

Meeting for Fisheries Community-Led Local Development Managing Authorities and National Networks

Online, 27-28 April 2021

Report

Participants	50 people from 18 Member States representing Managing Authorities (MAs), Intermediate Bodies (IBs) and National Networks responsible for Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) financed under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF); representatives of DG MARE, FARNET and FAME Support Units
Organiser	FARNET Support Unit (FSU) at the initiative of the European Commission



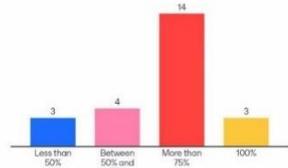
Introduction and provisional CFP and EMFAF regulations

The participants were welcomed by the FSU and the meeting kicked off with a Mentimeter poll asking the MAs about the finalisation of the CLLD in the current programming period.

The poll results indicated that vast majority of the MS have allocated more than 75% of their budgets, but in terms of budget spending, the results were more divided, with most MAs indicating the level of spending between 50 and 75% of total CLLD budget.

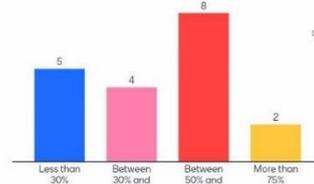
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Percentage of the CLLD budget committed in your MS/region by 31 March 2021



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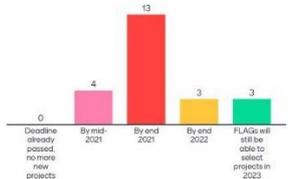
Percentage of the CLLD budget spent by 31 March 2021



Regarding the deadline for FLAGs to select their final projects for the current period, in most MS the FLAGs intend to make the selection by the end of 2021. New FLAGs are also expected to become operational in most MS during 2022.

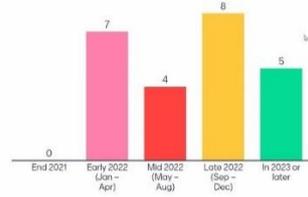
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Deadline for FLAGs to select their final projects for the programme 2014-2020

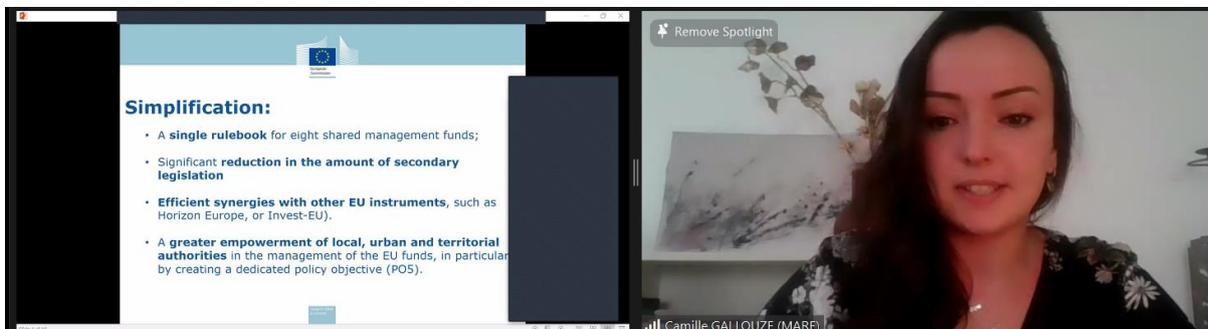


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When is the new generation of FLAGs expected to be operational?



Camille Gallouze, Policy Officer at the DG MARE provided an update on provisional CPR and EMFAF regulations, as well as common policy objectives of the 2021-2027 EU funds. She highlighted that among the five policy objectives of the funds, only two of them (*'a greener and low-carbon Europe'* and *'a Europe closer to citizens'*) will be relevant for EMFAF, with CLLD programmed under "Europe closer to citizens". The new provisional CPR contains various simplifications compared to the previous regulation and it gives greater empowerment for managing authorities to manage EU funds. CLLD in EMFAF 2021-2027 should boost the economic diversification of coastal fisheries and aquaculture and sustainable blue economy. *In the discussion, the issue of multi-funded strategies was raised in the context of EAFRD being delayed and the 2-year transition period for LEADER LAGs. It was also made clear that MS can use multi-funding without using the Lead Fund option.*



Urszula Budzich-Tabor presented the key changes for CLLD in the provisional 2021-2027 CPR and EMFAF regulations. The definitions of CLLD areas and partnerships as well as CLLD objectives have been significantly simplified. On the other hand, the tasks that shall be

carried out exclusively by (F)LAGs, including the selection of cooperation projects, have been more precisely defined.

