



## An Overview on Success of the LEADER Approach in European Countries

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### Abstract

**Purpose-** This study aimed at identifying the successful aspects of the LEADER Approach in European countries.

**Design/methodology/approach-** The methodology in this study is a systematic overview. The statistical population of the present research consisted of 30 scientific articles on the LEADER Approach published in different journals during 2000-2017.

**Findings-** The results showed the success cases (items) of the LEADER Approach in European countries can be defined in four general categories contains: economic, social, environmental, and management dimensions. Moreover, among the successes of the LEADER Approach, the economic dimension with a rate of 38.4% has the highest percentage relative to the other dimensions. One factor behind the success of the LEADER to European countries, which is an important guide for rural development programs in Asian countries including Iran, is a very important issue of networking in the rural development process, which has recently been intensely debated in the discussions of academic and executive development spheres in the EU countries. However, the effects of LEADER vary from region to region, so any generalizations between regions are likely to be unreliable. Therefore, it is still difficult to judge its true impact on rural development.

**Originality/Value-** The LEADER Program is one of the performed programs being implemented by European Union countries in the new vision of rural development planning. When the European Union started its new program with a completely new approach, there were a lot of skeptics against the initiative based on local development. LEADER has often been praised as a successful approach to rural development, although its implementation is not without scholarly critiques.

**Keywords-** European Union, Rural development, Rural areas, Socio-economic development, LEADER Program.

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## 1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union that consists of 28 European countries. These countries, called “member states”, include the countries of Austria, Spain, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Italy, Ireland, Germany, United Kingdom<sup>1</sup>, Belgium, Bulgaria, Portugal, Denmark, Romania, Czech Republic, Sweden, France, Finland, Cyprus, Croatia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Lithuania, Malta, Hungary, Netherlands and Greece. Two official candidates in order to membership in the Union are the Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. In addition, Albania, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia are recognized as the candidate countries (European Commission, 2007). Some of the European countries such as Iceland, Switzerland, Norway, and European Russia are outside of the Union territory. In addition, some member countries in the Union such as the Faroe Islands, are not located in the territory of the Union. The area of the European Union is 4,422,773 km<sup>2</sup> and its population is about 507,890,191 million. European public policies in the field of regional and rural development and territorial cohesion play a large role in the member states. Regional and rural development policies are designed taking into account the principles of subsidiarity, partnership and additionally. According to these principles, the European Union defines general guidelines and the member states or their subnational levels develop their specific strategy and way of implementation in their Rural Development Program (RDP) within this frame (Bullmann, 1996). LEADER<sup>2</sup>, as one part of Rural Development Policy, aims to support the development of strategies at a sub-regional level to meet specific challenges of the territory (Chevalier & Dedeire, 2014) and foster cooperation in rural areas (Pollermann, 2014). Therefore, a bottom-up approach is implemented in a so-called Local Action Group (LAG) composed of stakeholders from local government, civil society and economy which steer the implementation of their local development strategy inter alia by deciding about funding of projects

(Bruckmeier, 2002; Pollermann et al., 2013; Navarro et al., 2015).

The LEADER1 approach was devised as one possibility to bring forward rural development. LEADER started in 1991 (reissued up to now four times) and is now one axis of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (Pollermann et al., 2014). In this new system an action group creates the development strategy of the rural area. These groups contain the local government, entrepreneurs, NGOs and civil associations. On the basis of the development strategy the valorization organization determines a frame amount for this action group. This action group has the right in the future, on the basis of their strategy, to announce competitions and choose the supported projects (Bitáné & Koponicsne, 2009). By reviewing related articles, LEADER effects are so different between regions and countries that any transnational or trans-regional generalization is likely to be unreliable (Papadopoulou et al., 2011). So it is still difficult to judge the real impact on socio-economic development (Saraceno, 1999; ECA, 2010).

Several studies have been conducted in the context of positive assessments, or, in other words, the success of the LEADER Approach in areas such as better collaboration, partnership, networking, innovation, as well as the local mobilization for appropriate projects. Moreover, in some other studies, the success of the LEADER to improving social capital has been emphasized. However, in addition to the positive estimates (successes of the LEADER Approach), the negative aspects (the failure of the LEADER Approach) are also apparent in some researches (e.g., Marquardt et al., 2010; Dax et al., 2013; Pollermann et al., 2014; Gitta et al., 2012; Navarro et al., 2015; Pollermann et al., 2014; Bosworth et al., 2013; Oostindie et al., 2010; Chatzitheodoridis et al., 2006).

The following cases are mentioned the weak points of the LEADER Approach: reducing the ability of the LEADER to meet the stable and changing needs of local areas through increased regulation, reducing the independence of LAGs by increasing regulation, limited implementation of innovative projects, lack of innovative projects in the

1. Britain plans to leave the European Union.

2. An acronym derived from the French “Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l’Economie Rurale”, means “Links between actions for rural development”.

