

**Meeting of Directors-General
for Rural Development**
Forum for Exchange of experiences
14-16 December 2009
Kiruna, Sweden

All comments registered by the workshop groups

What could be considered as a reasonable and realistic time for process an application or requisition for payments? Please explain your choice

1.1 1-4 weeks

1. 1-4 weeks: If the application is correct and fulfil all requirements
9. 1-4 weeks: Agri env

1.2 1-2 months

4. 1-2 months: AXIS 1 AND 3 REASONABLE
5. 1-2 months: Depending on the type of investment and also the difference between the axes.
10. 1-2 months: 2 MONTHS ON AVERAGE FOR ALL KINDS OF PROJECTS
11. 1-2 months: It differs from measures and measure. The budget is the restraint. It can be an internal problem with the administrative burden.
18. 1-2 months: Farmers vs. other entrepreneurs, old vs. new beneficiaries does matter as much as the different measures

1.3 2-3 months

2. 2-3 months: Practically the time it will take for considering all the administration
3. 2-3 months: For investment support and similar issues
6. 2-3 months: In an area based measure where we have to prioritize
14. 2-3 months: The time it takes to ask for added information is what is important.
15. 2-3 months: BIG PROBLEMS AT THE BEGINNING UP TO 1 OR 2 YEARS BUT NOW DOWN TO 2-3 MONTHS
17. 2-3 months: The important thing is that the beneficiary knows how long time it takes.

1.4 More than 3 months

7. More than 3 months: AXIS 1 AND 3 SIX MONTHS, 2 MONTHS FOR 2 MONTHS FOR PROCESS, 2 MONTHS TO DECIDE
8. More than 3 months: AXIS 2 MAY TILL AUTUMN
12. More than 3 months: Sometimes in area based measures with several phases in the decision making
13. More than 3 months: IF THERE IS A LOT OF PLANNING AND BIG PROJECTS IN SOME CASES UP TO A YEAR
16. More than 3 months: Leader
19. More than 3 months: If there are a lot of applications at the same time

2 Please describe briefly practises or ideas you have of how to shorten processing times

1. Electronic systems
2. Simplify forms
3. Applications all over the year
4. Leader groups helps with preparations
5. Online applications
6. Serve with partly filled forms
7. Calls to be able to prioritize and if you have more calls it simplifies
8. Connecting with other authorities collecting relevant information automatically (tax authority etc)
9. Efficient information about application dates and procedures.
10. Clear selection criteria would help
11. You could shorten the time if you use "first come first serve " but what about the quality

12. Increase quality in forms by training of applicants
13. Error rates can be decreased by electronic forms
14. In the agro environmental scheme personalized application forms for all farmers is helping
15. Business plans just when it's needed
16. Help the beneficiary by early information avoids errors and therefore shorten times
17. Peaks of projects that can be compared between each other, instead of an ongoing application process.
18. To get the applications right from the beginning by giving good information to the potential beneficiaries
19. Peaks of projects that can be compared between each other, instead of an ongoing application process.
20. Using the same application form for all the measures is a help
21. Holding down the paperwork for the applicant
22. Having a fixed timetable over the years for applications builds knowledge and trust among the applicants
23. Standardforms shortens the appl times
24. Different forms depending on the amount - don't think its possible same legal framework
25. Precheck of an application if all data is correct, or self-declaration
26. More advisory help to applicants
27. State administration cooperation, by serving each other with information
28. Reduce the amount of departments and individuals involved in the application processing
29. Consult other regional services could be more efficient
30. Select criteria to control
31. All measures can be applied electronically in some MS
32. Increase the quality of the applications by information and support directed to the applicants
33. Electronic applications and information from other databases
34. Standardisation of applications and very clear guidelines
35. Not having to include all the invoices (for the first check) would lower the adm burden
36. For project support of innovative things the standardisation cannot be taken too far
37. Possibility for the applicant to electronically to check where the application is in the process.

3 Do potential beneficiaries in your country find that these things are difficult? Please explain briefly in what way

3.1 Administration

1. Administration: Start the process with a bidding process then come back with rest of documents
7. Administration: Axis 1 with or without EU co financing - without then the adm burden could be lowered
5. Administration: Small projects adm burden is big
12. Administration: There are difficulties in persuading the beneficiaries about the environmental aspects
20. Administration: the extension service organise workshops for potential beneficiaries on how to understand the regulations, how to prep are business plans etc.
23. Administration: Big organisations projectowners - other runs the project
24. Administration: Different t information activities for different axes
25. Administration: Incentives for collective actions
26. Administration: Only documents needed have to be sent in
27. Administration: Use the rural network for information activities
28. Administration: Information available in databases
30. Administration: Don't ask for all the invoices at the first check (but got criticism), on the on the spot check then all the invoices must be checked.
31. Administration: Communication between databases
35. Administration: Special telephone number for questions, and the answers are also put on the website
36. Administration: Cross compl. just for agriculture
37. Administration: Signed declaration of the invoices should be enough why ask for all the invoices
38. Administration: Flexibility in detailed regulations at a national level, Avoiding too detailed regulations make it easier to adapt to the current situation.
39. Administration: A possibility for an applicant to see how far the application has gone in the process, shown on website

- 32. Administration: FAQ on the website - and also to show answers to all stakeholders within a time limit
- 33. Administration: To many eligibility criterias

