Building Local Development on Territorial Identity: Lessons from Implementing the LEADER Public Action Model in Central Europe

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Introduction

The presentationfocus on the local development model supported by the European rural policy and implemented for more than ten years in Central European countries[1]. The LEADER[2] model is based on the capacity of local communities to design development strategies and to build potentially valuable territorial resources in a competitive way. Theimplementation of the LEADER model opens arelevant viewpoint to analyse the role of territorial identity in the process of local development and conversely the impact of collective public action on the consolidation of territorial identity.I start on the hypothesis that theidentity relationship linking a given rural community to its lived space must be considered as a driving force for local development processes. I will consider how the awareness of territorial identity takes part in the process of setting up local action groups (LAGs)and delimitating their areas of intervention. Then,how the local stakeholders formulate and implement a suitable strategy for promoting the development of their tangible and intangible resources and assets. At the end, lessons are drawn concerning the effects of completed projects on territorial identity.

The arguments arebased on the relevant academic literature, on official national sources and on empirical investigations done at the local scale during the period 2007-2013[3].We focus on how the Leader method is put into effects in different national and local contexts more or less receptive to this new way of thinking and managing local development.

1ˢᵗ section- Territorial identity, a driving force for local-scale development

First, I would like to define the reference policy frameworkin which the Leader model takes place.
-   **What is the LEADER approach of local development?**
The Leader approach is usually presented as an original way of promoting and supporting local development.The program has favored the disseminationof a new policy model based on a bottom-up principle of public action. Local communities are supposed to know what kind of development strategy is the best suited to their geographical context, their culture and their traditions. At the local scale, the LEADER approach ideally fits in with a territory, a local society with its own social relations,

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[1] The LEADER program has been experimented by the old member states for almost two decades and it was proposed to the new ones from their admission in the EU.
[2] LEADER is an acronym of *Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'EconomieRurale*(Links between Actions for the Development of Rural Economy).
[3] The research project « Local Action and Territorial Development in Central Europe » has been coordinated by Marie-Claude Maurel and by Pascal Chevalier. Engaged in 2008, the research project was carried on for four years. It has associated several research teams, the Centre for Regional Studies in Pécs (Hungary), the Institute for Agriculture and Rural Development in Warsaw (Poland), Vilnius University (Lithuania) and the French Research Centre for Social Sciences in Prague (Czech Republic).

values and resources. The local stakeholders come together to build a partnership on a territorial basis, devise a strategy, design and implement development projects. This model of development is supported by an experimental method that can be defined as follows: an area-based approach rather than a sector-based principle; the promotion of local resources so as to maximize the benefits from activities and retain the profits locally; a development targeted on the needs, capacities and expectations of the local society, and thus on the participation of local stakeholders in designing and implementing the development strategy. As a public action model, the specificity of the Leader approach lies handing decision-making over to local partnerships in a bottom-up process. Namely called Local Action Groups (LAGs), these partnerships involve stakeholders belonging to the public sector, the voluntary sector and the entrepreneurs at the community level. The "Leader region" formula applies to a territory and to a strategic project built by stakeholders to enhance their resources in a way that can make the local economy more competitive. The LAG plays an intercessory role: it represents the local society components; it coordinates local action and it supports the local strategy.

- **The reference conceptual framework: defining local community, territory and territorial identity**

The interactionbetween local-scale endogenous development and territorial identity needs to be understood calling on a larger set of sociologic concepts. In view to clarify them we propose to briefly precise their meanings[4].

Community refers to the socio-demographic collective formed by subjects and groups that establish social relations with one another. The community is therefore the network of mutually supportive relations upon which one can rely in a defined space and time.The term local community is here used to refer to a space with a distinctive characterconsidering the influence of geographical factors (location, physical features) on social relations. To be real, a local community must have a socio-economic nature and a cultural nature too. Local community identifies with its history, its landscape, and display common cultural features that are expressed in what is usually called a collective identity.From the Leader approach point of view, local community development is a process that organizesfunctional groups of citizens who are capable of being active stakeholders responsible for their own progress. This requires a voluntary coordination for a common investigation into local problems.

