

Recommendations for Local Development Strategies' evaluation

Ministry of Agriculture, Croatia

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Table of contents

Table of contents.....	2
1. General recommendations	3
2. Description of the evaluation criteria	4

1. General recommendations

Strategies' evaluation is based on evaluation criteria and the scale of points. Evaluation commission will be formed with a decision of Minister of Agriculture. After evaluation, all points will be summarized, average calculated and each strategy will receive its total score of points.

According to the proposal of Evaluation Commission the Minister of Agriculture will make decision about the ranking of strategies.

Ministry of Agriculture will make the approval of LDS if it's in accordance with minimum requirements (contains all the mandatory elements) of LDS and the LDS is drawn up by LAG that has been followed all necessary requirements set up for LAGs. Ministry of Agriculture will not approve the strategies, which meet at least one of following circumstances:

- LDS doesn't meet at least one of the LDS requirement (some of the mandatory elements are not present);
- LDS doesn't meet minimum requirements of the evaluation criteria;
- LAG doesn't meet necessary requirements;
- LDS provide deliberately false information;
- LAG influences the LDS processing non-legally accepted way.

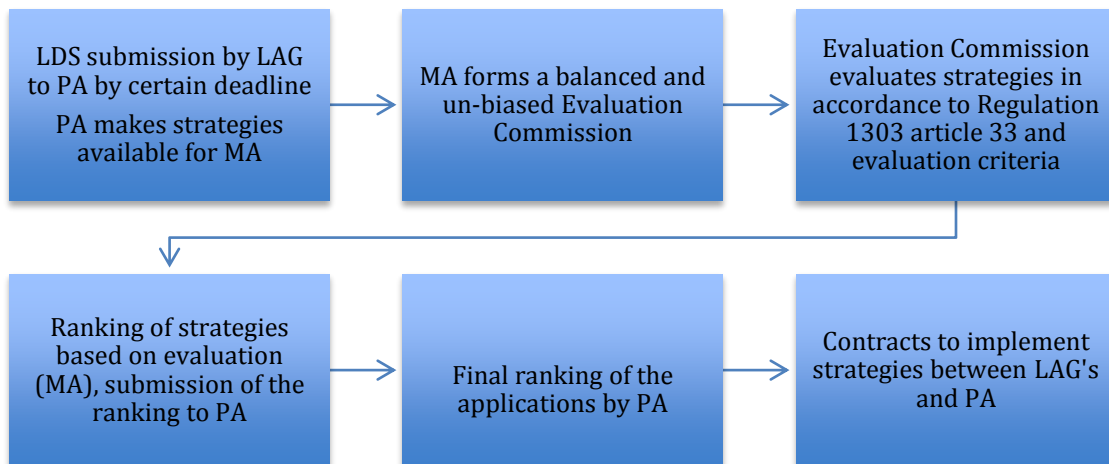


Diagram 1. Evaluation process of strategies

Suggestions for evaluation process

- It is important to save enough time for evaluation. The duration of the whole process can be up to 100 days;
- In order to control strategies accordance to Regulation 1303 article 33 MA could prepare checklist. In case MA states that LDS does not meet a certain

validation requirement(s), this statement should include relevant justification(s). MA can use the checklist as a feedback report to LAGs.

- Evaluation Commission should be broad-based; the recommended size of the commission is approximately 5-7 competent members from different authorities and institutions. In addition to the representative(s) from Ministry of Agriculture there should be representatives from other ministries involved with ESI-Funds implementation and/or local development, umbrella organizations to represent relevant stakeholder groups such as association(s) of local/regional authorities, association(s) of NGO's, SME associations, private experts and academic institutions. To safeguard the transparency of the evaluation process conflict of interest of the Evaluation Commission should be avoided by not including persons/institutions which have been involved in LDS-preparation process (i.e. contracted by the LAG's).
- Each strategy is going to be evaluated by 2-3 (depending on the total number of Evaluation Commission members) Evaluation Commission members; strategies are to be divided between commission members by random choice. Each evaluator evaluates the strategies according to the evaluation criteria. In case the evaluator scores any criteria with the score "1" or "2", additional comments to justify the score are to be added into the evaluation form.
- For evaluation MA prepares the evaluation form, which is filled in by 2-3 evaluation commission members. The ranking of the strategies will be formed based of arithmetic average calculated from the total scores given by the evaluators to the strategy.

