



Institute for International Links and Services
For Local Economic Development Agencies

**THE ILS LEDA PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY FOR
ASSESSING ECONOMIC TERRITORIAL RESOURCES AND
ELABORATING VALUE CHAIN STRATEGIES FOR
SUSTAINABLE, COMPETITIVE, AND INCLUSIVE
DEVELOPMENT**

***RESCO
At a Glance***

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1. Background

The methodology named REsources for Sustainable COmpetitiveness (RESCO) is a tool designed by ILS LEDA and already successfully employed in 13 countries over a period of 18 years, in the framework of United Nations and European Union international cooperation projects.

RESCO is a participatory methodology aimed at facilitating the elaboration of strategies and plans for the economic development of territorial competitive resources that is compatible with social inclusion, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

2. Main RESCO principles, and methodology

The following principles constitute the conceptual and operational backbone of RESCO

- 1) It assesses the territorial value chain
- 2) It is participatory, and based on the work of focus groups composed of actors directly involved in the value chain
- 3) It is based on a complex set of components to be assessed – each including specific factors, variables, and indicators.
- 4) It adopts an “optimum ignorance” approach.
- 5) It uses a Quick Collective Appraisal (QCA) method for making rapid decisions and nonconflictual choices.
- 6) It is highly flexible and adaptive.
- 7) It allows local actors to gain awareness on the most competitive, or excellent, resources in their territory, to build a sense of belonging, to experiment or exercise collective actions and decisions, to test the advantages of new forms of participatory governance, and to support institutional development and effectiveness.

The value chain approach

The concept of “value chain” was introduced by Michael Porter, and applied initially to enterprises¹. The advantages of referring to a value chain instead of a single resource is due the added impact a value chain has on competitiveness, employment, policies, and markets.

The rationale is that each territory disposes of resources that can be considered excellent, or, said in a “Porterian” fashion, resources “with competitive advantage”: a fruit, some fish, a special cow or goat, or special geological characteristics of land allowing good milk or meat, cultural or environmental attractions for tourists, special educational or health systems, etc. – in other words, resources that are DIFFERENT from similar ones available in other territories.

Yet, what makes these resources really impacting on employment and long term development, and less dependent from external factors, is their capacity, if well utilized, to trigger wider processes of development which push local economic agents to increase production, also in ancillary economic sectors, to transform raw materials into a large range of processed or industrial products, and to establish all the different services necessary to sustain the various components of the value chain. This in turn stimulates an expansion in

¹ Michael Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, 1985, NY: Free Press, 1985.

production of inputs and technologies in the area, in innovation capacities and professional training, as well as in the educational and financial systems.

Thinking in terms of value chains as opposed to individual economic resources, and in terms of territorial instead of sectoral development, not only opens more effective paths to competitiveness and employment strategies, but also helps better achieve the 2030 United Nations goals, because of the value chain intrinsic relationships among different actors (producers, service providers, universities, NGOs, public administrations, etc.), and the possible common interest on maintaining the integrity and the cohesion of the territory, including economic, social, and environmental aspects.

Generally speaking, *the selection of the value chains* to be assessed depends on the time and the budget available.

If one *does not have time and cost constraints*, one can take into consideration and assess any economic resource the local actors might suggest in the pre-assessment phase of the RESCO methodology.

The participatory approach

All the current socio economic theories, as well as the key international organizations (United Nations, OECD), and the European Union, with particular reference to its last TALD (Territorial Approach to Local Development), highlight the importance of participation of multiple actors to the decision making processes, both to ensure that the proper inputs are considered, and to reduce the risk of possible social resistance to the decisions being made.

Applying these principles and goals, the RESCO is a methodology which:

1. Facilitates and stimulates the participation of local actors, in that it puts them at the center of decision-making processes around their future opportunities, and does not consider them as mere "consultants" of the decisions being made
2. Foresees three participatory mechanisms:
 - The value chain focus groups (**VC-FoG**), which provide for the value chain assessment, highlighting potentials, opportunities, and obstacles, and identify the best value chain development strategies. VC-FoG requires a coordinator, who will in charge of liaising with RESCO experts and operators.
 - The Inter Value Chain Focus Group (**IVC**), composed by the ensemble of the different value chain focus groups, which will decide the overall development strategy, taking into consideration the commonalities and similarities of the strategic actions identified by each single value chain strategy.
 - The Special Committee for the Action Plan (**SCAP**), a body who is elected by the IVC, and who propose the IVC's a prioritized plan of actions, necessary to operationalize the chosen development strategy.

