

Guidelines for data on LEADER Interventions

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 2. Scope and frequency of data collection | 4 |
| 2.1 Data use | 4 |
| 2.2 Date and frequency of reporting..... | 5 |
| 3. Technical specifications for the transfer of computer files | 5 |
| 3.1 Transfer medium | 5 |
| 3.2 Data quality and checks..... | 5 |
| 4. Fields descriptions | 6 |
| 4.1. Data related to LAGs identification | 6 |
| 4.2. Data related to the LAG's activities..... | 10 |
| 4.3. Data related to LAG's finance | 13 |
| 4.4. Contribution to result indicators..... | 14 |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides further guidance with regard to the submission of data on Local Action Groups (hereinafter LAGs) and their activities for LEADER and defines the form and content of these data, as referred to in Article 14 (2) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475.

In accordance with Article 134 of the Strategic Plan Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 (hereinafter SPR) Member States will submit to the Commission an Annual Performance Report (APR) from 2024 onwards. The APR will provide on an annual basis aggregated quantitative information which will offer an overview of the level of implementation of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan at national level.

Some of the data on LAGs and their activities for LEADER represent the underlying data necessary for the calculation of the output and result indicators presented in the Annual Performance Report. In addition, they also seek to better demonstrate the added value of LEADER intervention as the basis for evaluation.

2. SCOPE AND FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION

2.1 Data use

Data provided by Member States in the APR alone do not provide the necessary detailed information to carry out the proper monitoring and evaluation of the LEADER achievements.

The Court of Auditors' report (10/2022) "*LEADER and community-led local development facilitates local engagement but additional benefits still not sufficiently demonstrated*" also points out at a lack of data to show the added value of LEADER approach. The data, whilst robust, should show some of the LEADER contribution to improvement of social capital, local governance and better projects results compared with non LEADER delivery. The conceptualization of LEADER's added value follows the Guidelines for Evaluation of LEADER/CLLDs (EU Rural Development Evaluation Network, 2017)¹.

In addition, the level of data aggregation in the APR, will not allow to carry out statistical and distribution analysis at the LAG's level. At the same time, robust data at the LAG's level will provide insights into the richness of local networks of public and private socio-economic actors, their localization, the inclusiveness of the decision-making of the local governance as well as it will provide detailed information regarding the projects supported, the budget of the community-led local development strategies (hereinafter LDSs) and their contribution to all relevant result indicators referred to in Annex I of the SPR. The data should also render itself to numerical/statistical analyses.

¹ https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/publications/evaluation-leaderclld_en

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|--|--|--|
| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

2.2 Date and frequency of reporting

According to Article 155) of Regulation (EU) 2022/1475, Member States shall report data on LAGs activities for LEADER only twice during the whole implementing period 2023-2027:

- (a) by 30 April 2026 in relation to operations paid in the financial years from 2023 to 2025, cumulatively; and
- (b) by 30 April 2030 in relation to operations paid in the financial years from 2023 to 2029, cumulatively.

The values reported in point (b) will thus include amounts in point (a). There is no need for any data reported per year, it will be cumulative only.

In addition, the Member State shall report data relates to the identification of the LAG (as indicated in Section 4.1 ‘Data related to LAGs) only once, at the moment of their selection. These data are to be reported by 30 April of year N for the LAGs selected by 31 December of year N-1. This means that LAGs selected by 31 December 2023 will have to be reported by 30 April 2024.

3. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE TRANSFER OF COMPUTER FILES

3.1 Transfer medium

According to Article 16(1) of Regulation (EU) 2022/1475, Member State shall transfer the computer files² to the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) through SFC2021, the information system enabling electronic and secure exchanges of information in respect of EAGF/EAFRD interventions and beneficiaries.

The Member States organize themselves to send the files. The information will be checked and validated at the Member State level.

3.2 Data quality and checks

According to Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2022/1475, Member State shall ensure that the data reported is complete and self-consistent, as well as that their content is recorded and presented in accordance with the requirements set out in chapter 4 below.

² The format of files is XML as provided by the Commission via CIRCA in December 2023.

