



Manufacturing Science and Education 2025

ACTA TECHNICA NAPOCENSIS

Series: Applied Mathematics, Mechanics, and Engineering

Vol. 68, Issue Special III, August, 2025

TRANSFER OF QUALIFIED KNOWLEDGE AND FOCUS ON INNOVATION WITHIN THE NORTH-EAST REGION LAG

Andrei PRIGOREANU, Ion VERZEA, Stejărel BREZULEANU

Abstract: LEADER is an essential tool for rural development, facilitating cooperation between local actors and promoting innovation through Local Action Groups. The study analyzes the impact of skills transfer and innovation within the LAGs in the North-East Region, highlighting their role in stimulating sustainable local development. Thus, the study emphasizes the importance of partnerships between public institutions, the private sector and local communities in the implementation of development strategies, and the main barriers identified are bureaucratic constraints and limited resources. The results suggest the need for strengthened support for LAGs in order to optimize the innovation process and increase the efficiency of rural development programs.

Keywords: LEADER, Local Action Groups, rural development, innovation, knowledge transfer.

1. INTRODUCTION

The LEADER initiative has proven to be a key driver for stimulating both economic and social progress in rural regions across Romania. Its role in bridging urban–rural disparities and enhancing social inclusion is widely acknowledged [11]. Nonetheless, recent evaluations show that the current local development capacities do not adequately meet the distinct needs of rural communities, particularly when it comes to effective public-private partnerships. In this light, it becomes necessary to reinforce a strategic and integrated approach to development—one that is community-led and tailored to local specificities. The application of LEADER principles and the establishment of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in Romania began during the 2007–2013 programming period, as part of the National Rural Development Programme (NRDP). During the 2011–2012 selection rounds, a total of 163 LAGs were chosen, covering an area of approximately 142,000 km², which represents 63% of the eligible territory and around 58% of the targeted rural population [12].

Looking ahead to the next programming cycle, the primary objective is to expand the application of LEADER principles throughout the entire eligible area, even if this comes with a reduction in the number of LAGs. The purpose is to ensure balanced territorial development by achieving a critical mass for the efficient implementation of local strategies, while also minimizing operational and administrative costs. Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) provides a flexible framework that empowers local actors to craft strategies aligned with the specific needs and resources of their territories. These strategies are built upon comprehensive regional analyses and aim to implement coherent, place-based measures that capitalize on endogenous assets [14].

LEADER primarily targets rural communities and small towns with populations below 20,000, aiming to support innovative, cross-sectoral, and integrated projects. These initiatives contribute to the broader goals set by the Europe 2020 Strategy, particularly in fostering sustainable and inclusive growth [15]. From a funding perspective, urban projects (in towns with more than 20,000 residents) are supported via the ERDF and ESF through the DLRC–ROP mechanism, while LAGs operating

in rural and semi-urban areas are financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), via the NRDP. Hence, LEADER is mostly backed by EAFRD resources. During the 2007–2013 programming period, one major limitation emerged in the form of a very short application window for broadband infrastructure investments. The requirement to sign funding contracts by 30 June 2014, coupled with technical eligibility constraints, resulted in numerous rejected applications. In the current programming period, however, such restrictions have been lifted, allowing LAGs to more effectively incorporate broadband infrastructure into their local development strategies. Initially, the Partnership Agreement allocated €25 million to support broadband infrastructure projects. However, based on the needs identified within local development strategies, this budget may increase up to €35 million to ensure broader coverage [1]. The NRDP's mid-term evaluation should include a territorial analysis of rural areas still left outside EU 2020 digital infrastructure targets. Where gaps persist, additional funding may be allocated to ensure more equitable and sustainable development outcomes.

Experience gained from the 2007–2013 NRDP confirms that financing mechanisms that harness local resources and emphasize territorial specificities play a critical role in preserving the innovative identity of the LEADER approach [6]. In line with the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy and NRDP, LEADER continues to promote tailored, bottom-up development solutions rooted in the distinct needs of each local area. What distinguishes LEADER is its focus on empowering local initiatives that identify real community challenges and translate them into actionable solutions. This methodology supports long-term sustainability in rural regions and facilitates both economic growth and social integration [2,3].

