAL in LEADER I and II)	Local enterprises, cooperatives, AGACA	Office rooms, meeting space	?	LAU II	Local enterprise, cooperative, AGACA	Contract

In the Comarca de Verín a **Centre for cooperation in development** has been established using various European development funding. Also this centre is meant to be a place for grassroots development initiatives to meet and exchange information. In contrast to the Westerkwartier, however, the centre is underused. Only a couple of activities are taking profit of the infrastructure, one of the grassroots development initiators Biocoop and AGACA, the Galician Association of Cooperatives. Apart from these two examples, in other CSAs

public administration was also stated to open their premises for meetings of local grassroots development initiatives.

9 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the question of how support and facilitation for learning and innovation can best be arranged will be discussed with reference to the evaluation of the different identified arrangements by its beneficiaries. The discussion will be divided into two parts. First, the evaluation of the formal shape of agreements will be discussed followed by a discussion of different shapes of operational interfaces.

9.1 Formal shape of agreements

With regard to procedures, rules and regulations, grassroots development initiatives stated that the provision of financial support, particularly with regard to LEADER is linked to too much bureaucracy, rules and too many regulations. Supporting this criticism, grassroots initiators in the Westerkwartier contended that the process of writing subsidy requests is further complicated because of having to interpret and apply the necessary grant-writing terminology, placing unrealistic demands upon what are voluntary workers. In addition, it was remarked that the prerequisite to form a legal entity in order to obtain support has a negative effect on the motivation to continue with the initiative. Also in Alytus County it was remarked that the need to form legal entities would restrict individuals with development initiatives serving public goods to pursue their development activities. Similarly, in County Roscommon and Oberlausitz, grassroots development initiators stated increasing difficulties in obtaining financial support, also due to changing agendas of the funding bodies. They contended that it had become increasingly difficult to formulate own development goals since the grassroots development initiatives have to adapt to the changing prerequisites of the funding bodies. In addition, in the Oberlausitz and Alytus County, funding periods were criticized as being too short-termed to facilitate development. It was thus remarked that instead of focussing only on initiating development initiatives, financial aid should also be provided to keeping them running. Furthermore, in the Comarca de Verín, the way funds are managed and distributed has become part of the local political power struggle. Grassroots development initiators thus remarked that despite the increased provision of development funds in recent years, the grassroots development initiators in the Comarca experience the effects of a lack of finances, lack of

demographic structure and a lack of training & education to advance rural development in the region. Initiators argued that in the current situation rural development is jeopardized and creates pessimism amongst the rural grassroots development initiators: "*Rural development is a joke. Not even politicians believe in it*" (Interviewee Comarca de Verín).

The results suggest further that an adequate scale of governance is crucial for arranging well-working support and facilitation for learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives. The scale at which operational interfaces can best be realized depends largely on the regional context (e.g. population density, geographic characteristics, density of initiatives etc). The results show that finding the right scale of governance is difficult. In the Westerkwartier, supporters contended that the division of the Westerkwartier into four separate administrative units (here municipalities) was hindering development processes. It was thus argued that more cooperation is needed across borders of administrative units to encourage the support and facilitation of grassroots development initiatives by public administration. It was therefore concluded that the current decentralisation process proves to be inefficient. In contrast, in the Direktionsbezirk Dresden where three independent districts and a district-free city were recently merged to form a larger administrative unit (district Görlitz), supporters stated that the merging makes it more difficult to reach grassroots development initiatives, implying the use of smaller units for development. More information needs to be collected on adequate scales in the different CSAs but the results already suggest that finding the right scale of governance is a crucial factor for arranging well-working support and facilitation for learning and innovation.

9.2 Operational interfaces

The comparative analysis has shown that agreements to support and facilitate learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives are operationalized through diverse operational actors and agencies. In some cases, state agencies are realizing the agreed upon support and facilitation but in other cases, limited companies, private development advisors, NGOS, public or private knowledge institutes or informal contacts of grassroots development initiators are more important for stimulating learning and innovation. In Alytus County and the Westerkwartier it was also shown that older grassroots development initiatives

can become supporters and facilitators of younger, starting grassroots development initiatives. The comparative analysis also suggests that in areas where a decentralisation occurs less state agencies are involved in operationalizing agreements to support and facilitate learning and innovation. Instead, learning and innovation appears to be governed more locally with funds being sought for from different rural development programmes and operational interfaces created on project bases. Depending on the type of operational agents and agencies, also the duration of the arrangements differs between the different CSAs. Whereas agreements involving assigned state agencies can have a long-term character (e.g. the Saxon Development Bank in Dresden or Teagasc and POBAL in County Roscommon), most operational interfaces are short-term, with duration dependent on the length of financial support. Grassroots development initiatives are thus confronted with an on-going pressure to develop new operational interfaces for the subsequent funding periods. For example, in the CSA Dresden, financial support is often provided on an annual basis. Thus, operational interfaces have to be negotiated continuously. In addition, national, regional, and local legislation as well as ERDF/ESF funding periods have a strong influence on the duration of operational interfaces.

