

The assessment of the added value of LEADER/CLLD as improved social capital in the LAG Prealpi & Dolomiti (Italy)

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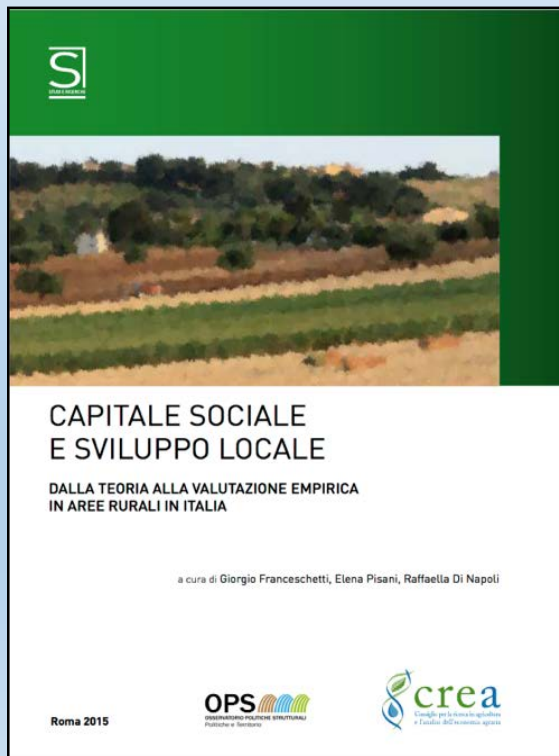
Matteo Aguanno – Director of the LAG Prealpi & Dolomiti

Good Practice Workshop: “Showing the added value of LEADER/CLLD through
evaluation”

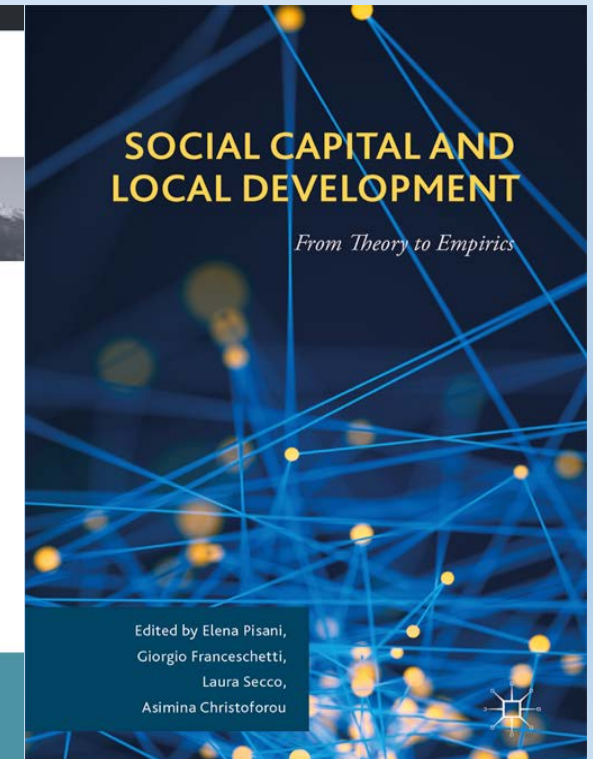
17-18 May 2018 Helsinki, Finland

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Background and needs
3. Process and methods
4. Evaluation findings, and lessons learned from the findings
5. Reflections on the evaluation approach

