

# PROMIS

## *Project Result Oriented Management Information System*

Implemented in Denmark for LAG and FLAG interventions, 2015-2020

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## **Background**

According to the relevant EU Regulation for the Operational programmes for agriculture/rural development and the development of the fishery sector, and due to requirements from the EU Court of Auditors, the F/LAGs must prepare transparent and objective prioritization criteria as a tool for them to select among project applications. The set of prioritization criteria should ensure a fair assessment of the applications and help the F/LAGs to identify and select the projects that are most likely to generate the highest and most sustainable results and impacts in line with the objectives of the EU2020, the Operational programmes and the local F/LAG

interventions described in the F/LAGs' own Local Development Strategies (LDS). In other words, quantifiable and verifiable results and impacts must be generated and documented.

In June 2014, the Danish ministry responsible for the full administration and implementation of the F/LAG-interventions under the Danish RDP and Fishery Sector Programme initiated the development of an IT-system, which could be used by the F/LAGs for this prioritization exercise. The developed integrated project results oriented management information system, PROMIS, contains a number of tools and options tailored to embrace the specific needs and characteristics of the bottom-up LEADER method. These tools ease the daily management of the interventions in the F/LAGs, allow for a smooth application process for applicants and provide real time insight into interventions and expected and realized results for the national ministries. PROMIS therefore does not only include a tool for project prioritization, but also contains application forms, a module for project recommendation from F/LAGs to MA and systems for collecting, monitoring and evaluation data.

PROMIS has 3 user groups, each with their own level of access:

- Access layer 1: Project applicants, being project beneficiaries/project holders, when their applicants are approved
- Access layer 2: F/LAG coordinators and the Board members of the F/LAG
- Access layer 3: The Managing Authority (MA) of the ministry responsible for the F/LAG interventions

The system is described briefly below with reference to these three levels of access and the associated users. Please note that the three access levels reflect the organization of the Danish system, and that a fourth regional layer could be added for Member States with regional RDPs, as well as an EU-level could be added in case more than one Member State make use of PROMIS.

## **Project applicants (access layer 1)**

### **Online application form for applicants under the F/LAG intervention**

The applicants wishing to prepare an application, create a user and log in on a central web based server whereby they get access to the electronic application form. The log in is personal, determined by an e-mail address and a password chosen by the applicant. The log in will always provide access to the files created by the applicant, being draft application(s), submitted application(s) and project documents.

The application form is in principle generic, but is adapted by the individual F/LAG to its own LDS. In effect, an applicant applying under a given F/LAG will be presented with the objectives and priorities of exactly that F/LAG and will be asked to relate the application to these objectives/priorities.

The application form is intelligent, and will develop dynamically on the screen with drop down menus, when the applicant clicks hers/his choices in the menus. Therefore,

s/he will only see questions to be answered and requests for data/information to be delivered, which are linked directly to the choice of focus area for her/his project application: Requirements for data, information and indicators for outputs, results and impacts will be different for a project targeting Agro tourism development compared with a project related to local cultural, social development or similar.

Pre-defined *common indicators* for outputs, results and impacts related to the specific topics and effect areas are mandatory for all applicants to fill in, but it is also possible for the individual applicant to insert additional indicators related directly to hers/his project.

Furthermore, the applicant will be asked to provide info about a number of *baselines* linked to the project and to the expected outputs, results and impacts. Baseline data will cover turnover, jobs, production capacity etc., and objectives as well as quantified targets related to the same indicators.

A number of the features of the PROMIS application form is summarized below:

- Online access to the application form
- More than one person may have access to the same application = group work
- Smart application form with drop down menus depending on selection of topics/project theme
- Smart control functions checking budgets and financing = Submission not possible before indicated errors are corrected
- Expected effects indicated, depending on project theme
- Distribution of project funds on LDS priorities and effect areas
- Online submission to LAG/FLAG for administrative control = dialogue online regarding corrections of application
- Applicant can always follow the application's state of play in the approval process

## **F/LAG coordinator and Board (access layer 2)**

The F/LAG and the Board has access to all applications (draft and submitted) and projects within their specific F/LAG. F/LAG and the Board can benefit from PROMIS in different ways during the implementation process: Before the call, during the call and after the call is closed.

### **Before the call for applications is opened**

- Coordinator and Board infers LDS priorities in the electronic application form

This action will in most cases only take place one time in a programming period: Before the first call. The LDS priorities and objectives are typically permanent during the whole implementation period and no changes in the application form will be needed in relation to the LDS objectives.

- Coordinator and Board decides on the content of project prioritization tool

In order to make the application process transparent for all, the Board and the Coordinator will decide before the call about the prioritization principles of the F/LAG.