Looking at the task and roles of the different operational agents and agencies, all interviewed grassroots development initiators were unsure about the use of research programmes carried out by public knowledge institutes for the development of their initiatives. It was, for example, commonly stated that public knowledge institutes brought their own research questions into the region instead of investigating regional research questions of the initiators. Consequently, the use of scientific research and the applicability to the work of the initiatives was questioned frequently. In addition, in the Westerkwartier, it was further stated that the establishment of contact with public knowledge institutes was difficult to establish and maintain. One initiator who was previously involved in a public research project in the Westerkwartier further argued that the involvement of public knowledge institutes with regional research questions is unattractive for the knowledge institutes due to a lack of adequate compensation. The person also criticised the fact that public knowledge workers often lack the competences, time and finances to engage with regional research questions. Nevertheless, the engagement in projects with public knowledge institutes has also had a positive effect in the Westerkwartier,

causing the regional stakeholders to collaborate with each other, beyond sector borders. In Oberlausitz, it was further remarked that the use of scientific networks to raise awareness for regional development problems was costly for the initiatives. Nevertheless, the beneficiaries evaluated this feature positively. It was, for example, stated that public knowledge institutes are a good source for providing students as interns, grassroots development initiatives value the cheap, helpful labour and new knowledge that these students bring with them. With regard to scientific knowledge, the initiatives evaluate the availability of the latest knowledge and expertise as well as the use of external opinions as positive.

In County Roscommon state agencies, working for public administration incorporate a public knowledge function into their remit. They enjoy a high reputation among grassroots development initiatives for their support in this regard. In the Comarca de Verín, however, where state agencies also incorporate knowledge functions, the beneficiaries stated that the available knowledge from technicians working for public administration is regarded as too slow and out-dated.

With regard to private agencies and agents and NGOs, their support and facilitation was evaluated positive across all CSAs. It was, however, remarked that grassroots development initiatives often lack the finances to engage with private institutes and agents, hence this option was often not a priority.

Private agents and agencies are often sought for through informal networks and coincidental encounters. These were organized by all types of operating agents ranging from public administration, NGOs to citizen groups. Stimulating informal networking activities can therefore be considered as extremely important to support and facilitating learning and innovation in grassroots development initiatives. In the Comarca de Verín, all initiators thus valued the assistance of public administration to facilitate fair visits, incidental encounters and informal networks which were argued to be highly important for experience and knowledge exchange. Beneficiaries in the Oberlausitz and County Roscommon stated that the informal networking activities of initiative members within advisory boards and other political parties were regarded as important because contacts established through networking activities extended over longer periods. In County Roscommon two types of networks were distinguished, formal and informal. Formal arrangements via memberships on the management boards of

certain supporting agencies were regarded as particularly important for ensuring a formalized networking platform. Informal networks of key personnel were seen as providing access to important expertise. On a downside, beneficiaries in the Westerkwartier remarked that the building and maintenance of networks was a difficult, time- and energy-consuming process. In the Oberlausitz it was further stated that network meetings organized by funding bodies do not lead to sustainable connections due to their artificial character and the lack of personal interests of partners.

10 SYNTHESIS

Arrangements to support and facilitate learning and innovation consist of two interrelated parts: *constitutive agreements* and *operational interfaces*. Constitutive agreements are made by founding (private and public) partners concerning a) the formal shaping of the interface, i.e. what development activities or initiators should benefit from public support, b) the scale of governance, c) what types of support will be provided and d) procedures, rules and regulations attached to the provision of the support. Next to a constitutive agreement, an arrangement therefore also includes the creation of an operational interface specifying a) the operational tasks and roles that can subsequently be delegated to b) operational agents and agencies.