This study aims to explore how knowledge transfer and innovation are integrated into the functioning of Local Action Groups in Romania's North-East Region. It relies on documentary analysis of LEADER implementation, examining European and national legislation, local strategies, and NRDP implementation reports. The research identifies

core challenges such as inter-institutional collaboration, access to financial resources, and administrative constraints, and evaluates how these factors impact the capacity of LAGs to facilitate innovation and support sustainable rural development. In participatory local development, knowledge transfer is the process by which technical expertise, experiences and good practices are disseminated among local actors – authorities, farmers, NGOs, businesses and academic institutions. This process is essential for the sustainability and innovation of projects implemented by Local Action Groups (LAGs).

Innovation, in turn, involves introducing new ideas, methods or technologies adapted to the local context and designed to meet the needs of the community. Within LEADER, innovation does not only mean advanced technologies, but above all new approaches to organisation, partnerships, community involvement or service provision. European regulations emphasise that local development strategies must include innovative elements tailored to the specific characteristics of the territory and facilitate networking and cooperation between local actors. In this sense, knowledge transfer is a fundamental prerequisite for innovation, and LAGs become support platforms, not just financiers. From this perspective, the study aims to analyse how these two concepts are reflected in the practical reality of LAGs in the North-East Region, as well as the barriers that limit their applicability.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to conduct an in-depth examination of the ways in which knowledge transfer and innovation contribute to sustainable rural development within the framework of Local Action Groups (LAGs) operating in Romania's North-East Development Region. This investigation is carried out in the context of implementing the LEADER programme, a European initiative known for promoting bottom-up development, local partnerships, and innovative solutions for rural areas. The study specifically focuses on how these two key concepts—knowledge transfer and innovation—are integrated into the

design and implementation of local development strategies (LDS) and what impact they have on the operational effectiveness of LAGs.

To achieve this goal, the research employs a qualitative, exploratory methodological approach, grounded in documentary analysis. This method allows for a comprehensive and interpretative understanding of how LAGs function at the intersection of European policy objectives and local realities. Unlike statistical or quantitative approaches, which measure outputs in numerical terms, this method emphasizes contextual interpretation and conceptual exploration, offering valuable insights into processes, intentions, and challenges.

A qualitative approach was selected due to the complexity of institutional and strategic frameworks that govern LAG activities, as well as the non-standardized nature of innovation and knowledge dissemination in rural development. The LEADER approach, by design, permits each LAG to develop a unique strategy adapted to the specificities of its territory. As such, understanding how innovation is interpreted and how knowledge is transferred among actors requires a flexible and nuanced method capable of capturing local variation. Moreover, the exploratory nature of the study is justified by the limited number of empirical analyses focusing specifically on the North-East Region of Romania in this field. The research is intended not to validate a hypothesis, but to generate structured insights and identify patterns, barriers, and enabling factors based on publicly accessible strategic and operational documentation.

The study relies exclusively on documentary sources, both primary and secondary, that are publicly available and directly relevant to the thematic focus. These sources include:

- European and national regulations governing rural development and LEADER implementation—such as Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 on the common provisions for European Structural and Investment Funds and Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 on support for rural development through the EAFRD. These documents outline the general

legislative and financial framework within which LAGs must operate.

- Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) Guidelines, as well as methodological guides and operational handbooks published by the European Commission and the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, which provide interpretative and procedural tools for LAGs to translate regulatory objectives into practice.
- Local Development Strategies (LDS) drafted and published by LAGs within the North-East Region, which contain concrete objectives, planned measures, funding allocations, evaluation indicators, and descriptions of stakeholder engagement processes. These documents serve as the main corpus for textual and content analysis.
- Implementation reports and monitoring documents of the National Rural Development Programme (PNDR), which include summaries of results, performance evaluations, and financial progress reports related to LEADER measures.
- Academic and scientific publications that provide theoretical and empirical perspectives on rural development, LEADER implementation, and innovation management. Relevant literature includes works by Brezuleanu, Crunțeanu, Gargano, Dwyer, and other authors cited in the reference section.

To ensure relevance and consistency, only LAGs meeting specific criteria were selected for analysis. These criteria are:

1. The LAG is geographically situated in the North-East Development Region of Romania.
2. It has developed and officially published at least one Local Development Strategy (LDS).
3. The LAG has participated in a minimum of two programming cycles: either 2014–2020 and/or 2021–2027, thereby demonstrating continuity and experience in strategy implementation.
4. It has made publicly available documents detailing projects implemented, funding allocations, and/or partnership activities,

ensuring transparency and allowing for comparison.

