SOCIETATEA BAZATA PE CUNOAȘTERE

Stepping Out from the Ivory Tower

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ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

INVESTEȘTE ÎN OAMENI

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Overview

- The Project
- LEADER in Romania
- Case study
- About social networks
- Topics for further research

„Epistemology of social networks”

3 level approach:

- the first level consists in analyzing the existing theories regarding the social networks from interdisciplinary point of view;
- the second level deals with analyzing the relationships that exists between **social capital, social capacity of the community, social networks, knowledge networks**;
- the last level is targeting the way how the rural development networks are organized in different countries and the final aim is to design different recommended models for the National Rural Development Network from Romania.

LEADER in Romania

- In the former programming period (2000-2006) Romania did not implement any Leader type measure, thus there are neither Leader LAGs funded under a national rural development programme, nor partnerships operating according to the Leader approach.
- Leader-type approach prior to the 2007-2013 programming period:
  - RuralNet – network assisting 250 communities (26 organisations) – local strategies, restoring schools, local hospitals, cultural facilities, improving the roads and bridges, Tele centers, training in writing projects etc.
  - Romanian Social Development Fund – poor communities – infrastructure, economic and social projects – establishment of public-private initiative groups and development of social capital
  - The Rural Development project – 5 counties – 104 communities – improving local governance

Twinning Project Romanian–French–German-Hungarian: **“Support the Managing Authority of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural development to prepare the rural development and fisheries programmes”**
(May 2006 – July 2007)

- The Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has pre-selected 120 areas (which covered 37 of the 42 Romanian counties) with **some experience in carrying out local projects** in order to foster the development of partnerships that will be created in order to work out local development strategies.
- Representatives of selected areas took part in two training courses regarding the implementation of the Leader approach in Romania. Each territory was represented by one person, who represented either the public, private, or non-profit sectors. Training sessions helped these representatives to acquire skills on the following subjects: building of partnerships; diagnostic analysis; local development strategy; action plan of the territory; animation activities; action plan monitoring; and evaluation.

The Ivory Tower Approach

- “These skill-building sessions should help these 120 groups to be in a good position to apply as pilot LAGs during the first phase of implementation”.
- The Master Plan (NRDP)
  - A first selection of Local Action Groups is to take place in **2009,** these representing, by the “power of example”, a stimulant and a real support for other territories or for partnerships that did not reach yet a “mature” stage followed by their participation in the last selection of LAGs.

Specific objectives aim at:

- Participation of the rural communities members in the local development process and encouraging the innovative actions (for example, new solutions for old problems, introducing and developing new products, new market systems, modernizing the traditional activities by applying new technologies, etc.) (measure 41)
- Encouraging the stakeholders at local level to work together with representatives of other communities inside the country or from abroad (measure 421)
- Fostering partnerships, preparing and assuring implementation of the local development strategies (measure 431)

The operational objectives can be found in the technical fiches of the measures 41, 421 and 431.

Fostering partnerships, preparing and assuring implementation of the local development strategies (measure 431)

- Sub-measure 431.1 supports **building of public-private partnerships**, drawing up the local development strategies and preparing the Local Development Plan in order to participate to the LAG's selection.
- Sub-measure 431.2 supports local action group for **running costs, animation and skills acquisition**.

Indicative timetable

Activities	*2009*	*2010*
Launch of call of proposal	January 2009	December 2009
Submission of dossiers	February-May 2009	January-April 2010
Selection	May-August 2009	April-July 2010
Taking the decision	August 2009	July 2010
Publication of the selected results	August 2009	July 2010
Total number of selected LAGs	40	40