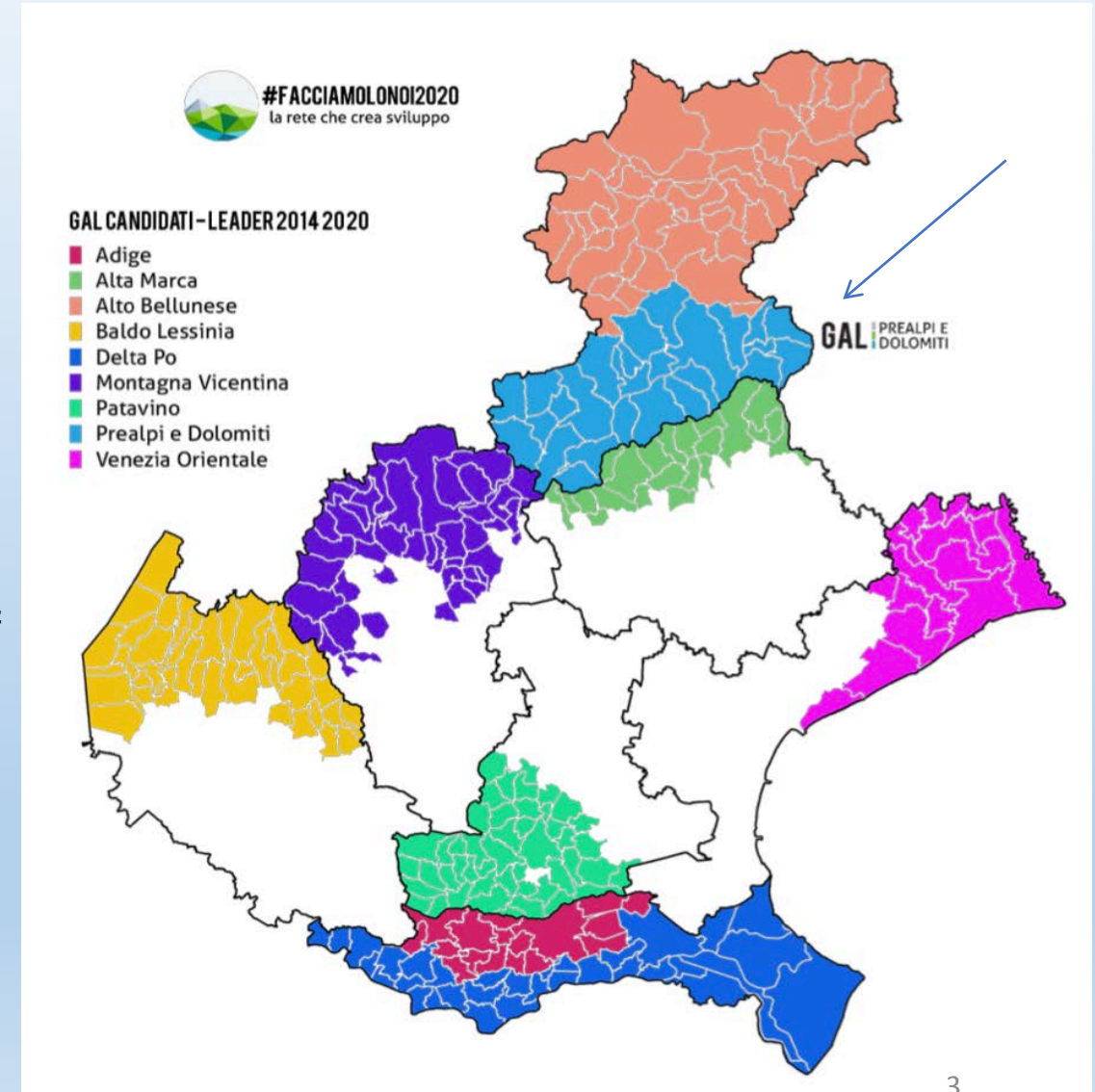


The screenshot shows the website for GAL Prealpi e Dolomiti. The header includes a search bar, language options (EN, IT), and various logos (European Union, Italian Government, etc.). The main navigation menu lists 'CHI SIAMO', 'LEADER 14-20', 'BANDI', 'DOCUMENTI', 'NEWS', 'MEDIA', 'ARCHIVIO', and 'MONITORAGGIO'. The central banner reads 'MONITORAGGIO E VALUTAZIONE' with a sub-header 'Sistema di Monitoraggio e Valutazione del GAL Prealpi e Dolomiti'. Below this is an illustration of a hand holding a magnifying glass over a document, with other icons representing data and communication. A button on the right says 'SCARICA LE RELAZIONI TRIMESTRALI'. The main text states: 'Il Sistema di Monitoraggio e Valutazione (M&V) del Programma di Sviluppo Locale (PSL) del GAL Prealpi e Dolomiti è stato avviato in collaborazione con il Dipartimento TESAF dell'Università di Padova e si sostanzia in due prodotti come previsto dal documento di indirizzo per il Sistema di M&V:'. At the bottom, two boxes describe the final reports: 'MONITORAGGIO FINALIZZATO ALLA VALUTAZIONE DI EFFICACIA ED EFFICIENZA' and 'MONITORAGGIO FINALIZZATO ALL'AUTOVALUTAZIONE DEL VALORE AGGIUNTO LEADER'.



