Achieving Results the CLLD Way: Putting the Method to Work

7–8 December 2016, Sweden

Factsheet

Financing, Delivering and Reporting

The 'Achieving results the CLLD way' seminar focused on three main themes related to the implementation of the LEADER / CLLD method. Each of these themes covered three sub themes, specific aspects of the way the method is put into practice. Workshop discussions informed by expert CLLD practitioner inputs developed and prioritised practical ideas for implementation improvements which would lead to achieving better results.

Under the Financing, Delivering and Reporting theme the three sub themes discussed were:

- Delivery Systems;
- Multi-funding and Local Financing; and
- Evaluation and Added Value.

Exemplar Practices

Tasos Perimenis: Lesvos (GR) LAG/FLAG – 'The importance of a good delivery system'

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Tasos emphasised the need for a robust delivery system to enable a successful CLLD implementation process, justify the funding and demonstrate positive impacts for the area.

Managing financing and reporting in a consistent manner in different areas allows consistency and comparison between areas.   There is a danger however that this can lead increased bureaucracy,   may   constrain implementation and can adversely affect some essential parts of the results and impacts.

In Lesvos they recognise the importance of focusing on achievement, 'not just the numbers'. They use their robust and systematic selection process and criteria as the basis to follow projects through their whole life cycle. This allows ongoing strategy delivery to be monitored and adjusted quickly to take account of both performance and local and wider socio-economic changes.   Their strong delivery system provides the back bone that allows flexibility in planning local development in order to achieve the potential of CLLD.

Peter Rundkvist: LAG Längs Göta Älv (SE) - 'CLLD along the Göta Älv river'- How a LEADER LAG has used and combined multiple funds

This LAG has taken advantage of working with multiple funds (EAFRD, ESF and ERDF) in peri-urban zones of Gothenburg to tackle the needs and opportunities of different areas and communities and strengthen rural urban links. The LAG strategy recognises that divisions between the LAGs urban and rural areas are reflected in social and economic segregation, this includes demand for and access to good quality local food. This project focused on reducing

deprivation in peri-urban housing districts by linking these areas and their food production potential to the city centre where demand for locally produced organic food is growing rapidly, local food awareness and access in peri-urban areas was also improved.

The EAFRD is used to promote more vibrant, attractive and accessible urban – rural zones for visitors and those who live there, the ESF to reduce segregation between the inner city – suburban areas – rural areas. The ERDF and ESF work together to support a good climate for creativity, entrepreneurship, learning and business, the EAFRD and ESF combine to foster sustainable production and consumption.

Jela Tvrdonova: European Evaluation Help Desk for Rural Development – Evaluating the Method

Jela discussed how the added value of the method and its seven principles can be measured through evaluation and how this can help to validate the use of CLLD in the ESI funds. This involved looking at the CLLD delivery mechanism, the rules and procedures used at local level and through evaluating them discovering how they work best and demonstrating that the method delivers added value. A common complaint is that bureaucracy is killing the CLLD method. Through evaluation of the implementation of the method itself it is possible to see whether specific administrative procedures foster or weaken specific CLLD principles and then take the appropriate action. For example, if specifying a limited number of eligible operations puts constraints on implementing bottom up, area based or multi-sectoral approaches the lesson may be to broaden the menu of measures.

What did participants think would help improve implementation and achievement?

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Working with multiple funds:

- Take a holistic view of the local development landscape and assess the need for the use of multi-fund at local level.
- Adapt the system to local needs, not the other way around.
- Make the rules for CLLD simpler and clearer, possibly have one common implementation rule and body for CLLD.

- Consider whether it should be compulsory to use CLLD for all ESI funds and if so should there be a minimum percentage set?
- If we are going to use multi-funding educate people about multi-funding at all levels; MA, PA, LAGs and project beneficiaries.

Delivery System:
- LAGs ability to disperse the funds locally makes things happen faster, however with authority comes responsibility and accountability.
- Find ways to simplify the process, for example through the use of the Simplified Costs option.
- Invest in developing and using good quality selection criteria, it pays off.
- Increase flexibility in the delivery system to reflect local needs and project size, make the transaction costsof participating more proportionate to project size.
- Strengthen understanding and peer to peer support between MAs and LAGs e.g. through a working group and use of modern technology to share best practice.