LEADER Approach, lack of facilities for the implementation of innovative projects, losing motivation of performers, negative understanding by some stakeholders from the role of LEADER Program in development, reducing joint projects between areas sponsored by LEADER, increasing the influence of the local government in the LEADER Program in order to the limiting independence of the LAGs, avoid the participation of deprived groups and noncompliance between optimal local opportunities, processes and disperse of financial resources. Moreover, problems in implementing a real bottom-up approach were also reported from the Netherlands: there LEADER was seen to be strongly dominated by representatives of professional rural stakeholder organizations such as municipalities, nature organizations, water boards, farmers, organizations, tourism organizations, etc. and –therefore- relatively weakly embedded in the rural area. This LAG-composition expresses little serious political willingness to strengthen participatory rural policy delivery systems (Oostindie & van Broekhuizen, 2010). In transition countries and also in some regions in southern European countries, a weak history of collective action is reported, and the collaborative approach encouraged by LEADER not engage well. For example, in Calabria, Italy: most actors still work atomistically rather than collectively because of their lack of trust in collective action (Dargan & Shucksmith, 2008). For Hungary (Katona-Kovács et al., 2011) highlight the importance to take social animation more seriously, and that social networks, local participation, the culture of co-operation and making decisions should be improved through a clear strategic approach (Pollermann et al., 2014). The research background in the unsuccessful cases of LEADER Approach is weak, so in this research, we have only investigated the successful cases of the LEADER Approach. Many studies have carried out by researchers in this area and by use of these resources, we can survey the success cases of the LEADER in the European countries. Various

studies have been conducted in this field in the European countries from the period of 1996-2017; each of these has examined various aspects of this field by use of various methods. In this study, the conducted researches in the field of LEADER were reviewed through a meta-analysis approach in order to provide a relatively comprehensive analysis of the conducted researches in this field as well as the success cases of the LEADER Approach. The purpose of this study was to identify the success of the LEADER in European countries. To do this, after selecting the researches in this field, the successes cases of the LEADER were presented and investigated. The main question of this study is: what are the fields of the success of the LEADER Approach in European countries?

## 2. Research Theoretical Literature

### 2.1. What is the LEADER?

The LEADER Program provides context for researching the emergence of new actors and power relations in rural, especially through projectification. LEADER is an acronym for Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale, meaning “Links between the rural economy and development actions” that is a local rural development method launched in 1991 by the European Commission as a Community Initiative (Lukić & Obad, 2016; Dalma & Dugulena, 2015; Bitáné & Koponicsne, 2009).

In the 2007-2013 programming period, the LEADER has been integrated within the overall EU policy for rural development. This means that LEADER is included in the national and regional rural development programs supported by the EU (Turek Rahoveanu, 2012).

Until now there were recorded five generations of LEADER Program. Timing of LEADER Program comprises the following periods: LEADER I during 1991-1993, LEADER II for 1994-1999, LEADER+ during 2000-2006, followed by the periods 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 (table 1).

**Table 1. Generations of the LEADER Program**

LEADER Generations	Goals	Program type
LEADER I (1991-1993)	Has experienced first time the ‘bottom-up’ approach of the pilot initiative in the implementation of business plans and decisions on funding at a local level for projects of rural development.	Community Initiative

LEADER Generations	Goals	Program type
LEADER II (1994-1999)	As part of the strategy for rural areas in the National Development Plans. The main objectives were acquisition of skills and development the animation for business plans in the rural areas.	Community Initiative implemented through 102 national/regional Operational Programs
LEADER+ (2000-2006)	During this time, the Member States had had LEADER Programs as separate funds of EU level financing.	Community Initiative, implemented
LEADER+ II (2007-2013)	Starting with 2007, the Leader Approach was mainstreamed within national and regional rural development Programs. LEADER Program became part of overall EU rural development policy. It was supported by the EU, alongside with other rural development axes. From 2007, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) supports each Member State with financing for the LEADER axis within the national financial envelopes.	Obligatory RDP/ Axis 4 measure (5% resp. 2,5% for new member states)
LEADER+ III (2014-2020)	RDP 2014-2020 emphasizes on cross-cutting nature of the LEADER Program and its innovative character. LEADER Program will support innovative projects in line with the types of activities eligible for support from the RDP 2014-2020 and local community development goals	Obligatory RDP Measure 19 (5%)

LEADER Program is the fourth priority direction for financing European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and consists in implementing local development strategies for improving governance level administrative areas. The LEADER Approach is applicable in rural areas of the European Union. More than half of the EU's population lives in rural areas, representing over 90% of the European Union territory.

Cunder & Bedrac (2010), in the definition of the LEADER approach, pointing to this point: The main objectives of the LEADER Approach are the building of local capacity, new employment opportunities, diversification of activities in rural areas, stimulation of endogenous development, improvement of management in rural areas, and extension of innovation. Moreover, the specific objectives of the LEADER Approach are: participation of local communities members in the local development process and encourage innovative activities, encouraging local actors to work together with representatives of other communities within and outside the country, fostering partnerships, preparing and ensuring the implementation of local development strategies.

According to the definition of the European Commission, the LEADER Program can be characterized by seven key features, each of which is complementary to other ones and has a positive interaction with them (Turek & Rahoveanu, 2012). Moreover, Bitáné & Koponicsne (2009), Eszter (2011), Marquadet et al., (2010), Lukić & Obad (2016) have mentioned that the value of LEADER

goes beyond its symbolic importance and that it does have some real effects, at least in terms of numbers. For that reason only, it was no surprise that the EU members which acceded in the 2000 expected (and hoped) that the LEADER Program would dynamize their rural development. A quarter of a century since the beginning of LEADER, the official rhetoric of the EU praises it as a successful approach to rural development, as an example of an innovative method proven to be so useful and effective that its main principles and modus operandi have been, as of 2014, transferred to urban areas, through the "Community-Led Local Development" program (CLLD) (Regulation EU, 2013). This is the last step in Leader's development, after it was integrated (mainstreamed) into the national Rural Development Programs (RDP) of 2007-2013. Furthermore, it is a rare case in which rural development has provided the blueprint for its urban counterpart, which, Lukic and Obad would argue, already makes LEADER a success story, at least symbolically (Lukić & Obad, 2016).

