

Information leaflet

The Local Economic Development Agencies for the sustainable goals.

According to the OECD "*a Local Economic Development Agency (LEDA) is a non-profit legal structure, generally owned jointly by the public and private entities of the territory, which acts as a mechanism through which local actors plan and activate, in a shared way, initiatives for territorial economic development, identify the most convenient tools for its realization, and organize a coherent system of services*"

There are several typologies of LEDAs in the world. OECD (2010) counted 15000 structures, whereas the LEDA established for achieving human development and the sustainable development goals of the United Nations are 55, spread in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. They are part of ILS LEDA.

The first of these last LEDAs were born 30 years ago in Central America, through the support of international cooperation program of the United Nations, funded by the Italian government.

National networks exist in Argentina, Colombia, and Dominican Republic.

These LEDA have a structure that has its own legal and operational autonomy and is non-profit-making. It is legally recognized under private law, that allows the participation of both public actors (local administrations, decentralized state institutions, services etc.) private business actors (producer networks, cooperatives, chambers of commerce, trade unions), service providers (private companies, academies, educational and research institutions, professional schools, financial institutions, etc.), and civil society organisations (women associations, pro social right, pro-environment, pro vulnerable group organisations, etc.).

Its autonomous nature allows it to represent at the same time an institutional entity, which weighs on the local and national political scene; a contractual entity, able to independently access to financial sources; an administrative entity, able to execute projects, provide services and credits in a simple and non-bureaucratic way.

They represent an effective tool for social dialogue and consultation as well as a space for decision-making in which local actors, both public and private, can move and determine their own processes of economic development. In fact, on one hand, the public sector takes advantage of the political capital to get closer to civil society, as well as to the needs and the moods of people; furthermore, it has the possibility to delegate the operational aspects needed to realize its political preferences to a technical and specialized structure. On the other hand, the private sector finds in the LEDA a space to spread its requests for development, without complicated intermediaries, in direct dialogue with its management bodies and with the public sector and influencing its policies.

Each Leda has its own story, and characteristics. Nevertheless, the most common areas of intervention are job creation, fight against poverty and social exclusion, valorization of local resources, development of small businesses, protection of the environment and mitigation of the climate change, revitalization of the local economy and reconstruction after conflicts or disasters, stimulating introducing and disseminating innovative technologies, implementation of public strategies and plans for territorial development.

Typical LEDAs annual results

- **Have promoted the typical local economic and cultural resources**
- **Have supported the most relevant territorial value chains, and facilitated their internationalization**
- **Have helped to improve the performance of hundreds small businesses, and cooperatives**
- **Have supported the creation protecting hundreds of jobs, especially, for women and young people**
- **Have helped protecting the environment and mitigating the climate change**
- **Have promoted spaces and mechanisms for enhancing the social cohesion and dialogue**
- **Have facilitated and supported social businesses**
- **Have facilitated the implementation of national development programs at local level**