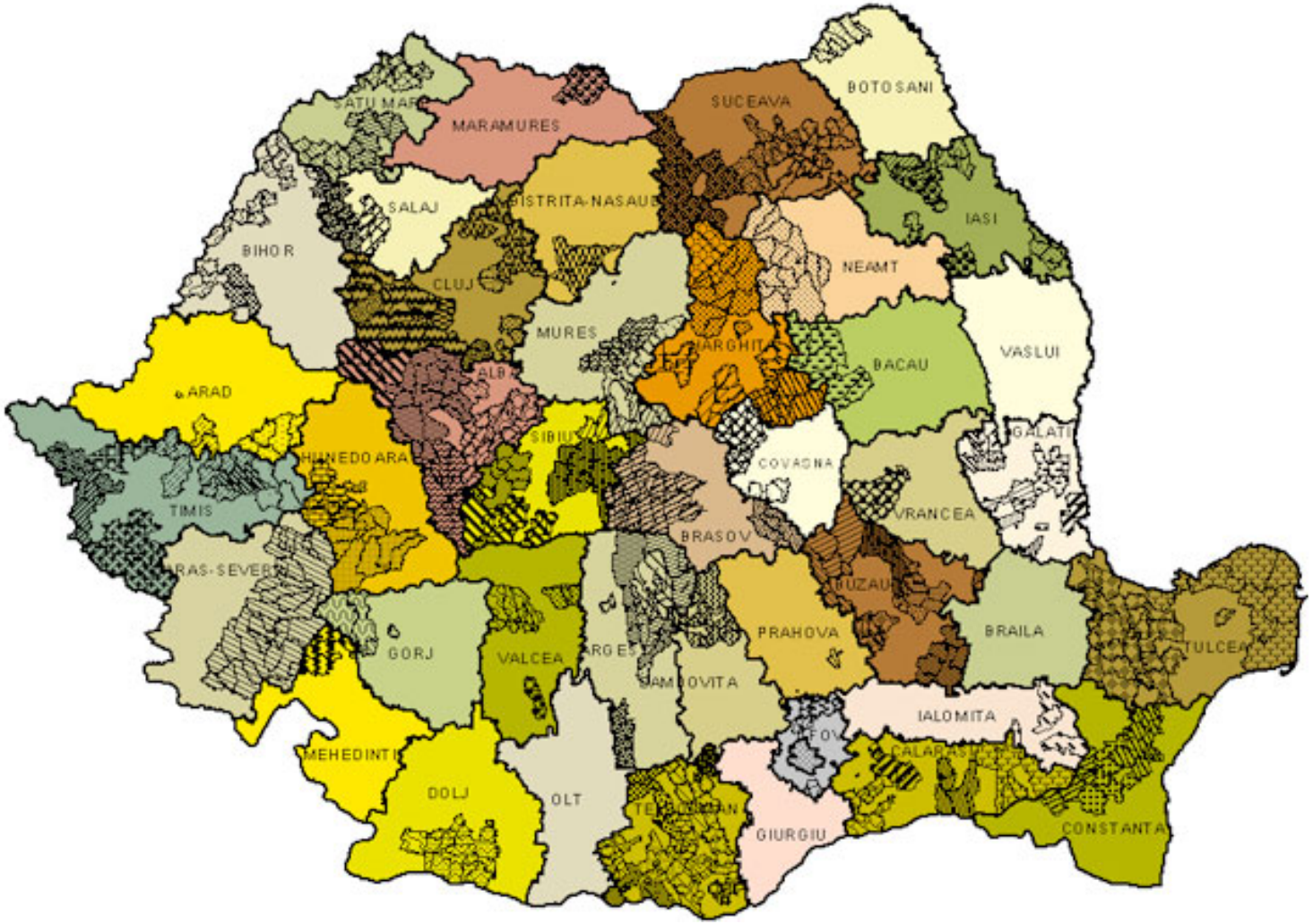
3 Phases for sub-measure 431.1 Establishing PPP

- Phase 1 – initiating local actors in LEADER approach (basic training)
- Phase 2 – focused training session on LED strategy for representatives of potential LAGs
- Phase 3 – Financial support for preparing the files for the LAG selection procedure