European writers such as Brunori & Rossi (2007), Halfacree (2006), Cloke (2006), OECD (2006), Woods (2005) stay that rural areas take many forms and the challenges that different areas face require intelligent, regionally targeted responses. One of the strategies in the past decade in European countries has been done in practice, is the LEADER approach, while rural development supporting policies are based on a top-down approach. A LEADER plan works with a bottom-

up approach and local development. Public and private partners form a local action group at the local level. This public-private partnership generally involves one or more municipalities with local entrepreneurs, farmers, foresters and other people interested in developing their communities and improving the local environment. At least half of the partners in the local action group should belong to the private sector. Local action groups have prepared their local development plans; they will introduce them as a way of working. Best programs are selected by regional or national authorities to making support. Supportive payments could be allocated to local development strategies, operational costs of local groups for collaborative projects between them as well as for

capacity building and mobility required for a local development strategy. Local action groups under the leadership of the LEADER, and other actors in rural development are linked and their work is linked through a national-rural network. A European network makes a cooperation between national networks as well as rural development agencies and organizations at EU level (European Commission, 2007).

As there is a long history of LEADER-implementation, there is also broad experience with research about LEADER. Table 2 gives an overview of international literature about LEADER research.

**Table 2. Overview of LEADER related literature**

Country	Reference	Focus / empirical basis
Romania	<a href="#">Marquardt et al. (2010)</a>	Does the EU LEADER instrument support endogenous development and new modes of governance
Romania	<a href="#">Dalma Polgar (2015)</a>	Characteristics of LEADER Program for rural development
Romania	<a href="#">Turek Rahoveanu (2012)</a>	LEADER APPROACH" - AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
CROATIA	<a href="#">Tolić et al. (2013)</a>	IMPLEMENTATION OF LEADER MEASURES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Greek	<a href="#">Loizou et al (2014)</a>	Leader Approach Performance Assessment in Rural Region
Slovenia	<a href="#">Cunder (2010)</a>	The Leader Approach – New development opportunity for rural areas
Greece	<a href="#">Arabatzis et al. (2010)</a>	Rural development and LEADER
south transdanubian region	<a href="#">Bitáné et al (2009)</a>	LEADER activity
Hamburg	<a href="#">Pollermann et al. (2014)</a>	LAG
Germany	<a href="#">Pollermann et al. (2014)</a>	Rural Development experiences
Spain	<a href="#">Esparcia (2000)</a>	The LEADER Program and the rise of rural development
England	<a href="#">Bosworth et al. (2013)</a>	LEADER as a vehicle for neo-endogenous rural development
Italy	<a href="#">Nardone et al. (2010)</a>	Social capital
Italy	<a href="#">Osti (2000)</a>	Partnership, interactions in LAGs
France	<a href="#">Buller(2000)</a>	Creating territory, shift from LEADER I to LEADER
Denmark	<a href="#">Teilmann &amp; Thuesen (2014)</a>	LAG-municipality-interactions/ qualitative
Austria	<a href="#">Oedl-Wieser et al (2010)</a>	Influence of Mainstreaming
Spain	<a href="#">Barke &amp; Newton (1997)</a>	Administration, framework
Spain	<a href="#">Cazorla-Montero et al (2005)</a>	Rural development model

The following findings are a small excerpt, whereby the focus is to briefly present some background information for questions: what has been the success of LEADER's approach in European countries?

### 3. Research Methodology

A Systematic Overview was conducted using the qualitative method. In systematic overview studies, the analytical unit is the final report of the conducted researches. Accordingly, a list was prepared to review and select the researches for the

systematic overview, which includes the following components: title of the research, author's characteristics, date of research, research's location. The subjects of the present research consisted of 30 scientific articles on the LEADER Approach published in different journals during 2000-2017. The sample was selected randomly from the listed articles. In order to evaluate the selected articles, a special form was prepared as the form of summarization and extracting information of articles that consists of two parts. The first part

relates to the year of publication and the studied country, and the second part includes the success of the LEADER Approach in the European Union (Figure 1).

The data table, consisting of the required information fields for research, was prepared in

Excel software. By use of the data table, the process of summarization and classifying the data and the qualitative outputs can be conducted with more simplicity and accuracy.

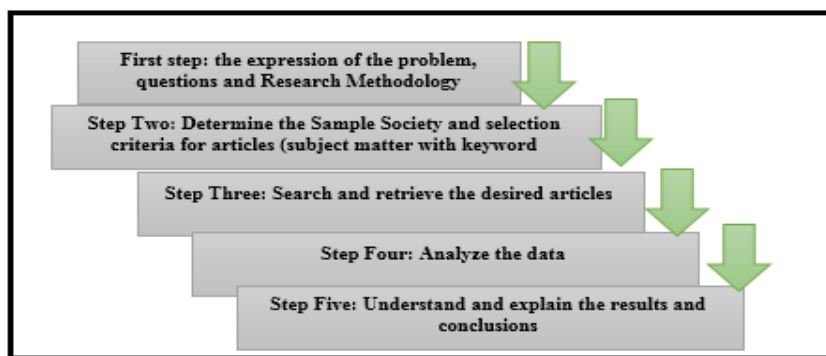


Figure 1. The process of conducting research

#### 4. Research Findings

A review on the researches shows that the starting point of the researches in the field of LEADER Approach in Europe was in the period of 1996-2000. Then, the academic community was familiar with the research needs in this field, and in this

regard, the researchers have increased in the period of 2007-2017. More than half of the research has been conducted between 2010 to 2016 years. Considering the current situation of the European countries, there is a necessity for more applied studies in this field (table 3)