The resources of RESCO

The human resources

For the completion of RESCO, the following human resources are needed:

- The Resco experts – people with expertise in RESCO operations and management. Generally, these are ILS LEDA experts.
- The representatives of the local actors (as specified in the next chapter), constituting the various Resco participatory mechanisms
- The Resco operators: local people previously trained, in charge of conducting or co-conducting (with the RESCO experts) the VC-FoGs.

Time

How much time will need for the completion of RESCO will depend on the financial availability of the project (the more the human resources are, the less the time that is needed), the local context (the more a culture and practices of networking and participation are present in the territory, the less the time needed), the program or project framework (i.e. specific requirements, constrains, etc.)

On average, RESCO takes between 3 to 6 moths to be finalized, including all the three phases of RESCO, as described in the following chapter.

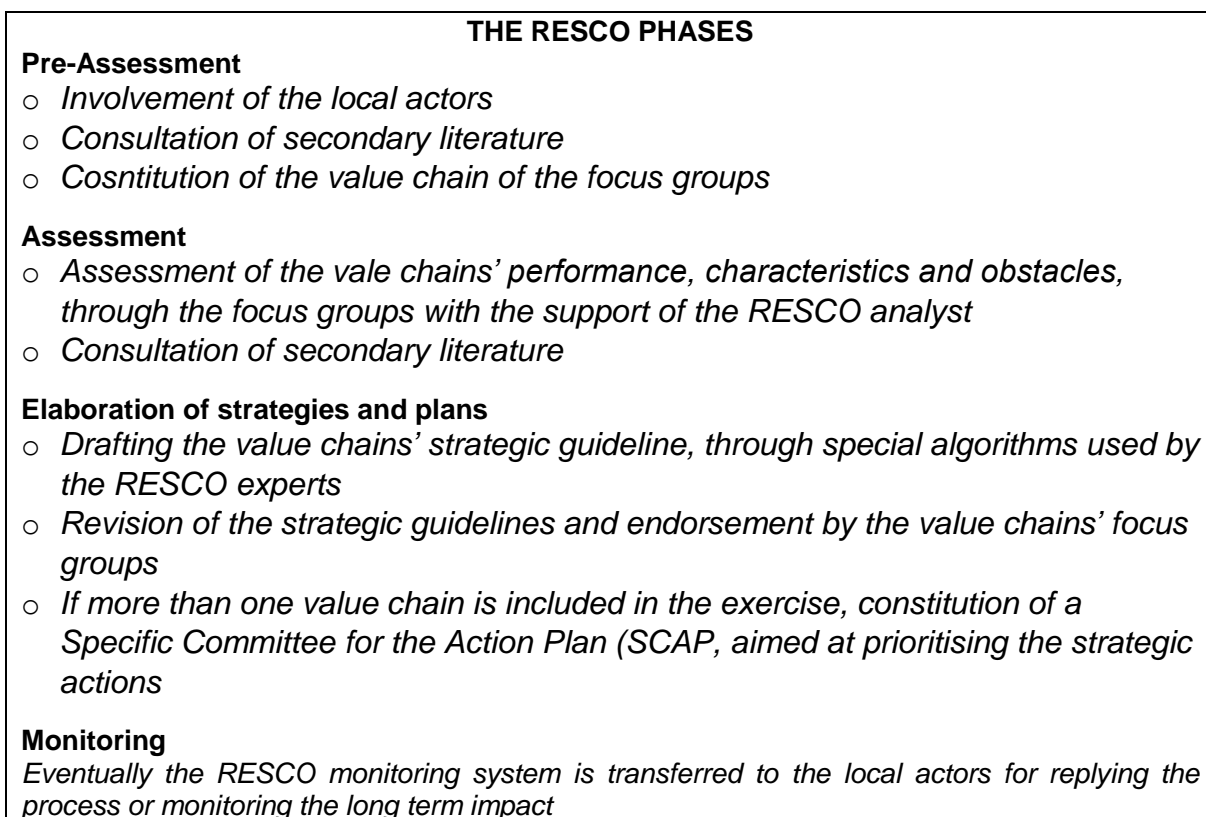
Investment

The costs for the realization of RESCO include:

- The cost of the experts and their mobility
- The cost of the operators and their mobility
- The cost of the training of the operators
- The cost of the workshops of the VC-FoG (no less than 3 workshops for each value chain), of the IVC (2 workshops), and of the SCAP (2 workshops)

3. RESCO at a glance (phases, methodology, and tools)

RESCO consists of three main phases (see scheme below):



i) The resources pre-assessment

The pre-assessment phase has the main objectives of:

- a) identifying the most appropriate local actors to involve in the RESCO exercise
- b) Identifying the economic resources and the value chains with most developmental potential

This phase includes:

- the consultation of territorial development plans (if they exist), and of secondary literature (studies, researches, etc.)
- preliminary contacts with the main local actors belonging to the productive sector, the service sector, the civil society sector, the local administration, the academic and financial sectors
- interviews with the most relevant local actors and experts, to gather their informed opinion on the local resources, and to receiving information about the profile of her/his organisation (according to certain criteria)
- The realisation of a map of the actors, as a result of the previous actions
- The selection of the actors to be involved in the build-up of the value chain focus groups, including representatives of the productive sector, the service sector, the civil society sector, the local administration.

As it happens, to ensure its effectiveness, the value chain Focus Group must include:

- Producers
- Public administration
- Service Providers
- NGOs (community-based organisations, social sector, environmental sector)
- Members of the academia
- Members of the financial sector

Participants to the focus groups are the protagonists of this exercise, in terms of provision of information, as well as of decision-making (both in the assessment of the value chain, and in the formulation of strategies and plans).

If possible, it is preferable to have a balanced focus group representing all sectors. Ideally, there should be not more than 15-20 people for each focus group.

An example of “good balance” is considered as follows:

- Producers 40%
- Public administration 15%
- Service Providers 15%
- NGOs (community-based organisations, social sector, environmental sector) 15%
- Academic sector 10%
- Financial sector 5%

Sometimes, one might find it hard to identify associations or networks. This will require supplementary work of selection.

Tools of the pre-assessment

- **Questionnaire for the interviews to the local actors**
- **Map of actors**

ii) The Resources assessment

The assessment consists of four elements, namely: Components, Factors, Variables, Indicators

The Components

During the assessment, each of the following elements will be explored and assessed:

- A. *The Competitive Advantage*
- B. *The existing and potential Market Positioning*
- C. *The Economic, Social, Environmental, and Institutional Sustainability*
- D. *The status of the Value Chain (existing and potential components, including products, sub-products, supplies, events, and services)*
- E. *The main obstacles to the value chain development, including their causes and prioritization*

The factors

For each component, the assessment proceeds by assessing specific and different factors characterizing such component (for instance, the component “sustainability” is articulated in factors, such as economic, social, environmental sustainability).

The Variables

Each factor may include one or more variables, very much dependent on the local context, and on the sector. As it happens, they are different in the case of agriculture, compared to industry, services, or tourism.

The Indicators

The indicators refer to each variable. They can be:

- Qualitative, as appraisal of the presence of the variable (i.e. yes or not)
- Quanti-Qualitative, as appraisal on a range of possibilities, either qualitative (low, medium, high), or quantitative (0-39; 49-99, >99; 0-10%; 11-50%; >50%)
- Quantitative

The following table shows the RESCO model of assessment for agriculture products.

Table 1: Resco Assessment			
RESCO COMPONENTS-FACTORS-VARIABLES-INDICATORS FOR AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAIN			
COMPONENT	FACTORS	VARIABLES	INDICATORS
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE	<i>COMPETITIVE FACTORS² (for Agriculture)</i>	Unique product, Organoleptic characteristics, Multi harvest, Healthy, Ecologic, Abundance, Organization, Infrastructure, Food security	QUALITATIVE
	<i>CAUSES OF COMPETITIVENESS</i>	Ecosystem, Knowledge, Entrepreneurship, Services, Geo position, Population Character, Good Governance	QUALITATIVE
MARKET POSITIONING	<i>CURRENT MARKETS</i>	Local-Regional-National-International- Worldwide	QUALI-QUANTI-TATIVE

² For the industrial products the main variables are: raw material, patents, innovative technologies, entrepreneurship, knowledge, traditional knowledge, local culture and habits, innovative business organization. For tourism the main variables are: natural attractions, local events, cultural heritage, geographic position, complex attractions close each other, services, welcoming atmosphere