- The effect of policy arrangements on capacity building within grassroots development initiatives depends largely on its' relation to and interaction with basic processes in an area and grassroots development initiatives in particular. This is also important if grassroots development activities are not directly following the timing and goals of political priorities.
- The successfulness of arrangements to support and facilitate learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives depends largely on the operational interfaces created, operating and mediating between different worlds: the 'world' of public administration, public officers and public policies (i.e. government) on the one hand and the 'world' of on-going (development) activities of various (regional) actors on the other hand. This might imply also the engagement of a third 'world' of (public) knowledge institutes and (public/private) agencies and agents arranging and facilitating learning and innovation might operate in between policies
- Concerning the beneficiaries targeted and support and facilitation provided, the results have shown that there are different policies and programmes to stimulate learning and innovation in rural areas. These are often sector-oriented and work separately from each other. Often, separate operational interfaces are created to operationalize the different policies and programmes, targeting different beneficiaries and provided different kinds of support and facilitation. In some CSAs, interfaces have been installed to attempt to integrate different policy interventions, thus ensuring an

integrated regional approach to learning and innovation. Examples of well working integrated regional approaches are the RIDC; Expert team and Saxon Development Bank.

- Concerning procedures, rules and regulations, too much bureaucracy, too many rules and too many regulations suffocate initiatives in the germ. In relation to this, the difficult grant-writing terminology was often stated as too much work for what are voluntary members of grassroots development initiatives. Also, public administration was stated to have too much power in decision making.
- Concerning the scale of governance: Almost all operational agents are working at LAU I/II scale, except in the Direktionsbezirk Dresden where they work at NUTS II level. However, due to different regional contexts (e.g. demography, geographical characteristics) the current scales of government are adequate to reach grassroots development initiatives vary between the different CSAs. The scale of governance appears thus to be crucial and needs to be carefully thought through when designing policy arrangements.
- Concerning the operational agents and agencies as well as their tasks and roles, it appears that the choice for the operational agents and agencies is very important and dependent on the type of support and facilitation provided. It has thus been shown that besides state agencies also NGOs, private advisors and informal contact can be assigned to provide this type of support, working much better than when carried out by state agencies. Though not only the choice for the operational agents and agencies is important. It is equally important to equip them with some decisive power with regards to the ability to provide funding to grassroots development initiatives and when deciding on the beneficiaries. If not, the support and facilitation processes become 'politicalized' and grassroots development initiatives have to adapt their development aims to changing political agendas. This constrains the support for bottom-up development initiatives. Well-working practises of equipping operational agents and agencies with decisive powers are, for example, the catalysts and expert team in the Westerkwartier.
- The shape of the operational interface, varies from assignments by partnerships to NGOs and state agencies to limited companies and

development projects. The variation of shapes of operational interfaces increases with decreasing scale of governance.

Since this study is concerned with supporting and facilitating learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives, the role of the knowledge infrastructure needs to receive special attention. It is interesting to note that the involvement of the knowledge infrastructure is organised differently across the CSAs. In County Roscommon and Aylus County, state agencies are fulfilling the function of the knowledge infrastructure. These services are generally evaluated positively by their beneficiaries. The more decentralised the government, however, the more privatised support and facilitation for learning and innovation become. Here, public knowledge institutes are often involved with grassroots development initiatives through short-termed projects. The short-term visions of projects, however, appear inadequate to contribute constructively to rural regional learning. The use of getting involved with public knowledge institutes was also often questioned by the beneficiaries since the alignment of regional and scientific research questions appears to be missing. Private advisors were also hired by the grassroots development initiatives. Their support was generally evaluated as positively although their services were not open to all grassroots development initiatives due to financial constraints. Furthermore, apart from formally arranged support and facilitation for learning and innovation, informal networking possibilities appear to be extremely important to stimulate learning and innovation within grassroots development initiatives. Examples of how to stimulate social networking successfully is by organising rural cafés or by being a board member in the management of different supporting and facilitating agencies.

The results thus show that in arranging public support and facilitation three basic components have to be considered: a) the formal shaping of the interface, b) the scale of governance (e.g. a territory, a business sector, a community or a specific group or development topic) and c) the delegation of specific operational tasks and roles to agents and agencies. Depending on the scope of the policy (fields of development, specific development activities, target groups or business sectors and so on) a well balanced mix of these three components has to be composed to make it work. In addition the arrangement must be attuned to the specific regional context to make the interface actually work, bridging and

connecting the different 'worlds'. It is therefore not possible to single out one good practise in arranging support and facilitation for joint learning and innovation in rural areas. The analysis learned that there is no single recipe, but a repertoire of practices to draw upon.

In addition to Task 4-2, in this report already a part of Task 4.3 Synthesised analysis and best practice has been done, including M4.4 Regional best practises selected and described. For a selection of the identified good or promising practises across the CSA the specific composure of arrangements and operational interfaces will be revealed more in depth, comparing them with similar arrangements and operational interfaces across case study areas. This will result in D4.3 Summary of best practice examples.