

Strategy Selection Criteria

The EMFF Regulation (Art. 18 (h)) requires the Operational Programmes to contain “a list of selection criteria for community-led local development strategies” (section 5.1.3 of the OP Template). The reason for this is to explain what the Managing Authority will look for when deciding which FLAGs will get funding for the implementation of their local strategies. These criteria will enable MA to focus resources on those strategies that are of appropriate quality and show the greatest potential for achieving results at local level.

This section addresses the following questions:

- 1. What should I put in my OP as a “list of selection criteria”?**
- 2. What kind of criteria can I use to evaluate the quality of local strategies?**
- 3. Should I use qualitative or quantitative criteria? What is the difference?**
- 4. Can I use a FLAG’s previous experience as a selection criterion?**
- 5. What do I need to do when selecting multi-funded strategies?**
- 6. Can I include regional selection criteria in the OP?**

1. What should I put in my OP as a “list of selection criteria”?

The process of selecting local strategies by the Managing Authority (or designated body) would normally include the following steps:

1. the Managing Authority defines which fisheries and aquaculture areas are eligible for CLLD ¹ and launches a call for local strategies;
2. the local actors in eligible areas consider their interest to apply, form partnerships, define areas and develop their local strategies;
3. the MA or its designated body receives applications and checks their formal eligibility;
4. applications which meet formal eligibility requirements are evaluated for quality and ranked;
5. the MA decides on the allocation of funding and formally recognises the selected applicants as FLAGs.

¹ Using area selection criteria described in section 5.1.2 of the OP Template, see Questions on CLLD programming in the EMFF: Area Selection Criteria

Criteria for formal eligibility used in step (3) should be based on requirements contained in the CPR and EMFF. Coherence with PA, OP and other strategic documents should also be part of formal eligibility check. In the OP, the MA should provide:

- › a list of **national or regional eligibility criteria** the MA intends to use in step (3) if these go beyond the requirements of the Regulation,
- › a list of **selection criteria** used to take decisions in steps (4) and (5).

2. What kind of criteria can be used to evaluate the quality of local strategies?

Selection criteria are the key tool to ensure a high quality of local strategies and eventually the selection of high quality projects by the FLAGs. The following examples of criteria can be useful:

- › To what extent is the strategy focused on issues of greatest relevance for the area? ²
- › To what extent does the strategy respond to the needs and challenges of the area?
- › Is the analysis of the area based on reliable data and indicators?
- › Does the strategy demonstrate clearly the links between SWOT, needs, objectives, activities and outcomes? (Intervention logic)
- › Are the objectives measurable and realistically achievable within the available budget and time frame?
- › Is there evidence of the involvement of key local actors, including the fisheries sector?
- › Does the strategy provide for strengthening links between different sectors and different types of actors, in particular fisheries? Does it create synergies?
- › Is there evidence of the applicant's capacity to deliver the outcomes? Is the action plan clear and robust?
- › Is the use of resources (human, financial) justified in relation to the proposed action? What mobilisation of other resources (including private funding) is envisaged?
- › How have horizontal issues (environment, gender equality) been addressed?

3. Should I use qualitative or quantitative criteria? What is the difference?

Some aspects of the strategy can be assessed using quantitative criteria, for instance number of jobs created, number of fishermen involved, amount of match-funding levered in etc. However, the quality of the strategy cannot be evaluated exclusively by numerical criteria and must involve a certain element of judgement.

Qualitative criteria for strategy selection could be used as in the example below (based on UK selection criteria for 2007-2013):

² While FLAGs should be free to choose between all five objectives of Art. 63 of the EMFF, the MA could prioritise strategies with a clear focus on a selected number of key issues.

Criterion <i>(selection criteria can fall into different categories, e.g. quality of partnership, relevance of strategy, economic criteria, social criteria etc.; here are just a few examples)</i>	Scoring (0-4) x weight	Evaluator must provide a brief justification for score
Have the roles, responsibilities, rights and tasks of the partners been clearly defined? Is adequate evidence provided in supporting documents?		
Do the objectives of the strategy address clearly identified needs? Are they expressed clearly, with expected output and results (targets)?		
Does the strategy aim at creating measurable economic benefits?		
Does the strategy aim at creating jobs or sustaining existing employment?		
etc...		

4. Can I use a FLAG's previous experience as a selection criterion?

The capacity of the FLAG to deliver the proposed strategy is an essential selection criterion. Experience from the 2007-2013 period would be a way to demonstrate that capacity. However, MAs should take care not to give unfair advantage to existing FLAGs. A possible solution would be to ask applicants to demonstrate that they have the capacity to deliver the strategy proposed. Experience from the previous period would only be one way of proving it.

5. What do I need to do when selecting multi-funded strategies?

In case of multi-funded strategies, common selection criteria should be used in order to ensure better integration of the funds and provide clear and simple guidance to the (F)LAGs. The EMFF specific requirements must, however, be taken into account.

This is the case, for example, of criteria concerning the quality of partnership.

- › The CPR requires that the local action group is “composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, where at the decision-making level neither the public sector nor any single interest group shall represent more than 49% of the voting rights” (CPR Art. 32).
- › For groups delivering funding from the EMFF, an additional requirement is laid out in the EMFF Regulation: it must have, at the decision-making level, “a significant representation of the fisheries and/or aquaculture sectors” (EMFF Art. 61).

6. Can I include regional selection criteria in the OP?

In regionalised countries there can be reasons for using different strategy selection criteria in different regions. The MA could then present in the OP a list of the common national selection criteria, complemented by specific regional criteria with a justification for these differences.

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