Reality –stepping out from the ivory tower

- In December 2009, there were selected **111 partnerships** under the measure 431, sub-measure 431.1, Phase 3, with the aim of building public-private partnerships, drawing up the local development strategies and preparing the Local Development Plan in order to participate to the LAGs' selection.
- Initially the implementation phase was established for 7 months (4 for elaborating the strategy and 3 months for the payments) – July 2010
- Phase 1 – took place in March-April 2010
- Phase 2 – June-July 2010
- The consultative version of the Guideline for the Local Development Plan was launched in August 2010
- The last deadline for the 431.1 projects August 23rd 2010
- Submission of potential LAG dossiers September 1st-October 29th 2010

120 territories selected in 2006



Importance of local knowledge based networks

- *- "Elaborating and Implementing Local Economic Development Strategy in Periurban Communities (Metropolitan Area of Iaşi)"*, funded by GRASP/USAID (2003-2004).
- The main objective of the project was to assist a targeted community (Aroneanu commune) in learning how to elaborate a local economic development strategy in participative way.

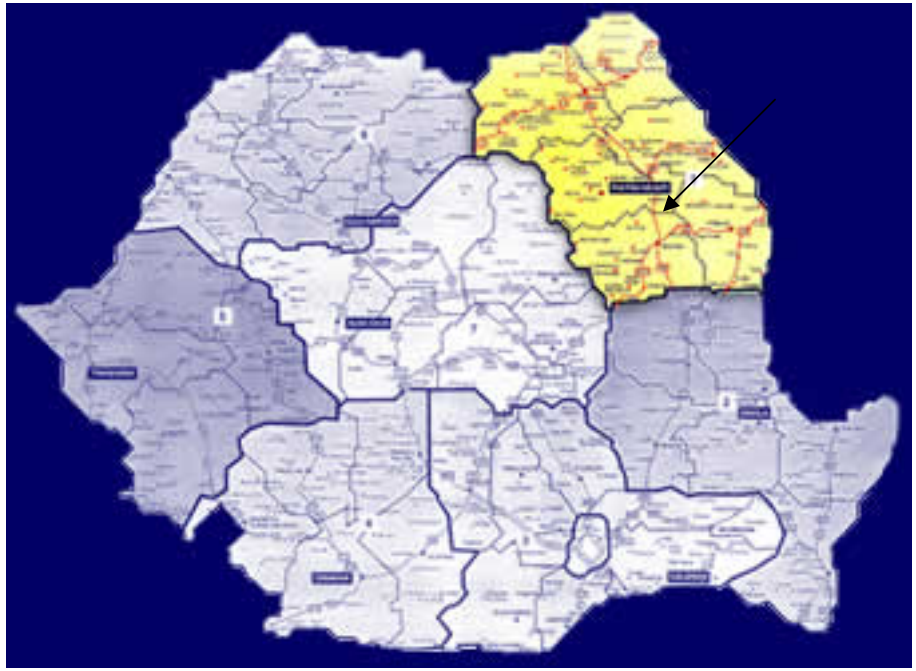
Achievements:

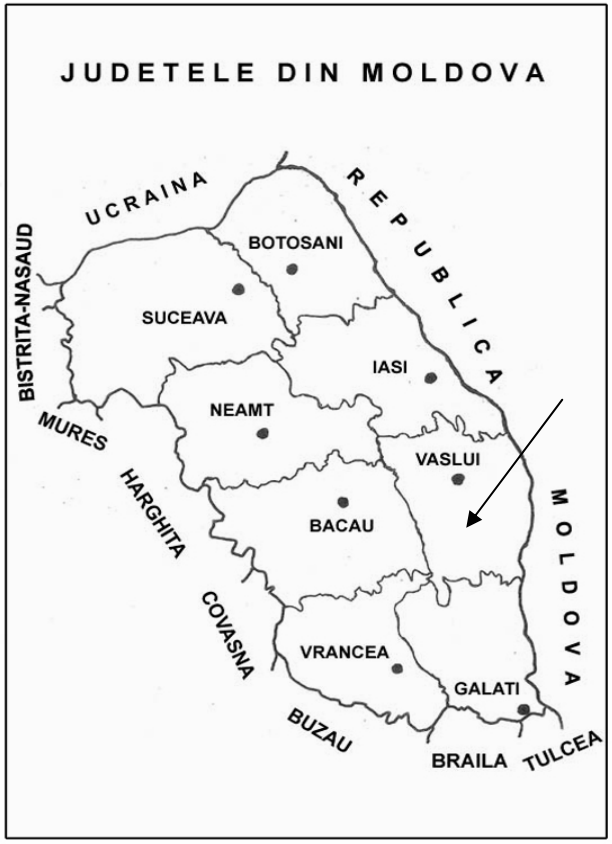
- The SWOT analysis was done for each village in a participative way.
- The establishment of the consultative group of the community.

