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***Project networks funded by LEADER across Europe: A proposed evaluation method based on Social Network Analysis***

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**Abstract**

The paper proposes a method to evaluate the project networks funded by rural development programmes through local development strategies of the LEADER-CLLD approach. By using indexes and graphs of Social Network Analysis (SNA), the paper proposes the Sub-Density Index (S-DI) related to specific dyadic relationships among members, partners and beneficiaries of projects. The S-DI allows measuring (i) the extent to which rural development initiatives have effectively supported local development strategies in relation to the different typologies of actors involved and (ii) the change in network relations in different programming periods considered.

The analysis has been applied in three case studies in Italy and France, by using secondary data (i.e. datasets of projects financed and implemented from 2000 to 2013). The results evidence the role of distinctive typologies of actors in different programming periods, and structures of the projects networks.

**Keywords** : LEADER Evaluation Project, Social Network Analysis