Territorycan be defined considering its two distinct dimensions, institutional and relational. In its institutional meaning (derived from the Latin word *territorium*),the concept is associated with the notions of appropriation, control and delimitation (boundaries) of a given area by a legal entity.In its relational sense, it can be regarded as that portion of geographical space which reflects a given community and represents the community's collective actions.The territory is produced by the result of human action. Whatever the meaning, a territory is still defined by its boundaries that mark out an inside from an outside (from the surroundings). The Leader approach challengesthe local community to link together these institutional and relational views in order to delineate the most relevant area for implementing public action. The setting-up of a Local Action Group requires a common territory that should besufficiently meaningful for the three stakeholders' groups (public, private, associative).

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[4] Allthese notions are polysemous and controversial.

Therefore they can agree to engage in a collective public action to develop the territory that expresses the process of identification between them and their lived space.

Territorial identity qualifies a form of identity attached to a place,as it is formulated by the metaphor of *genius loci*designating the essence of a place.It applies to the set of physical and human features that makes a place unique for people living there, and different from any other. "Itoriginates from a self-referential process carried out by a community that culturally takes possession of a predefined spatial sphere" (F. Pollice, 2003). Territorial identity can be assigned two distinct values,symbolic and patrimonial. The symbolic valuecan be expressed by the sense of belonging to a placethat can be nurtured by the attachment to a specific landscape, a common past and cultural traditions. When people choose to affiliate with a common identity built on the specific subjective qualities of their lived space they give it a patrimonial value. In that perspective, territorial identity should be regarded as the temporal and spatial structure of interaction between a community and its territory. Territorial identity is compound (sense of belonging and sense of community). Due to the coexistence of cultural or social identities at the local community scale, identity arrangements are usually complex and contradictory.Plurality of local group identities can hinder the ability to build inclusive and participatory communities and the design of share collective projects. On the contrary a strong territorial identity may be decisive to enhancing a development strategy based on the promotion of a territorial brand providing a benchmark for channeling public and private initiatives.

- **Territorialisation processes**

"Identity can be considered a consequence as well as a cause of territorialized processes". (F. Pollice, 2003). With regard to the process of territorialisation, identity plays a key role in all of the stages of creating, designing and managing the Leader regions. The awareness of a territorial identityby the stakeholders' groupcontributes in many respects to the establishment of a LAG's area. Concerning the Leader approach,the territorialisation processtakes the shape of three separate stages: denomination, reification, structuring.

Denomination: At the beginning of the LAG's setting up, TI can give sense and motivation to the "denomination" process. Most of the starting operations like naming the LAG, selecting a logo as a symbolic sign**,** delimitating the LAG's boundaries are based on territorial identity, either strong or weak, either authentic or invented. The denomination stage of the LAG can be regarded as the expression of the "symbolic control of space" by the stakeholders.

Reification (orobjectification): Once named and delimited the LAG's territory becomes the object to which other identity attributes are assigned. TI is hidden behind the visible signs left on the territory such as landscapes, historical monuments, settlement pattern that could become the target of preserving the local heritage. Reification process implies a strong identification process to the natural and cultural landscape, often shaping a re-invented countryside. Territorial identity can act as a container or mold for the spatial properties of events, such as traditional and folkloric celebrations. This reification process contributes to improve the practical control of space by the LAG. The former can be accomplished only if territorial identity is a shared value, constantly reproduced in common acting by the stakeholders.

Structuring:

Territorial Identity plays a more significant role with regard to the structuring process. This sequence requires a sensible control of space; such control can be actually exercised only within territorial contexts in which territorial identity has a structuring value, so that it can orientate collective public action.Structuring manifests itself as a rearrangement of visible and invisible patrimonial elements according to self-referential mechanisms. Once mobilized by stakeholders to orientate meaningful projects, territorial identity might become a driving force for endogenous development.