Table 3. LEADER in the current research over the period 2000-2015 by the year of publication

Year	Number	Percentage
2000	1	3.33
2007	1	3.33
2009	1	3.33
2010	10	33.4
2011	1	3.33
2012	2	6.66
2013	5	16.6
2014	4	13.4
2015	4	13.4
2016	1	3.33

The articles studied in this research are from the countries Croatia, Romania, Western Balkan Countries, Greek, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Italy, France, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Bulgaria, South Trans Danubian Region, England. Among them, the approach of LEADER in Slovenia, Spain and Italy has been studied more than other countries.

#### 4.1. The Success of the LEADER Approach in European Countries

In order to investigate the success cases of the LEADER Approach in Europe, we summarize the results of the researches in a form of summarization and extraction of information. After collecting information, primary coding was done. For encoding, all the things that the authors have referred to as the successes of the approach of the LEADER, was given in a brief phrase and a code is assigned to each of these cases. In this step, 49 successes case of the performed LEADER Approach from the author's point of view were

captured. In next step, codes that have the same concept were subdivided into a code. The total categories identified as successes cases of the social, environmental, and management (table 4).

performed LEADER Approach in European countries were 4 general categories: economic,

**Table 4. The Success of the LEADER in European Countries**

(Sources: Bedrac and Cunder, 2010; Tolic and Markotic Krstinic, 2013; Loizou et al, 2014; Arabatzis et al, 2010; Gitta, 2012; Navarro et al., 2015; High and Nemes, 2007; Esparcia Perez 2000; Bosworth et al., 2013; Pollermann et al., 2013; Dargan and Shucksmith 2008; Nardone et al., 2010; Farrell and Thirion 2005; Grieve et al, 2011; Berriet et al., 2016)

Successes	Abundance	Grouping	Total		
Providing jobs for residents of the area	3		23		
Supports regional economy through budget LEADER	2				
Development of investment in large areas	2				
Diversity of rural economy	1				
Animal husbandry development	1				
The ability of the village people to create their own ideas	1				
Achieve regional development goals in the EU	1				
agricultural development	1				
tourism development	1				
Employment opportunities for educated young people	2				
The pooling of local resources	1				
Better identification of economic needs and local solutions	1				
LEADER improve the quality of life in rural areas, both for farm families and for wider rural population	1				
Work-life balance and job environment	1				
Access to basic services and access to infrastructure and services	1				
To enhance the human capital	1				
Utilization of entrepreneurial and human potential	1				
Valorization of socio-economic performance	1				
Improved ecosystem services and environmental amenities	2			environmental	6
Enhanced and improved involvement of the rural population in environmental management	1				
Environmental Protection	2				
Strengthen the natural environment	1				
Maintaining special traditions of rural areas	1			Social-Cultural	17
Through the Leader Approach, LAGS play an important role in supporting low-population areas and villages to provide information, communication and capacity building for local developers.	1				
Reduce the aging population	1				
Increasing the level of service of the village	1				
Strengthening the cultural environment	1				
Increasing participation among people and decentralizing decision-making through LAGS	1	Social-Cultural			
Social Capital	Reinforcement of regional identity and coherence			1	
	Involvement, networking and openness			1	
Cultural capital	Enhancement of cultural rural amenities			1	
	Valorization of cultural assets			1	
a better cooperation, participation, networking, innovation and linkage between different types of knowledge, valorization of actors and suitable projects fitting to the local areas	2				
Increasing capacity through innovation	1				
Better identification of social needs and local solutions	1				
transfer of knowledge between people	1				
Improved cooperation between different groups	1				

Successes		Abundance	Grouping	Total
Multi-level governance	Level of decentralization	1	Managerial	14
	Coordination between different levels of governance	1		
Local governance	Partnership composition and empowerment of local actors,	1		
	Quality of governance	1		
Improved cooperation between the municipal authorities		1		
Improved cooperation beyond administrative borders		1		
Increasing decentralization of power in rural areas, with an emphasis on local groups		3		
improved sense of acting jointly in and for the region		1		
Promoting inter-territorial and transnational cooperation		1		
The important role of LAGS in supporting low-livestock and underdeveloped villages and providing information, communication and capacity building for local development stakeholders		1		
LAGS run as a rural organization at the national level of sustainable development in small villages		1		
Mutual Learning and Integrated Approach to Solve Sophisticated Economic and Social Problems through Networking in LEADER 's Approach		1		

#### 4.2. Analysis LEADER

Generally, based on the findings in the [table 4](#), the success cases (items) of the LEADER Approach in European countries are 49 cases (items). It is necessary to mention that some parts of the successes are mentioned in many articles. Therefore, in [table 4](#), the frequency of success rate of this approach has been noticed. The frequency revealed that a successful case of LEADER Approach has been noticed in several articles. As it can be seen in [table 4](#), among the successes of the LEADER Approach, the economic dimension with a rate of 38.4% has the highest percentage among other dimensions. In this regard, firstly, the indices of this dimension are considered.

