

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

Brussels, 15-16 October

## PARTICIPANTS

Over 40 representatives of Managing Authorities (MA) National Networks (NNs) and intermediate bodies (IB) responsible for payments under fisheries CLLD from 18 Member States.

## ORGANISERS

FARNET Support Unit, at the initiative of the European Commission

## THE FUTURE OF CLLD UNDER EMFF



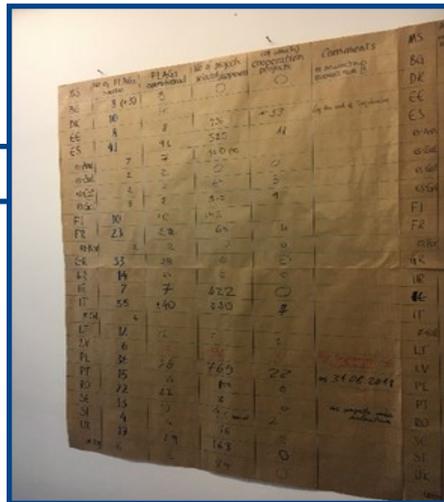
The European Commission’s proposals concerning post-2020 legislation have been published and are currently under discussion. The EU legislation has been simplified and leaves more flexibility to Member States (MS).

Fisheries CLLD is envisaged in the [draft EMFF Regulation](#) (under priority 3 “**Enabling the growth of a sustainable blue economy and fostering prosperous coastal communities**”) and in the [draft Common Provisions Regulation](#) (CPR) as objective 5 “**A Europe closer to citizens (sustainable development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives)**”.

### Some new features proposed for fisheries CLLD post-2020 include:

- ✓ The extension of CLLD to cover not just fisheries and aquaculture, but also other sectors of the **blue economy**.
- ✓ A clearer explanation of the **tasks of LAGs and FLAGs**, to avoid overlap with MA tasks.
- ✓ In multi-funded strategies, the possibility of applying rules from only one of the funds (the **Lead Fund**).

LAGs must be **selected and operational** within 12 months of OP approval, so there is a need to speed up delivery of the 2014-2020 period, with the aim of having all UP4 funding committed by the end of 2021.



MS	FLAGs operational	FLAGs approved	Committed projects
ES	3	5	
FR	10	15	
DK	8	25	
EC	11	520	
ES	41	140	
IT	7	2	
PL	2	2	
PT	10	10	
FR	23	67	
UK	35	78	
ES	14	6	
IT	55	140	
IT	12	4	
FR	38	260	
PT	35	20	
ES	22	8	
IT	15	16	
FR	4	16	
FR	19	145	
FR	13	145	

## STATE OF PLAY

In the 18 MSs present, there are currently 315 FLAGs operational and over 3200 projects selected and approved. In eight MS FLAGs are already implementing cooperation projects. In terms of delivery, the efficiency of systems varies greatly between Member States. For example, the approval of projects (from the time a project application is submitted) can take anything between one to nine months while it can take from under a month to five months for a beneficiary to see a payment claim reimbursed.

## IMPROVING THE RELEVANCE OF CLLD PROJECT DATA



Information about all projects (operations) approved under the EMFF is reported by MS to DG MARE via [Infosys](#). The system makes it possible to aggregate and analyse at EU level information such as the number of projects, amounts committed and paid, as well as types of projects and beneficiaries.

Over 60% of participants at the meeting were either directly involved in collecting or checking Infosys data, or in regular contact with the teams responsible for Infosys. Most MS use their national data system to obtain information about projects supported on an on-going basis. According to participants, Infosys can be a useful tool to aggregate data at the EU level and to compare the information at sea basin or regional level.

Participants discussed some issues identified by analysing [data on CLLD projects](#) as of 31 December 2017 and potential **SOLUTIONS**:

ISSUE	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	
	IN THIS PERIOD	IN THE NEXT PERIOD
<b>Type of beneficiary:</b> the category “legal person” is very broad (nearly 60% of all CLLD projects) and overlaps with some other categories. It is impossible to distinguish between enterprises benefitting from UP4 and other legal persons.	Information on “enterprises” could be captured using the “size of enterprise” code: it should only be filled if the beneficiary is an enterprise, otherwise it should be left blank.	New categories of beneficiaries with relevance for CLLD have been proposed, such as businesses, educational establishments, ports etc.
<b>Type of project:</b> the current objectives of CLLD from Art. 63 of the EMFF Regulation (adding value, diversification, environment, socio-cultural and governance projects) are very broad and to some extent overlapping.	In the coming months, FAME and FARNET could develop an explanatory document on the five objectives, with examples of projects that fall into the different categories	A different approach to thematic categories of CLLD projects may be needed.
<b>Cooperation projects:</b> it is extremely difficult to estimate the number of projects involving several FLAGs, as the contribution of each participating FLAG is usually reported as a separate operation; for transnational projects, different project titles are often used		In the future period, additional information about lead partner and harmonisation of project titles may be needed for cooperation projects
<b>Result indicators:</b> for local beneficiaries, the calculation of FTEs can be too complicated, while “jobs maintained” is very difficult to estimate. Other results of local strategies are very diverse and currently not captured		The indicator of “jobs maintained” is likely to be abandoned. Other indicators may be proposed to capture the results of FLAG strategies.

