RUSTIK

Garfagnana

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Experiment Overview

Objective
To create a strategic project with an expanded partnership for the multifunctional use of forests, which will be included in the 2023/2027 local development strategy of the LAG Montagnappennino.

Relevance
Valorisation of the multifunctional role of forests and community regeneration

Key innovation
1. Integration of different sources of information to generate new knowledge;
2. participatory governance by engaging local communities in sustainable forest management

Experiment Progress

What has happened so far with our experiment?
1) Stakeholder Mapping across the forest supply chain
2) Data Collection by compiling an inventory of existing data on the forest supply chain, and cataloguing projects related to forest management within the Pilot Region.
3) Perception Survey on Forest Economy, to capture forest supply chain actors' perceptions regarding the potentials and limitations of the forest economy.
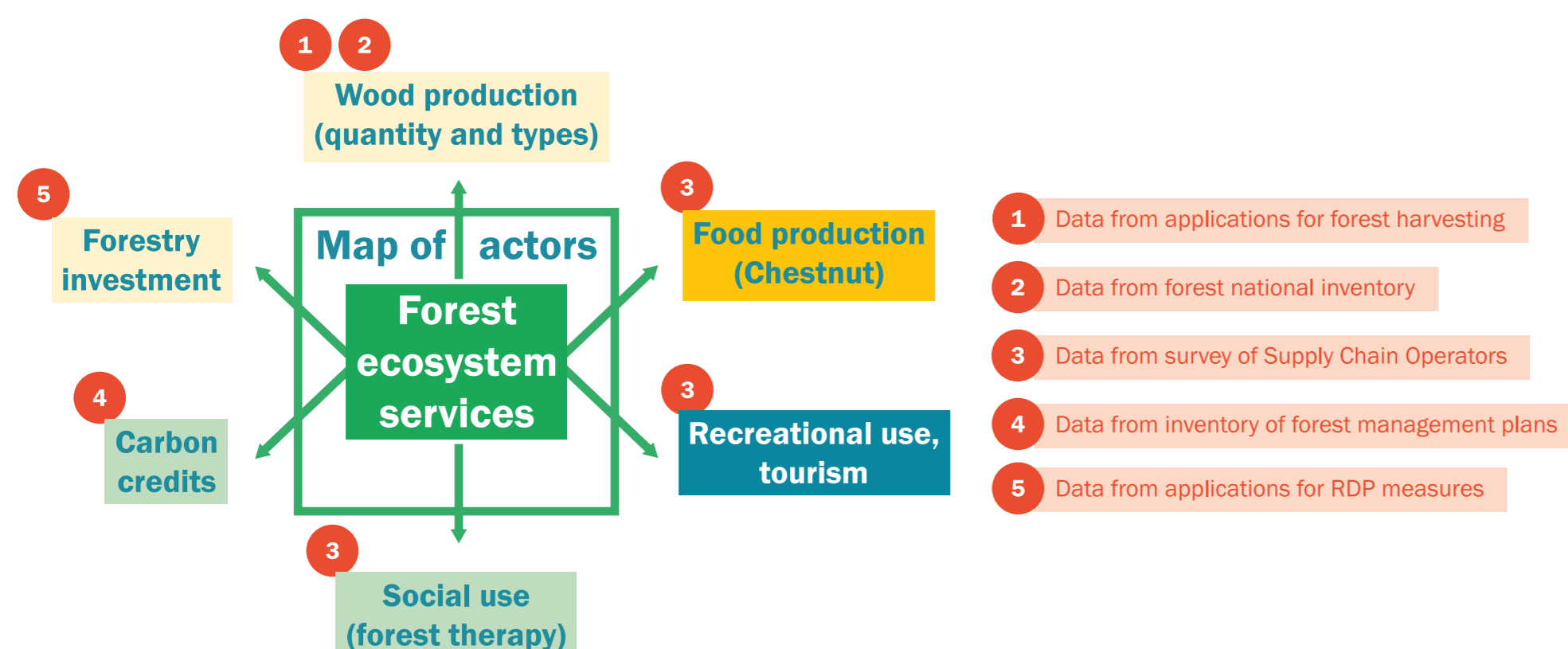
Methods and tools
→ Two early focus groups with different components of local economy (forest stakeholders; representatives of social associations)
→ One-day workshop with forest supply chain representatives covering 3 thematic aspects
→ Survey covering different categories of stakeholders, such as landowners, wood processors, tourist firms, local authorities' representatives, etc.
→ Horizontal communication

Findings
→ **Better identification of local challenges** in forest resource management due to limited innovation, fragmented governance, cultural distrust and the difficulty of recognizing forests as commons
→ **Broad involvement and engagement** from people involved with forest resources (including tourism and social activities).
→ **Strong participation** and cooperation from regional and local administrations.