The agricultural and food sector have an important contribution to the economy of the European Union, accounting 15 million jobs, equivalent to 3.8% of the total jobs and 4/4 percent of GDP. In recent years, many rural areas in the European Union have faced a structural crisis. The traditional agricultural and forestry economy has been threatened by international rivals, changing demands of costumers, and increasing the concentration of production units. As a result, job opportunities were limited and basic human resources were weakened by the migration of young people from villages ([Khorasani et al., 2016](#)). However, political decision-makers were looking for a means to solve economic crises in rural areas of EU countries. In this regard, the LEADER Approach was recognized as a scientific tool.

Success of the LEADER approach is expected impacts on the rural economy. There are five types measures: those relating to diversification and business development, including tourism; those relating to more effective service provision, including village renewal; those relating to the upgrading of rural heritage; and those relating to training and human capital development. First part (work-life balance and job environment) includes additional local employment opportunities for farm households outside the agricultural sector, improvement of working conditions for rural population as well as job satisfaction.

The second part (access to basic services and access to infrastructure and services) includes the creation/enhancement as well as accessibility and attainability of basic services for the economy and rural population, including services offered by small or newly established enterprises or diversifying farms, which is contributing to the upgrading of rural attractiveness. The third part also (to enhance the human capital), includes capacities for local actors required for the diversification of the local economy and provision of local services. The fourth part is utilization of entrepreneurial and human potential, including broad diversification of economic activities, to stimulation of small enterprises and promoting employment. Finally, the fifth part is valorization of socio-economic performance, including the increase of economic activities linked to resources and potentials specific to the area ([Grieve et al., 2011](#)).



Another success of the LEADER Approach is rural economic diversity. Considering the economic diversity in rural areas of the European Union, that has covered a set of agricultural hubs in the world, rely on agricultural is not trustworthy. Efforts to implement rural economic diversification strategies through the gradual replacement of a common agricultural policy with a rural, agricultural, and food policy, which does not consider village as an agricultural hub, and seeks to benefit from all the capabilities of the culture, economy, environment and heritage of villages in line with the economic development of the villages, is the common feature of rural development planners in the European Union. Indeed, paying attention to the approach in this field is a significant point for specialists. Several cases have led to the lack of significance of the diversification approach of rural economies in other non-EU countries such as the unreasonable emphasis on the agricultural and rural economy, mainly due to the overcoming the mere engineering vision of rural spaces and neglect from the enormous natural and cultural heritage of the villages (Khorasani et al., 2016).

As seen in table 4, 28.4 percent of the articles mentioned the success of the LEADER Approach in the social sector. One of these successes in the social dimension is the improvement of life quality, which is divided into two parts: The first part is related to social capital, and the second part is related to cultural capital. Both of social and cultural capital are also divided into two parts. In the sense of social capital, the relevant impacts in this regard could be increased interaction, the corporate sense of actors involved, the extent or growth of solidarity between different local or regional interest groups and the density of communication structures in regions. At a wider level, the utilization of local specificities and the valorization of area specific characteristics can arise as a result of rural development activities. The awareness and strengthening of identity and image characteristics or special competences can enhance an area's popularity, also in the second part (involvement, networking and openness), the extent and intensity of involvement" in information, participation- and co-operation-structures can be considered as a result or stronger social relationships (Grieve et al., 2011).

The cultural capital is also divided into two parts. The first part is enhancement of cultural rural

amenities. The expected impacts often include the improvement of housing and living circumstances in villages, energizing and valorization them through the stimulation of businesses and residential use as well as the recreational and leisure offers. In the second part (valorization of cultural assets), different impact categories concern the enhancing of touristic, natural and cultural activities by the local heritage and the valorization of cultural assets accompanied by an increasing attractiveness of rural areas for recreation, living and cultural activities (Grieve et al., 2011). Moreover, another success of the LEADER approach is increasing capacity through innovation. the EU's innovation policy states that regional policy would be an important route for encouraging innovation (EU-Commition, 2006). Actually, innovation (in different senses) is mentioned in various pieces of literature as an important pillar for the development of rural areas or as a rescuer from problems in rural areas (Gitta et al., 2012). For example, Neumeier (2011), states that innovation is an essential aspect of finding suitable solutions for problems of rural development. Against the background of demographic change in rural areas, social innovations are regarded as one of important aspects of successful rural development (Papageorgiou, 2011). In addition, innovation has been identified as one of the five key drivers of productivity, so it is one of the key determinants of the relative economic performance of rural areas (Agarwal, 2009 and HM. Treasury, 2001). LEADER provides opportunities to realize innovative projects to try out new solutions and meet the specific needs in the region (Gitta et al., 2012). According to the authors' view, LEADER is an innovative approach within EU rural development policy, and a method of mobilizing and promoting of the rural development in local rural communities. Moreover, experience has shown that LEADER can bring significant changes in the daily life of people in rural areas. It also encourages rural territories to explore new ways to become or remain competitive, to maximum value the assets and to overcome the difficulties they may face, such as an aging population trend, low levels of services or lack of employment opportunities. Thus, LEADER improve the quality of life in rural areas, both for farm families and for wider rural population (Turek Rahoveanu, 2012).