Points raised in the discussion included:

- the possibility of **advance payments to FLAGs or beneficiaries** – this is no longer explicitly provided for in the EMFAF regulation but MAs can use advance payments at their own risk or facilitate access of beneficiaries to loans;
- the need to describe CLLD objectives in the programmes **without restricting FLAGs** from choosing a focus for their strategies in line with local needs.

CLLD in Lithuania 2021-2027 (eligible areas, amount of support for implementation of LDS, quality criteria for selection of LDS)

[Simona Utaite](#) (FSU GE in Lithuania) presented the FLAG selection proposal for the next period, developed by an external consultant for the LT MA. The proposal contains many quantitative indicators as well as definition of the key features of suitable areas for CLLD. The proposal also contains a mechanism for determining the amount of support for the implementation of the LDS as well as the quality criteria for LDSs. In total, 22 of Lithuania’s 60 municipalities will be eligible for funding, although it is not clear if they will all be interested and how many FLAGs will finally be set up as one FLAG can cover several municipalities. The Lithuanian MA is shortly going to discuss these proposals with the FLAGs.

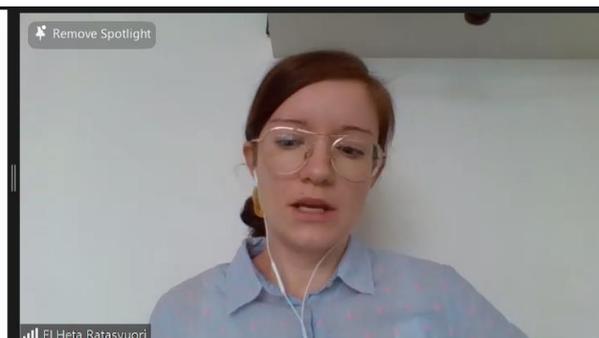
No.	Criterion name	Number of points
1.	LDS investment logic (the maximum number of points that can be collected according to this criterion is determined by summing the points according to sub-points 2.1–2.5 of this table)	50
1.1.	The strengths and weaknesses of the SWOT analysis are based on reliable indicators and statistics provided in the situation analysis, also their sources	8
1.2.	The needs indicated in the LDS are in detail related to the conclusions of the SWOT analysis, the needs of the population of the territory, a clear system for setting the priorities of needs	8
1.3.	Appropriate measures have been selected to meet the identified and selected development needs of the territory	8
1.4.	LDS achievement indicators are realistic, coordinated with the planned funds according to specific PPP measures, the stages of LDS implementation indicated in the action plan justify their accessibility	8
1.5.	The action plan is clear and reasonable	8
1.6.	Measures for cooperation between different sectors (tourism and fisheries, etc.) and different types of actors (NGOs and business, etc.)	5
1.7.	The investment logic of the LDS complements and is consistent with the implementation of other strategic plans at national, regional and local level	5

FLAG selection criteria in Finland 2021-2027

[Heta Ratasvuori](#), the MA from Finland, presented the proposal for FLAG selection criteria 2021-2027. FI has very limited EMFAF and CLLD budget, which requires proper planning how to spend funds efficiently. The FI MA has already developed a draft guidance for FLAG applicants, including minimum requirements and mandatory elements as well as preliminary qualitative criteria of the LDSs, based on FLAG evaluation carried out in 2020 and discussions with FLAGs. The draft list of qualitative criteria for FI FLAG selection includes elements such as clarity and logic of the LDS and its responsiveness to local needs, innovativeness, cooperation, and good communications strategy.

Preparation of selection criteria

- MA prepared draft guidance for FLAG applicants, which listed the minimum requirements for a FLAG, the mandatory elements of the strategy and preliminary qualitative criteria.
- Draft list of qualitative criteria were based on 2014–2020 selection criteria and on findings of evaluation on FLAGs done in 2020.
- Purpose of the criteria is that the quality of strategies could be evaluated and applicants can be prioritised in a transparent manner.



