Fast-track administrative procedures for smaller RDP projects in Scotland

Practice / Method

UNITED KINGDOM

Simplification

Location
Scotland

Programming period
2014 - 2020

Funding (EUR)
n/a

Duration
2015 – on-going

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Scotland's RDP has adopted simplified administration systems that include a 'two-tier' application process for RDP grants. This was introduced to provide proportionate 'fast-track' procedures for projects requiring smaller amounts of RDP funding.

The challenge

Simplification of RDP procedures can be achieved by Member States that apply the principle of 'optimising' rather than 'maximising' RDP checks and controls. An example of this is used in the UK by Scotland's RDP, which applies a 'light' system for smaller amounts of funding through a 'two-tiered grant assessment process'. It was introduced in the RDP's land-based schemes and forms part of wider improvements to RDP application and approval processes.

Main steps and features

'Level one' of the two-tier process is used for applications up to a value of £75,000 (circa €100 000 equivalent), which will be assessed and approved locally in the region where the farm is located. 'Level two' is applied for applications above £75,000, which will be considered nationally by a panel of experts from government departments and appropriate agencies, with stakeholder input.

Other new simplification actions introduced for Scotland's 2014-2020 RDP include:

Geographical targeting of support under the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme has been introduced to maximise environmental outcomes and ensure value for money. The online application system is designed to only present the management options that will deliver the greatest benefit for that area, when an applicant enters their agricultural holding code. This keeps it simple for potential beneficiaries and avoids them wasting time applying for land management options that are not considered most appropriate for their area.

Site visits have been introduced for the land-based schemes. These will take place prior to contracts being issued and will ensure that beneficiaries fully understand the management requirements they are agreeing to and the commitment involved.

A range of improvements to the new LEADER programme, including a simpler and clearer regulatory framework and a central IT system, which will reduce the administrative burden on LAGs and beneficiaries.

Challenges and lessons

❑ A degree of risk analysis is required here to help define a well-optimised set of RDP controls, but rewards remain worthwhile from balancing the need to properly manage public money with the need to properly develop rural Europe.