LAG Prealpi & Dolomiti

- *Key information:* The [LAG Prealpi & Dolomiti](#) was firstly established in **1997** in a large, but fragmented, mountain territory in the North-East of Italy. It now includes **23 municipalities**, covering a total surface of **1,344 km²** where 142.803 inhabitants are residents. The partnership is composed of **23 members** (**11 public** authorities and **11 private** actors)
- *Working with LEADER:* LEADER II (1994-1999), LEADER + (2000-2006), LEADER 2007-2013, LEADER 2014-2020
- *CLLD strategy* approved in **October 2016**, total budget is of **8.9 millions euros**, total number of projects n° **106** and total n° of implemented projects **83** by March, 2018
- *Organizational features:* The LAG is a *private not-for profit association* and the delivery mechanisms is via the mono-fund approach selected by the Veneto Region

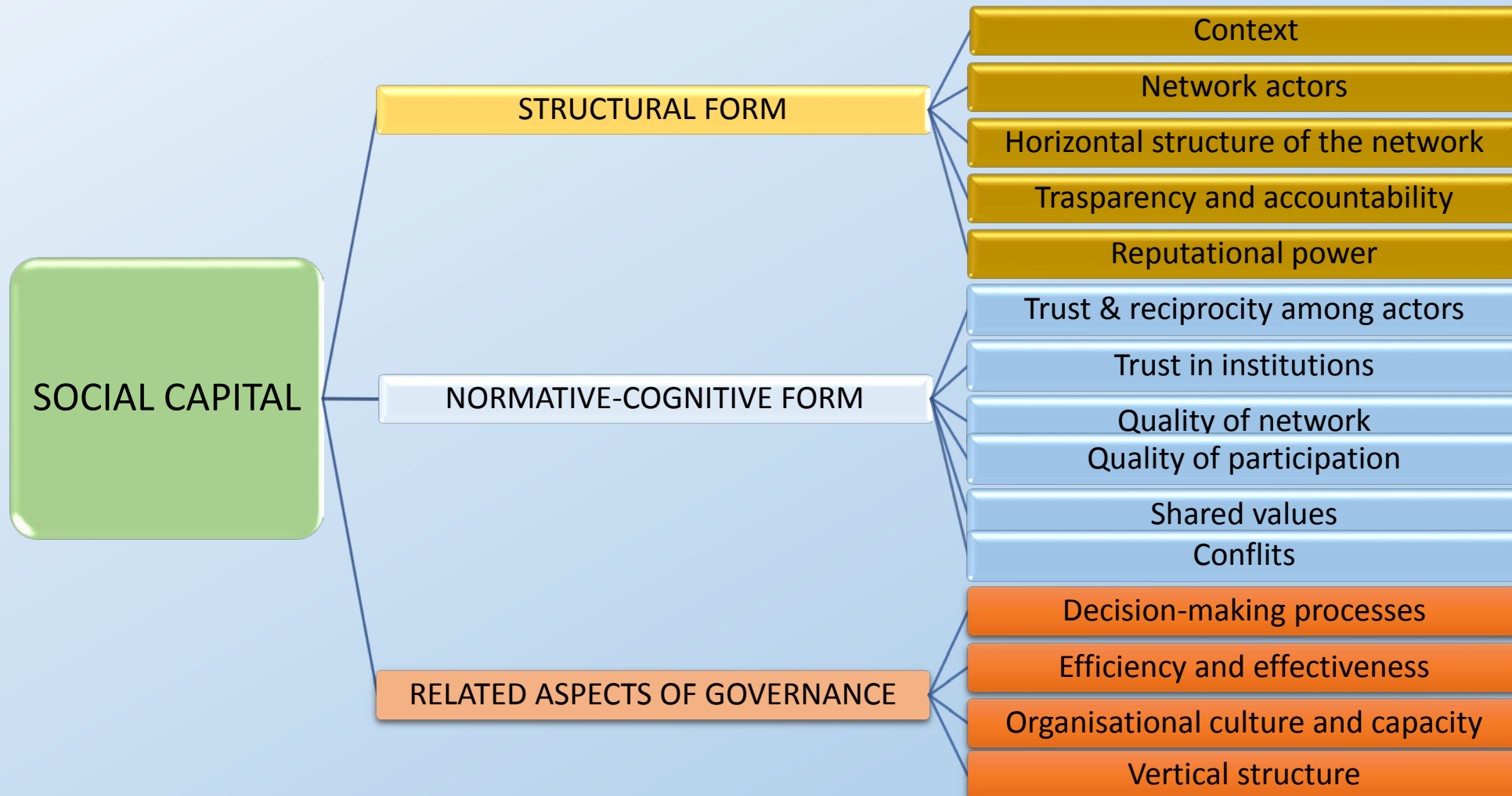


Background and evaluation needs

Key questions	Background and evaluation needs
Why?	<p>(i) <i>Different critical points</i> emerging from the external evaluation of the LEADER Axis (2007-2013) in the Veneto Region pointing on the limited value added of the LEADER Approach</p> <p>(ii) <i>Opportunity of a research project</i> done by the University of Padova on Social Capital and Local Development: from theory to practice recently published by Palgrave MacMillan</p>
