



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Deputy Director-General, in charge of Directorates B, C and D

Brussels,

Subject: Written consultation of the Monitoring Committee of the Slovenian Rural Development Programme 2014-2022, held between 19 and 21 October 2022

Dear Ms Žagar,

In relation to the documents submitted¹ during the written consultation pursuant to Article 49(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 under the Slovenian Rural Development Programme, the services of the European Commission express reservation for the approach taken and the selection criteria proposed in respect to the preparatory support for the community-led local development (CLLD) implementation of the community-led local development strategies in the programming period 2023-2027.

Pursuant to Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2020/2220, the CLLD for programmes extended in accordance with Article 1 of the same Regulation, the EAFRD may support the costs of capacity building and preparatory actions supporting the design and future implementation of community-led local development strategy under the new legal framework.

Consequently, it is possible to grant support for the preparatory actions based on the said Article 4, and the Slovenian Rural Development Programme for the period 2014-2022 contains the provisions² to that end. However, the document submitted to the members of the Monitoring Committee (MC) implies that 70% of the support would actually be reserved for community-led local development strategies, which are already selected and approved for

¹ Slovenian reference is document no. 3310-9/2015/420 of 3 October 2022. The document is registered under the reference Ares(2022)6979693 of 10 October 2022.

²Its section on beneficiaries stipulates that the beneficiaries of the preparatory support for the community-led local development (CLLD) are “local partnerships, which prepare the local development strategies”. Furthermore, its section on the eligibility conditions stipulates that “A local development strategy has to be submitted in confirmation with all required elements”. Furthermore, the same section stipulates that payment is to be carried out in two instalments/phases (i.e. with 30% and with 70% of the total amount planned for payment to the beneficiaries) whereby the milestones for the installments are not defined in the Rural Development Programme.

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their implementation. In the opinion of the services of the European Commission, this is not in line with the above-cited Article 4. The intention of this Article is to ensure a pool of various community-led local development strategies and favouring the selected ones is contrary to this provision. This position is in line with Article 35(1), point (a) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, which provides that preparatory support should be eligible regardless the strategy being selected or not for implementation. Therefore, the benchmark for the payment would be, for instance, the submission of a local development strategy.

Furthermore, the services of the European Commission ask the Managing Authority to ensure that not only existing local partnerships as cemented in the 2014-2022 local action groups are made eligible for the preparatory support. In relation to this, Slovenia is strongly advised to define existing and potential local partnerships eligible for the preparatory support in more open terms than provided for in the document submitted to the MC and without asking the local partnerships to be already established as a LAG with a lead partner, job, active office and a webpage.

The Commission would like to request the Managing Authority to document this position in the minutes of the written consultation.

Yours sincerely,

(e-signed)

Mihail DUMITRU