2d section - The territorial pattern of LAGs'areas in Central Europe

During the period 2007-2013, the Leader model was experimented in various geographical and socioeconomic contexts at the national and local scales. Downloading the model to the local communities takes place via various hierarchical modes of governance. National authorities (or transfer operators) transpose and implement European rules and norms which are rather flexible. Our comparative research takes into account national and local variations in order to highlight similarities and differences in implementing the Leader model. Hereafter we focus on some aspects characterizing the territorial pattern of the Leader model, focusing on two different countries, Hungary and Czech Republic where we have investigated a handful of LAGS.

- **Shaping the LAG's areas : national patterns**

What are the main factors behind the territorial shaping of LAGs'areas? In what terms do the European and the national regulations pay attention to the principle of territorial identity? The government operator interprets norms and regulations defined by the EU so as to make themmore compatible with the rules specific to the institutional system in that country, primarily the relationship between central, regional and local levels of government and land planning.

According to the European regulations[5] the Leader approach "takes a small, homogenous, socially cohesive territory, often characterised by common traditions, a local identity,and a sense of belonging or common needs and expectations, as the target area for policy implementation. (…)
The area chosen must have sufficient coherence and critical mass in terms of human, financial and economic resources to support a viable local development strategy. Area-based essentially means local. It does not have to correspond to predefined administrative boundaries."

How these principles have been implemented by national operators? It is necessary to take in consideration two criteria: the territorial pattern and the coverage level of rural areas.
At the beginning of the period 2007-2013, every country has selected a varying number of LAGs, differing widely in size between Member States (Figure2). Ina part of the new Member States, the LAGs appear to be the largest. In Hungary, as in Bulgaria and Romania, the LAGs have on average twice the population found elsewhere in the EU. The European Commission has noted "a tendency to standardise the size of LEADER regions" (EC-2011-8).Conversely, Czech LAGs are very varied in size, as it was also the case in Poland or in Germany.

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[5]European Communities, Fac Sheet, The Leader approach, a basic guide, 2006, http://europa.eu

In Hungary, the coverage of the national territory by LAGs is not only uniform but also nearly exhaustive (more than 80% of the total rural area).On the contrary, in Czech Republic, the coverage is incomplete.The irregular pattern of LAGs looks like a mosaic with white spaces corresponding to the rural areas absent from the process. (See the two figures).One may wonder about the reasons of these variations. The geography of LEADER regions may indeed reflect the irregular population and variety of the European countryside. However, in the cases of Hungary and Czech Republic, the socio-economic situation does not appear to be a determining factor. The factors for such a variety are depending mainly on the national operators'views (ministries for Agriculture and their agencies)for transferring the Leader model policy. The national rural development policies andthe consequent regulations have a great influence over the shape of the LAGs'areas.

In Hungary, the Central governmenthas chosen to keep instruments of control in its hands.The procedure for setting up LAGs is much more precisely defined than elsewhere in Europe. The ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development has firmly encouraged the setting up of large rural communities (HK) made up of two or three statistical micro-regions[6], approximatively corresponding to the country's electoral constituencies(Maps Hungary).In such a way, the principle of voluntary association for local self-governments to construct LAGs'areas has not been completely observed.
As can be seen on the map of LAGS in Baranya, rural communities have tried to delimitate the LAGs' areas following the administrative boundaries of micro-regions or electoral constituencies (map).

In the Czech Republic, LAGs were not supposed to be inscribed within the limits of the micro-regions, and local self-governments were free to take part or not in the Leader partnerships. Setting up a LAG, the municipalities were not obliged to observe the administrative boundaries either those of the existing micro-regions or those of NUTS3 regions. In this country, micro-regions are voluntary associations of municipalities that pursue common development objectives but without any administrative competence[7]. The principle of local autonomy in creating LAGs has been fully respected (map).