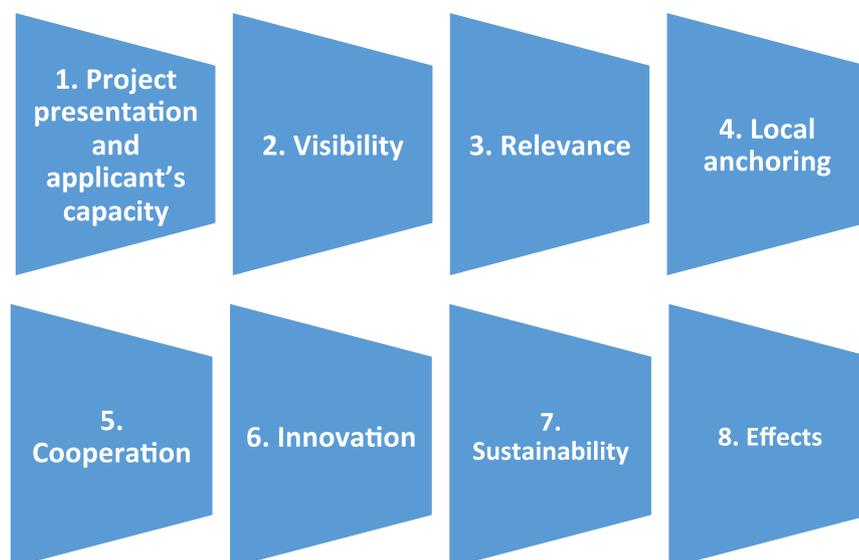
The PROMIS system includes 8 generic mandatory prioritization criteria and a number of sub-criteria for each main criterion. The main criteria are:

- a) Project description and applicant (7 sub-criteria including project description, rationale, realism, budget, the capacity of the applicant etc.)
- b) Visibility (2 sub-criteria related to marketing/communication and to transparency and the possibilities to replicate the project))
- c) Relevance in relation to the development strategy for the F/LAG (2 sub criteria on relevance and actuality in relation to the F/LAG development strategy)
- d) Local anchoring (4 sub criteria related to for example local identity, local resources, local experience etc.)
- e) Cooperation (5 sub criteria related to the quality, the frequency, commitment, cross-sectoral cooperation and to new networks)
- f) Innovation (high level of novelty of the project and its results and impacts)
- g) Sustainability (3 sub criteria related to risk/dead weight, green profile, sustainability in the local community)
- h) Effects (5 sub-criteria being related to economic, environmental, climate related, social and cultural effects)

The F/LAG can decide to include additional sub-criteria under each of the 8 main criteria. This can for example be in relation to visibility or innovation, where additional sub-criteria can be formulated depending on the LDS of the F/LAG.

The figure below summarizes the main criteria:

## Generic project prioritization criteria



Before the call for tender, the Board will also give a *weight to the criteria*, which the F/LAG finds most relevant from the point of view of the F/LAG and the Local Development Strategy of the F/LAG. The F/LAG Board may for example decide to give higher weight to the prioritization criteria *Innovation* or to the criteria *Cooperation* than the average weight proposed as default in the system. This means that project with a high score on Cooperation in the F/LAG will get more points than a project with the same score in a F/LAG without that same weight on Cooperation.

The F/LAG Board may also decide to introduce specific weights to *Young applicants*, *Territories with specific needs* or other local criteria, if so decided by the F/LAG.

The Board scores each criterion from 0 to 5 following a guideline for scoring describing the way each of the sub-criteria should be assessed and judged.

Furthermore, the F/LAG Board may also decide to define a *minimum score* for each selection criterion and for the total score of the project. If the application gets a score lower than this pre-defined threshold, the projects cannot be recommended to MA for approval. The minimum score counts both for individual criteria and for the project as a whole. This means that a project may get a total score above the minimum requirement of 450 points, but if the score of one of the criteria is lower than the minimum score for that particular criterion, the project will not be recommended for approval.

The ministry (MA) can also define such minimum score requirements to specific

criteria making sure that only projects achieving a minimum score on the individual criteria and achieving a given minimum total score are approved. The benefits of the minimum scores are summarized below:

- Total minimum score of 450 point out of 1,200 for a project to be approved
- Minimum scores may be decided for each criteria and/or effect area
- The minimum scores are the strongest management tool in PROMIS
- Consequence of strategic use of minimum scores:  
Minimum scores exclude projects without sufficient quality, for example related to cooperation, to innovation or – most importantly – to the relevance for the LDS of the LAG/FLAG.