	<i>POTENTIAL MARKETS</i>	Local-Regional-National-International- Worldwide	QUALI-QUANTI-TATIVE
	<i>ECONOMIC</i>	Women working in the value chain components- women owners in the value chain- women chief managers- women key position in local government-	QUALI-QUANTI-TATIVE
	<i>SOCIAL</i>	Ability to generate employment-Ability to generate employment for people with different physical and mental abilities-Ability to generate employment for people with low skills and professional curricula- Production units managed by young people under 35 years of age / total productive units -Enterprises that use their social responsibility for social investments	QUALITATIVE-QIALI-QUANTITATIVE
	<i>ENVIRONMENTAL</i>	Natural Reserve or Protected Zones- Public regulations for protecting natural resources- information Campaigns about environmental sustainability- Regulations about fishing in accordance with sustainable principles- Plans of programs for protecting the natural environment- Pans and programs for controlling or reducing the atmospheric pollution-	QUALITATIVE
		Initiatives or programs for facilitating the participation of citizens- Presence of voluntary corps for environment protection- Conferences. Debates on environment sustainability- University education- Program and structures for monitoring contamination	QUALITATIVE
		Regulations for managing differential waste- differential waste effectiveness- circular economy spread in the region- enterprises for the generation of alternative energies- Organic food production- Products with recyclable packaging- Conservation of natural heritage- Preservation of rare animal species- Conservation of historical and cultural heritage	QUALITATIVE
	<i>INSTITUTIONAL</i>	Level of implementation of Government plans for the development of the value chain-Level of attention from Local and national authorities for the development of the value chain	QUALITATIVE
<i>FINANCIAL</i>	Necessity of investments to strengthen the value chain (infrastructure, education, business, etc.)-Presence of capacity to provide credit to the business sector-Presence of specific financial mechanisms for the value chain considered (credit lines, etc.)	QUALITATIVE	

VALUE CHAIN STATUS	<i>INPUTS (for agriculture)</i>	Human resources-Capital-Raw Material-Land, Information	QUALITATIVE
	<i>EQUIPMENT</i>	Durable equipment, such as Manual tools (for working the soil, the trees and plants, harvesting), Mechanic machinery (for working the soil, trees, plants, sowing, fertilizing, processing, harvesting)-Structures and protections- Irrigation- Packaging- Digital devices sensors and apps for monitoring and control (climate, pesticides, soil consumption, etc)	QUALITATIVE
		Supply/Consumable goods, such as: office supplies- Supplies for cultivation (manures, fertilizers, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.)- Supplies for packaging-	QUALITATIVE
	<i>COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES</i>	Fairs-Events-Exhibitions-Cultural Initiatives-etc-	QUALITATIVE
	<i>SERVICES</i>	Technical, administrative, organizational services – training -support in the development of alliances / associations- access to finance- commercialization/marketing-soil monitoring-veterinary	QUALITATIVE
	<i>SUB-PRODUCTS</i>	Agro-industry-cosmetics-circular economy-medical- decorative and applied art-other	QUALITATIVE
OBSTACLES	<i>INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
	<i>INFORMATION</i>	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
	<i>SERVICES</i>	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
	<i>SERVICES FOR THE</i>	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN		
SERVICES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
ENTERPRENEURS HIP	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
MARKETING	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
NATIONAL PLANS	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
SOCIAL SERVICES	According to the participants' choices	QUALITATIVE
GENDER INEQUALITY		
FOR ALL THE OBSTACLES	According to the participants' scores	QCA

Tools for the assessment tools

- The Assessment questionnaires
- The quick collective appraisal methodology (see chapter 5), applied for the prioritization processes

iii) The formulation of the value chain strategy

a) the formulation of the strategy for each value chain.

Development strategies aim to **valorise the strength of the value chain, and render it sustainable in the long run. They identify actions needed to remove weaknesses in and obstacles to the development of the value chain in the desired markets.**

At this aim, ILS LEDA uses a **specific algorithm** to direct the process, as illustrated in the following picture:

The algorithm is based on the following logic:

Preliminary approximation

The algorithm relates each one of the “variables” correspondent to the different “factors” (as specified at the beginning of paragraph ii) to the “strategic fields or components of actions” in order to derive the “Strategic Actions” for each one of the variables.

