

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-005014/25**  
**to the Commission**  
**David McAllister (PPE), Jens Gieseke (PPE), Lena Düpont (PPE)**  
(18 December 2025)

*Subject:* Future of the Leader programme in the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework

Upcoming decisions on the next multiannual financial framework from 2028 will significantly shape the future of rural regions. The Leader programme has demonstrated the strength of local initiatives for more than three decades. There are currently around 2 900 local action groups all over the EU, reaching roughly 170 million people in rural areas. The groups carry out projects to strengthen economic development, social participation, cultural diversity and environmental responsibility. The impact is clear: more than 120 000 projects have been completed during the current funding period. The following questions relate to ongoing programmes, long-term investment planning and the need for planning certainty.

1. What is the Commission's priority for rural development in the next multiannual financial framework?
2. How does the Commission intend to address the current lack of budget for the Leader programme, so that regions and local action groups can make reliable plans?
3. What measures is the Commission planning to considerably cut red tape so local initiatives can continue to work efficiently?

Submitted: 18.12.2025

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission**  
(23 February 2026)

1. The Commission aims at supporting vibrant rural areas and make them stronger, more resilient, connected and prosperous in line with the Long Term Vision for Rural Areas <sup>(1)</sup>. The next multiannual financial framework (MFF), notably the proposal for the National and Regional Partnership (NRP) Plans including the proposal on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), ensure the continuity in the toolbox to support rural areas. The impact of EU support will be ensured by using synergies and complementarities in the use of funding for NRP plans.
2. The legal proposal for the next MFF and CAP proposes Leader to be mandatory in all Member States. To enhance support, the Commission put forward additional proposals that ensure support for rural areas, by obliging the Member States to allocate at least 10% of their NRP allocations to rural territories, at least EUR 48.7 billion, in which Leader could be included. Member States may also program upfront the part of the non-allocated funds, of EUR 45 billion, to support agriculture and rural areas. These funds were initially planned to be available only at the midterm review. The Commission will steer NRP planning with recommendations on the CAP, including on Member States' rural needs.
3. Leader/Community led Local Development will continue to be implemented in shared management by the Commission and the Member States making the simplification of implementation of local initiatives a joint effort. The Commission has proposed the mandatory use of simplified cost options in a considerable part of Leader to reduce the administrative burden at local level. The single set of reporting, monitoring and auditing rules, under the common legal framework, should simplify multi-sector community-led local development initiatives.

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<sup>(1)</sup> A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas — Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040 (COM/2021/345 final).