2. Description of the evaluation criteria

We propose a list of 14 qualitative evaluation criteria to evaluate the LDS's as follows:

1) The description of the development potential of the LAG-area.

LDS should describe clearly and adequately the area's geographical, cultural and economic integrity. The LDS includes the analysis of the development need and potential; there are logical connection between the analysis of the development needs and SWOT. The description on the current status of the area includes trends and conclusions and are not limited with statistic overviews. Area's specific characteristics are clearly described.

2) The adequacy of LDS objectives, activities and types of operations.

The LDS includes clear and measurable objectives and their hierarchy, also well justified indicators and measurable targets within the relevant monitoring and evaluation system. Objectives, activities and types of operations are based on the analysis of development potential and SWOT and are interlinked with area's specific characteristics.

3) The internal cohesion of the LDS.

LDS as a whole is internally coherent and has a clear focus on the achievement of the set priorities and objectives. It is important that the implementation of the strategy with the types of operations is based on the set objectives. Types of operations should be in clear accordance with the vision and objectives. The selection

criteria for the supported projects under the types of operations should be in accordance with LDS objectives and activities.

4) The consideration of important interventions in the LAG area. The synergy and connections with RDP and other relevant strategy documents (national, regional and local) has been taken into account.

5) Co-operation with other partnerships. LDS describes the co-operation perspectives in terms of inter-territorial and trans-national co-operation. LDS describes activities which are supported with co-operation projects. There are clear co-operation plans and objectives.

6) The financial plan of LDS. The division of the budget between activities and types of operation is logical and in accordance with LDS objectives. The financial plan includes the division of financial resources between the selected types of operations.

7) The sustainability of the implementation of the LDS. LDS describes how objectives, activities and types of operations are covered with financial resources. The sustainability of the LAG as an organization is guaranteed. LAG uses diverse financial sources to achieve their objectives.

8) LDS's contribution into EAFRD priorities and RDP's LEADER-specific objectives. LDS clearly describes how and into which EAFRD priorities it contributes. LEADER-approach specific objectives are supported by the selected activities and types of operations. The relevant contribution is reflected within the monitoring and evaluation system.

9) The integrative and innovative character of the LDS, the contribution into RDP's horizontal issues. The integrative and innovative character of the LDS is evident and well described. The strategy contributes into RDP's horizontal issues such as innovation, environment and climate change adaption/mitigation.

10) The community's involvement into the LDS preparation process. LDS clearly describes how different stakeholder groups were involved into LDS preparation process. The LDS is supplemented with an involvement plan to describe the objective of the involvement processes, relevant target groups, methods and activities.

11) The LAG's administrative and financial capacity and experiences. LAG's previous experiences to contribute into local development (IPARD experience of other relevant activities). Clear description of the roles of LAG's staff members is included into the LDS.

12) Description of the project support. The project processing activities are described, they are transparent and non-discriminative. LDS includes clear and understandable selection criteria for the projects.

13) The clarity, transparency and efficiency of the decision-making processes. The set-up of the LAG's decision-making (including project selection) processes is described and is well-justified and transparent. The

conflicts of interests are avoided during the LAG management and project selection. LDS includes an evaluation plan with the reference to the for LDS revision needs.

14) LAG’s capability to perform animation activities in the area. LDS describes perspective animation activities to influence the development of the area (including the impact to be achieved by the selected types of operations). LAG has mapped potential risks to influence the LDS implementation and proposes necessary mitigation methods.

In order to carry out the qualitative evaluation of the LDS’s we recommend to evaluate every above-mentioned criteria using the scale of 1 – 4. The descriptions of the score values of the proposed scale are reflected in the table 1 below:

No of criteria	Justification of the score	Value of the score	Points
1	Development needs description is general and described only through statistical data. There are no interactions between the development needs, situation analysis and SWOT. There is no explanation about the uniqueness of the LAG area.	1	
	The interactions between the development needs, situation analysis and SWOT are partially presented. Uniqueness of the LAG area is unclear.	2	
	The interactions between the development needs, situation analysis and SWOT are mainly presented. Uniqueness of the LAG area is described.	3	
	Development needs analysis in concrete and there are used trends to describe the situation. Interactions between the development needs, situation analysis and SWOT are clearly and logically presented. The uniqueness of the LAG area is presented clearly.	4	
2	There are only objectives or type of operations described in the LDS. The objectives, activities and types of operations are not connected to the situation analysis and development needs as well as they are not related to the uniqueness of the area. Indicators and their target levels are not related to objectives, activities and type of operations.	1	
	There are objectives, activities and types of operations described in the LDS but their interactions are missing. The objectives, activities and types of operations are not connected to the situation analysis and development needs as well as they are not related to the uniqueness of the area. Few indicators and their target levels are related to objectives, activities and type of operations.	2	
	There are objectives, activities and types of operations described in the LDS but their interactions are partly described. The objectives, activities and types of operations are mainly connected to the situation analysis and development needs and they are related to the uniqueness of the area. Most of indicators and their target levels are related to objectives, activities and type of operations.	3	
	There are clear achievable objectives and their hierarchy as well as clear and measurable target levels of output and result indicators related to objectives, activities and type of operation. The objectives, activities and types of operations are connected to the situation	4	

	analysis and development needs and they are related to the uniqueness of the area.		
3	Interactions between situation analysis, development needs, SWOT, objectives, activities , type of operations and projects selection criteria are missing. There are general description of the innovative and integrated character of LDS. There is no cohesion between different parts of LDS.	1	
	Interactions between situation analysis, development needs, SWOT, objectives, activities , type of operations and projects selection criteria are weak. There are some description of the innovative and integrated character of LDS. There is weak cohesion between different parts of LDS.	2	
	Interactions between situation analysis, development needs, SWOT, objectives, activities , type of operations and projects selection criteria are mainly described. There are understandable description of the innovative and integrated character of LDS. The cohesion between different parts of LDS is mainly presented.	3	
	Interactions between situation analysis, development needs, SWOT, objectives, activities , type of operations and projects selection criteria are clear and logical. There are understandable description of the innovative and integrated character of LDS. There is cohesion between different parts of the LDS.	4	
4	LDS takes into account only RDP interventions. Other development documents are considered formally or it doesn't explained in LDS.	1	
	LDS takes into account RDP interventions and limited number of other national, regional and local development documents.	2	
	LDS takes into account RDP interventions and partially other national, regional or local development documents.	3	
	LDS takes into account RDP interventions and other main relevant national, regional or local development documents. Interactions are described clearly.	4	
5	Cooperation with other partnerships is not presented in LDS.	1	
	The cooperation with other partnerships is planned but there are no objectives and areas of the cooperation pointed out in LDS. There are no transnational cooperation planned.	2	
	There is described inter-territorial and transnational cooperation with other partnerships. There are general description of objectives and areas of cooperation in LDS.	3	
	There is described inter-territorial and transnational cooperation with other partnerships. There are clear description of objectives and areas of cooperation in LDS.	4	
6	Budget allocation between types of operations is not in accordance with objectives of LDS.	1	
	Budget allocation between types of operations is in limited extent in accordance with objectives of LDS.	2	
	Budget allocation between types of operations is mainly in accordance with objectives of LDS.	3	
	Budget allocation between types of operations is completely in accordance with objectives of LDS. Proportions between types of operations are optimal.	4	
7	The financial resources for LDS implementation are described	1	

