

Better LEADER practices for Local Development Strategies across the EU

This Infosheet is part of a series of relevant practice examples that Managing Authorities and Local Action Groups have used while implementing the LEADER approach in the 2007-2013 period. The series aims to extend the reach of rural development policy by highlighting what works well in the design and delivery phase of Local Development Strategies (LDS).

Practical checklist for LAGs preparing their Local Development Strategies

N.05



Country: Sweden

Organisation: Managing Authority - Swedish Board of Agriculture

AT A GLANCE



Objectives

The Swedish Managing Authority developed a detailed evaluation checklist as a practical tool to help Local Action Groups (LAGs) to improve the quality of their Local Development Strategies (LDS).



Key elements of the approach

The LDS approval process involves an objective assessment of overall quality using clear and consistent criteria. The most important aspect of the Swedish example is that the Managing Authority (MA) openly shares its evaluation checklist with the LAGs in the beginning of the LDS preparation process.



Lessons learnt

The use of a detailed evaluation checklist, which measures LDS quality in both quantitative and qualitative terms, has improved overall LDS quality in Sweden. As most of the LAGs need some support and guidance when developing their LDS, this simple transferable practice could be used by other Managing Authorities and could provide a strong starting point for LAGs in the next programming period 2014-2020.



Objectives and background

Dealing with demanding information flows and hectic local development duties is time-consuming. LAGs are in need of simple and easy-to-use tools to help them efficiently prepare their LDS. The Swedish

MA provided its LAGs with a practical LDS evaluation checklist during the preparation phase for the 2007-2013 programming period.



Key elements of the approach

Swedish LDS consist of four parts:

- 1) Analysis of the territory;
- 2) LAG as an organisation;
- 3) The LAG territory; and
- 4) Quality of LDS.

The MA checklist follows the same structure and logic.

Mandatory parts of LDS

1. Analysis of the territory

- SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats);
- Basic facts of the territory;
- Link between the territory and the selected LDS priorities

2. LAG as an organisation

- Bottom-up approach in forming the partnership, the LAG as a legal organisation (non-profit association) and the LAG's Board of Directors;
- Participation from the public, private and civil sectors.

3. LAG territory

- Description of the positive but also negative factors in the area that were relevant to the definition of the geographical area;
- The LAG's own involvement in the definition of the area.

Mandatory parts of LDS (continued)

4. Quality of LDS

- The relationship between the LDS priorities and the territory's specific positive and negative factors;
- Description of the strategic priorities and thematic orientations of the LDS;
- Linkage of the LDS priorities to the national RDP;
- Description of transnational and interregional cooperation (not mandatory);
- Multi-sector integration;
- Bottom-up approach both in the LDS design and planned implementation;
- Innovative approach;
- Description of the implementation procedures;
- Sustainable development and equity;
- Targets and indicators have been defined and quantified for the program period and the LDS shows the estimates or calculations underlying them;
- LDSs horizontal priorities;
- The LDS contributes to the competitiveness and growth of the rural economy as well as to job creation;
- LAG's project selection criteria reflected against the LDS;

The checklist also defines the minimum threshold for each element of the LDS if it is to be approved. The selection procedure was based on the principle that every rural territory respecting the checklist would qualify. However the MA also had internal guidelines for cases where more than one LAG applied for the same geographic territory (with instructions on how to choose the best group).

Communication aspects

The Managing Authority makes the LAG selection checklist and the minimum criteria public and available to the LAGs that are planning their LDS. The material is

The requirements for the innovative approach required by the LDS are for example:

“The strategy should highlight new ideas and opportunities that can enhance the development of the area and indicate how to implement them. For example, suggesting new forms of collaboration on projects, new activities in new or existing networks, new ideas for LDS delivery or ideas about the larger project efforts.”

also explained during training and capacity building events for LAGs, organised by the MA.



Lessons learnt

Benefits

Opening the process of LAG and LDS selection in detail has improved overall LDS quality in Sweden. The evaluation checklists have proven handy to use, both for the MA and the LAGs.

Barriers

The MA had to first design and codify the LAG evaluation checklist and set the minimum criteria, but this effort has been well worth it.

Lessons learnt

Several Member States have been asking for clearer guidance on how to implement the new multi-fund LDS planning process for the 2014-2020 programming period. Design and use of 'multi-fund' checklists for LAGs inspired by the Swedish example could be one very practical solution. This is a transferable practice that can be used by other MAs.

The information included in this Infosheet is primarily coming from case studies carried out within the ENRD Focus Group 4 on Better Local Development Strategies. It has been compiled by the Contact Point on the basis of the information collected in the EU Member States and regions and takes into account views expressed by the Focus Group. This notwithstanding, the content does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU institutions and national authorities.

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