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| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

4. FIELDS DESCRIPTIONS

4.1. Data related to LAGs identification

Member States shall report the data relates to the situation of the LAG only once, at the moment of LAG selection.

LAGs, for which the preparatory costs of Local Development Strategies have been financed from the EU funding but whose Local Development Strategies have not been selected for implementation, will not be reported.

(a) L100: identification of LAG (ID)

This field provides a unique code of each LAG.

Required format: MSRE999, where MS stands for the Member State abbreviation and 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9. Letters can be allowed for regionalised member states.

(b) L200: LAG's name

This field provides information on the name of the local action group.

(c) L300: municipality codes

This field provides a list of the Local Administrative Unit code of the municipalities within the LAG area. Multiple codes may be selected. Please use the list (2021) as provided by the Eurostat:

[Local administrative units \(LAU\) - NUTS - Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&code=sdg-11-6-1&plugin=1)

A single municipality code can be entered by more than one LAG in the Member States where the LAGs territories can overlap.

The code of municipality is reported also in cases when LAG covers part of it

(d) L400: total population covered by the LAG

This field provides information on the population within the LAG area. The calculation of this variable shall follow the calculation method of the Result indicator R.38 'LEADER coverage' set out in point 8(j) of the Annex to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/2290;

Required format: 9999999 where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9. This data is based on the data received by LAGs for the selection process.

(e) L500: support of a LAG by more than one Fund pursuant to Article 31(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

This field indicates whether the LAG is supported by other Funds than the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

If the value L500 is "yes" the LAG shall provide the following variables:

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| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

- (i) L501: use of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support: whether the LAG is receiving support under the ERDF;
- (ii) L502: use of European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) support: whether the LAG is receiving support under the ESF+;
- (iii) L503: use of European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) support: whether the LAG is receiving support under the EMFAF;
- (iv) L504: use of other European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) (e.g. the Just Transition Fund);
- (f) L600: total number of LAG's members

This field provides information on the total number of the LAG's members referred to in Article 31(2), point (b), of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. Member States shall report the number of LAG's members broken down by type of organisation, as follows:

- (i) L601: number of LAG's members that represent local public administrations;
This can include: municipalities, districts, public services ...
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (ii) L602: number of LAG's members that are representatives of private local economic interests (e.g. economic organisations, local businesses, etc.);
This includes both representatives of collective . interests (eg agricultural chambers, business organisations, etc) and individual private businesses.
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (iii) L603: number of LAG's members that are representatives of social local interests (e.g. non-governmental organisations, local associations, etc.);
This field will cover social, cultural, sports, and environmental organisations.
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (iv) L604: Number of LAG's members falling under other categories than those listed in points (i), (ii) and (iii);
Inhabitants of the local area who are members of LAGs will be reported here.
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

The sum of L601+L602+L603+L604 must equal L600

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|--|--|--|
| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

- (g) L610: total number of LAG's members in the LAG's decision-making body

The decision making level refers to the body within the LAG which takes key decisions, for example on the content of the Local Development Strategy or project selection. In some cases the whole general assembly will take decisions – in this case the composition of LAG's decision making body will correspond to the LAG's composition as above.

Member States shall report the number of LAG's members in the decision-making body by type of organisation, as follows:

- (i) L611: number of members of LAG's decision-making body that represent public administrations;

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

This can include: municipalities, districts, public services etc.

- (ii) L612: number of members in LAG's decision-making body members that are representatives of private local economic interests (e.g. economic organisations, local businesses, etc.);

This includes both representatives of collective economic interests (e.g. agricultural chambers, business organisations, etc.) and individual private businesses.

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

- (iii) L613: number of members in LAG's decision-making body that are representatives of social local interests (e.g. non-governmental organisations, local associations, etc.);

This field will cover social, cultural, sports, and environmental organisations.

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

- (iv) L614: number of members in LAG's decision-making body falling under others categories than those listed in points (i), (ii) and (iii);

Inhabitants of the local area who are members of LAGs decision making body will be reported here.

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

The sum of L611+L612+L613+L614 must be equal to L610.