This is to say that , in a preliminary approximation:

$$S_a = f(V_{ij}, F_n)$$

Where

S_a = Strategic Actions

V_{ij} = Variable “i” of the Component “j”

F_n = Factor “n”

For instance, in the case of the Variable 1“ Natural Resources” of the Component 1 (see paragraph on assessment) “Competitive advantage “ (V_{11}), we can have a number of Strategic Actions correspondent to the field of action 1 (Fa_1), Field of action 2 (Fa_2), etc.

What about the Fields of actions?

According to the ILS LEDA experience, these fields correspond to the following items:

- 1) Capital
It refers to the possibility of accessing finance for businesses or for economic development initiatives
- 2) Information
It refers to mechanisms for collecting and disseminating information
- 3) Governance
It refers to mechanisms of relationship between local actors, between them and national or international institutions, of joint decision-making, of exercising pressure towards decision-making institutions, of optimization of resources and of concerted planning
- 4) Services
It refers to services needed to support territorial economic development initiatives
- 5) Culture
It refers to the behavior of local actors, providing for resistance to change or or on the contrary predisposition for innovative solutions, or to the education level in regards to collective work, the resilience towards disasters, etc.
- 6) Know How
It refers to the level of knowledge of the local actors in promoting and supporting local economic development in all its general or specific aspects, or the presence (or absence) of mechanisms or institutions for facilitating it
- 7) Environmental culture
The sensitiveness to protection of the natural environment
- 8) Gender Inequality
It refers to the inequality in the gender distribution of richness or in the opportunity to access to economic life, and of sensitiveness towards gender equality

Second level approximation

In a subsequent approximation, one has to consider if the prioritised variables can be considered as a “strength” for the value chain development, or as a “weakness”.

In the case of a **strong variable**, the strategic actions shall pertain to what to do for **maintaining and possibly improving this strength**.

In the case of a **weak variable**, the strategic actions shall indicate what to do for **reducing or overcoming this weakness**.

The algorithm could be written as a function of field of action to maintain “FaM” or of fields of action to improve “Fal”

$$Sa = f(V_{ij}, FaM_m, Fal_n)$$

where “m or “n”, correspond to the numbers of the abovementioned list.

For instance, in the case of the example, the strategic action for maintaining the competitive advantage correspondent to the natural resources V_{11} , it is related to FaM_3 , correspondent to Governance or FaM_7 , correspondent to environmental culture, it is to say:

Sa_x : (improving governance): Organise a territorial committee for monitoring the environmental protection

Sa_y : (improving environmental culture): Promote sensitisation campaigns and environmental education in the school.

In the case of the variable 5 “Weak Services” of the component 5 “Value chain assessment” V_{55} , the strategic actions for improving the services for the value chain development will be correspondent to Governance or FaI_3 , and Services FaI_4 , as it follows:

administrations, universities, for strengthening the service system

Sa_z : (improving services): Promoting and working for the realisation of a university course or master on Tourism Business Administration.

The final formula is therefore

$$\text{Value chain strategy} = \sum Sa_n$$

Example of strategy formulation

The beekeeping value chain

Strategic Component: GOVERNANCE		
Factor	Critical Problems	Strategic Actions
Competitive Advantage	Maintain in the long period the competitive advantages that consist of the flavour derived from the typical fruits and an uncontaminated environment, and the accumulated knowledge about production	Create a knowledge transfer center
		Implement a pollution monitoring system
Social Sustainability	Difficult access to finance and services for marginal people	Seek agreements with the Government and / or with banks to facilitate access to finance for marginal people
	Lack of youth entrepreneurship	Make agreement with the universities for a twinning with companies and the dissemination of business culture
Economic Sustainability	Low productivity	Improve technologies, through relationships with research centers, and entrepreneurs capacity building Establish links with Research Centers
Environmental Sustainability	Scarce entrepreneurial attention Scarce demand for bio-products	Sensitisation Campaigns Capacity entrepreneurial building
Value Chain status	Lack of relationships among the value chain components	Identifying common interests for common actions (inputs and technology purchasing, commercialisation, transportation etc.)
Obstacles	Lack of collaborative platforms	Establish a departmental development forum to prioritize and search how to build highways, energy networks and other infrastructures, and make pressure to the Government to improve legislation in favour of beekeepers
		Establish agreements with banks to facilitate access to credit
		Establish the federation of beekeepers associations
		Establish the value chain consortium
Strategic Component: CAPITAL		
	Critical Problems	Strategic Actions