## IMPROVING COOPERATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT DELIVERY ACTORS

To speed up delivery and ensure that all funds are committed by the end of 2021, it is important to address issues and blockages at different steps in the delivery of CLLD projects, from application to payment.

**Improvements are needed in some MS, in particular where:**

### AT THE PROJECT APPLICATION STAGE

- ✓ Application forms are too detailed and complex, which leads to many mistakes.
- ✓ Additional formalities have to be completed before the FLAGs can launch calls.

### AT THE APPROVAL STAGE

- ✓ MAs are unable to deal with many applications at the same time.
- ✓ Project approval is a lengthy and complicated process.

**Some general issues were also identified, such as:**

- ✓ Lack of flexibility of IT systems, not adapted for CLLD specificity.
- ✓ Large number of bodies responsible for different delivery tasks.

**Some of the proposed solutions included:**

- ✓ Developing tailor-made IT systems for CLLD.
- ✓ Capacity building for delivery actors, especially FLAG managers and animators, and MA staff.
- ✓ Improved communication between delivery bodies, e.g. through common e-platforms.
- ✓ On-going calls or staggering times of calls with different FLAGs to avoid the MA receiving too many applications at once.
- ✓ Developing guidance for FLAGs and applicants, including identification of most common mistakes and how to avoid them.

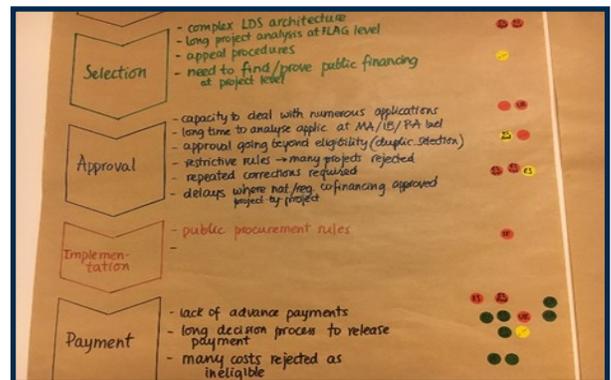
**Examples** of potentially useful solutions in delivery systems from [Finland](#), [Estonia](#) and [Sweden](#) were presented.

### AT THE SELECTION STAGE

- ✓ FLAGs need guidance in checking and processing applications.

### AT THE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

- ✓ Public procurement rules are complex.
- ✓ Beneficiaries have difficulties to collect the necessary documentation.



**Some personal commitments made by participants:**

- ✓ Improving contact between FLAGs, IB and NN through regular meetings.
- ✓ Disseminating or developing guidance.
- ✓ Reviewing the timing of calls.
- ✓ Testing financial instruments to address lack of co-funding.

## NATIONAL NETWORKS

National Networks are an important intermediary to help FLAGs access tools and resources developed by FARNET: guides, seminars, good practice examples, news from the FARNET Flash and tools facilitating cooperation.

**To communicate with FLAGs and other stakeholders, many NNs use newsletters, but the Swedish National Rural Network has replaced this with new tools such as:**

- ✓ Blog with e-mail alerts.
- ✓ Lunchtime webinars on specific topics (with a moderated forum, later available on the website).
- ✓ Podcasts (a few people discussing with a journalist on a specific theme).

The FSU could help NNs collect and compare the different communication tools and facilitate further exchange between NNs, e.g. through a dedicated LinkedIn group.

## SEA BASIN EXCHANGES

Working groups discussed how to stimulate cooperation projects in the Atlantic, Baltic and Mediterranean & Black Sea basins. **The following ideas emerged:**

### Mediterranean and Black Sea

- ✓ The **Baltic MAs and NNs** are planning to organise a meeting for all FLAGs from the Baltic MSs; such a meeting could cover themes such as: seals and cormorants, invasive species, the future of CLLD, and work with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) on certification of small-scale fisheries. Cooperation is facilitated thanks to the fisheries and aquaculture theme within the Baltic Leadership Programme.

### Baltic

- ✓ Most **Mediterranean and Black Sea FLAGs** have yet to start cooperation although a project in the north-west Mediterranean, led by Catalonia, is underway to promote fisheries products better within Mediterranean gastronomy. Another group of FLAGs is exploring an idea to develop a knowledge hub on how to get more added value from Marine Protected Areas. Further themes identified in the discussion included working on marine litter, eutrophication of lagoons used for aquaculture and managing discards.

### Atlantic

- ✓ In the **Atlantic group**, action plans were developed to facilitate cooperation on two themes: **“Improving working conditions of fishermen and raising their health awareness”**, and **“Managing the co-existence of offshore wind farming and fisheries activities”**. Other potential cooperation themes include: pesca-tourism, sustainable fishing villages, new ways of marketing fish products, women in fisheries network, organising shell recycling, Integrated Multi-tropic Aquaculture and seaweed collecting and treatment.

