

**ENRD Seminar on
Stakeholder Involvement**

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***Interactive evaluation of RDP delivery
– with target group***

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The practice in 3 lines!

- NRN inventory of constraints in implementation RDP-LEADER
- **interactive evaluation sessions** with LAG coordinators and advisors (**Practice**), and Payment Authority DLG+DR) and MA (and RDP Directors Office) (**Policy**)
- specific **governance groups** were identified for each bottleneck

Main purpose - *Why?*

- “to diminish the complexities in implementation of LEADER and develop possible solutions together.”
- NRN received many complaints about bottlenecks associated with the procedures of the Dutch RDP (2007-2013).
- **slow procedures, complicated formats, heavy personal investments in starting up, compulsory 50-50 co-funding in each project, contradictory information, non understanding between ‘field’ and ‘MA+PA’.**
- **less projects proposed, delayed budget spending RDP, frustration about ‘Brussels’**

Stakeholders concerned - *Who & how?*

- dozens of phone calls and emails from project owners and LAG coordinators to NRN team
- 1 step: NRN informed provincial coordination staff ...
- 2 step: idea workshop + organization by NRN team, preparation in direct cooperation with authorities
- 20 interviews with all stakeholders
- workshops with 27 participants : MA (incl MoA and RB POP) , provinces, advisors, project owners, PA (DLG + DR) and NRN team

Lessons on stakeholder involvement

- joint problem identification – and joint solving – is powerful
- bureaucrazy problems often added by national authorities to EU regulations
- putting sensitive issues on the agenda demands careful and open acting
- building trust requires involvement and cooperation

Success factors for interactive evaluation:

- results are ‘owned’ by all stakeholders, as they collectively identified problems and solutions, so they are ready to act on the common findings
- the Network’s mandate to send “policy signals”

Achievements/Results

- PA staff trained on *de-minimus* + on communication. PA standardized knowledge on state aid in their offices in all provinces
- LEADER delivery improved partly (faster, common fee/hour for bottom-up time). **Not solved**: advance payments; compulsory 50-50 co-funding
- In 2015 Agric Minister announced further simplifications in RDP

Easier **advances** below €100.000 (under art 63 Verordening (EU) nr. 1305/2013).

Projects evolved from an area development process with all stakeholders (LEADER) offer guarantee for justified use of financial means. Use **lump sum** payments.

Easier reporting. No zero-situation reports.

- commits rural inhabitants to initiative and investment
- mutual understanding between field : bureaucracy → better democracy