Tackling the challenge
→ **Enhanced knowledge integration:** By merging data from multiple sources, the project is creating new insights into the forest economy.
→ **Improved information sharing:** Facilitated exchanges of knowledge on both opportunities and challenges within the forest sector.
→ **Foundation for strategic implementation:** Established a basis for designing the next phase of the strategic project.
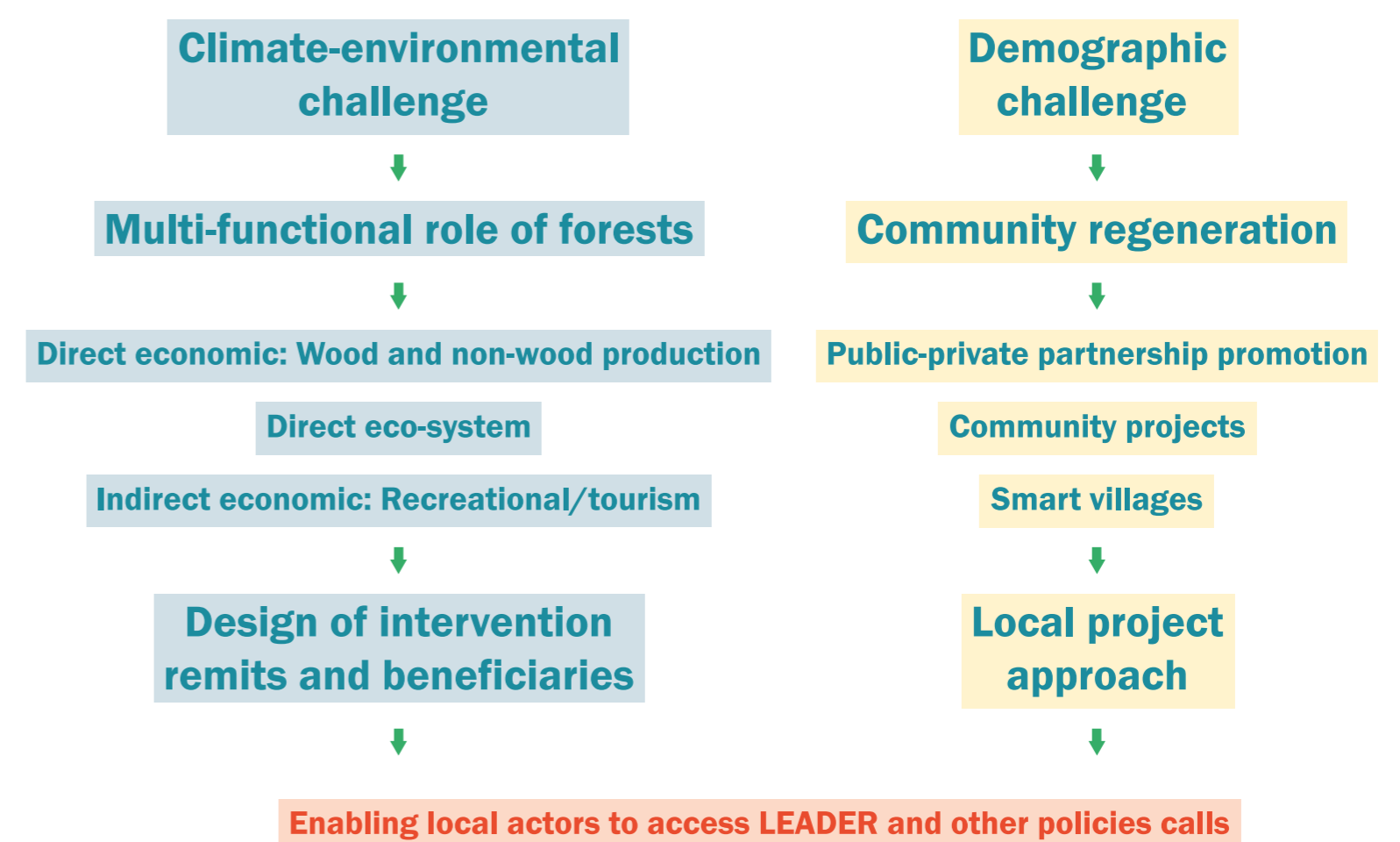

What went well?
→ **Effective involvement** of local stakeholders and active participation in Living Lab (LL) activities.
→ **Successful collection of diverse data** on the current state of the forest economy.

Challenges
→ **Difficulties in harmonizing data** from various sources and with differing levels of detail and granularity.
→ **Achieving a representative sample** in the survey to fully capture local forest-related perceptions.

Learning
→ The local information pool is **rich but highly fragmented**, which suggests a need for better information integration.
→ **Consistent and sustained engagement** in Living Lab activities is essential for achieving long-term project goals.
→

Next steps
→ **Integrate collected data across sources**, by synthesizing information gathered so far using a series of maps to visualize key insights.
→ **Map policy uptake in the pilot region:** identify and analyse how various policies are being adopted and implemented locally.
→ **Assess and compare needs and policy instruments:** map out and evaluate the alignment between local needs and existing policy tools.
→ **Gather stakeholder feedback:** engage stakeholders to validate findings and gather input on proposed strategies.

Goals for the Living Lab in 2025
→ Identify a theme and project focus that addresses the multifunctional role of the forest, aiming to collaborate with a broad partnership
→ Starting the preparation of a proposal for an integrated strategic project with a broad partnership of forest supply chain actors
→ Identify the framework for project implementation, considering that LAG's strategy includes cooperation projects, community regeneration projects, strategic projects in the smart village context, and funding to public entities and microenterprises

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