Social Sustainability	Difficulty in accessing to finance	Establish a solidarity fund
	Lack of corporate social responsibility	Find ways to encourage business companies to adopt corporate social responsibility
Economic and social sustainability	Lack of access to finance	Establish a guarantee fund
Strategic Component: SERVICES		
	Critical Problems	Strategic Actions
Market Positioning	Weakness in commercial, marketing, input purchasing, professional training, veterinary services	Strengthening veterinary services
		Realization of a territorial marketing strategy and territorial brand
		Establishment of an input purchasing center
		Support for the creation of new companies in the chain: wax and candles, cosmetic products, pharmaceuticals, poison, etc..
Economic sustainability	Lack of youth entrepreneurship	Support for the creation of companies and cooperatives by young people
Environmental sustainability	Lack of services for supporting circular economy	Establishing a Circular Economy Service Center
Value Chain Status	Incomplete value chain	Capacity building of entrepreneurs for diversifying products and /or support to new entrepreneurs for producing wax, cosmetic cream, soaps, shampoo, pharmaceutical products (propolis, pollen, poison, royal jelly, furniture cleaner
	Lack of specialised services	Establish a Beekeeping Development Center
Obstacles	Lack of Information	Improve information on market and financial opportunities
	Lack of capacities	Strengthen business capabilities, especially in terms of long-term vision, cooperative work, and innovation
	Lack of services	Realizing a cooperative system for providing comprehensive services to producers
	Lack of capacities in marketing strategies	Carry out a marketing strategy, including a brand
	Weak regulations	Establish national incentive policy

Strategic Component: CULTURE		
	Critical Problems	Strategic Actions
Competitive Advantage	Maintain over time the competitive advantages that consist of the flavour derived from the typical fruits and an uncontaminated environment, and the accumulated knowledge about production	Spread honey culture starting with the local population
		Reinforce the culture of environmental safeguarding from secondary schools
Sustainability	Lack of corporate social responsibility	Awareness campaigns for corporate social responsibility
	Weakness in the green economy	Awareness campaigns on the green economy issue
Value Chain status	Lack of sensitiveness and culture	Perform an annual Bee Festival

b) the integrated multi-value chains strategies

In the majority of cases, more than one value chain is selected for the assessment exercise.

Consequently, what most likely will happen is that some strategic actions, identified in the first phase, are similar to or overlapping each other.

In the before mentioned example, there is a high probability that the following actions will be common among the selected value chains:

- Implement a pollution monitoring system
- Seek agreements with the Government and / or with banks to facilitate access to finance for marginal people
- Establish agreements with banks to facilitate access to credit, through solidarity or guarantee funds
- Reach an agreement with universities, for a twinning with companies and the dissemination of business culture
- Realise sensitisation campaigns on environmental protection, also reinforcing the culture of environmental protection in secondary schools
- Realise awareness campaigns for corporate social responsibility
- Realize a territorial marketing strategy and territorial brand
- Facilitate a circular economy

All in all, the strategy will be articulated in two levels:

- I. At the integrated level, the strategy will describe the actions that are common to all the value chains
- II. At value chain level, the strategy will describe the actions that are specific to the single value chains

c) the action plan

The value chains development strategies cannot be implemented in a short period. As it happens, the literature shows that they need a 5-10 year time frame to achieve the expected results. It is, therefore, necessary to spread the action in a short, and medium / long term period.

Thus, a Special Committee for the Action Plan (SCAP), will need to be established for overseeing this effort.

First of all, The SCAP will share the criteria on which to prioritise actions, and carrying them in the short term (first-second year), medium term (third-fourth year), and long term.

According to the ILS LEDA experience, these criteria should be:

- Social impact
- Gender impact
- Economic impact
- Scale impact
- Needed investment
- Coherence with current public policies

Afterwards, the SCAP proposal will be submitted to the united value chain focus groups, for their endorsement.

The tools for formulation of the strategies and plans

- Study cases of value chain development strategies, as derived by the ILS LEDA experience
- The quick collective appraisal methodology for the prioritization

iv) The monitoring system

The RESCO monitoring system is constituted by a number a factors, that may be monitored through a set on indicators, inspired to the United Nations Sustainable Goals.