This selection framework supports the comparability of cases and offers a solid base for cross-sectional analysis of how LAGs conceptualize and operationalize innovation and knowledge transfer.

The analysis was conducted in four structured stages, aimed at progressively narrowing the scope and deepening the understanding of the research subject:

- Identification of key concepts:
- Extraction and classification of relevant information:
- Comparative assessment:
 - Integration and interpretation:
 - Several limitations inherent to the chosen methodology were acknowledged:

The study is not based on fieldwork, such as interviews or surveys with stakeholders, which would have offered additional depth and real-time perspectives. As such, it captures only the documented and formal dimensions of strategy and project implementation.

There is uneven transparency among LAGs in the North-East Region. While some publish comprehensive documentation, others provide only minimal information, affecting the comparability of data.

The administrative complexity and technical language used in strategies and regulations sometimes limit the clarity of innovation-related content, requiring interpretive caution in data extraction. Despite these constraints, the methodological approach remains robust in offering a structured, evidence-based view of how LAGs in the North-East Region approach their role as facilitators of innovation and agents of knowledge transfer under the LEADER framework.

3. LEADER PROGRAM: DRIVING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The LEADER program is designed to support the development of sub-regional territories through the active involvement of local actors in the elaboration and implementation of local development strategies. These strategies must contain innovative elements adapted to the

specific features of each community. Although the LEADER programme has as its central objective the promotion of innovation and local cooperation, a documentary analysis of the LAG strategies in the North-East Region reveals a fragmented and often formal application of these principles. In most cases, innovation is presented in a generic manner in the strategic documents, without a clear definition of the type of innovation targeted (technological, organisational, social) or the concrete ways in which the LAGs intend to support it. This indicates a limited or uneven understanding of the concept of innovation at the local level.

Knowledge transfer, although theoretically present in the strategies, is rarely translated into specific training, mentoring or inter-institutional cooperation actions. For example, clear partnerships with universities, chambers of agriculture or research institutions are rarely provided for, and local animation activities, which are essential for disseminating knowledge, are not always adequately budgeted or strategically planned.

Another important aspect is that project selection does not always reflect the prioritisation of innovative initiatives. In many of the calls for projects launched by LAGs, the scoring criteria do not clearly favour innovation or the transfer of good practices. Thus, innovation remains a topic of discussion rather than an active tool for local development. At the same time, there are significant differences between LAGs in terms of implementation capacity.

From a rural development policy perspective, LEADER contributes directly to the objectives of Priority 6: "Social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development" - as well as to Focal Area 6B, which focuses on promoting local development, thus LEADER interventions directly target social inclusion, poverty reduction and stimulating economic development at local level [7] (Figure 1).

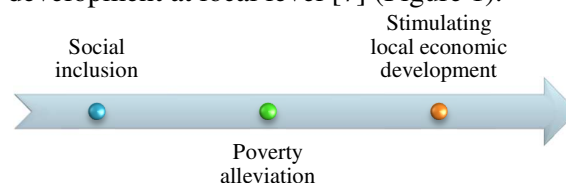


Fig. 1. LEADER interventions.

The program also contributes to other priorities and strategic directions in EU rural development, either directly or indirectly, based on its integration within rural development schemes. Out of the 110 RDP programs approved in EU Member States, LEADER has been put into practice in 108, thereby reaching 54% of the rural population through local development strategies.

Over time, the LEADER initiative has undergone several transformations—from its beginnings as the LEADER Community Initiative, followed by LEADER II and LEADER+, to its integration into the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy starting in 2007, and its subsequent evolution into Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) under the DLRC framework since 2014. Despite these structural shifts, the promotion of local innovation has consistently remained a fundamental objective of the program [5]. However, the mainstreaming of LEADER into the broader rural development policy framework has brought increased administrative complexity. Since 2007, the project implementation process and the operational activities of Local Action Groups (LAGs) have become more burdened with formalities and reporting duties.

Innovation itself is interpreted in diverse ways, often based on geographic or thematic dimensions—such as regional, local, or technological innovation. Within the LEADER context, innovation is best understood as the introduction of new ideas or practices that are designed to align closely with the specific features of the LAG's strategy and the distinctive needs of its territory. The focus is not necessarily on technological novelty, but rather on the suitability and originality of the approach in responding to local challenges (Figure 2).

