

HL-WP 2, MS 3  
Measure 2.4.03

## **Summary report about new innovative tools in planning and funding Regional policy for key potentials**

### Introduction

Regional Planning in rural areas traditionally means determination of locations and areas with different priorities for further development. These priorities in general follow an analysis of location factors, such as traffic access, environmental potentials in nature, culture, landscape, economic and social items, leading to priority zones („agriculture“, „tourism“, etc. or priority locations (Village/town with importance of ...).

A strong territorial planning would influence other sectors of public planning and funding to guarantee an efficient and effective input of money and work. But also recent experiences show that in particular ERDF- money went to investments situated outside priority zones of territorial planning, often following a real demand than a supposed chance. So sometimes development in rural areas just happened but was not planned seriously. LEADER+ activities had a closer approach to rural communities, but were not necessarily attached to territorial planning. The larger the LEADER+ area the more unlikely it was that local actions groups were able to approach to a greater number of villages. But in no case there were examples found when development activities were checked under demographic transition issues.

HINTERLAND gives with its experiences from more than 100 villages not an overall catalogue for new tools, the projects basic is too small and limited considering only 15 months of real project work. But there are the following key recommendations for further innovative tools in planning and funding:

1. A serious and detailed analysis of local demographic transition is necessary. Large spatial units cover a broad variety of individually different pre-conditions and processes on local level. To ease individual determinations the vitality check can step behind a regional curtain of decline indicators and point out details of village future.
2. Stability of local and regional development under decline is to investigate either from the vitality check or from a local potential analysis in collaboration with local people. Although local stakeholder lean on more optimistic visions of their future elements, they exactly at least know the demographic risks within their horizon. Development activities therefore should consider local knowledge and be very careful with investments in an uncertain future. A recommended tool is a local potential discussion among people with the clear request to evaluate potentials under decline issues.
3. Potentials with a remarkable stability should not be developed and in particular executed isolated but in collaboration with the local community and their direct neighbors as measures of both, individual and network-members. This is to embed as much actors and assis-

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tance in public-private investments to raise success factors for durable realization of ideas and projects. It is to work out that there is a win-win-situation for all members of a village community rather than an affair of a lucky entrepreneur. So a moderated determination of tasks and roles can improve climate of development and investments. It seems that a well organized local foresight procedure can do the sharing of roles and tasks best. On many evenings it was to observe that still well-known human attitudes like grudge have to be tamed sustainable.

4. It could be helpful to distinguish in future in wider rural areas between different types of villages, regardless their location, infrastructure and location factors. It is to consider that the typology used in HINTERLAND vitality check only works with intensive locally based investigations on decline characters, but these investigations are not executed in villages where no one is to be found as responsible local “investigator”. From this point view the typology should be completed by types with little or no activity to lead to a catalogue of villages with strong, sustainable local communities – being ready for potential development (recently found in HINTERLAND project), villages on the step to strength – worth to obtain more encouragement as candidates for HINTERLAND activities and those without any reactions on HINTERLAND offers – to be not seriously considered in further rural development.  
Severe decline will not lead to abandoned villages immediately, but it seems worth to bundle all efforts of decline management and rural development in locations with success promising qualification.
5. Urban-rural partnerships could help to qualify the process of potential exploitation. This requests more work on competitive products, which can be found in the great amount of HINTERLAND potentials. Competitive products themselves need a qualified marketing as HINTERLAND brands and a much stronger self consciousness as found recently among rural communities.
6. A last new and innovative tool should be the execution of local foresight activities. Creating a long-term oriented schedule for meetings, task definition, task-sharing and task execution with success control could bring a systematic approach to local initiatives and also keep them more stabile for the future.