



European
Commission



Launching **community-led local development (CLLD)** post-2020

CLLD or “community-led local development” is a bottom-up approach to socio-economic development that **brings local people together to decide how they want to improve their area**. They do so by setting up partnerships of civil society, businesses and public bodies, called Local Action Groups (LAGs) or, in the fisheries context, often called fisheries LAGs or “FLAGs”.

In 2014-2020, under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, CLLD was applied as an effective approach to addressing a range of challenges facing fisheries and aquaculture communities across the EU. Under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), 2021-2027, coastal areas once again have the opportunity to launch – or re-launch – CLLD.

CLLD’s key characteristics include:

- a focus on a **specific area and its inhabitants** (rather than on a sector or type of activity). Areas covered by CLLD should be *subregional* so as to be small enough to facilitate direct contacts between key stakeholders, but large enough to allow endogenous development (based on local resources). The most important thing is that the area is coherent (has common characteristics in terms of its economy, social structure and/or natural or cultural resources etc.), and that the community can identify with it and have a sense of “belonging” to it.



- a **local partnership** (the **Local Action Group** or LAG), which is the driver of change in the area and which decides how CLLD funding should be used to achieve this change. The local partnership should involve all the key actors of the fisheries area and should be representative of the community (the fishing and aquaculture sector as well as other relevant economic sectors such as gastronomy or tourism, NGOs and community groups, local authorities and other public bodies, etc.).
- a **local development strategy** developed in a participative manner, with the broad involvement of inhabitants and organisations active in the area, including the most vulnerable groups. The local strategy will lay the basis for the activities and projects that the LAG will support and which should complement each other, jointly contributing

to the objectives agreed by the partnership. Under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), local strategies should help communities in fisheries and aquaculture areas better exploit and benefit from the opportunities offered by the sustainable blue economy, capitalising on and strengthening environmental, cultural,

social and human resources. These strategies **may range from those which focus on fisheries or aquaculture to broader strategies directed at the diversification of local communities.**

Together, these three elements: area, partnership and strategy form the core of the CLLD approach.

Who does what in fisheries CLLD?

Managing Authority (national or regional)

- designs the rules for the selection of local partnerships and strategies
- publishes calls for local partnerships and strategies and selects the LAGs
- approves support to projects selected by the local group

Members of the LAG

- define the area
- develop a local strategy
- define criteria and procedures for project selection
- encourage and support potential project promoters
- select projects
- monitor progress and adapt strategy or procedures as needed
- carry out self-evaluation and analyse reports of external evaluators (if relevant)

Employees of the LAG

- prepare project application system
- prepare and disseminate information about funding possibilities
- undertake community outreach (animation) and help project promoters prepare their applications
- support the selection process (without the right to vote)
- carry out the administrative tasks of the local group (financed with running costs) and prepare reports
- collect data necessary for monitoring of progress
- work with external consultants, including evaluators (if relevant)

Other local actors

- participate in the development of the local strategy
- express needs and develop ideas for projects
- submit applications for projects and carry them out, if the applications are approved
- participate in the evaluation of results and reflection on changes in the strategy if needed

External consultants

- can support the partnership in drafting the strategy
- can carry out external evaluation

Key steps to launch CLLD in your area

NEW AREAS OR PARTNERSHIPS WHICH HAVEN'T IMPLEMENTED CLLD BEFORE



Put together a partnership involving the key organisations and individuals relevant to your area's blue economy, and in particular the fisheries and/or aquaculture sector. It can be a good idea to start with a relatively small group of people who are willing to contribute voluntary effort and who are interested in the well-being of the whole area, not only their individual business or organisation. With time, as the partnership builds trust and recognition in the area, further partners should be invited and encouraged to participate, ensuring decisions are not monopolised by a restricted group of people.



Define your area: in addition to such factors such as proximity and critical mass, you should also take into account the national (or regional) rules defining the areas which are eligible for CLLD funding under EMFAF. While at the EU level all areas with fisheries or aquaculture are in principle eligible, many Member States or regions define more specifically the types of areas that can apply for funding, for example only areas located along the sea coast, or areas with a certain proportion of employment in fisheries can be eligible to receive funding. It is also advisable to get in touch with the relevant local authorities to ensure they are aware of the potential benefits of CLLD and support your initiative.



Communicate the intention of launching CLLD to the local community. This initial communication is essential to ensure transparency of your partnership's work and mobilise the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders.

EXPERIENCED PARTNERSHIPS WHICH HAVE ALREADY IMPLEMENTED CLLD IN THEIR AREA



Reflect on what you have achieved so far and what needs to be changed or improved in the new period.



Changes may be needed in the focus of the local strategy, its objectives and types of activities envisaged.



New community outreach activities (animation) might help engage with parts of the community that have been hard to mobilise.



Changes to the criteria and/or procedures for selecting local projects may also be needed.



Better communicating of the LAG's activities and the projects it has funded can improve visibility and encourage more people to get involved and present project ideas.