Who initiated?	LAG's director and staff together with Elena Pisani of the TESAF Dep. of the University of Padova have jointly initiated the assessment of these different forms of added value
How?	The initial evaluation need has been now transformed into a LAG's self-assessment
Who supported?	Italian Rural Network, TESAF Dep. UNIPD, regional network of the LAGs of the Veneto Region, and local community
Which stage in the assessment?	<p>Programming period 2007-2013: completed!</p> <p>Programming period 2014-2020: first round of data collection</p>

The evaluation approach

- Social capital can be defined as “**networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups**”
- This definition is used in the Guidelines Evaluation of LEADER-CLLD (2017) and OECD (2001)

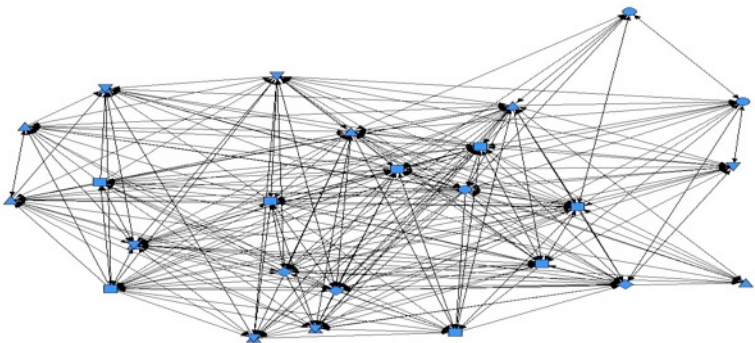


The network approach: using networks to measure and show the social capital in LEADER

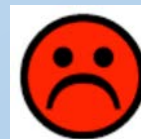
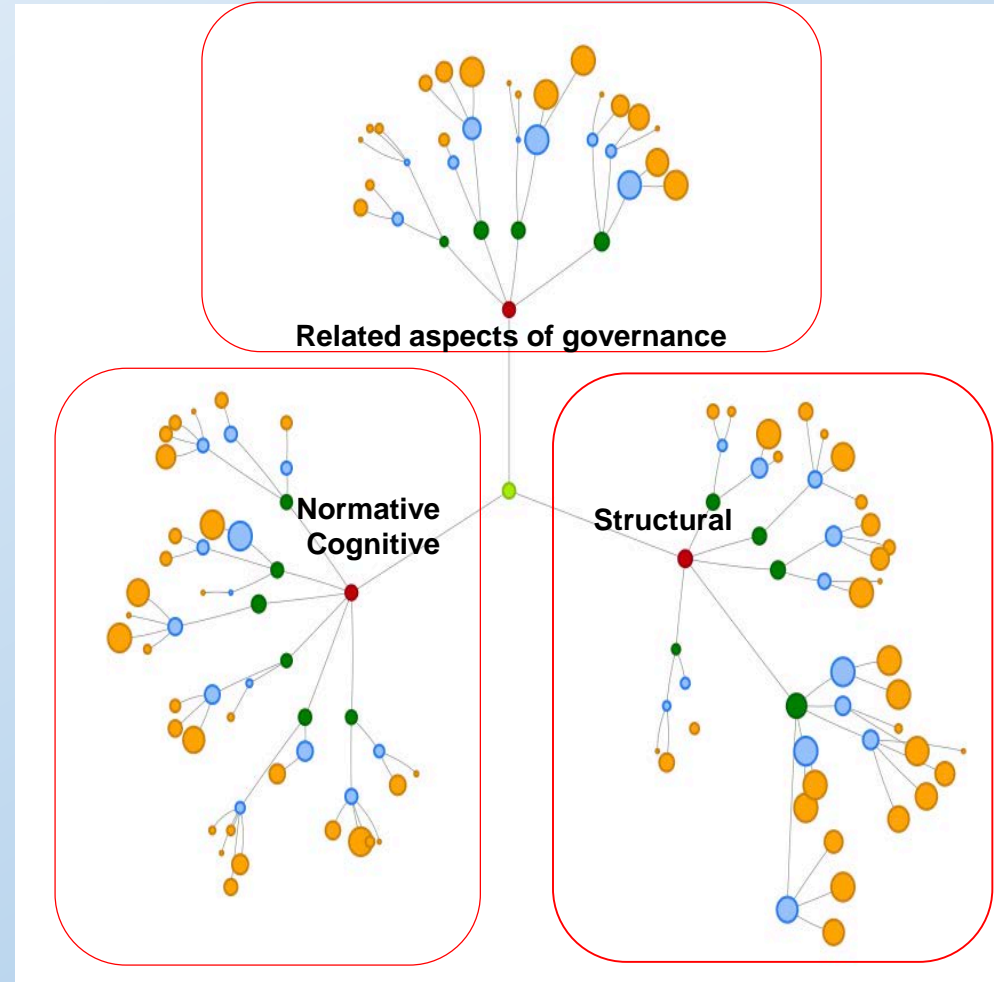
Indicators based on questions to the director, members and a representative sample of beneficiaries