-   **Setting up the LAGsat the local level**

Once, the LEADER policy has been codified at the national level it has been incorporated into the local context by a twofold process of institutionalizing and territorializing[8].Implementing the LEADER approach requires forming the partnership, delimitating the LAG area and organizing its governance (decision-making bodies) as to reflect all its territorial components. The partnerships have to

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[6]In line with this policy, it was rationale that the Central government should locate the implementation of European rural development policy (ERDP) within territorial divisions compatible with that objective.In Hungary, the micro-regions delineated by the central statistical office KSH have not taken account of the links formed by freely chosen inter-municipal cooperation. For years, Central government has attempted to identify them with the institutional level for territorial development. Established through a top-down process, these micro-regional entities do not constitute the appropriate framework for building a strong and immediate sense of belonging.

[7] The Act on municipalities (128/2000) introduces rules for the creation of groupings of municipalities, specifying their functions and fields of cooperation. Micro-regions were encouraged and supported by the Ministry of Regional Development, in the view to overcome the extreme fragmentation of municipal divisions.
[8]Territorializingimplies to define areas for public action according tostrategic stakes.

promote a new territorial identity built on stronger factors of legitimacy than a common belonging to an administrative division. It could be done by creating symbolic signs such as naming the LAG, then by designing a common development strategy taking in consideration the interests of all the territorial components.

Our study LAGS' areas comprise a variety of patterns some with a few numbers of municipalities, the others with a large numbers(Table 1).

Close attention must be paid to the LAG's administrative composition, to their naming and to the related symbolic signs (such as narratives and images) on which territorial identity could be based on. The designing of a common logo for the LAG partnership can be interpreted as an attempt of branding the new entity. Conversely, the partnershipmight not be able to select a single symbolic sign and decide to display as many images as the villages taking part.Looking to the different websites created by the LAGs is very informative.On certain websites one can observe a host of coats-of-arms or photography's landscapes suggestive of local identities at the village scale.

Table 1 –Distinctive features of the observed LAGs

Name and location of LAG	Area in km²	Population	Number of local self-governments	Overlapwithmicro-regions	Origin of naming
Zengő-Duna South Transdanubia	664	45 428	60	Two micro-regions	It associates the mount Zengő and the Duna river
Mecsekvidék South Transdanubia)	331	28739	38	One micro-region (without Pécs City)	From the Mecsek mountain, the LAG covers the eastern part
Ostrožsko a Horňácko (South Moravia)	265	26 068	16	twomicro-regions)	Two micro-regions names referring to ethnographic entities
Ekoregion Úhlava (South Bohemia)	317	11 706	9	one micro-region	From the Úhlava river, the prefixed Eko refers to the ecological brand

HorňáckoaOstrožsko LAG

A local action group was established in 2008 covering the two micro-regions of Ostrožsko and Horňácko, the organisation of which goes back to the beginning of the 2000s. The micro-regions and the LAG have freed themselves from the administrative boundaries (Nuts 3)[9] in order to fit in better

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[9]The LAG's area consists of five local authorities belonging to the region (*kraj*) of Zlín and eleven that come under the region of Southern Moravia (see map).

with both common historical features (the folklore traditions of "Slovačko") and diverse natural landscapes (the hills dominating the Morava river valley and the White Carpathian Mountain). The Horňácko micro-region extends over the protected landscape area of the White Carpathians, characterised by an extensive development based on cattle-rearing and forestry and low density levels, while the Ostrožsko micro-region, more densely populated and more intensely developed, possesses a greater capacity for investment. The LAG has an interesting potential with attractive landscapes and cultural heritages that make identification easier. The stakeholders of the LAG are aware of the interest this heritage holds for a development strategy that mobilises this kind of resources to build a diversified rural development. Patrimonial resources of a natural or a cultural kind offer as many opportunities todevelop green tourism, local products, and popular arts and crafts. The strategy created in this way is entitled "Return to popular roots, services, and arts and crafts".

