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ELARD

Survey about simplification in LEADER/CLLD

As part of the ROAD-project within the European Rural Parliament (ERP), within the theme:
“LEADER/CLLD for citizens and for the European Union”



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Survey

Aim: to contribute to the LEADER/CLLD legislative proposals to be used in Member States and also outside EU to design balanced legislation for the implementation of LEADER bottom-up approach.

Method: 2-step survey – short Google questionnaire in order to identify most beneficial examples; detailed questions via e-mail or Skype/phone interviews to describe the specifics of the selected cases.

4 categories: LAG administration, TNC, animation, project beneficiaries

Responses received from 20 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Portugal, Romania.

Survey

What is Lump sum?

What is flat rate?

What is umbrella project?

Main simplifications 2014-2021

FOR reducing administrative burden of local action groups (LAGs):

Most frequent:

- Flat rate/lump sum for indirect costs (mainly 15%, but in some countries higher – Estonia 20% and Finland 24%, approx half of the countries implement the SCO);
- Electronic systems for applications and payment claims (Bulgaria has joint system for all ESI funds);
- Unit costs for salaries, car traveling, meeting costs, etc (Austria has quite elaborated system for salaries)

Main simplifications 2014-2021

FOR LAG transnational cooperation projects:

- Simplified rules and flexible time schedule (Sweden, Estonia, Finland)
- TNC project decided by LAG (Sweden, Estonia, Finland)
- Lump sum for the preparation of the TNC and unit costs for travels inside and outside Europe (Portugal)

Main simplifications 2014-2021

FOR LAG animation activities:

- Lump sum for umbrella projects (Finland, Austria)
- Standard Scales of Unit costs for meetings (the Netherlands);
- Lump sum for animation (Poland) and drafting Local Development Strategy (Poland, Portugal, Slovenia).



Main simplifications 2014-2021

FOR project beneficiaries (local businesses, village associations, local municipalities, etc):

- Flat rate for indirect costs 15% (Estonia, Slovenia);
- Unit costs for salaries (the Netherlands);
- Lump sum for umbrella projects (Austria, Finland);
- Lump sum for starting up business (Poland);
- Electronic application (most of countries);

Example 1

POLAND, Polish Network of LAGs, Krzysztof Kwatara

Title of the practice: Lump sums for running and animation costs

Short description: The amounts for support under sub-measure 19.4 under the individual LDS, depending on the amount of funding provided for support under sub-measure 19.2 (implementing LDS). There are 8 rates from 1 125 000 PLN (262 000 €) to 2 650 000 PLN (617 000 €). This applies to single-fund LDS. For multifunded LDS rates are slightly different.

For the amount received, some **conditions have to be fulfilled, such as:**

- organised offices and roster for residents
- employment of number of employees in the Office (depending on the amount received)
- running the website
- announcements of calls for applications
- providing advisory services
- providing information actions
- training of employees

Main benefit of the practice: Approved by results, no invoices.

Implementation mechanism: LAG receives part of funds in advance and submits payment claims gradually with the implementation of LDS presenting fulfilment of conditions.

This is controlled by the Intermediary Institution in the Voivodship (region) acting on behalf of the Managing Authority (The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development).



Example 2

ESTONIA, Estonian LEADER Union, Kristiina Tammets

Title of the practice: Flat rate from 20% direct personnel costs for LAG and 15% for project beneficiaries.

Short description:

Indirect costs include: Office appliances; phone and postal expenses; IT and website management; office equipment, such as computers, printers, servers and their maintenance, etc.; office rent and communal expenses; office furniture; bank transaction fees; car maintenance expenses and fuel.

Main benefit of the practice: While designing the framework for the programme period, the Estonian University of Life Sciences conducted a survey about time spent on controlling all LAG documents by the Paying Agency. The university undertook recommendations on which costs should be included in the flat rate in order to save time and money on controlling. It is a huge saving of time for LAG managers and Paying Agency employees.

Implementation mechanism: With a payment claim, LAG submits the personnel costs and the payment done by the Managing Authority is 20% in addition.



Example 3

AUSTRIA, LEADER-Forum Austria, Stefan Niedermoser

Title of the practice: The small projects up to 5.700 Euros and the implementation of umbrella projects for 19.2.1 LEADER

Short description: Not competitive projects

Beneficiaries are exclusively non-profit organizations / non-governmental organizations or groups of non-organized people with a charitable purpose

The amount of lump sum appropriations is limited to a total of 5% of the total LAG budget

The same sponsor can be granted a lump sum for small projects at most three times within the funding period

Project applicant only hands in the project description; LAG approves it and sets a lump sum. After execution of the project the applicant hands in a project report and gets the money. No invoices etc. are necessary.

Main benefit of the practice: Focus on impact in small projects and not on bureaucratic regulations. Bringing some new stakeholders (youth, social) in the LEADER process, because they often do not have the capacity for the regular LEADER process.

Implementation mechanism: It was implemented at the beginning of the period 2014-2020 by writing this option in the National Programme



Example 4

PORTUGAL, Minha Terra Network, Luís Chaves, David Canaveira

Title of the practice: Lump sum for the preparation of cooperation projects: 5.000€ for inter-territorial and 8.300€ for preparation of TNC projects (90% support rate), justified with a detailed report.

Short description: In accordance with the Specific Technical Guidance (STG) of the Managing Authority of the Rural Development Program of the Mainland (Portugal) for the implementation of LAG cooperation, the lump sums of EUR 5,000 and 8,300 are set aside for the preparation of inter-territorial cooperation projects and transnational cooperation projects, respectively.

Main benefit of the practice: Simplifies the management of preparatory work to establish cooperation projects; reduces paper-work.

Implementation mechanism: The MA opens calls under the cooperation measure at the same time for inter-territorial and transnational projects and also for the preparation of these projects.

Applications are analysed by the MA.

LAGs can develop their preparatory activities after the application.

LAGs present a detailed activity report on the preparatory actions with supporting documents (lists of attendance, photos, boarding cards... (without financial documents) to the MA for approval.

Then, the LAGs can submit a claim in the Payment Agency IT system attaching the report already approved by the MA (no need for justifications of payment), asking for the reimbursement of the *lump sum* (90% of € 5,000 for inter-territorial and 90% €8,300 for TNC).



Main conclusions and needs for future

- There are already some good practices in the Member States in use but still the real potential of the simplification is less used for all kinds of activities and beneficiaries and especially for TNC and LAG animation where there are only very few simplification examples in Europe.
- There are practices that called simplification but analyzing the implementation mechanism these are not real simplifications because still a lot of papers are asked. In many cases there is a need to elaborate further the current practices so that the real simplification can take place.

Main conclusions and needs for future

- Member States are doing their very first steps in simplifying the LEADER/CLLD implementation and therefore simplification is rather fragmented. We need more holistic approach on Member State level and to provide LAGs and beneficiaries simplification as a package of many different tools. At the moment there are so few tools in use that the effect of simplification is not recognized by LAGs and beneficiaries. Poland has the most holistic approach for simplification in LEADER/CLLD at the moment. Bulgaria has joint electronic application and monitoring system for all ESI funds.

Main conclusions and needs for future

- There is a need for dialogue, training and experience exchange between countries and different funds. Deepened mentoring and expert support for LAGs, Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies would be very beneficial. There is a need for the national LEADER/CLLD simplification working group.
- EU policy is changing in the programming period 2021-2027 the emphasis of evaluation from procedures to performance of results. This enables radical changes in simplification measures, which Member States should undertake.



Thank You!