Indicators based on SNA indexes of specific relationships among LAG members (information sharing, collaboration and trust relationship)



Information sharing among LAG members



0

Node size

1



Social capital

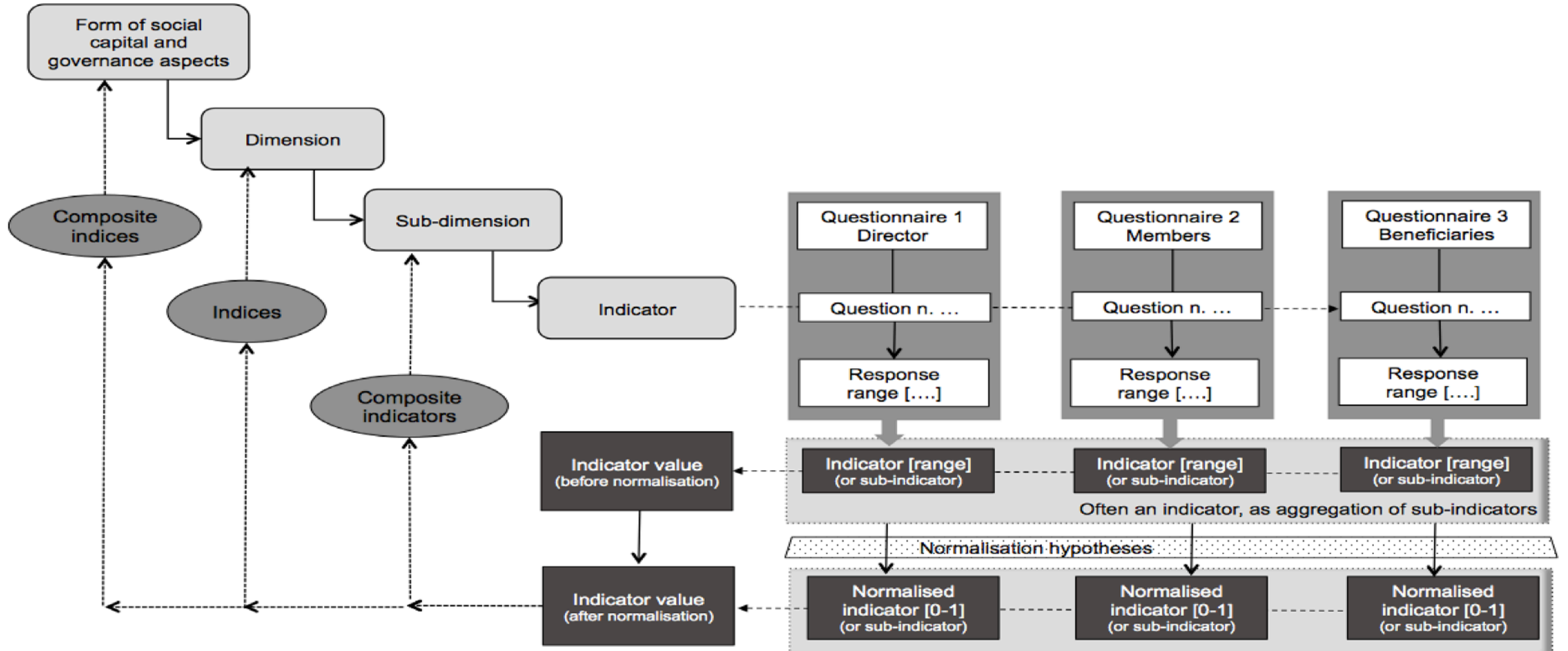
3 Forms

15 Dimensions

34 Sub-dimensions

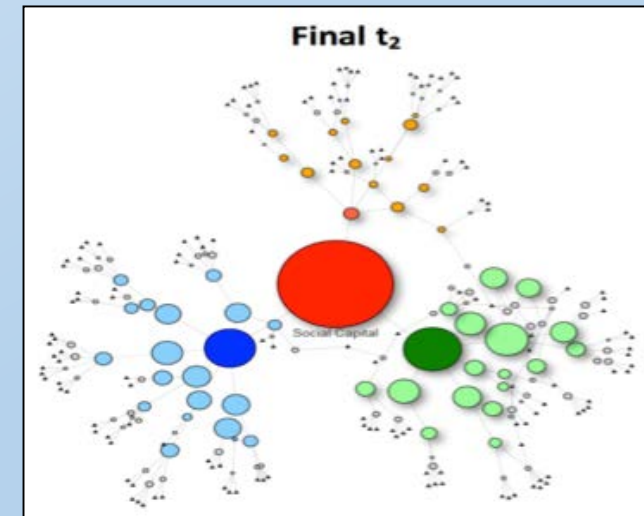
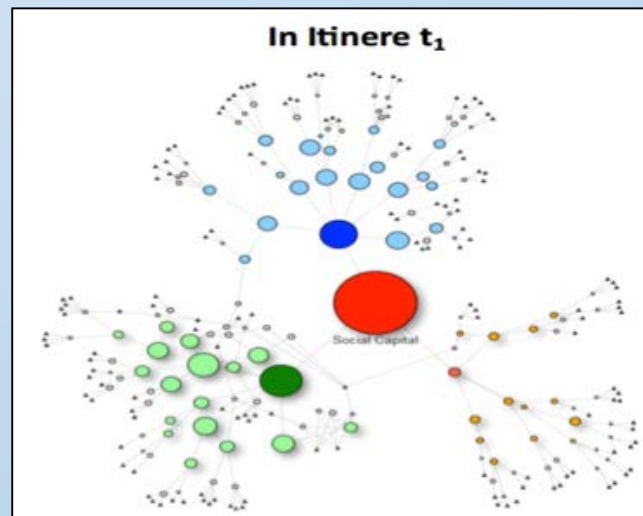
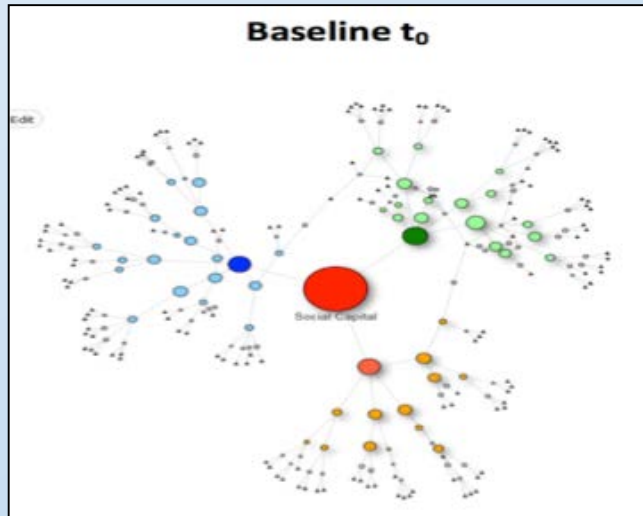
78 Indicators

The network approach to assess the social capital in LEADER-CLLD: How does it work? (1)



The network approach to assess the social capital of LEADER-CLLD: How does it work? (2)

KEY POINT	SPECIFICATIONS
The approach can be used for the self-assessment of the added value of LEADER in terms of improved social capital.	Baseline, ongoing (<i>in itinere</i>), and final data collection and the consequent elaboration of indicators allow to estimate if changes in social capital indicators are correlated with the changes in output, results and outcome indicators of the local development strategy .