The main topics for the F/LAG Board to decide on are summarized below:

- Insertion of sub-questions under the main prioritization criteria used in the call
- Weight of the scoring of the criteria
- Minimum scores required for each criteria
- Yes/No to prioritization of Young applicants and Geographical areas of special interest

Thus, in this way the PROMIS system is customized to the Local Development Strategy and the policy of the individual F/LAG.

### During the call

During the call, the coordinators and Board members have access to and can monitor all draft and submitted applications. This means that the coordinator can prepare the Board on the volume of the upcoming tasks of prioritization and assessment of project applications. If only few draft applications are entered into the system, when the deadline for the call is closing in, the coordinator may intensify the mobilization of potential applicants in the geographical area in order to ensure that the expected number of projects is submitted.

Furthermore, coordinators have the possibility to facilitate the preparation of the draft applications in cooperation with applicants on-line. Applicants may call the coordinator to get help to answer specific questions, and the assistance can take place on-line within the PROMIS system with both F/LAG coordinator and applicant looking at the application simultaneously. Coordinators can also edit directly in the application until the application is submitted. It is logged in PROMIS who writes what and when, and applicants must always sign the application as the last thing before submitting it. Finally, F/LAG coordinators can make written comments to each question in the applications form, for example asking the applicants for further elaboration, thus being able to provide feedback without coordinator and applicant simultaneously looking at the application. Experience from Denmark since august 2015 reveal that this feature helps many applicants to deliver better applications suited for approval than under the previous programme period.

## After the call is closed

When the call is closed and the applications are uploaded in the database, the assessment and prioritization process will start in the Board.

Coordinator and/or Board members will prioritize the submitted applications after the predefined prioritization and scoring model. The prioritization can take place before the Board meeting and be discussed during the meeting in a democratic and transparent way leading to a final consensus of the scoring and the prioritization of each project and of the total portfolio of applications. The prioritization task of the Board is not only a prioritization, but also a quality control of the applications and the applicants. Unrealistic projects with too high expectations to results and impacts should be assessed accordingly; too much optimism about the innovative level of a project should also be brought down to a realistic level. This will be accomplished by the Board due to its local knowledge and insight into the applicants in the territory/community. Thereby, PROMIS allocates considerable decision power to the local level.

Projects with the highest number of scored points must be recommended for MA approval. The prioritization list cannot be broken due to subjective criteria.

After the prioritization process, applications are then “submitted” electronically to MA for final approval. Since PROMIS is based on one central database, the applications are not moved physically, but only electronically, in the sense that their status are changed, for example from draft application to submitted application, from application received by F/LAG to application recommended by the F/LAG etc.

After each call and the complete implementation of the projects, each F/LAG may evaluate the performances of their projects in the light of their development strategy, and they may decide to make a new call with another weight profile in the prioritization tool. If they find that they received too few projects with cultural effects, they may decide to change (increase) the weight of the prioritization criteria in order to get more cultural projects higher on the prioritization list or vice versa.

The weight can only be changed between two calls and NOT when a call is ongoing.

The ministry may also for its part decide to change its basic weight of the criteria in order to for instance get more business-oriented projects and vice versa. Any change in the basis weight of the criteria will always be generic across all F/LAGs.

## Project holder (access layer 1)

When a project applicant gets the project approved by the MA, he/she is no longer an applicant, but beneficiary/project holder. The project holder still has the same level of access to PROMIS as when s/he was an applicant (layer 1).

## Applications for revision of projects

The project holder implements the project in line with the approved application. If

changes of the project are needed, for example related to the budget or the time-plan, an application for a revision of the project must be submitted, following the same principle procedures as an ordinary application, although with simplifications. C The F/LAG Board and the MA will only need to address proposed changes in the project, and not necessarily to the full project again.

### **End reporting template for project holders**

When the project has come to an end, the project holder must submit an end-report, including a payment claim in order to receive the granted support. She/he will access the end-report template by logging in to PROMIS. The end-report will be pre-prepared by PROMIS reflecting the approved application and will include all the applicant's baseline data and his/hers expected objectives and quantified targets. She/he will then fill in the factual results and impacts and submit the report to the database. She/he must also provide narrative explanations on the project performance compared to the objectives, for example in cases where the expected results and impacts vary from the realized results and impacts.

It must be emphasized that there is no legal basis for any form for sanction of project holders not fulfilling the quantified targets. Thus such sanctions are not a part of the system.

### **Two years report**

If the project contributed to job creation, gross value added etc. (financial indicators), two years after completion of the project the applicant will be notified to fill in a new, very brief end report (2-years report), where the factual results and impacts after two years are reported. This will contribute to the mapping of the sustainability of the results and the impacts as well as to map the impacts, which do not appear from the first day after the project ended.