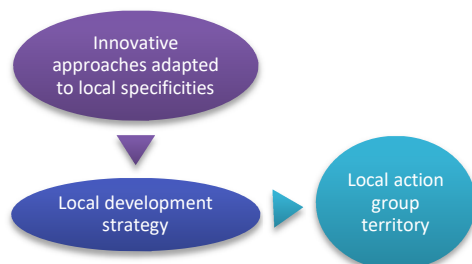


Fig. 2. Approach to defining innovation in LEADER.

In rural regions, innovation promoted through the LEADER initiative is primarily realized via the development and execution of locally tailored strategies. These strategies are shaped not only by community engagement but also by specific regulatory frameworks that emphasize innovation as a central component.

According to the European Structural and Investment Funds Regulation (ESIF), Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) must be customized to reflect the unique needs and capabilities of each territory. The regulation stipulates that CLLD should incorporate innovative approaches that are context-sensitive, encourage collaboration among local stakeholders, and foster networking opportunities where appropriate (Article 32) [16].

Similarly, the Regulation on the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) outlines the European Union's priorities in the area of rural development, with Priority 6(b) being most closely aligned with the objectives of the LEADER approach. This priority highlights the need to support rural development through locally driven strategies that integrate innovation across all stages of planning and implementation (Article 5) [11].

Further guidance is provided in the Commission's 3rd edition of the Guidance on Community-Led Local Development (June 2014), which recommends that local strategies introduce original approaches or methods rather than replicating existing ones. Innovation, in this sense, can take many forms—from procedural to social or technological—and should always be assessed with respect to the specific characteristics and challenges of the local area [19].

Knowledge transfer and innovation are two fundamental concepts for sustainable local development, particularly within Local Action Groups (LAGs) supported by the LEADER programme.

Knowledge transfer consists of disseminating expertise, good practices and technical solutions among local actors (public institutions, NGOs, farmers, entrepreneurs, etc.) to support community development. This process involves: access for rural communities to specialised

information and know-how; vocational training for LAG teams and beneficiaries; partnerships with educational and research institutions; promotion of local and interregional networks for the exchange of experience.

It is an essential mechanism for innovative ideas to be understood and applied effectively in different territories.

Innovation can be supported by LAGs either through funding or facilitation — i.e. by creating an environment conducive to generating and testing ideas.

Knowledge transfer is often a prerequisite for innovation: without new information and skills, innovation remains limited. LAGs should therefore act not only as fund administrators but also as facilitators of innovation, fostering collaboration, creativity and adaptability at local level.

3. THE ROLE OF LOCAL ACTION GROUPS IN STIMULATING INNOVATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The success of innovation under LEADER is conditioned by the availability of adequate resources for local animation and capacity building activities both within the LAG and in the community served. In addition, the quality of the partnership within the LAG plays a crucial role, influencing the way the organization operates, the selection and implementation of projects, as well as the methodology used for the selection process [20] (Table 1).

Table 1
Knowledge transfer and focus on innovation within LAGs in the North-East Region.

Factor	Description
Availability of resources	Level of funding and access to resources for innovative projects;
Management and support capacity	Capacity of the LAG to effectively manage and support initiatives,
LAG team competence	Professional training and experience of the LAG team in promoting innovation;
Quality of partnerships	Relations between the LAG and other local actors (institutions, NGOs, private sector);
Local animation activities	Efforts to inform and involve the community in innovative projects;

Factor	Description
Capacity building	Creating opportunities for local skills development;
How the organization operates	Governance structure and efficiency of decision-making;
Project selection and implementation	Selection and monitoring criteria for projects supported by the LAG;
Selection methodology	Procedures used for evaluation and selection of innovation projects;