They are part of a separated document

4. The optimum ignorance approach

Robert Chambers considers “in the appraisal of natural resources, economic potential, social development, and the other fields, there is an active search for shortcuts with trade-offs between timeliness, accuracy, relevance, and actual use of information. Nevertheless, cost-effectiveness has its own rigor and should generate its own values”. He suggests three linked principles: optimal ignorance, appropriate imprecision, and learning by people, as it follows:

- 1) **optimal ignorance** means knowing the difference between what is worth knowing and what is not, enabling the collection of information that is required for the research projects. This avoids collection of too much irrelevant data.
- 2) **appropriate imprecision**. In conventional surveys, many of the data collected have a degree of precision that is really unnecessary. It is often more useful to obtain causes of problems, trends and directions of change, rather than accurate information on the absolute numbers.
- 3) **learning from people**. “Listening and learning” by local people and producers, and treat them as investigators, assuming that the local people have much valid knowledge

that outsiders do not have, trying to get inside their skins and see the world as they do, open the way to unexpected information.

ILS LEDA has experienced that this last principle has one added value more. If people are really consulted, and they are able to express their opinion, by having their perspectives influence the decision making process and mould or shape the actions to be carried out subsequently, they will increase their responsibility and commitment to make such things happen concretely. Since theory and experience in territorial development show that the main success factor is the motivated participation of people, RESCO promotes a people-centered approach which ensures efficacy of action on the one side, and local ownership of development processes on the other.

Resco adopts this principle by following the lead of the Focus Groups, constituting of local actors responsible for policies, administrations, production, services, and environment and social networks, and by taking their assessment as the optimum level of knowledge.

In the RESCO methodology, the level of optimal ignorance approach is justified also in its purpose, as RESCO does not aim to produce a scientific investigation, but rather strategies based on very local and very real potential, opportunities, and constrains.

The individual appraisals and opinions are, in specific and appropriate cases, filtered either through statistical evidence, or quick collective appraisal.

5. The Quick Collective Appraisal (QCA)

When a collective decision has to be made, for instance where there is a need to prioritize the causes behind a competitive advantage or obstacle, RESCO uses the ILS LEDA Quick Collective Appraisal (QCA). This is a simplified management methodology, and it is extremely useful when quick decisions have to be made, and conflicts avoided or solved.

It consists of the following steps:

- i. Each member of the Focus Group indicates what are the variables she/he wants to take into consideration
- ii. By eliminating duplications, and adjusting similar indications, the list of variables trough which measure the factor performance is prepared by the RESCO operators.
- iii. According to the numerousness of the resulted variables and a pre-established grid, the number of clusters and the number of variables for clusters are also established, and organized in order of priority. For instance, if one has 80 variables, one wants to establish 8 clusters of descendent priority, of 10 variables each.
- iv. Each participant, individually, selects and scores "8" to the 10 variables she/he considers as Very High Priority; selects and scores "7" to the to the 10 variables she/he considers as Second Priority (N°2); selects and scores "6" to the to the 10 variables she/he considers as Third Priority (N°3); and so on until the last eighth group of 10 variables
- v. At the end, the scores received by each variable are summed, and the variables with the highest score are prioritized

6. The RESCO implementation options

RESCO is a flexible and adaptive exercise.

In general, the RESCO methodology is adapted to the socio-economic, and cultural aspects of the territory of application.

Provided that the basic scheme is articulated in components, factors, variables, and indicators, and that the components remain always the same, the other elements can change. How they will change is something that is decided together by ILS LEDA and the local partners participating to and leading the RESCO exercises.

This is why we can say that there never is a RESCO that is similar to another, when they are employed in different contexts.

Furthermore, ILS LEDA may propose three different types of implementation: the standard, the simplified, or the remote implementation.

The Standard Implementation

The STI is based on the implementation through value chain *focus groups*

For each selected value chain, a Focus Group is established, including the actors pre-identified through the pre-assessment phase.

The standard option uses *pre-established questionnaires* for each component. sometimes an individual, and sometimes a collective answer.

In the cases of difficulties in reaching an agreement vis-à-vis the collective answers, the QCA method is used.

The Simplified Implementation

One might want to opt for the simplified option in case of time/cost constraints, or difficulties in gathering people.

In the first case, one can use the focus group approach, but with reduced number of questions.

In the second case, one might reach and interview people where they are located. All the answers will be, of course, individual.

The Remote Implementation

This option has been developed and used during the COVID-19 restrictions.

In this case, the questionnaires are designed be used through a digital platform, and the training and assistance will be provided through the web, by way of using any of the available digital platforms (e.g. Skype, Hangout, Meet, Zoom, etc.).