The success of the managerial sector to the LEADER Approach with a frequency of 14 is the 3rd rank of success based on the number of articles. Rural governance is a major concern of the LEADER methodology. So the Common Evaluation and Monitoring Framework (CMEF) for EAFRD includes the question: to what extent has the LEADER Approach contributed to improving governance in rural areas? (Grieve et al., 2010). The focus of rural governance is the contributions to steering issues at the level of one LEADER-Region to support rural development. It can be defined as a network-like collaboration between local actors of three sectors (public administration, private/ economic sector and civil society) aimed at collective action (Grieve et al., 2010). In this way, another success of the LEADER approach is expected impacts on governance. The main impact of Quality of Life measures and LEADER on governance can be summarized at two levels. First part is multi-level governance and it is divided into two parts. First part, level of decentralization, assessing its 'dynamic' and innovative contributions to improved regional rural policies and empowerment of local actors (vertical integration and subsidiarity). The second part is coordination between different levels of governance, referring to any coordination networks or joint actions that have been developed or supported by the vertical level (vertical integration and co-operation). The second part of this success is local governance. It is divided into two parts: partnership composition and empowerment of local actors and quality of governance. Partnership composition and empowerment of local actors, assessing commitments of partners inside of Local Action Groups (LAG) and their support of the local development also beyond the programming period (participation, horizontal integration, legitimacy and high quality of learning mechanisms). Eventually, quality of governance, assessing transparency and common trust among participating local actors (transparency and high quality of communication and conflict management). Actually, governance in its various forms is a highly important theme when evaluating the impacts of LEADER measures. According to the CMEF documents the LEADER Approach should contribute to improve governance in rural areas. In several policy documents (EC, CoE, OECD and UNDP) the topic of good governance

has been discussed and associated with the following aspects: transparency, participation, horizontal and vertical integration, legitimacy, subsidiarity, high quality of communication and conflict management, high quality of learning mechanisms. Good governance is not only important for the successful implementation of LEADER projects, but it also contributes to improving the Quality of Life (Grieve et al., 2011). Other achievements of the LEADER Approach are improved cooperation between the municipal authorities, improved cooperation beyond administrative borders, and improved cooperation between different groups. But not only improvements in the quality of networking were mentioned but also aspects of the innovation-process itself: transfer of knowledge between people and inspiration for projects and actions and improved sense of acting jointly in and for the region (Gitta et al., 2012).

Another success aspect of the LEADER Approach is mutual learning and an integrated approach to solving complex economic and social problems through networking in the LEADER Approach. Indeed, bottom-up approach is the basis for planning in the European Union. The basis for approval and implementation of programs is the consideration of local needs, requirements, and capabilities, which are mainly implemented by the private sector in the form of projects supported by the economic and administrative sectors of European Union. In other words, the planning system in EU not only limited to providing macro strategies or some executive plans, but also the program seeks to identify and assess the capabilities and needs at the local level, find solutions to solving problems, and optimal utilization of the capabilities. It is important to establish a network of projects at the local level with completeness and high and satisfaction productivity, as well as the virtual network of these projects to share successful experiences and the use of knowledge among the people who compile these networks. Also, creating a local partnership as a local action group (LAG) is a major feature. Indeed, this group is responsible for identifying and implementing a local development strategy and deciding on the allocation of resources and its management. LAGs must use public and private contributor in an efficient manner. Rural actors active in local projects include professional organizations, citizens and trade unions, residents

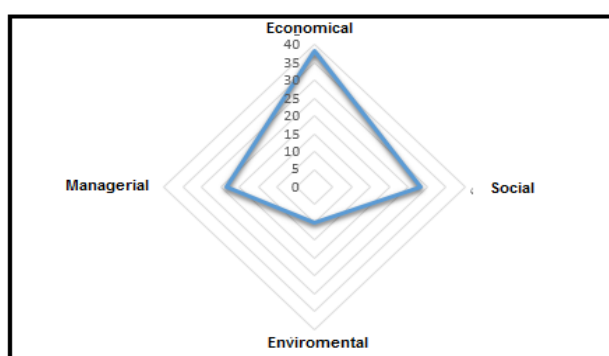
and local organizations, local political representatives, environmental associations, cultural services providers including the media and associations of women and youth. As can be seen in Table 4, the most important successes from the authors' point of view in the field of LAGs are: 1. Important role of logs in supporting low-population and undeveloped villages and providing information, communication and capacity building of people committed to local development; 2. LAGs as a rural organization at the national level, that implement the sustainable development in the small villages; 3. Creating job opportunities for educated young people; 4. Increasing participation among people and decentralization of decision making; and 5, Increasing decentralization of power in rural areas.

As can be seen in table 4, the environmental success of the LEADER Approach with 10% has the 4th rank from the author's point of view. One of the other successes of the LEADERs approach is expected impacts on the rural environment. The

main expected impact is to enhance the well-being of the population due to the improved environmental situation. This includes two main aspects first part, is improved ecosystem services and environmental amenities. This may have a direct impact on human well-being through the direct provision of goods or through the direct results of regulatory ecosystem services and supporting ecosystem services. Besides this services such as the beauty of the landscape, the overall image of the territory, the spiritual and inspirational values, shall be considered as well. The second part also includes enhanced and improved involvement of the rural population in environmental management; That can lead to increased awareness, responsibility (local and regional) and identification with their own region, its natural resources and environmental qualities as important contribution to quality of life (Grieve et al., 2011). Table 5 and figure 2 show some statistic and graphic view of the LEADER Approach based on the articles reviewed.