The ability of Local Action Groups (LAGs) to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate with other authorities responsible for implementing RDPs is crucial. Effective cooperation helps minimize errors, fosters trust, and enhances local innovation outcomes. A significant risk for LAGs arises when excessive time is spent on administrative and reporting tasks, diverting attention and resources away from animation and capacity building activities designed to stimulate innovation [10]. When financial resources, particularly those allocated to operational and animation costs, are limited, LAGs must explore alternative avenues for fostering innovation, such as relying on volunteers, leveraging local networks, and sharing resources with other organizations (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, local businesses). Expanding LAG resources and strengthening their capacity would increase their ability to support innovation more effectively, leading to improved project quality, reduced error rates, and diminished risk perceptions. Cultivating an innovation-driven culture at the local level is another key factor. Both the attitude and experience of local stakeholders in relation to innovative initiatives, as well as the openness of LAG decision-making bodies to change, play an important role in establishing such a culture. Another variable impacting innovation in local communities is the health and dynamics of the LAG itself. Ideally, the relationships among the LAG team, board, and potential beneficiaries as well as the interactions with the broader community should be characterized by transparency, trust, and a shared understanding of local development priorities [9]. In the absence of these conditions, successfully implementing and maintaining innovation under

LEADER becomes exceedingly challenging. External factors are also paramount, particularly the LAG's capacity to communicate and coordinate with other stakeholders involved in LEADER implementation. This capacity is shaped by regulations and procedures at the RDP level, as well as the understanding of LEADER principles by managing authorities and paying agencies. Improving coordination and fostering better comprehension of LEADER's innovation objectives can be achieved through increased collaboration among LAGs and the establishment of joint communication strategies.

When funding is limited—especially in terms of resources earmarked for operational needs and local animation—LAGs are compelled to explore alternative means of sustaining innovation. These can include mobilizing volunteers, leveraging informal local networks, or forming partnerships to share infrastructure and expertise with local governments, NGOs, or private enterprises. Enhancing the financial and human resource base of LAGs would allow for a more efficient and impactful approach to fostering innovation. It would improve the quality of supported projects, reduce implementation risks, and strengthen the long-term sustainability of initiatives. Equally important is the cultivation of a local innovation culture, one rooted in the attitudes, openness, and prior experience of community actors, and reinforced by a decision-making structure within the LAG that is receptive to change.

The internal dynamics of a LAG also play a fundamental role. Ideally, the relationships between the management team, the governing board, beneficiaries, and the wider community should be grounded in transparency, mutual trust, and shared development goals [9]. Without these relational foundations, efforts to promote or sustain innovation become significantly more difficult under the LEADER framework.

In addition to internal governance, external influences must also be considered. The LAG's capacity to collaborate with other entities involved in LEADER delivery is shaped by national RDP regulations and the degree to which managing authorities and paying agencies understand the program's innovation objectives.

Enhancing coordination mechanisms and aligning perspectives on innovation can be accomplished by fostering inter-LAG collaboration and developing joint communication frameworks [21].

Cross-border partnerships between LAGs from different EU Member States, as well as exchanges through the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD), represent valuable opportunities to strengthen knowledge transfer, enhance practical skills, and inspire innovative practices.

It is essential that local initiatives do not operate in isolation. To avoid fragmented or redundant efforts, LAGs must ensure coherence in their actions and integrate effectively with other measures under the Rural Development Programme [4]. In this regard, LAGs can serve as facilitators or catalysts, supporting a broader ecosystem of development.

Ultimately, the boundary between innovation initiated within the LAG and that which is supported externally by the LAG is often fluid. These two dimensions reinforce one another. The expertise of the LAG team and the strength of partnerships with local actors remain decisive in identifying, implementing, and scaling up innovative rural development solutions [8].

Based on the analysis of the functioning and strategies of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the North-East Region, a number of clear conclusions can be drawn, supported by the factors detailed in Table 1 and the case studies examined.

One of the most relevant findings is that the success of the innovation process is directly linked to the competence of the LAG team. Teams that include members with training in local development management and solid knowledge of European funding are able to identify innovative projects, support beneficiaries and implement strategies effectively. This was highlighted in Table 1 by the indicator on "LAG team competence" and is confirmed by the literature (e.g. Gargano, 2021 [8]).

Furthermore, active partnerships between LAGs and local actors – administrations, NGOs, academia – are a decisive factor. They facilitate not only the implementation of projects but also

the effective transfer of knowledge. LAGs operating in collaborative ecosystems demonstrate a greater capacity to stimulate sustainable initiatives through access to diverse intellectual and logistical resources.

A major obstacle identified is the lack of financial resources for animation and training activities, which are essential for stimulating innovation. With available funds directed almost exclusively towards physical investments, soft activities – which provide the basis for innovative ideas – are neglected. This imbalance reduces the capacity of LAGs to build a local culture of innovation and visibly affects the impact of the LEADER programme.