It was the first genuine LEADER approach in the North-East Romania.

- Impact: County Office of Agricultural Consultancy (COAC) Iaşi disseminated at county level the brochures and the book elaborated within the project and managed, in 2006, together with other "actors" active in rural areas (World Vision, Pro Women Foundation, Hope Foundation, Elmol Foundation, Wine Growers' Association, The Centre for Economic Development – CDE, elementary schools, local public administrations) to mobilize the rural people and to support the establishment of the first Local Action Groups in the county (5 LAG's from total 6 in Iasi County).

Case study

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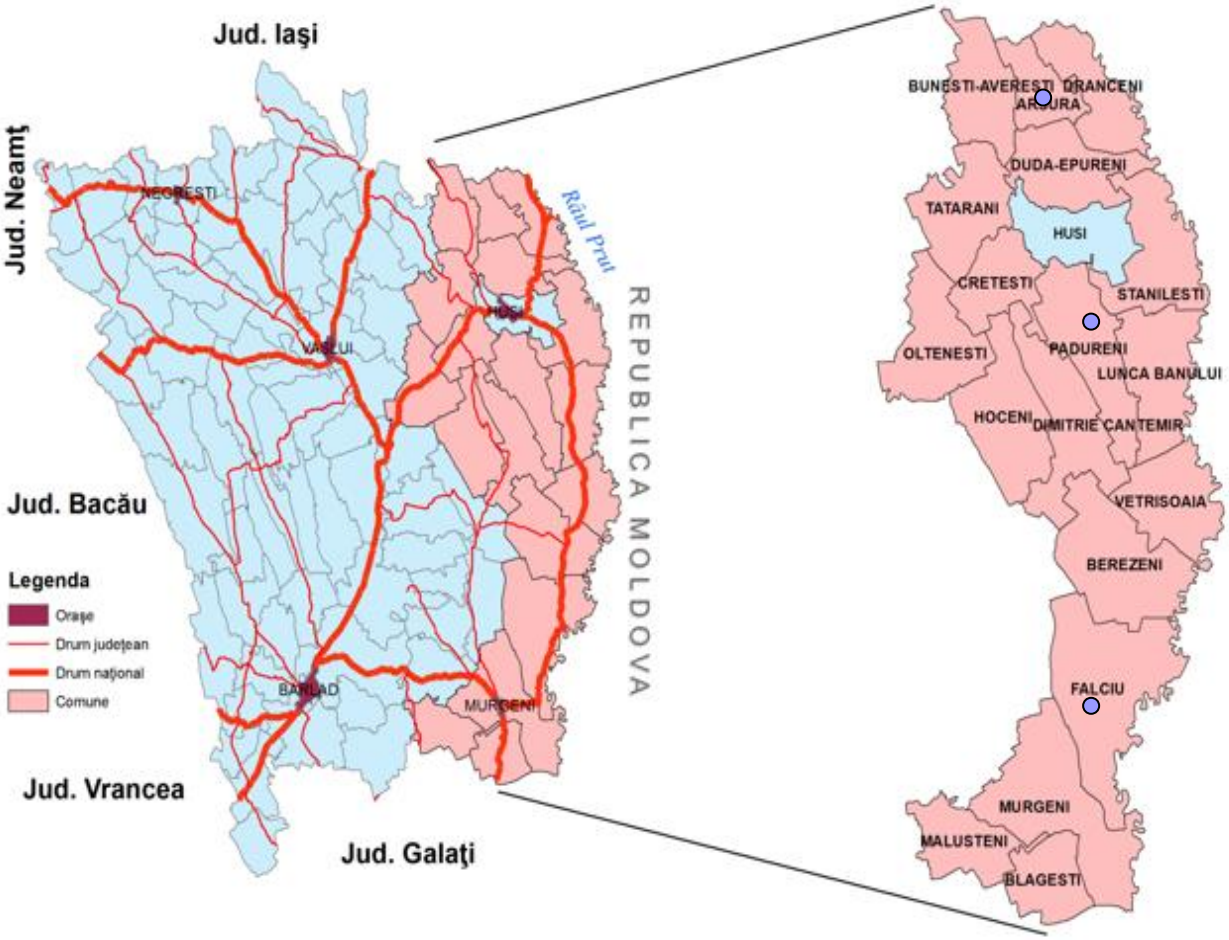
BUZAU
BRAILA
TULCEA

