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European Parliament Joint hearing on LEADER

**Tracking overall inputs and outputs in rural
development. How can we measure the
added value of LEADER?**

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**EUROPEAN
COURT
OF AUDITORS**



LEADER in the current 2014-2020 period

**Only 11 % of the
7 billion euro
budget is used
so far**

- At least 5% of EAFRD must be reserved for LEADER
- Co-financing: EAFRD contribution is 20%-80%
- Allocated EU funding 7 billion euro...
- ... but absorption is low: to date only 11 % is used



Relevant characteristics of LEADER

**LEADER
involves
higher costs
and risks**

- A bottom-up and partnership/networking approach and area based strategies
- Covering over 54% of the EU rural population
- Implemented by 2745 Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the control of a multitude of local partnerships
- The additional implementation layer – LAGs – and the intervention of a multitude of partners lead to higher costs and risks compared to traditional funding methods
- Those risks should be justified by the additional added value
- We reported that the Commission and MSs could not demonstrate the added value of the LEADER approach (SR 5/2010)



Monitoring LEADER in the current period

In view of the higher risks and costs, monitoring and evaluating LEADER added value is of crucial importance

9 EU indicators and additional national ones

EU indicators	
Output	O.1 - Total public expenditure
	O.18 - Population covered by LAG
	O.19 - Number of LAGs selected
	O.20 - Number of LEADER projects supported
	O.21 - Number of cooperation projects supported
	O.22 - Number and type of project promoters (LAGs, Public bodies, NGOs, SMEs, Others)
	O.23 - Unique identification number of LAG involved in cooperation project
Result	R.22- Percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies
	R.24 - Jobs created in supported projects



Monitoring LEADER in the current period

Some MSs/Regions developed additional national indicators

Example of BE-Flanders:

Per project 8-10 indicators are reported: 6 horizontal ones, 2 for the main theme selected for the project and 2 for a secondary theme (if applicable) for example:

Theme		Indicator 1	Indicator 2
1	Agricultural and nature related trainings	Number of newly developed trainings	Number of participants to trainings organised during the lifespan of the project
2	Working on biodiversity in the Flemish countryside	Number of hectares concerned	Number of awareness-raising and/or communication actions on biodiversity
3	Sustainable energy and climate adaptation	MW of renewable energy to be generated yearly through the project	Number of awareness-raising and/or communication actions on sustainable energy and climate adaptation
4	Poverty and vulnerability in the agricultural and rural communities	Number of awareness-raising and/or communication actions on poverty and vulnerability	Number of new partnerships/collaborations
5	Knowledge transfer and innovation in the agricultural and horticultural sectors	Number of organised trainings	Number of participants to trainings organised during the lifespan of the project
6	Soil and water management	Number of hectares concerned	Number of awareness-raising and/or communication actions on soil/water





Monitoring LEADER in the current period

The EU indicators concern implementation (with the exception of the result indicator on jobs created)

In our SR on LEADER we already reported that

- there is an absence of data for evaluations
- there is little evidence on the added value of the LEADER approach

Monitoring should be more directed towards indicators of the added value of LEADER rather than implementation.

Given the scale and variety of LEADER, different approaches (such as statistically valid samples of projects) could be used



LEADER in the future CAP

According to the CAP proposal, LEADER will be similar to the current period:

- at least 5% of EAFRD must be reserved for LEADER
- co-financing: EAFRD contribution is 20%-80%

The allocated EU funding will depend on MSs CAP Strategic Plans (but with a minimum of 3,9 billion euro)



How can we monitor Leader after 2020?

In our opinion on the proposals for the CAP post 2020 we :

- Welcomed the shift to a performance-based model...
- ... but considered that the proposal does not contain all necessary elements for it, in particular:
 - the absence of clear, specific and quantified EU objectives which creates uncertainty about how the Commission would assess MS CAP strategic plans
 - and also means that achievement of EU objectives cannot be measured
 - the link between objectives, individual actions and indicators remains vague, and the indicators are not yet fully developed.

**Only one
single EU
indicator for
LEADER is
proposed**



How can we monitor Leader after 2020?

For LEADER only 1 indicator is proposed:

O.27 Number of local development strategies

It should also be clarified whether O.27 is intended to measure all strategies supported or only those selected for implementation (in light of the current two-stage approach of supporting LEADER strategies).



How can we monitor Leader after 2020?

CONCLUSIONS

- LEADER is a complex measure whose added value at local, national and European level is not obvious to assess.
- On one side, measuring dimensions such as innovation, cooperation, and improved social capital and governance is not an easy task
- On the other side, the current indicators required are minimalistic and far from being capable of grasping the diversity of the LEADER approach and the variety of possible actions
- Therefore, a strong set of indicators addressing all relevant dimensions of LEADER is needed

**Thank you
for your attention!**

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