



Leader – Success and Prospects for Rural Development in Schleswig-Holstein (Germany)

For the funding period 2007–2013 the Ministry of Energy, Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Areas Schleswig-Holstein (MELUR) has focused in the field of action “rural development” on the three instruments Leader/ AktivRegions, rural land readjustment, and broadband. Based on these experiences the state government of Schleswig-Holstein plans a strategic reorientation in the next EU funding period 2014–2020. Our rural development policies will focus more strongly on the key challenges of rural areas.

In Schleswig-Holstein the LEADER concept has been implemented across the area for the funding of rural development measures. Currently we have 21 Local Action Groups (LAG) – the so-called “AktivRegions.”

In order to find answers for current and future challenges within rural areas – for instance in order to deal with demographic change – we need the knowledge and skills of as many people from the region as possible. The LEADER concept is a highly appropriate instrument for involving stakeholders from various sectors of civil society in the development of forward-looking solutions.

We rely on strong and self-organized rural regions that are motivated to play a positive role in shaping their future on a partnership basis. Among the political community, administrative authorities, associations, and private players new forms of cooperation should be inspired in order to release previously unutilized potentials.

With some targeted incentives we intend to support rural areas so they can

- increase economic strength and retain and create secure jobs,
- maintain quality of life,
- strengthen the sense of community to encourage people to take on initiatives as well as to motivate for new partnerships.

The regional departments of the State Agency for Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Areas (LLUR) perform an important supportive role as a member of the LAG and funding authority. This work will be rounded off by the statewide regional network maintained by the Academy for Rural Areas Schleswig-Holstein (ALR e. V.).

At EU level the LEADER concept is also evaluated very positively. It is set to continue in the next funding period by increasing the scope of action of the regions. In addition, even more responsibility will be transferred to the regions and those involved in regional development. In a dialogue process between the state government of Schleswig-Holstein and the LAG AktivRegions we worked out that the funding priorities are expected as follows:

- climate action, adaptation to climate change, and energy turnaround
- sustainable public services
- growth and innovation
- education and training

The present brochure provides an overview and gives you a vivid impression of the work which the AktivRegions have performed and the success they have achieved. We hope that you will enjoy reading about their accomplishments and perhaps this brochure will provide some valuable ideas for your own commitment to the development of rural areas.



State of Schleswig-Holstein

- The northernmost federal state of Germany is located between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea and between the River Elbe and Denmark.
- There are many connections in the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions, in particular to Scandinavia.
- The Kiel Canal is the most frequented artificial sea-lane in the world connecting the North Sea and the Baltic Sea and hence important European economic regions.
- Six million guests every year make it one of the most popular German states for tourists.
- Schleswig-Holstein is an energy export state and wind energy is an important economic factor.
- Our state is internationally known for its innovative health industry and medical technology as well as for its future-oriented agriculture.
- The Wadden Sea Schleswig-Holstein is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Kieler Woche – the biggest sailing event in the world attracts millions of visitors every year.

www.schleswig-holstein.de
www.melur.schleswig-holstein.de

Facts:

- 2.8 million inhabitants
- spoken languages: German, Danish, Low German, Friesian and Romani
- total area of 15,799 sq. km
- four independent towns (Kiel, Hanseatic City of Lübeck, Flensburg, Neumünster)
- 11 districts and 1,122 municipalities
- state capital Kiel with approx. 240,000 inhabitants, located on the Firth of Kiel, by the Baltic Sea
- UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Town Lübeck: largest German port on Baltic Sea
- two thirds of Germany's fishing fleet based in Schleswig-Holstein
- highest point above sea level: Bungsberg at 168 m; lowest point: Neuendorf at 3.5 m below sea level



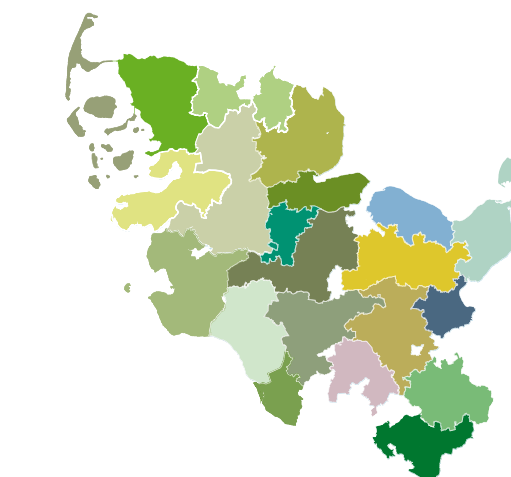
LAG AktivRegions in Schleswig-Holstein

The Leader concept was well proven in the EU funding periods between 1991 and 2006 (Community initiatives Leader I, Leader II, and LEADER+). It has become an independent focus in mainstream funding from EAFRD since 2007.

The Leader concept envisages the establishment of regional partnerships of private and public stakeholders – Local Action Groups (LAG). In Schleswig-Holstein these are called AktivRegions. They elaborate tailor-made development strategies for the respective regions and all aspects of life. Each LAG AktivRegion receives its own regional budget for the implementation of the strategy and decides independently which projects should be supported from the funds.

Culture of cooperation – regional and statewide networks in Schleswig-Holstein:

- LAG AktivRegion as an innovative regional partnership
 - by local authorities with economic and social partners
 - at working level with project groups and working groups for specific topics
 - accompanied by regional management
- State Agency for Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Areas of Schleswig-Holstein (LLUR), responsible in all matters of funding for LAG AktivRegions
- statewide LAG AktivRegion Council: chooses flagship projects based upon selection criteria and manages the implementation of Leader together with the appropriate ministry
- statewide regional network at the Academy for Rural Areas (ALR e. V.) of Schleswig-Holstein:
 - organizes info events on a regular basis, meetings to exchange experiences, training for regional managers, and project promoters
- close cooperation with the media Information and Facts about LAG AktivRegions



- Each LAG AktivRegion has between 50,000 and 120,000 inhabitants; they dispose of an annual EAFRD regional budget of between 250,000 and 300,000 euros for implementing their development strategies.
 - some 800 projects adopted by the LAG AktivRegions from 2009 to 2013

Total investment volume of approx. 67 million euros with grants amounting to approx. 30.5 million euros

- For projects classified as “New Challenges” (health check), e.g. in the fields of climate change, renewable energy sources, approximately 70 measures with investments of more than 33.5 million euros and EU subsidies of about 15.1 million euros will be implemented. For modernization of 54 rural paths and lanes the volume of EU commitments was 6.3 million euros; this triggered investments of 13.8 million euros since 2010, for modernization of rural paths and lanes 8.6 million euros.
- LAG AktivRegions, which are classified as areas belonging to the future-oriented program of fishing, with projects aimed at the sustainable development of the fishing industry, can be supported by the European Fisheries Fund (EFF).
- A statewide LAG AktivRegion Council decides upon additional funding for flagship projects:
 - 56 flagship projects selected by the middle of 2012

Total investment volume of approx. ten million euros with grants amounting to approx. 25 million euros (eight million euros EAFRD and approx. 17 million euros federal government/state Schleswig-Holstein)

- The current budget for the future-oriented program for rural areas (“Zukunftsprogramm Ländlicher Raum”) in Schleswig-Holstein is 302 million euros, of which approx. 76.3 million euros is expected to be realized by LAG AktivRegions.

For further information:
www.aktivregion.schleswig-holstein.de
www.aktivregion-sh.de