

DENMARK

Monitoring & Evaluation

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Denmark

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Implemented by
Danish Managing Authority

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The Danish Managing Authority commissioned an online tool used for evaluating applications for LEADER support, taking a baseline and measuring interventions, in addition to scoring against priorities.

The challenge

The Rural Development Regulation (and due to a requirement from the EU Court of Auditors) requires transparent and objective project prioritisation criteria. The idea is that such a set of prioritisation criteria may be useful for selecting projects, which will generate results and impacts in line with the objectives of the CAP pillar 2 objectives. These will in turn lead to quantifiable and verifiable results and impacts.

The Danish Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Development - responsible for the full administration and implementation of the LAG-intervention under the Danish RDP – looked to develop an IT based system, which could be used by the LAGs for this prioritisation exercise, combining the application with baseline measurement, and which would enable the scoring of applications for funding against a series of priorities.

The objectives were to create an IT based system which could be used to submit online applications, assess these applications against set criteria, score the applications and provide a baseline for monitoring and evaluation which would be transparent. Results from project delivery can then be used to assess impact against the baseline indicated.

Main steps and features

An IT based integrated solution was proposed, which contained a number of tools (documents). They are:

1. An application form for applicants under the LAG intervention in Denmark.

The application form is generic and electronic, and it will develop on the screen when the applicant clicks their choice in the menus. He will therefore only see questions to answer and data/information to deliver linked to what the choice of application. So, for example, data and information and indicators will be different for an agritourism project than for a Culture oriented project. The applicant will be asked to provide information on a number of baselines linked to their project and to their expected outputs, results and impacts. Baseline data on turnover, jobs, capacity and so on and objectives/quantified targets all relate to the same indicators. What is the current status of the applicant, and what do they seek to achieve?

2. Prioritisation tool for the LAGs to select from project applications:

When the call for applications has ended and the LAG has a number of project applications uploaded into the database, the co-ordinator (or the board) can give each project a score (a number of scores) distributed on 8 prioritisation criteria and a number of sub-criteria for each main criteria. The main criteria are:

- Project description and applicant (seven sub-criteria including project description, rationale, realism, budget, the capacity of the applicant etc.)
- Visibility (two sub-criteria related to marketing/communication and to transparency and the ability to replicate the project)
- Relevance in relation to the development strategy for the LAG (two sub criteria on relevance and applicability in relation to the LAG development strategy)

- d. Local anchoring (four sub criteria related to for example local identity, local resources, local experience etc.)
- e. Cooperation (five sub criteria related to the quality, the frequency, commitment, cross-sectoral cooperation and to new networks)
- f. Sustainability (three sub criteria related to risk/dead weight, green profile, sustainability in the local community)
- g. Effects (five sub-criteria being related to economic, environmental, climate related, social and cultural effects)

The LAG will weight the criteria before the assessment, according to the relevance from the point of view of the LAG and the LAG development strategy, which will also reflect the objectives of the Danish RDP and the CAP Pillar 2 priorities. More weight may be given to outputs or to

co-operation than the average model used. This means that project with a high score on co-operation in a specific LAG will get more points than a project with the same score in a LAG without does not give weight to cooperation. The LAG also has the choice of introducing specific weights to young applicants, territories with specific needs or other local criteria. A minimum project score can also be defined. If the applicants get a score lower than this threshold, the project cannot be recommended for approval. The Danish ministry can also define minimum score requirements to specific criteria making sure that only projects receiving a minimum score on the individual criteria and in total are approved.

The criteria for the pilot of this initiative were defined by the Danish ministry in conjunction with LAGs based on a survey of LAG coordinators, so the tool has been created using the input of those who will operate it.

Results

The current IT tool is in pilot phase, using existing paper-based application forms, and an Excel based prioritisation tool, before the appropriate (tableau) software is applied to the system. This has been conducted alongside a tour of LAGs to collect information on applications and to conduct a training session on how the tool will operate.

The tool has been accepted for use by all LAGs, and is now under consideration for use by Fisheries LAGs.

Challenges and lessons

- ❑ It has been important to engage and consult with all the actors involved in project assessment to build the criteria involved, but can also be improved as it progresses, for example it can be used in project visualisation to assess how projects are moving in delivery of RDPs, and with the potential to adjust the interventions to ensure a balanced delivery against the set criteria.