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| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

- (v) L615-L618: Gender of members in the LAG's decision-making body
- Member States shall report the number of members in LAG's decision-making body by gender (L615 to L618);
- Required format: Member States shall provide the gender according to the categories in Table 1 below.

Table 1

| Code | Label |
|------|-------------------|
| L615 | Man |
| L616 | Woman |
| L617 | Non-binary |
| L618 | Prefer not to say |

'Non-binary' is provided for those Member States which have legal provisions or practices recognising that individuals may not fall into man and woman categories.

'Prefer not to say' applies for persons who may not wish to be associated with one gender.

Member States that do not have such provisions may decide not to apply these two categories.

The total of L615 + L616+ L617+L618 must be equal to L610.

Age of members in the LAG's decision-making body

Member States shall report the number of members in LAG's decision-making body by age, as follows:

- (vi) L619: number of young persons in LAG's decision-making body
- This field applies to persons who are below a certain age limit as defined by Member States;
- Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (vii) L620: age limit defined by the Member State for the variable referred to in point (vi).
- The member states are encouraged to set the age of "young" according to their national circumstances. The UN definition comprises persons up to

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|--|--|--|
| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

24. The UN also recognises that this varies without prejudice to other age groups listed by member states such as 18–30.

The age upper limit shall not exceed 40 as stipulated in Art.4 point 6 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115.

The reference date for calculating the age is 1 January 2023.

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9

4.2. Data related to the LAG's activities

Member States shall report by LAG the list of variables on LAG's activities set out in points (a) to (d), in 2026 and 2030, from the moment of the first payment to a given operation. This is in line with the methodology to plan and report result indicators.

Each operation will be reported only once at the first payment even if it receives several payments. Operations which receive several payments but do not come to an end thereby producing a partial result will therefore be reported as well, at the moment of the first payment. The first payment means that the provision of goods or services have materialised.

The term “first payment” also does not cover any advances although expenditure related to advances referred to in Article 44(3) of the HZR paid for rural development “investments’ and ‘cooperation’ interventions, should be reported in the annual accounts.

The report in year N relates to all operations paid until 15 October N-1. These variables relate to the number of operations implemented in accordance with Article 34(1), point (b), of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

Operations relating to the management, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and its animation, including the facilitation of exchanges between stakeholders (Art. 34. point c), shall not be reported in L700s.

(a) L100: identification of LAG (ID)

(b) L700: total number of operations implemented by the LAG

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

This field provides the total number of operations implemented by the LAG, without double counting. Member States shall report the number of operations by type of promotor, as follows:

The operation is reported in the moment of the first payment to it. Each operation is only reported once in the moment of the first payment to it (not advances) so that the double counting can be avoided.

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|--|--|--|
| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

FIELDS L701-L707: OPERATIONS BY TYPE OF PROMOTOR

- (i) L701: number of operations implemented by private individuals or businesses;
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (ii) L702: number of operations implemented by public administrations;
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (iii) L703: number of operations implemented by representatives of private economic local interests (e.g. business associations, chamber of commerce, etc.);
This field will cover operations by collective organisations. Conversely, operations by individuals or businesses are reported in L701.
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (iv) L704: number of operations implemented by representatives of social local interests (e.g. non-governmental organisations, local associations, etc.);
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (v) L705: number of operations implemented by research organisations;
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (vi) L706: number of operations jointly implemented by several types of promoters;
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.
- (vii) L707: number of operations implemented by promoters that fall under other categories than those listed in points (i) to (vi);
Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

The sum of L701+L702+L703+L704+L705+L706+L707 must equal to L700.

The cooperation operations are reported separately and not included in L700.

FIELDS L708 – L709: COOPERATION OPERATIONS

Member States shall report the number of interregional or transnational cooperation operations as follows:

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|--|--|--|
| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

- (viii) L708: number of interregional cooperation projects implemented by the LAG;

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

- (ix) L709: number of transnational cooperation projects implemented by the LAG;

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

FIELD L710: innovation in the local context

- (c) L710: number of operations which are innovative in the local context

Member States shall report operations, which are innovative in the local context as set out in Article 31(2), point (d), of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

In general innovation should be understood as relative to the local context and can cover not only technological aspects but also other aspects such as: organizational, economic, creative, social etc.

