



European Commission
Agriculture and Rural Development



Innovation in Leader

Introduction to the 2nd thematic session

3rd ENRD Leader Sub Committee meeting

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Innovation in transition from the Community initiatives to the Leader axis of the EAFRD

The broad definition of innovation is still valid !

Innovation needs to be understood in a wide sense: It is simply seen as finding solutions to an area's needs.

- ***Innovation should be encouraged (in RDP's) by allowing LAG's wide margins of freedom and flexibility in making decisions about actions they want to support.***
- ***The emergence of new project ideas might be stimulated when the LAG is not strictly bound by a fixed menu of measures.***
- ***Remember Leader+: the „pilot character“ of actions***
- ***Strong role of cooperation and networking***



Innovation in transition from the Community initiatives to the Leader axis of the EAFRD (2)

Types of innovation:

(1) Product innovation: Development of new products and services, which reflect the specificities of the territory

(2) „Process innovation“

- ***New methods, which allow to combine the human with the natural or/and financial resources of a territory, so that the endogenous potential of can be better used***
- ***Interconnections between economic sectors which were so far separated,***
- ***New forms of organisation and participation of the local population to the decision making process and the implementation of projects***



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Innovation in transition from the Community initiatives to the Leader axis of the EAFRD (3)

The administration has to provide for the eligibility of innovative approaches and projects:

It has to be possible to fund different types of projects, such as...

(1) Integrated projects combining measures or associating several types of operations

(2) Territorial projects

(3) Collective projects: production chain, creating alliances between several categories of beneficiaries



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Innovation as an integral element of the Leader axis of the EAFRD (1)

Community strategic guidelines for rural development 2007-13 (2006/144/EC) (in point 3.4.)

- ***In order to meet these priorities, Member States are encouraged to focus support on key actions. Such key actions could include: (...)***
- ***Promoting cooperation and innovation. Local initiatives such as Leader and support for diversification can play an essential role in connecting people to new ideas and approaches, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship (...)***



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Innovation as an integral element of the Leader axis of the EAFRD (2)

- **Art. 61 (e) Reg. 1968/2005:**
The Leader approach shall comprise at least... (e) implementation of innovative approaches

- ***Innovation is a mandatory operational goal of the Leader axis in the RDPs (even if innovation is not mandatory on the level of the local development strategies)***

- ***Recommendation from the COM at the time of the approval of RDPs: Innovation as a quality criterium in the selection of LAGs***



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What is important in order to ensure innovation under the Leader axis:

According to Art. 63 Reg. 1968/2005 LAGs can implement projects, (1) which corresponds to one of the EAFRD measures or (2) outside the catalogue of measures as long as they aim to achieve the objectives of one or more of axes 1-3 and as long as the RDP allows this/these axis/axes can be implemented via the Leader approach.

- To implement projects which do not correspond to catalogue measures (while suiting better the development strategies) is crucial to preserve the experimental and innovative character of the Leader approach.***

- Horizontal criteria to be met: state aid ; coherence with other EU funds***



Questions identified until now:

- ***How is the scope of innovation defined in RDPs as regards Leader?***
- ***How do the selection and eligibility criteria of the rural development programmes provide the possibility for the implementation of innovative projects?***
- ***Are there examples in RDPs which allow the implementation of innovative projects which do not fulfil the conditions/scope of a concrete RDP measure?***
- ***Are there examples of support schemes for innovation in LAGs local development strategies?***



Quotes from rural actors on innovation...

- ***„Innovation needs an experimental ground. It is a learning process. Innovation support guidelines must not infer that failure can't be permitted. – Those who are responsible have to be more courageous!“***
- ***„When you really want to promote innovation, you have to do away with perfectionism and accept that some things may go wrong in innovative projects.“***
- ***„Administrators are not receptive and proactive towards innovative concepts and projects in so far that they do not recognize them and do not know how to manage them.“***
- ***„Creating a new idea is normally the most difficult part, gaining funding for it should ideally be the easier part...“***