Summary of Focus Group session on FLAG selection criteria

Bety Breznik (MA, SI) and Kristaps Gramanis (NN, LV) [summarised the discussion](#) from a Focus Group meeting organised on 21 April to prepare for the MA meeting. The aim was to share practices on selecting high quality LDSs, defining fisheries and aquaculture areas. Based on the feedback by the MAs, most MS plan to continue with existing FLAGs, but some MSs considering designating new areas (e.g. inland). Certain MS are considering narrowing down the definition of fisheries areas, while others are allowing all fisheries and aquaculture areas to apply for CLLD funding. In terms of criteria for the LDSs and selection procedure, it was pointed out that LDSs should be compliant with the objectives at regional and EU level. It was also suggested that the selection criteria examples could be shared between MS. The key message of the focus group session was that there won't be radical changes in the selection criteria in most MS.

DAY 2

CLLD objectives and indicators in Lithuania

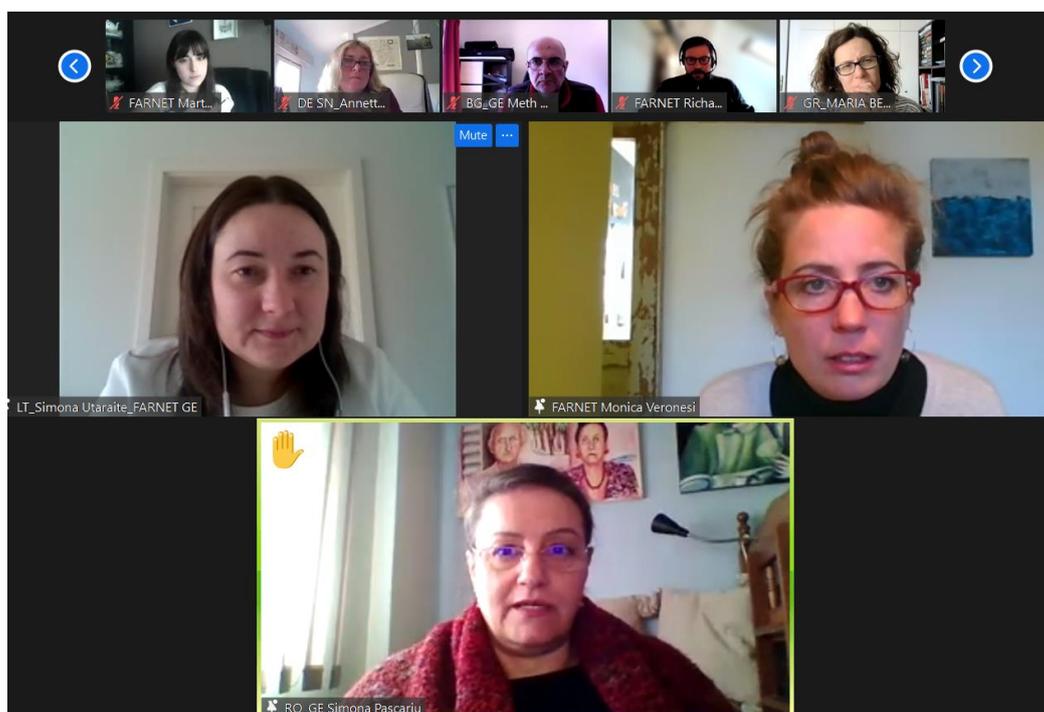
The second day of the MA meeting started with the [presentation on Lithuanian CLLD objectives in 2021-2027](#) provided by Simona Utaite (FSU GE in Lithuania). The draft programme may contain more detailed objectives for the CLLD focusing on business development, sustainable food systems, including sustainable aquaculture and other blue growth sectors, by supporting the combination of tourism and other services with fisheries and aquaculture. The key indicators in the LT draft OP seek to measure number of jobs and innovative projects created, including projects related to digitalization, blue bioeconomy, aquaculture, and fisheries tourism sector. *In addition, the proposal contains some new objectives and indicators related to climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as to biodiversity conservation and circular economy.*

Participative process in Spain for EMFAF Programme elaboration

[Jose-Maria Solano López](#) from the Spanish MA presented the key features of the CLLD programming in ES under EMFAF 2021-2027. The Spanish 2021-2027 programme will not see significant changes but the MA wants to revise the process itself and make it more inclusive and participatory for FLAGs. Spain is a decentralised country and the general decision-making process is usually more complex than in other MS. The national MA provides a neutral discussion forum for regional IBs and FLAGs via virtual platforms and public consultations. In the terms of CLLD objectives, the Spanish programme contains elements such as *'economic growth'*, *'social inclusion'*, *'employment'* and *'diversification of activities'* as well and *'improvement of whole management system'*. In addition, the MA intends to provide better access to credit for beneficiaries by establishing a public guarantee system.