## **Managing Authority (access layer 3)**

The MA has the ultimate overview over the implementation of the F/LAG interventions using PROMIS. The MA has access to all applications in all F/LAGs, as well as to the used weights, minimum scores etc. but cannot change the priorities established by the F/LAG.

### **Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of projects and of F/LAGs**

In the central database, the MA can display aggregated baselines, inputs, *expected* outputs and expected results and impacts for all project applications. The MA can also display all *realized* inputs, outputs and results and impacts from the accomplished projects. The data gives an overview over all expected results and impacts compared to the realized results and impacts (*effectiveness*). All data can be related to the money spent, and in this way generate data on *efficiency*. In this way the system for example can display how many jobs are generated for the money invested or how many tourists 1 million DKK in total investments or in public support generate.

The generic impact indicators used are:

- Number of jobs maintained and created (FTE)
- Economic development (change in turnover and gross value added)
- Population covered by the services provided by the projects

Many other indicators are used in order to cover economic, environmental, climate, social and cultural effects.

PROMIS is integrated with a data analysis and data visualization tool, which makes it possible to prepare dashboards designed to the reporting needs of the individual F/LAG and to the needs of the MA.

The main point for the MA is that the ministry at any time can provide the minister or other stakeholders with answers to all relevant questions from the press and the opposition regarding the interventions.

### **Access to data in real time**

Access to the data is in real time, meaning that the database at any time is updated with the information from the applications, from the projects and from the F/LAGs. How many projects do we have today on agro tourism? How many jobs do we expect these projects to deliver? How many jobs have the projects created today and how many jobs do we expect them to deliver until the end of the project period/year according to their objectives?

### **State of play, 27 May 2016**

PROMIS was launched in August 2015 for the LAG intervention and in May 2016 for the FLAG intervention.

### **LAG**

On 27 May, 473 applications are recommended by LAGs to MA, of which MA has approved 228 applications. Only 2 are rejected by the MA. 282 projects are related to business development, while 191 projects are related to basic service and infrastructure.

The 473 applications recommended by LAGs and/or approved by MA represents a total investment of 383,567,530 DKK (51.5 million €). The total support applied for/granted is 126,980,887 DKK (17 million €).

It is expected, based on data from the application forms controlled by the LAG Boards, that the projects generate a total of 254,743,485 DKK (34.2 million €) in Gross Value Added (GVA) the first year after projects are finished. At the same time, the projects are expected to generate 559 new full time jobs.

The expected efficiency is then 4.4 new full time job per 1 million DKK (134,000 €) in public support; 2 million DKK in GVA per 1 million DKK, and for example 2004 day tourists per 1 million DKK.

Note that data on realized results is not yet available as projects are still ongoing.

## **FLAG**

The calls for projects under the FLAG intervention were opened early May and only few projects are so far recorded in the database.

3 projects are approved by FLAG Boards and are waiting for MA approval. 15 projects are under assessment of FLAGs. In total the 18 projects represent 18 million DKK (2.4 million €) in total investments costs.

## **Overview**

PROMIS is basically a simple way of managing the processing of a complex system of information and data in a structured way. The system presents itself best through a practical demonstration, and a full demonstration can be provided upon request.

The main features of the PROMIS system are:

### **Summary IT features**

- PROMIS is based on common and internationally recognized software for database management, for programming and for data visualization
- No software risks due to novel software
- One central database
- On-line web access from all computers, everywhere, anytime via log in
- Upload, download and print out of documents, if needed
- Submission/processing of applications online by changing the status of the application/project –
  - Applicants: From draft to final
  - LAG/FLAG: From submitted to prioritized and recommended
  - MA: From received to processed/approved
  - Project beneficiaries: From ongoing to finalized
  - MA: From on-going to finalized and payments completed

### **Summary overview:**

- On-line and real time overview over drafts, applications, ongoing and completed projects
  - Numbers of projects
  - Value: Total project budgets, private and public funding
  - Geographical distribution
  - Thematic distribution
- The expected and realized effects of projects
- Expected and realized effectiveness and efficiency of projects (such as jobs/1 million €)

## Further perspectives

PROMIS is now implemented in Denmark by one ministry (MA) with 26 LAGs and 10 FLAGs. However, it can also be used in countries with regional programmes, such as Italy, Spain and Germany.

Furthermore, it may also be used on EU level integrating data from all countries using PROMIS. The potential benefits for DG Agri and DG Mare by having online access in real time to the state of art of implementation of LAG and FLAG interventions in Member States and regions are considerable. Such benefits include cross comparisons; exchange of good practices based on the data from the system; levels of efficiency and effectiveness will be transparent and so on.

It must also be emphasized that the benefits can be achieved without any interference in local, national and regional objectives and priorities beyond what is the case today with the regulatory requirements.