A potential LAG. The Moldo-Prut partnership



Snapshot

- 1479 square km
- 67,981 inhabitants
- 45.97 inhabitants/square km
- 1 municipality (7,842 inhabitants) and 17 communes (comprising 102 villages)
- The partnership comprises 12 NGOs, 15 public entities and 22 private companies.

Strengths

- 6 protected areas under Natura 2000 and areas under Bird Life International – potential for niche tourism
- Handicraft - 20 traditional crafts preserved nowadays
- Irrigations – vegetable growing
- Fish ponds
- Wines – 2 local brands (registered)
- Orchards
- Rich cultural heritage - with international recognition (folk band)

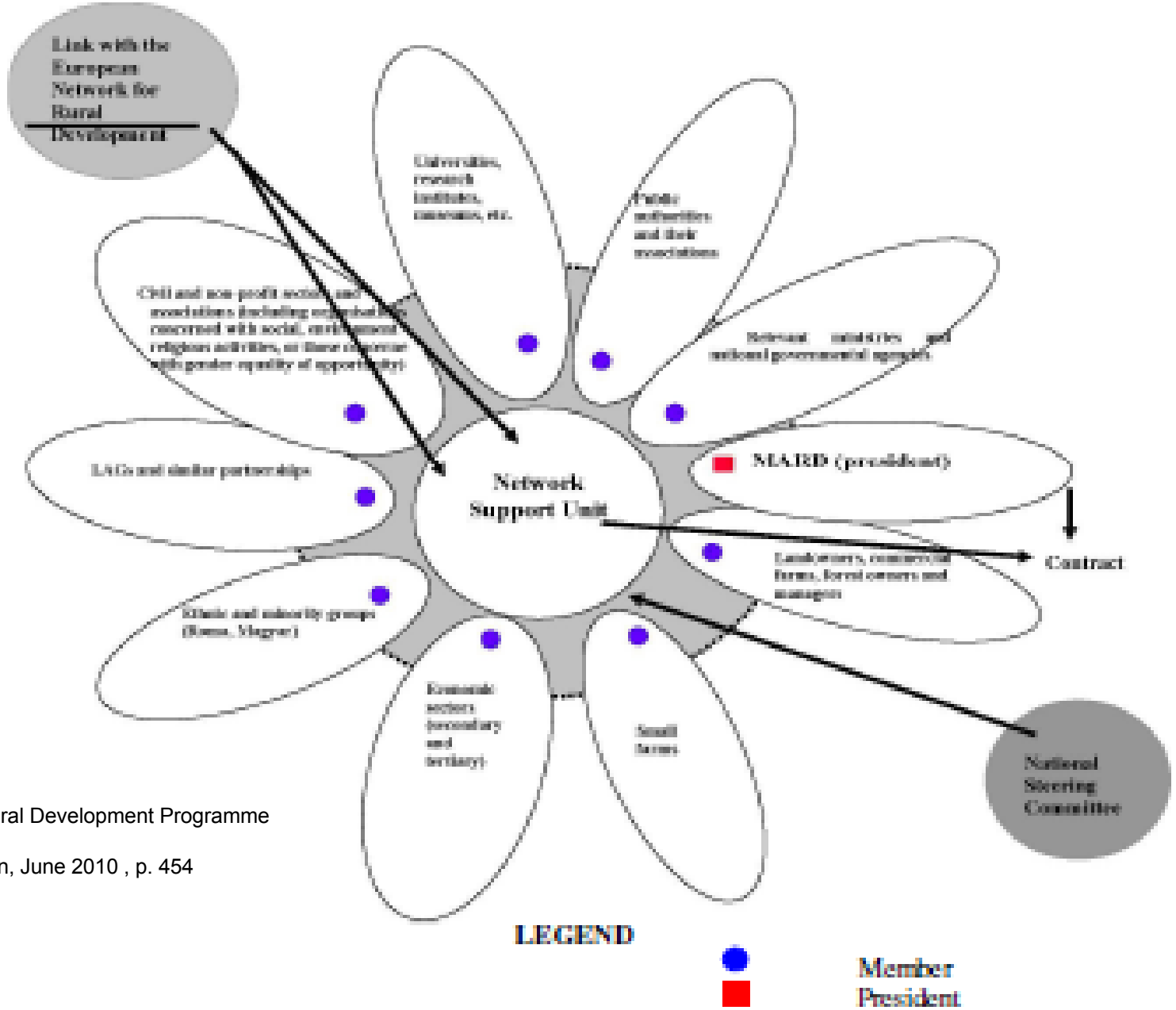
Tiszafured - Hungary

Cirja - Romania

Social capacity of the LAG

- 2 public associations (for territorial sustainable development activities)
- 7 water users associations
- Cross border projects with Moldova Republic – The Prut River crafts
- World Bank project – Knowledge Based Economy – IT centers for public access (in 5 communes)
- Strong agricultural association (professional association of farmers) – 85 members 35,000 ha agricultural land
- Networking experience –SWOT analysis for each commune on 4 main topics: territory, demography, economics, social organization (participative approach – local teams and the working group 18 specialists)
- Membership in the National Rural Development Network (7 water users association, 1 professional association, 1 vineyard growers association, 1 fishermen association, 1 cultural NGO)

National Rural Development Network



Source: National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013