Member States, regional authorities or the LAG shall define the term 'innovative in the local context'.

Required format: 9999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

(d) Operations by objective/area

This field indicates the one or multiple objectives/areas to which a given operation relates, as follows:

- (i) L801: number of operations related to knowledge transfer, including advice, training and knowledge-exchange on sustainable, economic, social, environmental and climate-friendly performance;
- (ii) L802: number of operations related to producer organisations, local markets, short supply chains and quality schemes, including investment support, marketing activities;
- (iii) L803: number of operations related to renewable energy production capacities, including bio-based;
- (iv) L804: number of operations contributing to environmental sustainability and the achievement of climate mitigation and adaptation goals in rural areas;
- (v) L805: number of operations which create jobs;
- (vi) L806: number of operations supporting rural businesses, including bio-economy;
- (vii) L807: number of operations related to smart village strategies;
- (viii) L808: number of operations improving access to services and infrastructure, including broadband;

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|--|--|--|
| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

- (ix) L809: number of operations in the area of social inclusion;
- (x) L810: number of operations that fall under other categories than those listed in points (i) to (ix).

The fields above are defined following the definitions of results indicators as in the Cover note on output and result indicators³.

Each operation can be attributed to one or several objective/area above, provided that it contributes directly and significantly to them. The Member States set up their rules for classification of projects by objective/area, following the same logic as for their contribution to the result indicators, which the above objectives/areas mirror.

4.3. Data related to LAG's finance

Member States shall report the variables set out in points (a), (b) and (c) on LAG's finance in 2026 and 2030. The report in year N relates to all operations paid until 15 October N-1.

All amounts shall be reported in EUR.

- (a) L900: total Union budget under EAFRD planned, per community-led local development strategy (LDS)

This field will include an amount planned for the Local Development Strategy both for (a) the implementation of operations, including cooperation activities and their preparation, selected under the strategy and (b) the management, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and its animation, including the facilitation of exchanges between stakeholders.

In the Member States where these amounts are not formally contracted with LAGs, an indicative planned amount will be given.

Required format: 9999999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

- (b) L910: total amount from EAFRD committed to support the implementation of operations, including cooperation activities and preparation, selected under the LDS

Required format: 9999999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

- (c) L920: total amount of Union contribution paid from the EAFRD per LDS

Member States shall report the Union contribution paid from the EAFRD broken down by actions provided for in Article 34(1), points (a), (b) and (c), of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060:

³ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cmef_en#towardsthepmeff

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|--|--|--|
| | Guidelines on data for LEADER Interventions | |
|--|--|--|

- (i) L921: total amount from EAFRD paid for capacity building and preparatory actions supporting the design and future implementation of the LDS;

The preparation costs of a given LDS either under the Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020 or CAP Plans 2023-2027 shall be reported as appropriate.

Required format: 9999999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

- (ii) L922: total amount from EAFRD paid for the implementation of operations, including cooperation activities and their preparation, selected under the LDS;

Required format: 9999999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

- (iii) L923: total amount from EAFRD paid for the management, monitoring and evaluation of the LDS and its animation, including the facilitation of exchanges between stakeholders.

Required format: 9999999, where 9 stands for a digit from 0 to 9.

In cases of multi-fund LDS (if the value of L500 is “yes”) the share of costs reported in L923 as a proportion of the total costs in L900 can be higher than 25%.

4.4. Contribution to result indicators

Member States shall report in 2026 and 2030 information by LAG on the contribution of the LDS to all relevant result indicators referred to in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 selected in their CAP Strategic Plan following the selection of LDS. The report in year N relates to all operations paid until 15 October of year N-1.

The selection of the relevant result indicators following the selection of Local Development Strategies will be reflected in the CAP Plans. The LAG will then adopt them. Thus the set of relevant result indicators will be specific to each CAP Plan.

Where result indicators are expressed as a share (%) the Member States shall report the numerator at LAG level whereas the denominator (total population) will taken at the Member State level.