EkoregionÚhlava LAG

The micro-region of Úhlava,[10] formed in 1999, around the small town of Nýrsko, is located on the foothills of the Bohemian Forest (Šumava) massif, in the region of Plzeň in Southern Bohemia. This rural area has seen its position change since the disappearance of the Iron Curtain and the opening up of the border with neighbouring Bavaria. The micro-region partly overlaps with the territory of the Šumava National Park (created in 1991) and the protected landscape area that surrounds it (the peripheral zone). The local authorities have gradually become aware of the opportunities for development linked to the protected area of Šumava National Park. They consider the forested areas as a guarantee of an "authentic" landscape suitable for green tourism. However, the memory-based heritage of the Sudeten Germans does not help consolidate local identity. In this border region the past may cast a heavy shadow on the present. Developing the natural and cultural potential of the EkoregionÚhlava has made progress with German-Czech cooperation. A cross-border association called *KrálovskýHvozd*try to restore the "traditional" elements of the natural landscape and architectural patrimony (old buildings, churches, cemeteries) related to the history of German settlement before 1945.

Zengő-Duna

Located in Baranya County, the large Zengö-Duna LAG's area includes the two micro-regions of Pécsvarad (20 municipalities) and Mohács (40 municipalities) that display various physical features and economic profiles. The LAG's partnership was negotiated on the basis of an informal agreement between the guiding political leaders, one MP and two mayors. All the sixties self-governments are represented in the territorial governance. The region is characterized by a multicultural settlement pattern (Magyar, Swabian, Croatian, Roma). At the scale of the local place (village), identity is closely related to the dominant ethnic community. In many villages there is a large German-speaking minority. This community is particularly committed to preserve its identity, organising cultural events to keep alive its traditions.

The main goal of the LAG's strategy is to create an attractive living environment on the basis of promoting local resources. It is expressed in the sentence: "Living there, it is good!". The strategy

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[10]This grouping of local authorities was originally created in order to manage the water supply network coming from the River Úhlava.

draws on branding local products in the agricultural and tourism sectors and promoting heritage resources such as rural buildings or the agrarian landscape as well as local historical events[11].

Mecsekvidék

Corresponding to the micro-region of Pécs without the city, the Meceskvidek LAG is lacking a common territorial identity. The 38 municipalities have no homogeneity either regarding the physical features or from the point of view of their economic activities. Most of villages are places of residence for people working in the near city. The most remote small localities are depopulating. As the transport conditions are inconvenient, social relations networks are organized at the scale of the seven *microterseg*.

Asserting territorial identity: What is the relevant scale?

When setting up the LAG's area, the partners have to take in consideration the expectations of local communitiesas they are expressed by theirself-governments.It should be borne in mind that people are strongly attached to their places of residence (embodied in the village or the parish)[12]. The smallersettlement units were mergedby the communist regime to make up larger administrative divisions. This merging process has untied them from the scale of local communities, thus weakening their identity. At the beginning of the 1990s,the administrative reforms introducing self-governments have triggered a process of fragmentation of the former administrative units. Even the smallest villages wanted to recover their autonomy as a community endowed with their own identity. Time flying, the small self-governments have to overcome the negative effects of fragmentation onlocal development.The LEADER approach proposes to implement a bottom-up process of gathering the small settlement units, based on their voluntary engagement to make up partnerships.

When set up, the new partnership has to ascertain its territorial identity through different means: naming, designing a place-based strategy and defining the LAG's brand. Place-based strategies must embody the construction of identities and images around a collective project.All these signs either symbolic or concrete should provide a benchmark for channeling public and private initiatives.

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[11] Since the 1990's, local authorities endeavor to promote joint development projects such as the creation of the "White Wine Road" to help marketing local produce. Investments are made to restore all types of heritage (churches, cemeteries, war memorials, public squares). Almost every community organizes small village museums to preserve the objects of the old peasant way of life destroyed by collectivization.

[12] The smaller settlement units were merged by the communist regime to make up larger administrative divisions. This merging process has untied them from the scale of local communities, thus weakening the local territorial identity. At the beginning of the 1990s, the reforms introducing self-governments have triggered a process of fragmentation of the former administrative units. Even the smallest villages wanted to recover their autonomy as a community endowed with their own identity. To overcome the negative effects of fragmented municipalities, micro-regions have been set up in very different ways. In the Czech Republic, it was primarily a bottom up process initiated by local self-governments with the support of Central government. In Hungary, the micro-regions delineated by the central statistical office KSH have not taken account of the links formed by freely chosen inter-municipal cooperation. For years, Central government has attempted to identify them with the institutional level for territorial development. Established through a top-down process, these micro-regional entities do not constitute the appropriate framework for building a strong and immediate sense of belonging.

