

EN

E-000306/2026

Answer given by Mr Hansen
on behalf of the European Commission
(12.3.2026)

1. One of the key principles of LEADER¹ approach is the local partnerships where the local action groups design the strategies and implement the operations. The responsibility for project selection and its assessment lies with the Member State and in particular with the LEADER local action group in the area, in line with their local development strategy, and the priorities defined by the local communities therein. The project selection criteria are defined in the strategy and contain not only economic but also social and environmental criteria. The Managing Authority (regional or national) may also set the eligibility conditions. The bottom-up approach and local decision-making are a defining characteristic of LEADER and contributes to its success. The Commission is not involved in the project selection.

2. LEADER is implemented under shared management. The Commission does not evaluate each individual project before selection or assess its impact after the completion and does not collect such information on individual projects. Evaluations are done at the level of local development strategies and programmes. The Commission evaluates the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) instruments including LEADER, at the EU level.

3. LEADER can finance a broad range of actions for local development in line with the strategies developed by local communities in a participative manner. Projects of local recreational value are not excluded from eligibility at the EU level. Typically, LEADER provides a grant for investment but does not continue subsidising the operations, not least due to its limited budgets.

¹ https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/networking/leader_en.