

Brief 'title' of simplification example (if relevant)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simplification of guidelines (on national level): "Start too early". 2. Better communication PA – MA – LAG – beneficiary 3. Simplification of guidelines (on national level): Reasonableness of costs
Relevant theme <i>(Please select the relevant option from the drop-down menu in the adjacent cell.)</i>	simplification, improvement of LAG-MA/PA links
LAG name (if relevant)	LAG – De Kracht van Salland
Country / region	Salland – The Netherlands
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Summary of the issue/initiative/example related to LEADER simplification <i>(Please describe the key issue which was 'solved' by the simplification solution and the actual simplification 'method'/approach, also including who were involved and in how the solution was developed.)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Simplification of guidelines (on national level): "Start too early". <i>The issue:</i> A beneficiary sent his first payment claim which included an invoice which had been paid before the date of application (for a lawn mower). The PA said to the beneficiary: 'you started your project too early. It is not allowed to start with the implementation of your project before submitting the application form'. Therefore, the whole LEADER contribution was withdrawn. But as the beneficiary has already spent a considerable amount they came into financial trouble. <i>Simplification:</i> The PA and MA decided to change the guidelines on national level. In cases similar to the one described (when the invoice is only a "small" part of the whole project), only the amount of the invoice will be withdrawn and not the total amount of LEADER support. In many cases the regulations have not changed, but the interpretation / people / attitude has changed. 2) Better communication PA – MA – LAG – beneficiary <i>The issue:</i> In the process from submitting the application and payment claims until the final payment there can be many problems: delays, mistakes, errors, misinterpretation, etc. Most problems can be prevented if there is good communication. The Paying Agency aims to 'keep its distance' to maintain its independence. They want to control and only communicate by e-mail (formal, written, verifiable communication). For the beneficiaries this is too complicated. They have questions about the declarations (payment claims) and ask for help. Even for us (LAG manager) and even for employees of the PA it is complicated and sometimes not evident. Interpretations are changing during the programme period and this increases the possibility of error and financial risk with the beneficiary. Beneficiaries are worried and stressed about LEADER.

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	<p><i>Simplification:</i> A helpful attitude, understanding and communication is very important. All partners (PA, MA, LAG, LAG managers) should be helpful to the beneficiary. All partners have the same goal: realizing good projects. This means focus on the projects, focus on the results, focus on the beneficiaries. Therefore, all partners should understand the situation of the beneficiary. Our task is not to control, but to facilitate and support the beneficiaries.</p> <p>In the Province Overijssel, every eight weeks we have a meeting with the Province (MA), RVO (PA) and the managers of four LAGs. We discuss the problems and try to solve them.</p> <p>After the approval of an application there is a "start up meeting" at the location of the beneficiary, with PA, MA, LAG and beneficiary. The PA explains the requirements for the projects administration.</p> <p>We notice there is a "new wind". Understanding LEADER is important. LAGs are now also involved in discussion about CAP. This is also an improvement.</p> <p>3) Simplification of guidelines (on national level): Reasonableness of costs (ROC)</p> <p><i>The issue:</i> The PA asks the beneficiaries many questions relating to the ROC, including very small amounts (about the price of the coffee, price of peanuts, etc.). The costs of the administration and control (for PA and the beneficiary) is much higher than the value of such invoices.</p> <p>The EU contribution in the LEADER projects in our situation is less than 25%. The private contribution (by the beneficiary) is at least 50%. The control is disproportionate. This questions the reasonableness of control applied.</p> <p><i>Simplification proposal:</i> Let every Member State make its own regulations for controlling the ROC. In the Netherlands there is a discussion about thresholds for controlling the ROC. There is not as yet a new guideline.</p> <p>Look for good examples elsewhere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ERDF - The Province of Overijssel has very simple rules for their programmes.
<p>Possible relevance to other LAGs / EU MSs - transferable experiences or elements</p>	<p>When the EU amount is small and the private amount is high, let the member state make their regulations for controlling the ROC.</p> <p>Regular meetings between PA, MA, LAG (manager) and beneficiaries result in better communication between all partners, better understanding of LEADER and a helpful attitude towards the beneficiaries.</p>