**Table 5. Grouping Successes**

Percentage	Abundance	Grouping the success of the Leader Approach in the European Union
38/4	23	Economical
28/4	17	social
10/0	6	environmental
23/4	14	Managerial



**Figure 2. Percentage of the success rate of the LEADER to article authors**

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

By the 1990s there were some inappropriate situations like improper contribution to GDP, villages exposed to evacuate, and the negative growth of the rural population in most of the member states of the European Union. However, the European Union meet the problems by the creation of a coherent planning system and

rebuilding the regions, instead of accepting the existing conditions, adopting a passive approach and urbanity policies, avoiding agriculture, relying on industrial and service development. Investigating the LEADER Program in the EU countries reveals that the establishment of local institutions and using their ability in the implementation of rural development programs

including the LEADER Approach, can result to a higher productivity of the LEADER due to compliance with regional needs as well as provide the platform for continuity of programs, by satisfying all influential and stakeholders groups. Perhaps the success of the LEADER Approach in the EU is due to the integration of all rural development programs. In each of European countries, each of the executive systems considers the rural development in a coordinated manner, and consider the problems of the villages in priority compared to urban issues.

Another factor behind the success of the LEADER to European countries, which is an important guide for rural development programs in Asian countries including Iran, is a very key issue of networking in the rural development process, which has recently been intensely debated in the academic and executive development spheres in the EU countries. The same look at the leadership approach of the EU shows that the creation of local institutions and the use of their power at all stages, all rural development programs can, in addition to providing higher utilization of programs. In order to adapt regional environments, the continuity of programs and the planning system through the satisfaction of all stakeholders will be provided. The negative growth of rural populations in most

of the member countries of the Union, the proposed package has created the LEADER approach in the form of economic and social organization of rural areas, will have the ability to overcome development and prosperity and improve the quality of life from other rural areas.

The success of the LEADER Approach in European countries can be defined in four general categories contains: economic, social, environmental, and management dimensions. Among them the economic dimension has the highest percentage relative to the other dimensions. However, the effects of the LEADER are so different between countries and regions that any transnational or trans-regional generalization is likely to be unreliable. Papadopoulou et al. (2011) mentioned this point. As another example, focusing on the relevance of social networks for LEADER in Romania, Marquardt et al. (2012), found that the complexity of the program, weak administrative networks, political influence, and heritage of the socialist era inhibit the smooth introduction of the LEADER instrument.

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## مروری بر موفقیت رویکرد لیدر در کشورهای اروپایی

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### چکیده مبسوط

#### ۱. مقدمه

رویکرد لیدر از جمله برنامه‌های اجرا شده و در حال اجرای کشورهای اتحادیه در چشم‌انداز نوین برنامه‌ریزی توسعه روستایی است. تاثیرات رویکرد لیدر بین مناطق و کشورها به قدری متفاوت است که هر گونه تعمیم بین‌المللی یا فرامنطقه‌ای غیر قابل اعتماد خواهد بود. بنابراین قضاوت در رابطه با تاثیرات لیدر در توسعه اقتصادی و اجتماعی و... روستاهای کشورهای اتحادیه اروپا بسیار دشوار است. با توجه به اینکه شکست‌های رویکرد لیدر در مقالات مطالعه شده بسیار کم بوده، بنابراین در پژوهش حاضر تنها به بررسی موفقیت‌های رویکرد لیدر پرداخته شده است. مطالعات و بررسی‌های بسیاری در این حوزه توسط پژوهشگران انجام شده است تا بتوان از طریق آنها به میزان موفقیت رویکرد لیدر در کشورهای اروپایی دست یافت. از سال ۱۹۹۶ تا سال ۲۰۱۷ در کشورهای اروپایی پژوهش‌های مختلفی در این زمینه انجام شده است که هر یک از آنها ابعادی از این موضوع را با شیوه‌های گوناگونی مورد بررسی قرار داده‌اند. هدف پژوهش حاضر دسته‌بندی و شناسایی موفقیت‌های رویکرد لیدر در کشورهای اروپایی می‌باشد. بر این اساس، پس از شناسایی مقالاتی که به موضوع مورد بحث پرداخته‌اند، موفقیت‌های رویکرد لیدر در نمونه‌های مورد مطالعه، ارائه شده و هر یک از آنها نیز مورد بررسی قرار گرفت. پرسش اصلی در پژوهش حاضر چنین مطرح بوده است که: موفقیت رویکرد لیدر در کشورهای اروپایی در چه زمینه‌هایی بوده است؟

#### ۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

رویکرد لیدر زمینه را برای پژوهش در مورد ظهور عوامل جدید و روابط قدرت در روستا به ویژه از راه برنامه‌ریزی فراهم می‌کند. لیدر، مخفف مشتق شده از عبارت "ارتباط بین اقتصاد روستایی و اقدامات توسعه" در زبان فرانسه است که در واقع، یک روش محلی توسعه روستایی است که در سال ۱۹۹۱ توسط کمیسیون اروپا به عنوان یک طرح محلی راه‌اندازی شد. از آن زمان به بعد، رویکرد لیدر در سیاست کلی اتحادیه اروپا برای توسعه روستایی در نظر گرفته شد. این به معنایست که لیدر در برنامه‌های توسعه روستایی ملی و منطقه‌ای از سوی اتحادیه اروپا مورد حمایت قرار گرفته است.