Another important issue is that the project selection methodology does not sufficiently favour innovation. Evaluation criteria often remain vague or favour conventional projects. In the absence of a differentiated approach, there is a risk that LAGs will select safe projects with low added value.

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the implementation of the LEADER Program through Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the North-East Region of Romania highlights both the potential and the current limitations in achieving sustainable rural development through innovation and knowledge transfer. Although official strategies frequently invoke these concepts, their concrete application is often superficial and uneven.

The quality of local partnerships is another key factor. Collaboration with public institutions, NGOs, educational centers, or companies is essential for the transfer of knowledge and good practices. Where these links are lacking, LAGs encounter difficulties in implementing strategies with an innovative impact. Resource constraints for soft measures such as training, community animation, and capacity building affect LAGs' ability to stimulate local entrepreneurship and creative initiatives. In addition, the project selection methodology often favors conventional solutions over innovative ones. The bureaucratic burden reduces the time and resources available for community involvement and support for innovation. For the LEADER program to truly

become a driver of innovative and inclusive rural development, it is necessary to strengthen the skills of LAG teams, support local partnerships, and ensure an institutional framework conducive to experimentation and local learning.

5. REFERENCES

- [1] Ala-Mutka, K., Review of Learning in ICT-enabled Networks and Communities, European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, ISBN 978-92-79-13753-2, ISSN 1018-5593, Luxembourg, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.2791/29644>.
- [2] Brezuleanu, C.O., Brezuleanu, M.-M., Mihalache, R., Susanu, I., Creangă, D.E., Ungureanu, E., Aspects of the contribution of the LEADER approach to rural development in Romania. Case study: North-East Development Region, Journal of Applied Life Sciences and Environment, ISSN 2285-5653, Iași, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.46909/alse-571123>.
- [3] Brezuleanu S., Prigoreanu A.-2024-Promovarea valorilor socio-economice ale Fondurilor Europene prin GAL, Conferința științifică Internațională - PROMOVAREA VALORILOR SOCIAL-ECONOMICE ÎN CONTEXTUL INTEGRĂRII EUROPENE, Ediția a 7-ea, din 06-07 decembrie 2024, Chișinău, Republica Moldova, ISBN 978-9975-3611-4-9, 3(082), pag. 9-16
- [4] Cele, M. B. G., Luescher, T. M., Wilson Fadiji, A. (Eds.), Innovation Policy at the Intersection: Global Debates and Local Experiences, HSRC Press, ISBN 978-0-7969-2591-6 (soft cover), ISBN 978-0-7969-2592-3 (pdf), Cape Town, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340504112_Innovation_Policy_at_the_Intersection_Global_Debates_and_Local_Experiences.
- [5] Crunțeanu, M. E., Comșa, M., Fîntîneru, G., The Impact of LEADER Funding in Romania, Sustainability, MDPI, ISSN 2071-1050, Switzerland, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16041503>.
- [6] Dinu, M., Pătărlăgeanu, S. R., Chiripuci, B., Constantin, M., Accessing the European funds for agriculture and rural development