Summary of Focus Group session on CLLD objectives and result indicators

Simona Pascariu (FSU GE for Romania) presented a summary of the preparatory discussion during the Focus Group organised on this topic on 20 April. When comparing the EMFF and forthcoming EMFAF, for most MS the CLLD objectives will change slightly in the 2021-2027 period. The other conclusions of the session highlighted the importance of setting relevant objectives at programme and local level and of a broad definition of innovation.



EMFAF CLLD result indicators, FAME SU

[Pernille Skov Jensen and Matthew Rudh](#) from the FAME SU presented the key features of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) 2021-2027. The purpose of the MEF is to provide a standardised, structured system for the accurate, comparable, and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of EMFAF programmes. In the MEF 2021-2027 there are fewer indicators, which improves flexibility, and the result indicators are not specifically linked to measures/actions/operations. In 2021-2027, any indicator can be chosen for any type of action/operation. The full list of common result indicators, their definitions, and examples included in a fiche in the [FAME working paper on MEF 2021-2027](#). *The session ended with practical group exercise on objective setting and defining result indicators for CLLD.*

European Green Deal, Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies

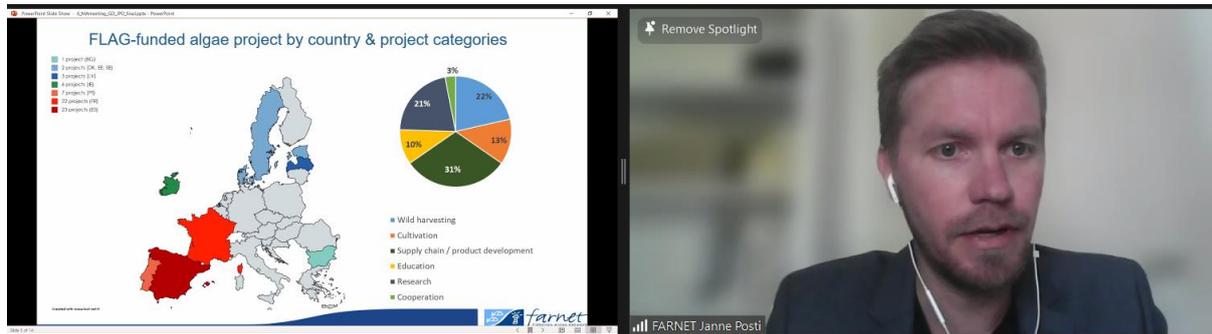
[Fleur Breuillin](#) from DG MARE unit D3 provided an overview on EU's Green Deal and Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies. The Biodiversity Strategy 2030 aims to protect and restore Europe's biodiversity, e.g. by protecting 30% of the seas by 2030. Currently the European Commission is developing more detailed criteria and guidelines for MS, which should be adopted by the end of 2021. Subsequently the MS have time until 2023 to legally design MPAs and fisheries management measures for them. The Farm to Fork Strategy, which aims to make food systems sustainable within the EU, can accelerate the shift to sustainable fishing and aquaculture production and foster alternative food and feed raw materials (such as algae) and by-products. *The session ended with a Mentimeter poll on collecting ideas of FLAG actions related to Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy. Potential actions included short supply chains, digitalization, protected areas, tackling marine litter and enhancing algae production. Due to limited FLAG budgets the bigger investments to climate and environmental actions may be funded through general EMFAF budgets, but FLAGs can play a role in facilitating these joined up actions.*



FLAG actions contributing to the European Green Deal

Janne Posti from the FSU presented the key results obtained from two surveys on FLAGs actions contributing to the EU Green Deal and sustainable Algae production. Project examples

of FLAG activities contributing to Green Deal were presented from Finland, Croatia and France.



Conclusions and next steps

Monica Veronesi from FSU, wrapped up the meeting by showing the latest FARNET resources and publications and highlighting the key topics to follow up including finalisation of programmes, ongoing consultation with FLAGs, preparation of future delivery systems and selection of new FLAGs. *The session ended with Mentimeter poll asking the participants to indicate the important discussion topics for the next MA meeting. The following topics were highlighted by the MAs: "innovations enabled" as a result indicator, 'Simplified Cost Options', 'advance payments', 'animation activities and costs', 'monitoring and reporting'.*