Example of evaluation elements used in the network approach

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATORS
To what extent did the HORIZONTAL STRUCTURE OF THE NETWORK lead to the generation of added value?	Internal participation has increased	C1 Average annual rate of attendance of LAG members at Board of Directors' meeting C2 Average annual rate of attendance at the LAG Assembly C3 Regular attendance of LAG members at formal meetings
	Level of openness of the LAG has increased	C5 Implementation of communication channels by the LAG C6 Outreach to new actors by the LAG
	Density of relations in the LAG has increased	C7* Density of the information network of the LAG C8* Density of the collaborative network of the LAG
	Public-private relations internal to the LAG has increased	C9* Proportion of private actors in the centre of the network compared to proportion of private members in the Assembly C10* Collaborative relationships among public and private actors in the LAG C11* Public-private relations over total number of relations of the beneficiary
	Pro-activity of the LAG has increased	C12* Bridging capacity of the LAG among members and beneficiaries C13* Role of the LAG in building relationships among members C14 Level of synergy between beneficiaries and the LAG

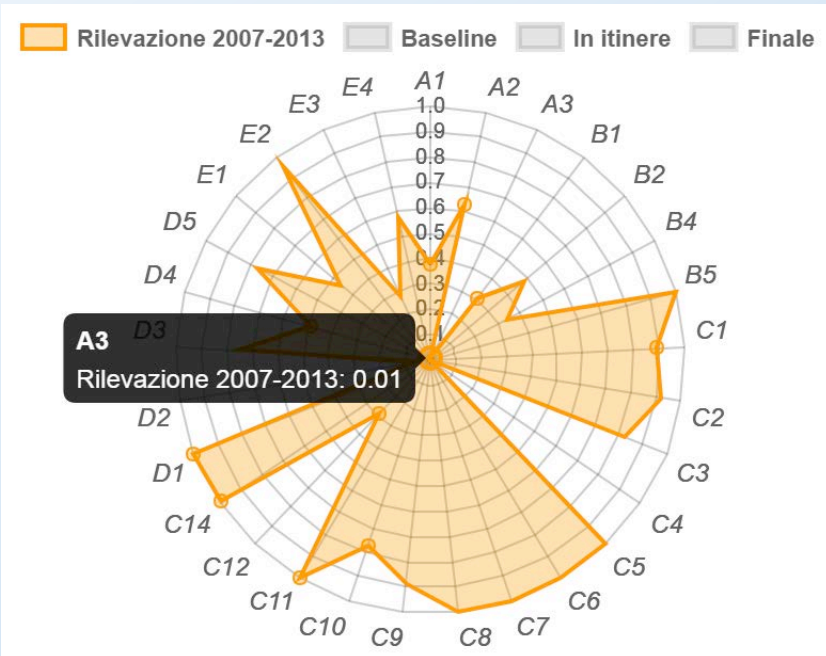
* Indicators are computed with SNA

The network approach to assess the social capital in LEADER-CLLD: How does it work? (3)

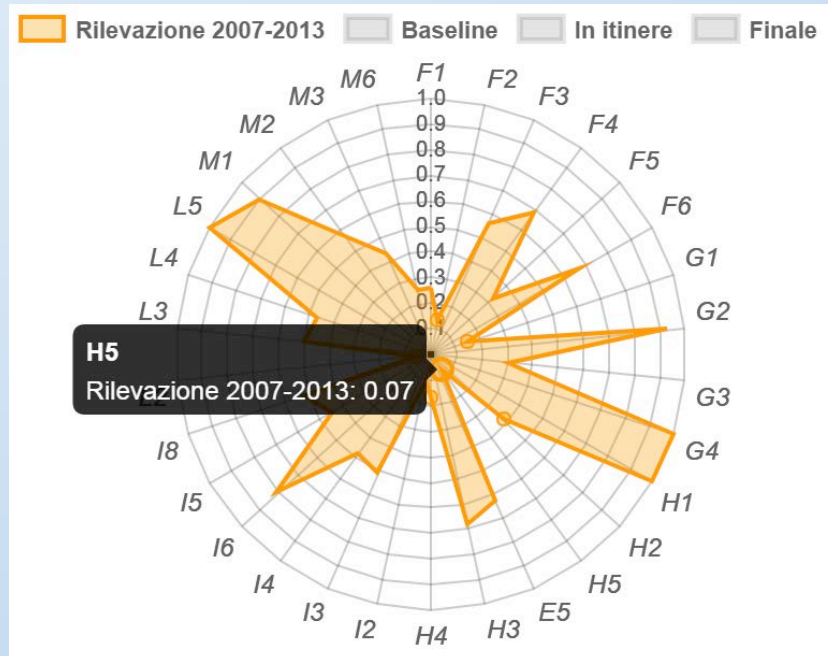
Step	Description	Who does what
1. Setting up the purpose and plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Define the evaluation questions ✓ Agree on roles and responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ LAG manager and LAG staff ✓ LAG members ✓ External researcher ✓ NRN
2. Conceptualizing the approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reviewing the CLLD strategy objectives ✓ Define the indicators to be used among the 78 proposed ✓ Prepare and test the data collection tools (questionnaires) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ LAG manager ✓ External researcher (supervision)
3. Collecting data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Carrying out interview, focus groups, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ External actor
4. Analysing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Data entry in the excel file and on the SNA software ✓ Elaboration of indicators and their graphical representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ External researcher (supervision) ✓ External actor
5. Visualizing, discussing, and interpreting findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Display findings in graphs and online tools ✓ Arrange meetings with LAG members to diffuse ✓ Adopt consequent actions or improve the existing ones in order to capitalize the lessons learnt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ IT or communication expert ✓ Facilitator of interactive group works ✓ LAG manager ✓ Executive Board ✓ President of the organization

