

Meeting report

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

Estonia, 18-20 September 2017

Participants: Over 40 Managing Authorities (MA) and National Networks (NNs) representatives from 18 countries implementing CLLD

Organisers: FARNET, at the initiative of the European Commission

Hosts: Läänemaa FLAG

MESSAGES FROM DG MARE

Main achievements

- 332 out of an expected 361 FLAGs approved
- At least six cooperation projects underway
 - Four in Galicia promoting coastal tourism and heritage, supporting capacity building and networking for women, promoting local products with a gastronomy network
 - One among four Estonian and Finnish LAG/FLAGs on fisheries youth camps
 - A Baltic project (including Finnish, Estonian, Polish etc. FLAGs) tackling the challenges posed to fisheries by seals and cormorants

Upcoming milestones in the post-2020 preparations

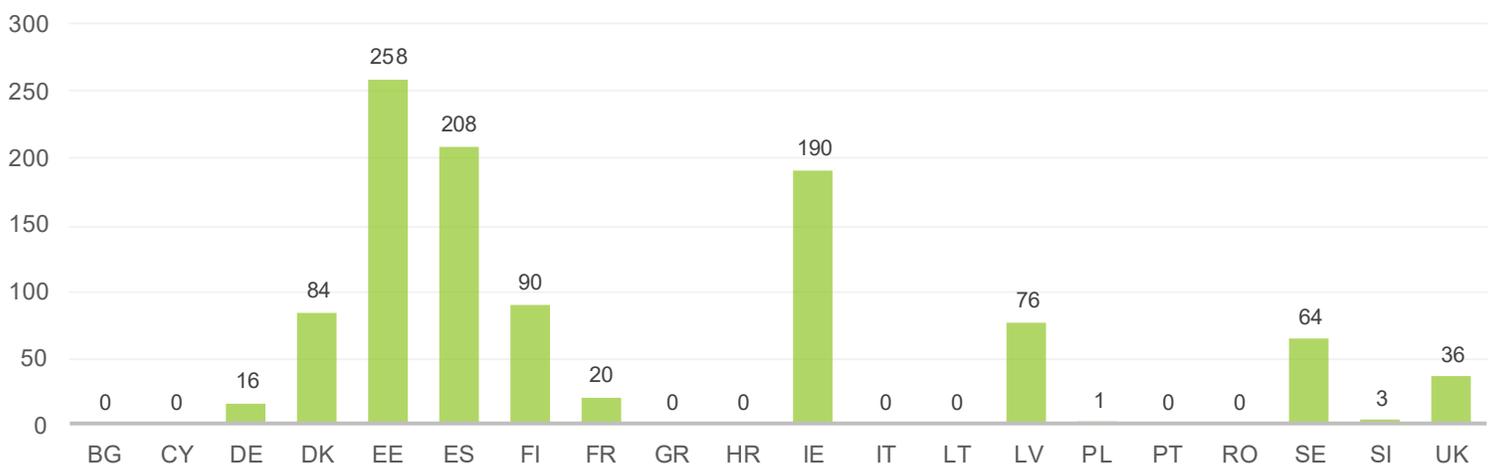
- EMFF Stakeholder Conference 12-13 October 2017 in Estonia
- May /June 2017 – DG MARE input to the different sectoral proposals on common provisions for the ESIF
- 2018 - Impact assessment report

Room for improvement

- FLAGs selected should be enabled to start operations as fast as possible!
- There is a need to increase the rate of spending
- Some Member States are currently in the process of approving remaining FLAGs: eight in Bulgaria, two in Spain, two in France, nine in Croatia, four in Portugal (Azores), three in Romania and one in the UK

▶▶▶ We've passed the halfway point of implementation - all FLAG strategies must be selected by end of this year. ▶▶▶

STATE OF PLAY: 1 046 approved CLLD projects



WORKING GROUPS

Participants worked in smaller groups on improving the three specific components of CLLD: area, partnership and strategy.