Consolidated version, June 2010 , p. 454

Social network analysis
What kind of theory?

- “Is a theory judged on the basis of its **predictive validity** or on the basis of its **descriptive reality**?”
- “Is it a set of **causally linked concepts** concerning some aspects of the world from which one derives falsifiable hypotheses?”
- “Is a theory an **abstract, symbolic representation of, and explanation of, social reality**?”

Sorce: Kilduff, M., Tsai, W., Social networks and organizations,SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, 2003, p. 36.

Social network analysis

- Imported theories (social psychology, mathematics etc.)
- Indigenous social network theories (strength of week ties)
- Exportation of theories to organizational theories

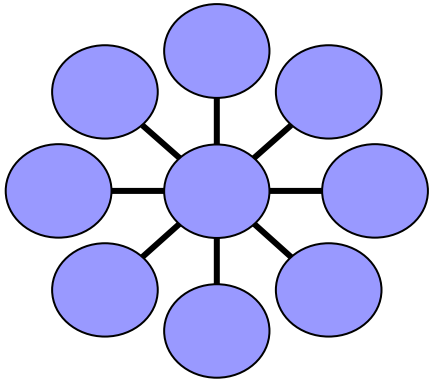
Why social network analysis?

- **structure and connections influence conduct**, unlike other analyses stating that socialization and adherence to norms determine behavior;
- the **shape and structure** of the social network **determines its usefulness** to individuals (organizations);

Further research

- Determining the threshold for adoption at small scale networks
- Analyzing interpersonal relations in LAGs
- Leadership theories – for ego-centric networks
- “The weak ties” in regional networks
- National Rural Development Networks in different countries
- Cooperation and Networking on LEADER

- Thank you very much for your attention!



“Cooperation and networking need time to grow and to bear fruits” (MTE).

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