Evaluation Findings

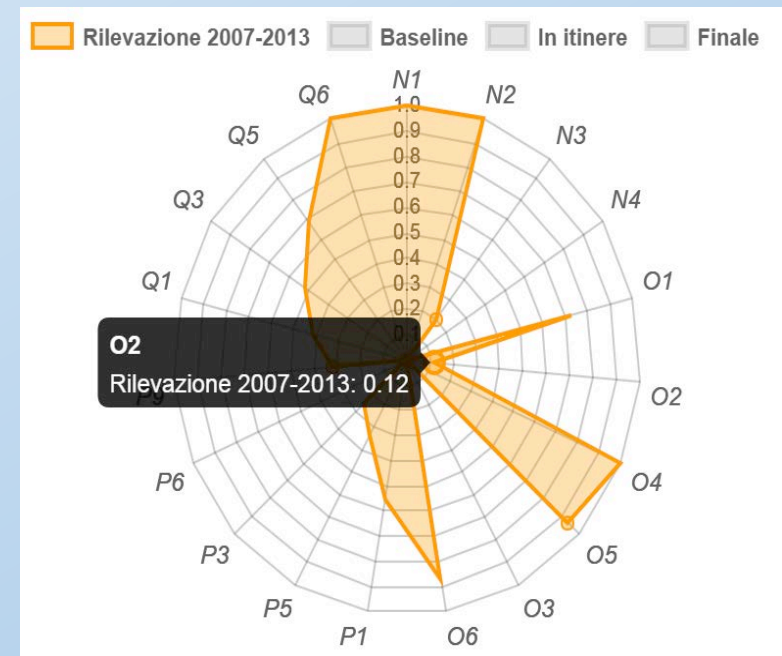
Structural social capital



Normative-cognitive social capital



Related aspects of governance



INDICATOR A3: value 0.01
Beneficiaries' level of indirect knowledge of projects supported by the LAG

<https://www.galprealpidolomiti.it/capitale-sociale/indicatore/>

INDICATOR H5: value 0.07
Innovative capacity of the LAG as perceived by beneficiaries

<https://www.galprealpidolomiti.it/capitale-sociale/indicatore/>

INDICATOR O2: value 0.12
Understanding the role of the LAG in the territory

<https://www.galprealpidolomiti.it/capitale-sociale/indicatore/>

Lesson learnt and follow-up actions

Structural social capital



R1 MESSA IN SICUREZZA DEL PERCORSO CICLOPEDONALE LUNGO IL CANALE CELLINA
Comune di Alpego
[➔ Dettagli](#)

R2 RECUPERO TRACCIATO CICLO-PEDONALE IN LOC. VELOS
Comune di Santa Giustina
[➔ Dettagli](#)

Normative-cognitive social capital



Related aspects of governance



Example of action:
dedicated tool

Example of action:
innovative agriculture

Example of action:
training courses

Reflections on the evaluation approach

Challenges encountered in assessing the added value of LEADER:

- ✓ Cultural challenge
- ✓ Simpler definition of social capital for communication purposes

Elements that worked out well, and could be transferred to other Member States:

- ✓ Training of the staff and interviewer
- ✓ Graphical representations (e.g. network graph, spider diagram, etc.)

Overall ability of the approach to show the added value of LEADER:

- ✓ Number of indicators is the real added value of the approach
- ✓ Social capital becomes “tangible”

Possibility to upscale the approach at RDP level:

- ✓ Require strong coordination between the LAGs and the MA

Critical elements to consider:

- ✓ The SNA method has direct costs and indirect costs
- ✓ How to connect social capital with improved results

Thank you

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<https://www.palgrave.com/de/book/9783319542768>

<https://orchid.org/0000-0002-8918-2781>

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<https://www.galprealpidolomiti.it/monitoraggio-e-valutazione/>