A new funding opportunity to re-think the area covered by your strategy - which may have to be reduced or expanded - or to adjust the composition of your partnership or the decision-making body, for example to associate new partners linked with blue economy sectors.



More information:

You will find more information about starting starting CLLD for the first time in FARNET Guide 1 "Area-based development in EU fisheries areas", and Guide 4 "Steps for success".

More information:

You will find suggestions for new themes to address in your strategy (local resource management, circular economy, smart and resilient coastal areas) in the relevant FARNET Guides.



FURTHER STEPS RELEVANT FOR ALL PARTNERSHIPS

Remember: many of these steps can happen in parallel!
Don't wait to complete one step before moving on to the next!

Develop (or update) your local development strategy:

starting with an analysis of your area, including identification of its needs based on the SWOT analysis, you will define your strategic objectives and types of activities you will carry out, or support other actors to carry out, in

order to reach these objectives. You will also provide an estimate of the costs of these activities, i.e. the budget you will need to implement your strategy, and indicate

the expected sources of funding: the EMFAF, other EU Funds if available, national/regional public funding, private contributions etc. Remember, your budget will never be sufficient to address all of your

area's needs! You should focus your strategy on a few priorities that are expected to have the greatest impact and show how your activities will be complementary to other initiatives, for example strategies for job creation or local economic development programmes. You should also try to check potential linkages with any Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) relevant for your area.

Use cooperation projects to help achieve your strategic objectives! Go to FARNET Guide 20, Chapter 3 "Using cooperation effectively".

Your strategy is more than just an application for funding! If it is very long, prepare a shorter, easy to understand version. Make sure it is a living document known to the whole community.

See more information on developing your local strategy in FARNET Guide 20: "Forward-looking strategies for fisheries areas".

Design (or update) the criteria and procedures for project selection

The procedure should ensure transparency of decision-making and facilitate the application process for beneficiaries as much as possible. The criteria should provide clear guidance to beneficiaries and to the members of the decision-making body, enabling the development and selection of high quality projects that correspond closely to the needs and strategic objectives identified by the LAG. High quality projects should bring about positive long-term change while offering value for money, ideally building on local resources and complementing other activities implemented in the area.

Streamline the project selection process to help your beneficiaries. In certain countries the selection of projects takes less than 1.5 months (see FARNET Guide 19 "Delivering CLLD effectively").

More information on ensuring high quality of your projects can be found in FARNET Guide 21: "Nurturing Quality Projects: A guide for FLAGs".

Design your animation and communication activities

The role of the local partnership’s staff and volunteers goes far beyond selecting projects for funding. They are also responsible for identifying potential project promoters, especially the “unusual suspects” who have not received EU funding before, encouraging them to apply and helping them prepare their applications. Another important role is to facilitate linkages between local stakeholders, for example between the fishing sector and the food chain or with the research community, as well as ensuring that the projects funded maximise synergies and, together, contribute to the LAG’s objectives. Effective communication activities are essential to ensure that all key stakeholders are mobilised and that potential beneficiaries are aware of the strategy and funding possibilities. They should also ensure that decision-makers and the broader public are aware of the results achieved with CLLD.

Stability and motivation of your staff is a key success factor of the local strategy implementation!

Set up (or ensure the continued operations of) the office and administration of the local group

While CLLD depends to a large extent on the voluntary involvement of local stakeholders, especially in the start-up phase, smooth implementation of the strategy and accountability for public funding require qualified staff and a well-organised office. Adequate funding, continuity of employment and opportunities for capacity building are essential to enable the local partnership to recruit and maintain staff with the necessary skills and motivation.

You will find more information about designing FLAG operations in [FARNET Guide 22 “Fit for the future: A guide for effective FLAGs”](#).

Set up a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system

of the strategy and of the operations of the local group. It is important that M&E is designed alongside the strategy development and that systems are set up early on to collect the relevant data from the beginning of the strategy’s implementation. This will ensure a focus on results and ongoing improvements while ensuring the information needed to evaluate results is readily available.

Peer to peer evaluation can be a powerful tool to improve your performance.

A comprehensive guide on CLLD evaluation will help you design your M&E system – see [FARNET Guide 15: “Evaluating CLLD - Handbook for LAGs and FLAGs”](#).

Where to look for support?

FAMENET is a specialised service contracted by DG MARE to support the implementation of the EMFAF; part of its responsibilities is **networking and capacity building of all stakeholders involved in the implementation of CLLD** under the EMFAF. If you have a question to FAMENET, please contact CLLD@famenet.eu.

You will find a lot of useful material on the [former FARNET website](#) (FARNET was supporting the implementation of CLLD under the EFF and EMFF in the period 2009-2021).

In many Member States there are [National Networks](#) which support local partnerships in fisheries areas by building their capacity, facilitating cooperation or promoting good practices – please check if there is a National Network in your country which can help you!