- in Romania for the 2014-2020 period, Proceedings of the 14th International Conference on Business Excellence 2020, ISSN 2558-9652, <https://doi.org/10.2478/picbe-2020-0068>.
- [7] Dwyer, J., Kubinakova, K., Powell, J., Micha, E., Dunwoodie-Stirton, F., Beck, M., Gruev, K., Ghysen, A., Schuh, B., Münch, A., Brkanovic, S., Gorny, H., Mantino, F., Forcina, B., Evaluation Support Study on the Impact of LEADER on Balanced Territorial Development, European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Luxembourg, 2022, ISBN 978-92-76-41486-5, <https://doi.org/10.2762/01039>.
- [8] Gargano, G., The Bottom-Up Development Model as a Governance Instrument for the Rural Areas: The Cases of Four Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the United Kingdom and in Italy, Sustainability, MDPI, ISSN 2071-1050, Basel, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13169123>.
- [9] Kim, S., Yoon, G., An Innovation-Driven Culture in Local Government, Public Personnel Management, ISSN 0091-0260, Sage Publications, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026014568896>.
- [10] Lampkin, N., Stolze, M., Meredith, S., de Porras, M., Haller, L., Mészáros, D., Using Eco-Schemes in the New CAP: A Guide for Managing Authorities, IFOAM EU, FiBL, and IEEP, Brussels, 2020. Available at: https://www.organicseurope.bio/content/uploads/2020/06/ifoam-eco-schemes-web_compressed-1.pdf?dd.
- [11] Opria, A.-M., Roșu, L., Iașu, C., The Economic Impact of the LEADER Program in the Rural Communities of Romania, Scientific Annals of Economics and Business, ISSN 2501-3165, Romania, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.47743/saeb-2023-0026>.
- [12] Opria, A.-M., Corodescu-Roșca, E., Roșu, L., Are LEADER principles achieved in Local Action Groups? A systematic assessment of local representatives' perception, Eastern Journal of European Studies, ISSN 2068-651X (print), 2068-6633 (online), Iași, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.47743/ejes-2024-0116>.
- [13] Rubio, E., Zuleeg, F., Magdalinski, E., Pellerin-Carlin, T., Pilati, M., Ständer, P., Mainstreaming Innovation Funding in the EU Budget, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union, European Parliament, ISBN not available, Brussels, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2861/29644>.
- [14] Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), European Network for Rural Development. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/enrd-static/themes/clld/en/clld_en.html.
- [15] European Commission, REGULATION (EU) 2021/1060 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, Official Journal of the European Union, 2021. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1060>.
- [16] Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, Official Journal of the European Union, L 347, 20.12.2013, pp. 320–469. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1303>.
- [17] Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, Official Journal of the European Union, L 347, 20.12.2013, pp. 487–548. Available at: <https://www.madr.ro/docs/dezvoltare-rurala/2017/Instrument->

- financiar/Regulamentul-UE-1305-din-2013.pdf.
- [18] Guidance on Community-Led Local Development for Local Actors (Version 1: May 2014), Publications Office of the European Union, ISBN 978-92-79-34688-9, Luxembourg, 2014. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_clld_local_actors_en.pdf.
- [19] Guidance on Community-Led Local Development in European Structural and Investment Funds (Version 3: June 2014), Publications Office of the European Union, ISBN 978-92-79-38430-0, Luxembourg, 2014. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_clld_en.pdf.
- [20] European Network for Rural Development, LEADER Toolkit: Implementing LAGs and Local Strategies, European Commission, ISBN not available, Brussels, 2024. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/sites/default/files/leader-clld-implementing-lags-strategies_en.pdf.
- [21] European Network for Rural Development, Working with the LEADER Delivery System – LEADER Toolkit, European Commission, ISBN not available, Brussels, 2024. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/enrd/leader-clld/leader-toolkit/working-leader-delivery-system_en.html.

Transferul de cunoștințe calificate și accentul pe inovație în cadrul GAL din Regiunea Nord-Est

Programul LEADER reprezintă un instrument esențial pentru dezvoltarea rurală, facilitând cooperarea dintre actorii locali și promovând inovarea prin intermediul Grupurilor de Acțiune Locală. Studiul analizează impactul transferului de cunoștințe calificate și al inovației în cadrul GAL-urilor din Regiunea Nord-Est, evidențiind rolul acestora în stimularea dezvoltării locale sustenabile. Astfel în cadrul studiului se subliniază importanța parteneriatelor dintre instituțiile publice, sectorul privat și comunitățile locale în implementarea strategiilor de dezvoltare, iar principalele bariere identificate sunt constrângerile birocratice și resursele limitate. Rezultatele sugerează necesitatea unui sprijin consolidat pentru GAL-uri în vederea optimizării procesului de inovare și creșterii eficienței programelor de dezvoltare rurală.

Andrei PRIGOREANU, PhD student, Faculty of Agriculture, "Ion Ionescu de la Brad" Iasi University of Life Sciences, Mihail Sadoveanu Alley, 700489, Iasi, Romania.

Ion VERZEA, PhD, Professor, Department of Engineering and Management, The "Gheorghe Asachi" Technical University of Iasi, 700050 Iași, Romania.

Stejărel BREZULEANU, PhD, Professor, Department of Agroeconomy, Faculty of Agriculture, "Ion Ionescu de la Brad" Iasi University of Life Sciences, Mihail Sadoveanu Alley, 700489, Iasi, Romania.