#### ۳. روش تحقیق

این پژوهش که از نوع فراتحلیل است، به فراخور نیاز با استفاده از روش کیفی انجام شده است. در مطالعات فراتحلیل واحد تجزیه و تحلیل، گزارش نهایی پژوهش‌های انجام شده درباره موضوع بررسی است. با توجه به این مطالب، برای بررسی و انتخاب پژوهش‌های انجام شده برای فراتحلیل فهرستی از مقاله‌ها تهیه شد که شامل این مولفه‌ها بوده است: عنوان پژوهش، مشخصات نویسنده، سال انجام پژوهش، محل اجرای پژوهش استفاده شده است. جامعه آماری پژوهش حاضر شامل (۳۰) مقاله علمی در زمینه رویکرد لیدر است که طی سال‌های (۲۰۰۰-۲۰۱۷)، در مجلات معتبر علمی به چاپ رسیده‌اند. نمونه‌ها به صورت تصادفی ساده از بین مقالات مندرج انتخاب شده‌اند. به منظور فراتحلیل مقالات انتخاب شده فرم مخصوصی با عنوان فرم تلخیص و استخراج اطلاعات مقالات تهیه شد که مشتمل بر دو بخش می‌باشد:

\* نویسنده مسئول:

دکتر حمید جلالیان

آدرس: گروه جغرافیای انسانی، دانشکده علوم جغرافیایی، دانشگاه خوارزمی، تهران، ایران.

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موفقیت‌های رویکرد لیدر در کشورهای اروپایی تشخیص داده شد، شامل: ابعاد اقتصادی، اجتماعی، زیست محیطی و مدیریتی می‌باشد. همچنین نتایج نشان داد، در بین موفقیت‌های رویکرد لیدر، بُعد اقتصادی آن با ۳۸/۴ درصد بیشترین درصد را نسبت به سایر ابعاد به خود اختصاص داده است.

#### ۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

یافته‌های به دست آمده به خوبی گویای وضعیت موجود بخش کشاورزی و جوامع روستایی در کشورهای اتحادیه اروپاست. سهم ناچیز در تولید ناخالص ملی، روستاهای رو به تخلیه، و رشد منفی جمعیت روستایی در غالب کشورهای عضو از مهمترین مسائلی است که در نگاهی اجمالی توجه را به خود جلب میکند. با این حال، اتحادیه اروپا به جای تن دادن به شرایط موجود و اتخاذ موضع منفعلانه و در پیش گرفتن سیاست‌های شهرگرایانه، کشاورزی گریزی و متکی بر توسعه صنعتی و خدماتی، با ایجاد یک نظام برنامه‌ریزی منسجم، هم به لحاظ پوشش جغرافیایی و هم به لحاظ جامعیت عملکردی و اجرایی، به استقبال تغییرات، مخاطرات و در یک کلمه بازساخت در حال وقوع در نواحی روستایی با استفاده از رویکرد لیدر رفته است.

**کلیدواژه‌ها:** اتحادیه اروپا، توسعه روستایی، نواحی روستایی، توسعه اجتماعی - اقتصادی، لیدر.

#### تشکر و قدرانی

پژوهش حاضر حامی مالی نداشته و حاصل فعالیت علمی نویسندگان است.

بخش اول مربوط به سال انتشار مقاله و کشور مورد مطالعه و بخش دوم نیز موفقیت‌های رویکرد لیدر در اتحادیه اروپا را شامل می‌شود.

#### ۴. یافته‌های پژوهش

مرور پژوهش‌های انجام شده نشان می‌دهد که در بازه زمانی ۱۹۹۶ تا ۲۰۰۰، آغاز پژوهش‌های حوزه رویکرد لیدر در اروپا بوده است و رفته رفته جامعه دانشگاهی با ضرورت‌های پژوهش در این حوزه آشنا شد و از سال ۲۰۰۷ به بعد تا سال ۲۰۱۷ این پژوهش‌ها افزایش یافت. بیش از نیمی از پژوهش‌ها در فاصله سال‌های (۲۰۱۶-۲۰۱۰) به انجام رسیده است. به نظر می‌رسد با توجه به شرایط کنونی کشورهای اروپایی، نیاز به انجام مطالعات بیشتر و کاربردی در این حوزه بیش از پیش احساس می‌شود. همچنین، بررسی‌ها نشان می‌دهد بیشترین تعداد پژوهش‌ها و مقالات در این زمینه در کشورهای (کرواسی، رومانی، بالکان غربی، یونان، ایرلند، لهستان، پرتغال، اسلوانی، ایتالیا، فرانسه، دانمارک، اسپانیا، بلغارستان، انگلیس و...) و توسط نویسندگانی از جمله (پولگار و دوگیلنا، ۲۰۱۵، آدریان؛ ۲۰۱۲، تولیک و مارکوتیک، ۲۰۱۳، لمویزو، ۲۰۱۴، اربلتزی و همکاران، ۲۰۱۰، بیرو و گیورک، ۲۰۰۹، گیتا، ۲۰۱۲، نارو و همکاران، ۲۰۱، هایگ و نامس، ۲۰۰۷، بیرولو و همکاران، ۲۰۱۲، پریز، ۲۰۰۰، بوسورث و همکاران، ۲۰۱۳، دارگان و شاکسمیت، ۲۰۰۸، میتس و همکاران، ۲۰۱۰، ناردون و همکاران، ۲۰۱۰، گریو و همکاران، ۲۰۱۱، بریت و همکاران، ۲۰۱۶)، صورت گرفته است. از بین مقالات مورد مطالعه، رویکرد لیدر در کشورهای (ایتالیا، اسپانیا، اسلوانی) بیشتر از دیگر کشورها، مورد مطالعه قرار گرفته شده است. در نهایت مجموع ابعادی که به عنوان

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