

FLAG Cooperation in France

Introduction

Cooperation is strongly encouraged by the programme authorities in France and FLAGs were required to lay out their plans for cooperation within their local development strategies in their bid to gain EMFF funding.

In some cases, cooperation is viewed as a transversal tool to strengthen the impact of all areas of FLAG work and, in other cases, cooperation is programmed as an area of work in its own right with specific objectives.

Projects are expected to include activities ranging from **study visits** and **exchanges** (e.g. for fishermen and aquaculture producers but also for FLAG staff) to joint actions to develop new ways of working and/or **common products**.

Information gathered from French FLAGs points to a number of emerging themes such as: enriching and **improving local know-how** and knowledge, in particular with regards to fisheries practices and data; support to **small-scale fisheries and aquaculture**, including improving activities such as **processing and marketing** (e.g. through auction sales and short circuits...) and diversifying production; the development of **tourist activities** linked to the sea and local fisheries; and the promotion and awareness-raising of **employment opportunities for the young** in the fisheries sector.

In its Operational Programme, France included a target of 48 cooperation projects over the 2014-2020 period, in other words around 2 projects per FLAG. In terms of budget allocated, this varies by FLAG, from approximately **€30 000 to €450 000** for the programming period.

Number of FLAGs France: 25

Organising Cooperation

- Cooperation is the responsibility for each FLAG which lays down its broad plans and objectives for cooperation in its local development strategy and decides how much budget to dedicate to cooperation actions.
- In most cases, cooperation projects can be presented to the FLAG at any time and are evaluated on an ongoing basis (approximately 3 times a year) by the FLAG's selection committee.
- Successful projects are then submitted to the regional administration for final approval.

Possible Partners

- French FLAGs can cooperate with partners in France, the EU or outside the EU.
- Cooperation projects in France are generally open to any relevant organisation from the FLAG area. However, the specific eligibility and selection criteria for beneficiaries is defined by each FLAG, in partnership with the regional authority and, in many cases, it is expected that the FLAG will implement cooperation projects themselves.
- At programme level, French FLAGs are not excluded from cooperating with partners from CLLD groups funded by other European Structural and Investment Funds or with non-EU funded CLLD-type public-private partnerships.

Eligibility and Financing Rules

- The costs associated to exploring cooperation ideas and planning projects can be covered by the FLAGs, as long as they can demonstrate that they are planning the implementation of a project that will cost at least €2 000.
- The aid intensity for cooperation projects in France is set at 50% of total eligible costs but can be increased to 100% if the operation fulfils the criteria mentioned in Article 95.3.b of the EMFF: it is of collective interest; it has a collective beneficiary; it has innovative features, where appropriate, at local level.

- This aid intensity rate is reduced to 30% if the operation is carried out by a private company that is not recognised as an SME.

For any further information or assistance on cooperation in France

Details of the NN not yet available