

Community-led local development

Community-led local development (CLLD) is an approach to territorial development whereby local actors, who are best placed to identify challenges and make the most of local assets, work in partnership to design and implement their own strategies in order to meet development needs in their area. Having supported this approach in rural areas for more than 20 years, the EU is now putting further emphasis on it by extending the scope for funding and introducing more coherence therein.

Background

The EU started to support rural development initiatives led by local actors in 1991, when the [LEADER](#) method (*Liaison entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie rurale*) was introduced on a trial basis. This approach proved successful and gathered momentum over the years and across the whole EU. Since 2007, LEADER has been co-funded under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). From the 1990s onwards, the local partnership approach has also been implemented for some initiatives under the Regional Development (ERDF) and Social (ESF) Funds, while support for fostering local development led by fishing communities was introduced in 2007 and continues under the Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

2014-20: a reinforced approach

Considering the role of local communities in contributing to territorial cohesion and to the Europe 2020 strategic goals for growth, the EU - with strong support from the [European Parliament](#) – has decided to facilitate and strengthen the use of [CLLD](#) for all types of territories (rural, urban, coastal) and various types of community needs (notably social, cultural, environmental and urban). In the 2014-20 period, CLLD initiatives are eligible for support from all [European Structural and Investment \(ESI\) Funds](#) (with the exception of the Cohesion Fund) and are subject to common rules laid out in the [Common Provisions Regulation](#) (CPR) governing these funds. This ensures more consistency and coordination in EU funding, and greater efficiency in its use. The common rules are complemented by fund-specific features (for example, a minimum of 5% EAFRD funds must follow the CLLD approach, whereas support to CLLD is optional for the other funds).

Essential components of CLLD

CLLD is based on three interconnected elements: **local action groups** (representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests), integrated **local development strategies** and **well-defined territories**. All three are subject to specific requirements laid out in the CPR, e.g. the targeted territory shall have a population of 10 000 to 150 000 inhabitants and the strategies shall include, *inter alia*, the objectives pursued, an analysis of the needs and potential of the area, and action and financial plans. The CPR also provides that CLLD shall be innovative in the local context and involve networking and cooperation. The European Commission has published [guidelines](#) for local actors to give them practical tools and suggestions for implementing CLLD in a range of context.

New features of CLLD

One of the new aspects, compared with the previous periods, lies in the single methodology for CLLD, applicable in all EU regions and across the four ESI funds concerned. Some incentives are provided to encourage Member States to use CLLD to a greater extent in the implementation of their [operational programmes](#): under specific conditions, co-financing for the various ESI funds can be increased by 10%. Also, more consistency and coordination in EU funding means that it will be easier for local actors to design multi-sectoral strategies supported by a combination of funds and better suited to mixed territories (e.g. rural-urban or rural-coastal areas). In the case of 'multi-fund' strategies, for simplification purposes, it will be possible to designate a 'lead fund' covering all management costs.