

SIMPLIFICATION

***DG Agriculture and Rural Development , Unit H1
CDG on Rural Development, 20.05.2016***

OUTLINE

- 1) High Level Group on Monitoring Simplification for Beneficiaries of the ESI Funds**
- 2) CAP simplification exercise-with focus on rural development**

ESIF HLG group – simplification for the beneficiaries

Tasks of the High Level Group:

- Assess the uptake of simplification opportunities by Member States
- Analyse the implementation of simplification opportunities in Member States and regions
- Identify good practice in matters concerning the reduction of administrative burden on beneficiaries
- Make recommendations to improve the uptake of simplification measures for 2014-2020

ESIF HLG group – simplification for the beneficiaries

Online discussion:

- The Simplify ESIF platform allows you to share your experiences, present your ideas, engage with other stakeholders, and help us reach a more effective and efficient management of the funds.

<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/simplify-esif>

ESIF HLG group – simplification for the beneficiaries

Work programme:

20 October 2015	<u>First meeting of high level group</u> (opening discussion with EU Institutions and stakeholders)
1 December 2015	<u>Second meeting of high level group</u> (focus on SCO and e-Governance)
2 February 2016	<u>Second meeting of high level group</u> (focus on SMEs and Financial instruments)
21 June 2016	<u>Fourth meeting of high level group</u> (focus on goldplating)
Nov/Dec 2016	<u>Fifth meeting of high level group</u> (focus on results of study on simplification and cross-cutting audit issues)
March 2017	<u>Sixth meeting of high level group</u> (focus on post 2020)
June 2017	<u>Seventh meeting of high level group</u> (focus on post 2020 and new territorial tools such as CLLD and ITI)
February 2018	<u>Eighth meeting of high level group</u> (final report)

ESIF HLG group – simplification for the beneficiaries

First meeting– EU Institutions' perspective (summary)

- tackling the barriers to accessing funding caused by gold plating or overly strict national interpretation of national rules;
- risk averse authorities who lack confidence to use the new tools and simplification measures;
- proportionality in terms of control of the funds relative to both the amount of funding, geographical coverage and the objectives;
- preoccupation with compliance over results; and,
- the challenges of other EU rules such as public procurement and state aid in the context of the implementation of the funds.

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First meeting – stakeholders' perspective (summary)

- the lack of co-ordination between the ESI Funds and other EU funds such as Horizon 2020 which have a lighter touch approach in some case
- Goldplating and the lack of trust between the different layers of management and control
- the conflict between results and compliance with the focus of many authorities on the control side, often as a result of Commission and ECA audit; and proportionality

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e-Governance (HLG conclusions)

- Facilitate the possibility in the next period for Member States to have a common platform or system across the ESI Funds that would provide a consistent approach for beneficiaries to audit issues and information technology.
- A more consistent approach to audit is needed and clarification on acceptability of electronic documents for all funds and ensuring there is agreement from all relevant audit bodies, including the European Court of Auditors.
- A partnership approach to e-Governance should be encouraged and assistance provided to Member States and managing authorities with training for partners.

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Simplified Cost Options (HLG conclusions)

- Commission needs to ensure that the barriers and uncertainties around their use, especially in terms of conflicts with other EU rules such as state aid, are clarified as soon as possible and by legislative changes if needed.
- More support is needed for programme authorities and to give them an up-front assurance of their SCO schemes by opening up the possibilities already contained in Article 14 of the ESF regulation and/or providing a fast track approval of methodologies developed by programme authorities.
- Legislative changes may be needed to remove some of the restrictions that complicate the use of SCOs and make the flat rates currently possible for some funds or objectives available to all.

Simplification initiatives for Rural development

CAP simplification- with focus on rural development

Amending control rules for better implementation and simplification for beneficiaries (R. 2015/2333 amending R.809/2014)

Changing control rules for collective implementation of agro-environment-climate measure:

- flexibility for better results: several holdings treated together as one single beneficiary for managing larger area with relevance of habitat, biodiversity and nature conservation
- ensuring efficient checks on the implementation: real-time notification of commitments

CAP simplification- with focus on rural development

Enhancing correctness of payment claims:

- Mandatory geo-spatial aid applications as from 2018 for RD
- preliminary checks as part of the application process (voluntary basis)
- informs beneficiaries about potential non-compliances so they can change their application for support and avoid reductions/administrative penalties

Extending the deadline of the final date for payment claims submission (IACS) - Claim year 2015 and 2016

In the pipeline:

- 'yellow card' system for first offender for some area-related aid schemes and support measures (Natura 2000, WFD and ANC)
- flexibility and adaptations of the administrative penalty system for animal premia

CAP simplification- with focus on rural development

Rural Development

R.699/2016 amending R.808/2014

- Simplification of programming for financial instruments:
 - No limits for programme amendments
 - Simpler description of the operations to be supported
- Information obligations for the beneficiaries
 - Mandatory for investment measures only
 - Limit increased to EUR 50.000
- What next?

Thank you for your attention!