3ʳᵈsection - The leverage effect of place branding on local sustainable development

Local development presupposes a socially constructed territory, a territory endowed with a genuine identity. Endogenous development comes from a social process based on the mobilization of local resources[13], with the intention of creating economic activity and employment. It is up to the cooperation network (the LAG's stakeholders) to identify the objects or attributes, whether material or immaterial, likely to become resources thus defining the intervention objectives or priorities of the strategy. On that basis, the cooperation network organizes project calls and proceeds to their selection.

The specification mechanism

With the globalization process, places and regions have become increasingly interchangeable. As a counterforce to the global logics, new strategies, which are more place-based, have to be developed. They must rely on the principle of specification, in other words the search for resources that are site-specific and enable a place to stand out from other areas. Specificationresults from a process of identification and valorization of the site-specific (non-ubiquitous) resources that can be turned into a comparative advantage[14].

By definition, the territorial identity which is unique to a given community represents that kind of specific quality not transferable to other areas. Territorial identity is interconnected with the cultural and natural patrimony of the local community. The patrimony includes tangible elements and intangible values, historically rooted in the reality of a place and passed down from generation to generation. Making a community aware of its natural and cultural heritage is the decisive starting point for place branding. It requires to identify, to protect and to give value to the local heritage with the aim to turn it into a specific resource for the development.Specific resources can be drawn on heritage resources such as rural buildings, natural landscapes as well as local traditions and historical events. In reality, it is rare to find a resource or an asset that is simply specific. The aim of territorial development strategies should be to identify and promote the specific potential resources in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the local economy. The mechanism of specification requires certain conditions to be met.

From brand awareness to implementation

The branding strategy emphasizes the role of place-identity in local development. It uses symbolic capital that functions as a cement to unite people around the local patrimony. Place branding could be defined as a deliberate planning of the image embedded in cultural identity. Part of this making is the storytelling of the place reflecting its territorial identity.The process of branding can be divided in

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[13]By a resource we mean a potential that can be developed. Resources become assets once they become marketable, whether they are goods or services that come on the market.

[14]It distinguishes "generic" resources from "specific" ones. The term "generic" applies to a resource or an asset whose presence is independent of the social or business dynamic of the place. It is a feature that is exogenous, interchangeable, and independent of what we might call the *genius loci*. The characteristic "specific" is the result of the strategies; it is endogenous in origin and does not lend itself to being transferred.While the former are characterized by transferability, the latter are place-based and result from a process of identification and valorization that turns the location constraint into an added value that increases the competitiveness of local goods on the market.

three stages: increasing people's awareness of the qualities of the territory, developing new resources, reorganizing branding-based activities.

Enhancing the visibility of the place

Strengthening place identity could be undertaken by reviving cultural traditions and values. In that perspective, the support given to localprojects promoting musical festivals, folkloric dancing,pilgrimages, and all kinds of cultural events could be very helpful.These projects were predominantly proposed by local self-governments and local associations (for example, folkloric groups and German associations in the Transdanubian villages). They were numerous although rather small in terms of investment. The realization of cultural events strengthens the village identity. It is doubtful if it would be helpful to build plural inclusive and participatory community at the micro-regional scale.