	inadequately. LDS does not include an adequate description how objectives, activities and types of operations are covered with financial resources.		
	The financial resources for LDS implementation are generally described. LDS includes a very general description how objectives, activities and types of operations are covered with financial resources.	2	
	The financial resources for LDS implementation are diverse and realistic. LDS includes a certain description how objectives, activities and types of operations are covered with financial resources.	3	
	The financial resources for LDS implementation are very diverse and realistic. LDS includes a comprehensive description how objectives, activities and types of operations are covered with financial resources.	4	
8	LDS does not contribute into EAFRD priorities and RDP's LEADER-specific objectives and there is no clear cohesion between the LDS and EAFRD priorities/RDP LEADER-specific objectives.	1	
	LDS contribution into EAFRD priorities is vague and contribution to RDP's LEADER-specific objectives is minimal, but the cohesion between the LDS and EAFRD priorities/RDP LEADER-specific objectives is described.	2	
	LDS contribution into EAFRD priorities is adequate and clear and it contributes into majority of the RDP's LEADER-specific objectives and the cohesion between the LDS and EAFRD priorities/RDP LEADER-specific objectives is described.	3	
	LDS contributes into relevant EAFRD priorities and all of the RDP's LEADER-specific objectives and the cohesion between the LDS and EAFRD priorities/RDP LEADER-specific objectives is clearly described.	4	
9	LDS innovative and integrated character is not evident and it is not described. LDS does not include any evidence of contribution into RDP's horizontal issues.	1	
	LDS's innovative and integrated character is described and evident to some extent, but inadequate. The LDS's contribution into some of the RDP's horizontal issues is described to some extent.	2	
	LDS's innovative and integrated character is described. The LDS's contribution into of the RDP's horizontal issues is described.	3	
	LDS has an evident and strong innovative and integrated character; contribution into all RDP's horizontal issues is evident and clear.	4	
10	An inadequate number of stakeholder groups were involved into LDS preparations. The involvement methods are inadequate, the LDS does not include any involvement plan.	1	
	A limited number of stakeholder groups were involved into LDS preparations. The involvement methods are partially adequate and justified. The LDS includes a partial involvement plan.	2	
	Stakeholder groups from different sectors were involved into LDS preparations. The involvement methods are adequate and well justified. The LDS includes an involvement plan.	3	
	An adequate number of stakeholder groups from all the relevant sectors were involved into LDS preparations. The involvement	4	

	methods are innovative and very well justified with local needs and characteristics. The LDS includes a comprehensive and well justified involvement plan.		
11	The description of the roles of the LAG staff does not reflect the LAG's experience and capability in terms of administrative and financial management. LDS does not describe the previous experiences of the LAG (or the justification of the absence of this description).	1	
	The description of the roles of the LAG staff is partially reflects the LAG's experience and capability in terms of administrative and financial management. There is a general description about the previous experiences of the LAG.	2	
	LDS includes an adequate description of the LAG staff, which reflects the LAG's experience and capability in terms of administrative and financial management. There is an adequate description of the previous experiences of the LAG, but improvement proposals for the forthcoming period are inadequate.	3	
	LDS includes comprehensive description of the LAG staff, which reflects the LAG's experience and capability in terms of administrative and financial management. There is an adequate description of the previous experiences of the LAG and well justified improvement proposals for the forthcoming period.	4	
12	The selection criteria for the project selection are general, could be mis-interpreted and are not in accordance with LDS objectives, activities and types of operations.	1	
	The minority of the project selection criteria is adequately described. Majority of the criteria are no in accordance with LDS objectives, activities and types of operations.	2	
	Majority of the project selection criteria is relevant, adequate and can not be mis-interpreted and in the clear accordance with LDS objectives, activities and types of operations.	3	
	All the project selection criteria are adequate, relevant and in a clear accordance with LDS objectives, activities and types of operations.	4	
13	LDS includes a very general or minimal description of LAG's decision-making processes (including the project selection processes) and basis for strategy's revision are not described.	1	
	LDS includes the description of LAG's decision-making processes (including the project selection processes), but they are not clear and transparent. LDS includes very general description about the basis of the strategy's revision.	2	
	The description of the LAG's decision-making process (including project selection processes) are generally well described, but there are limited number of missing/inadequate components. The process of LDS revision is described well.	3	
	LAG's decision-making processes (including projects selection processes) are described very clearly and understandably, the processes are transparent. LDS includes a well justified description of strategy revision.	4	
14	The analysis of the areas' situation and development needs is missing or very weak. The animation activities are not described or the description is general. Potential list are not taken into consideration.	1	

	The LDS includes a minor analysis about the situation of different sectors and development needs in the area. There is a minimal description of planned animation activities. The potential risks are listed, but no mitigation activities foreseen.	2	
	There is a relevantly comprehensive analysis and a justification of the development needs of the different sectors within the area. LDS includes adequate description of the animation activities. Potential risks are listed and perspective mitigation activities partially proposed.	3	
	LDS includes a very comprehensive analysis and a justification of the development needs of the different sectors. There is a very comprehensive and well justified description of the animation activities. LDS includes a high-quality risk analysis.	4	