Delivery mechanisms of the EU rural development policy

Based on the work and findings of the Thematic Working Group 4

ENRD Contact Point
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THE ANALYTICAL WORK OF THE ENRD

Aims to

• increase understanding of how the EU rural development policy works in practice

• assess what works well and what can be improved

• provide insights to inform decision making in Member States and at the European level.
ENRD Thematic Working Group 4

Launched in early 2010...

...to look into what works well and less well in the current practices put in place to deliver rural development programmes in the EU Member States and Regions...

...building on the experience and the findings of the ENRD thematic activities carried out so far...
Thematic Working Group 4

Delivery mechanisms of the EU Rural Development Policy

- Mountain farming
- Thematic Working Groups
- Agriculture and the wider rural economy
- Public goods and public intervention
- Targeting territorial specificities and needs

Analysis and summary of RDP monitoring indicators

Implementation of the bottom-up approach

Preserving the innovative character of Leader

Leader Focus Groups

Implementation of the cooperation measure
The delivery process... from the point of view of the stakeholders

- Definition of strategic approach (including targeting)
- Programming process and financial aspects
- Implementation procedures (including: Leader, M&E, controls)
- Functioning of the partnership principle
- Ensuring complementarity and coordination with other EU policies

THE FOCUS OF TWG4 ANALYSIS

EU
National
Regional
Beneficiary
THE FOCUS OF TWG4 ANALYSIS

12 case studies

- Austria
- Bulgaria
- Denmark
- France
- Germany (Rheinland-Pfalz)
- Greece
- Ireland
- Italy (Emilia Romagna)
- Latvia
- Poland
- Romania
- Spain (Catalonia)
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS*

The over-arching finding is that **much works well in the delivery of the RDPs**

Over **70 examples** of positive practices identified from the Member State/Regional case studies

COMMON AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

**TWG4 identified six specific areas for possible improvement**

- As RD Policy is a shared management policy, all six require attention both at the EU level and by MS/regional administrations.
- **It is important to recognise that the roles of the EU and MS/Regions are different**
To address common, horizontal difficulties:

- Design of regulations which address common problematic aspects

Not only supervision but also understand and take account of the diversity of delivery mechanisms:

- Provide much more in the way of **Guidance**
The Role of the MS / Regions

The most important role in the delivery of the policy

No single effective “standard model”, but a general need to:

- Increase emphasis on institutional capacity building
- Ensure adequate and effective implementation capacity
THE 6 COMMON AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Sharpening the Focus on Policy Goals and strengthening coherence through the delivery chain
- Offering fewer, simpler measures and more flexibility in their use
- Defining and implementing specific conditions for Leader
- Implementation rules (including applications and controls)
- Further enhance M&E as a support tool for policy implementation and making
- Improving coordination and exchange of information
1. Sharpening the Focus on Policy Goals and strengthening coherence through the delivery chain

Individual aspects of the delivery process should not be dealt with in isolation

Two main elements for improvement:

- Strengthening articulation of strategic priorities and targets
- Ensuring that the priorities and targets are better embedded in the whole of the delivery process

Targeting – more and smarter
Some specific improvements suggested:

- Strengthened coherence between targeting interventions and strategic priorities – more use of rural typologies
- Ensure coherence between strategic goals and eligibility / selection criteria
- Clarify the role of the NSP in decentralised MS
- Adequate timing and better sequencing of programme preparation
- More clearly defined role and rules for Monitoring committees
2. Offering fewer, simpler measures and more flexibility in their use

- Fewer - more simply defined - measures could be more easily adapted to meet goals at regional, national and EU level
- Increased flexibility is required:
  - Combining measures in specific circumstances to address specific priorities should be encouraged
  - Pre-packaging (combinations of) measures can improve and simplify beneficiaries access to funds
Some specific improvements suggested:

- Shift from programming approach guided excessively by “rules and tools” (axes and measures) to one guided by objectives.
- Reduce number of measures.
- Improve the design of the agri-environment measures in programmes.
- Envisage differentiated types of measures:
  1. addressing specific sectoral needs / beneficiaries
  2. thematic measures defining areas of intervention.
3. Defining and implementing specific conditions for Leader

Need to reverse the tendency to compromise Leader principles – particularly the bottom-up principle and innovation

At the EU level:

• More explicitly set out the distinctive nature of implementation approaches which maintain the Leader approach
• Indicate how multi-fund and multi-sector interventions can work

At the MS/regional level: Instil a more risk tolerant attitude
Defining and implementing specific conditions for Leader

Some specific improvements suggested:

- Clarify division of responsibilities between the various implementing authorities and LAGs
- Improved information flow between MAs, PAs and LAGs
- Improved guidelines for the Leader approach
- Consider special risk assessment criteria for projects
- 20% running costs ceiling to apply to minimum LAG functions
- Consider mainstreaming TNC
4. Implementation rules (including applications and controls)

- Implementation rules have to be linked with strategic priorities and implementation goals
- Small projects should have specific application procedures
- **Reduce administrative burdens** with respect to controls
  - Ensure proportionality
  - Consider the nature of the measure / operation
Some specific improvements suggested:

- Justify eligibility and selection criteria by ensuring consistency with strategic priorities /goals
- Introduce « one-stop-shop » with competent staff for handling beneficiaries
- Introduce « two-steps » application procedures for investments and for other measures necessarily requiring a large amount of documentation
- Provide consistent interpretation of control rules
5. *Further enhance M&E as a support tool for policy implementation and making*

The M&E system must be simple enough to be manageable for all MS and regions

At the EU level:

- **CMEF** – Fewer common indicators and if/where possible more scope to design evaluation to meet MS needs
- Current delivery framework does not reflect the specificities of Leader approach
- **Monitoring** requirements are disproportionate for small projects

At the MS / regional level: Ensure the constructive use of M&E outputs in programme management
Further enhance M&E as a support tool for policy implementation and making

Some specific improvements suggested:

- Have a limited number of indicators linked to the strategic objectives
- Set EU level ‘targets’ (to provide a reference for MS)
- More systematic data collection with a long term perspective
- Enhance IT systems and procedures
- M&E framework to respect specific character of small projects and Leader
6. Improving coordination and exchange of information

Need to change existing practices which result only in clear demarcation but relatively poor coherence and complementarity

- At the EU level: policy goals need to be set out more clearly facilitating and encouraging greater coordination efforts
- At the EU and MS/regional levels: strengthen networking
Some specific improvements suggested:

- Introduce a common strategic framework for all EU funds
- Ensure participation of stakeholders and exchanges with public authorities through the NRN
- Increased use of ENRD of addressing different forms of coordination
- Envisage joint MCs for different EU funds / programmes
- Dedicated bodies for ensuring and fostering a culture of cooperation
For further information:

Visit the ENRD web site...
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/

..and download the Final Report « Delivery mechanisms of the EU rural development policy »