AREA

> **The working group identified the key elements needed to select the areas, including:**

- A critical mass both in terms of fisheries and aquaculture and size of population is required to make a FLAG viable
- FLAGs as links between inland and coastal areas
- Area selection should be linked with focus of CLLD (fisheries vs. regional development)
- Ensure degree of coherence within the area
- Size of available budget

> **Some of the key issues linked to these elements include:**

- Dispersed fishing communities
- Distribution of budget

> **Some solutions were proposed to address issues related to area selection:**

- Flexible but grounded definition of coherence (economic, cultural, geographic)
- Keep a balance between budget available and number of FLAGs to be selected
- Allow for FLAG to cut across different areas to gather dispersed communities
- Avoid full reset of areas from one period to the other

PARTNERSHIPS

> **Key elements needed to achieve a well-functioning partnership include:**

- Forming a real partnership based on the local needs and capabilities, not just to fulfil the criteria established by the regulation
- The importance of identifying and working with the right key partners to form synergies
- Having a common vision/focus of the purpose of the CLLD strategy which is 'owned' by the partners

> **Some of the key issues linked to these elements include:**

- Different interest (social, economic, environmental) among the members
- Some partners are more equal than others because of what they control / contribute, private sector vs public sector when contributing to the co-financing of the projects
- Many ideas vs resources, what are reasonable expectations for some members are difficult to achieve for the others (e.g. small-scale fishermen)
- Members play more than one role in the community and FLAG, especially in the small communities, this needs to be factored into the balance

> **Some solutions were proposed to address issues related to strengthening the partnership of a FLAG:**

- Capacity building and training to FLAG members
- Create synergies and improve network between all sector, special focus on involving research institutes and start-ups
- Reinforce the fundamental importance of animation in the territory and ensure it is resourced

STRATEGY

> **The working group identified the key elements needed to select and implement FLAG strategies, including:**

- Mobilisation of fishermen and other actors, needs analysis, capacity building and communication
- Developing selection criteria for strategies (basic information in the OP), organisation of the selection process
- Development of national rules, definition of tasks, putting in place IT systems
- Implementation at FLAG level, including calls for projects

> **Some of the key issues linked to these elements included:**

- The need to ensure continuity for well-functioning FLAGs at the end of a programming period
- Shortage of funds for running costs in FLAGs with small budgets
- The additional complexity of implementation in case of multi-funding was also highlighted

> **Some solutions were proposed to address issues related to strategy implementation:**

- The possibility to continue with (well-functioning) existing FLAGs in the next period or simplify the selection process
- More dialogue between FLAGs and MA, and greater involvement of fisheries sector in FLAGs
- Developing and disseminating project examples and positive stories of beneficiaries from the previous period.

CLLD DELIVERY SYSTEMS: OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Elements identified in the three working groups mentioned above which are related to delivery systems:

Ensuring continuity	Allocating budgets	Roles and tasks	Eligibility	Monitoring & reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Minimum criteria for re-selection> Avoiding funding gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Ensuring minimum running costs> Ensuring national/regional co-financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Harmonisation vs. autonomy in regionalised MS> Complications from multifunding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Additional national/regional rules on top of EU> Different co-funding levels for different types of actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Excessive expectations> Discouraging amount of paperwork

REALITY CHECKLIST

The Estonian MA and the Läänema FLAG participated in an interactive discussion on the impact and results of FLAG action. Main elements of the discussion:

- ✔ Background info on CLLD in Estonia (8 FLAGs, average budget €3 400 000)
- ✔ Common points highlighted by the two representatives regarding the future of CLLD in Estonia (mono funded groups, special focus on small-scale fisheries sector)
- ✔ Main achievements of CLLD in Estonia from the two perspectives (fisheries sector development and human capacity building)

For more information on the CLLD program in Estonia, consult the web page: www.maainfo.ee

For questions, email Liis Reinma at Liis.Reinma@agri.ee.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

Participants were welcomed in the harbour of Dirhami, a small sea port in the northwest of Estonia. The FLAG manager and a project beneficiary presented their projects: a small-scale processing unit combined with conference facilities and a cafeteria to help diversify the fisheries-based local economy. They also shared their views on the support received by the FLAG and fisheries CLLD in general.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF CLLD IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE AREAS

In this session, MAs focused on looking ahead on the implementation of fisheries CLLD and discussed ways to improve the design of the regulation for the future. The discussions took place around the legislation pack, including current articles 32-35 of CPR and Art. 60-64 of the EMFF.

Beyond the work on specific articles of the current EMFF, group discussions revealed a number of common concerns among participants:

- The importance of keeping fisheries and aquaculture at the heart of any fisheries CLLD
- The need to reduce the bureaucracy associated with delivering CLLD funding
- The need to simplify monitoring and evaluation requirements and reduce the reporting layers
- The need for a reflection on how to ensure continuity between funding periods, without undermining competition rules or institutionalising the FLAGs.