Developing cultural values and renewing the local heritage

Selecting and undertaking a project based on the patrimonial resourcestakes partin the consolidation of a territorial identity.In that sense, the stakeholders set up the heritage character of some exclusive nontransferable resources granting them territorial quality labels. In the **EkoregionÚhlava** particular attention has likewise been given to environmental renewal in relationship with the Šumava protected area. The issue of the local development of this cross-border region cannot be understood outside of its historical context that requires a particular approach of heritage integration. It proceeds from the rewriting of the painful memory of the Sudetian regions and the discovering of the past cultural identity of German people who were expulsed at the end of the Second World War. The renovation of historical or religious buildings (churches, chapels, cemeteries, and ways of the cross), was partially engaged at the initiative of the descendent of expulsed German people. A reconciliation policy was endeavoured in the framework of cross-border cooperation in the aftermath of the iron curtain opening. The places of memory evoke the meanings which are attached to particular elements of the heritage by different groups of people who experience places in different ways as current residents, descendent of former inhabitants and tourists. The places of memory can free identity if their implication is connected to new collective projects.In that case, the mechanism of specification takes on an original dimension to overcome the conflicting past and for reconciling people.

Promoting brands of local products (rooted in cultural identity)

The attempt to link the landscape, the cultural heritage and the agriculture to create a branding-based activity as green rural tourism is a well-known device.

The strategy of the **EkoregionÚhlava** has provided the framework for developing green tourism: establishing a network of information centres, opening cycle tracks, creating an "Ecoregion" label awarded to green tourism services (restaurants and accommodation). Unfortunately, this label is a marketing concept devoid of any real normative content. The outcomes are not fully convincing.

In the case of **Ostrožsko a Horňácko** LAG, the landscape elements (vineyards and wine cellars, meadows and forests) and the cultural heritage (the folklore of *Slovačko*) are combined in such a way as to create a specific resource. From the heritage of landscape and architecture, a few enterprising stakeholders have tried to qualify a new territorial resource for rural tourism. One may indeed

wonder whether the drawing of cycle tracks through the vineyards, the creation of arts and crafts (such as producing local costumes), and the organisation of folklore festivals will be sufficient to form an economic basis ensuring a real comparative advantage to the LAG. The mechanism of specification of the resources has been put in motion but is still unachieved.

The priorities initially defined by the development strategy of **Zengő-Duna LAG** were not respected by the selecting process of the projects (table 2). The stakeholders express a large preference for two categories of projects oriented towards the village renewal and the strengthening of local identities. The attempt to promote quality labels or quality marks for local products (such as wine and honey) could be very promising, although it takes time and continuous effort. This process can be based on culturally embedded agricultural products that aim to tell the story of the place. Creating a brand is not an easy task. The example of creating a marketing image for the White Wine Road in Bóly micro region is a relevant one. Territorial resources as a set of shared identity values may acquire an economic value whenever they can be transformed into marketable products (or services).Strong territorial identity may be a key element to enhancing a territorial's level of development and to successful exploitation of the lag's brand.

Table 2- Supported projects in the Zengő-Duna LAG according to the priorities (2009-2013)

Priorities of the strategy	Number of projects	Costs in Euros	In % of total investments	Initial repartition (according to the strategy)
Renewal and equipment of villages	26	91356	42	14
Development of tourism	7	11 933	5,5	29
Economic support of enterprises	4	17 360	8	19,3
Strengthening identity	53	78 496	36	7,2
Facilities development	9	16 732	8,5	24
Strategic territorial marketing	0	0	0	6,5
Total	99	215 877	100	100

Conclusion

The restoration of village heritage, the branding of local products, the reviving of local fests as a cultural activity participate in a conscious activity of preservation of local identity based on a sensitive relationship to the territory. The feeling of belonging to the local homeland, or one's place of origin with which one maintains an attachment, is a cultural fact that motivates and justifies the involvement of stakeholders in collective action. It opens the door to greater local cohesion.

Territorialization of collective identity is a long dynamic process, the result of the continuous interaction between a given community and its relational space. The synergic relationship between identity and local development will occur only where there is a strong identity matrix. Building and strengthening territorial identification through collective action are very decisive aims for the stakeholders. From a symbolic basis territorial identity makes potential resources explicit and real by

making them visible. By means of a reifying power territorialization processes create a concrete basis for further local based development. Thus, in the forms of territorial markings the potential resources are reshaped and reintegrated as active components of the local community based development.

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