3.2 Cash-flow

- 2. Cash-flow: Small beneficiaries have a problem with this, might be the biggest problem
- 3. Co-financing: Communicating the support decision to the banks if requested from the applicant and if it is positive
- 4. Cash-flow: Pay contractor directly
- 6. Cash-flow: Our program is not adjusted to the current financial crisis.
- 8. Cash-flow: Slow process in payments gives cash flow problems for farmers.
- 9. Cash-flow: have to wait to start before approval
- 14. Cash-flow: Have to deal with other co financer when waiting for money
- 18. Cash-flow: Allow some form of advance payments
- 19. Cash-flow: Payment in advance is helping
- 21. Cash-flow: A minimum amount must be asked fore per requisition and sometimes it takes a long time for small projects to reach this amount and then they have cash flow problems
- 22. Cash-flow: Advances is being used

3.3 Co-financing

- 10. Co-financing: The global financial crisis is making the banks hesitating or even refusing credits
- 11. Co-financing: Every project has to have co financing - good project i.e. within Leader are therefore not done
- 13. Co-financing: Informing banks of the function of the subsidies in the RDP
- 15. Co-financing: Regional and central governments agrees about who is responsible for the co financing so that it is set for the whole programme period
- 16. Co-financing: The private beneficiaries do not necessary co financing
- 17. Co-financing: Co financing is centralize and decided and is not a question for the municipalities
- 29. Co-financing: system for banks to evaluate the business plans from the farmers
- 34. Co-financing: The added funds to RDP due to the Health Check can create problems to find public co-financing

4 How can we catch signals from different stakeholders that help us to implement the programme in a more efficient way?

- 1. Working group when preparing for the programme - different stakeholders - also now when working with the amendment of the programme (consensus)
- 2. In monitoring committee.
- 3. Round table discussions initiated by paying agency and MA with different stakeholders on important topics
- 4. Three possibilities of contact with stake holders: coming to the administration, lifting issues in Monitoring Committee, National Rural Network
- 5. Informal meetings with farmers' representatives
- 6. When more money is on the table special meetings with the stakeholders
- 7. Political discussions before presenting programmes
- 8. Use the channels to agr chambers and extension officers
- 9. Assessing forms and regulations with stakeholders
- 10 Long meetings with advisers. Private advisory system
- 11. Show on website both good examples and "bad examples" on applications etc. Anonymous
- 12. At the beginning when writing the programme/health check meetings are arranged
- 13. Lots of meetings with stakeholders during the year
- 14. Constant communication through e-mails, telephone and letters between administration and beneficiaries

15. Questionnaire on a regular basis to stakeholders
16. Rural Network very important to share best practices
17. Three special telephone lines at the administration for questions from beneficiaries
18. Developed monitoring com. meetings
19. By law the administration has to respond to complaints within 30 days
20. Personal contacts with stakeholders
21. A national rural portal on the internet established by the rural network including discussion forum
22. Difficult to find the stakeholders for axes 1 and 2 in rural Network - they need to be found elsewhere
23. Communicating with beneficiaries
24. Regional strategies for implementation but for decisions of amendments of programmes a broader group
25. Promotion campaigns training teams of regional promoters
26. Put documents from interesting workshops on website in order to continue the discussion
27. Planning to use the network for catch signals
28. Discussion with a group of stakeholders give more than with just one
29. Network are going to help with the strategy
30. Ask farmers not applying thru surveys why they do not apply for funding.
31. MC in each region to get the discussions on " the right level"

5 What is the best advice to make the programme more effective today and for the next programme period?

1. Not ask for all the invoices at the first check
2. In a federal state with several programmes the national coordination is crucial
3. The control and regulation are too difficult and should be changed. To much reference to the first pillar today.
4. New programme approved as from 1 Jan 2013
5. The strategy should be included in the programme (then no need for update every 2 year)
6. There is a cash flow today that a farmer needs to borrow 100 % today and then receive the grant, which gives cash flow problems
7. No national programme
8. Stimulation of the staff of administrations to stay working for a long time and not change jobs so often
9. Make one axis out of axis 1 and 3, one single measure for investments for example
10. Harmonization of rules
11. Try, together with the EU and the stakeholders, to optimize the program Implementation continuously
12. Well trained administrative staff is important that understands the program.
13. Clarity of rules from beginning Security for administration
14. One measure for each type of action/activity, also easier to monitor
15. Define target groups and precise objectives
16. Art 24 controllreg concerns the bills and control of liability too complicated
17. It is not allowed for a member state to only accept digital applications on line. It should be a possible option.
18. More flexibility for member states in evaluation
19. A better coordination with the research fund for innovation measures in the RDP
20. Do not touch too much when changing for the close future - we have just recently earned the system
21. Transfer of the area based subsidies to the CAP pillar I
22. Just one document for national strategy
23. Cooperation between farmers for example water projects it should be possible to have a collective application (not individual like today)
24. The Rural Network should be supported
25. Not more than 150 pages per program...
26. No need for changing the strategy when programme approved
27. Continue the current rules in the running program period (no second health check in this period, please)

28. More connections with the structural funds.
29. A more flexible evaluation framework
30. One common framework for all expenses in all funds
31. Quicker process for making changes in programme
32. Further development of the on-line application of area based subsidies
33. So much continuation of the current rules as possible in the next period
34. The strategy should be included in the program
35. For federal states it would be good to have a possibility to have both national measures and regional measures, which not is allowed at the present.
36. Difficult to make national strategies in countries with many regional programs
37. Is a member state strategy a help for federal states?
38. It should not be more profitable to apply in one fund instead of another, for example EAFRD instead of a structural fund or vice versa