Evaluation and added value:
- Ongoing evaluation allows LAGs to see if they are achieving their results, and to adjust if required.
- Embed an evaluation culture into the Local Development Strategy right from the start to encourage reflection and educate the LAG on its importance.
- Provide support in the form of manuals and other tools to share good practice.
- Disseminate the results of evaluation, share them with multiple stakeholders and ask for their feedback to improve the LEADER / CLLD method, adding to its value.
- Encourage coordination between MAs to design a common evaluation framework. Consider having a single evaluation for multi-funded strategies.

What did participants prioritise overall?

Each of the three workshop groups brought forward a single recommendation for improvements which would do most to improve implementation and results under this theme:

'One simple implementation rule and body for CLLD, but not a single fund!'
- *What will this do?* - Improve LAG's autonomy and responsibility.
- *What needs to happen?* -From across the funds 'one common basket of money for CLLD'.
- *Who should do it?* - More inter DG structures to facilitate simpler rules and within Member States a single delivery body for CLLD. LAGs must mobilise support.
- *Who takes responsibility?* – Each Member State through one single body responsible for managing and paying.
- *Resources needed?* – The will, some lobbying and time, start now!

'Better delivery system with exchanges and a working group'

➢ *What will this do?* - Lead to a more efficient beneficiary orientated delivery mechanism.
➢ *What needs to happen?*- Working group to identify critical issues, collect and exchange good practice, make changes.
➢ *Who should do it?* – Initiate through ENRD, working group calls for ideas, MAs submit with help of LAGs, WG collaborate final doc
➢ *Who takes responsibility?* – MAs and Working Group on voluntary basis
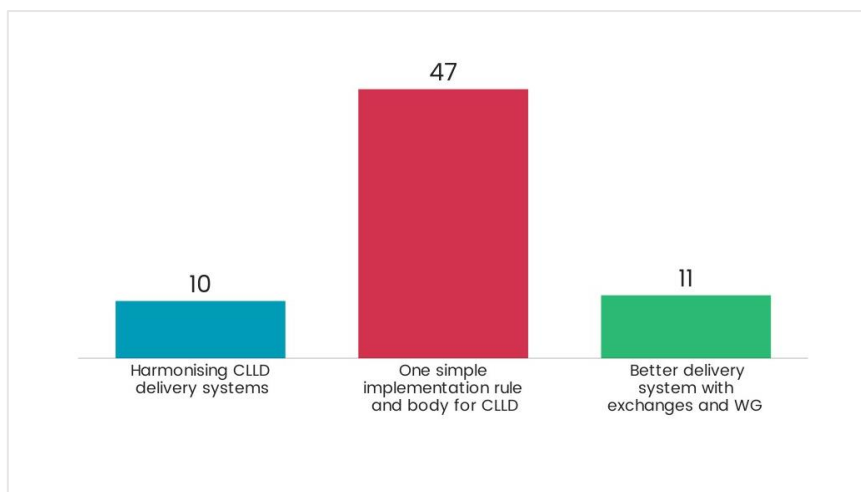➢ *Resources needed?* – Good will, on line platforms, workshops.

'Harmonising CLLD delivery systems'

➢ *What will this do?* - Common speedy and flexible processes at local level, improving multi-funding for local applicants.
➢ *What needs to happen?* - Allow flexibility to incorporate local needs into national policy / systems with some flexible interpretation of the regulations by the MA.
➢ *Who should do it?* – National MA's.
➢ *Who takes responsibility?* – Local level initiative, national MA implementation
➢ *Resources needed?* – Effective communication and trust between the actors.

What was top of the list?

Seminar participants were asked to identify the single most important contribution under each theme.

One simple implementation rule and body for CLLD was the big ambition but recognised as a longer term objective. The key point was that if this is the ambition then there are some first steps which can be taken now to begin the process.

*Participants' votes on main priorities.

"We have to ensure the method delivers, but first we need to make sure the method happens"

Jela Tvrdonova
Rural Evaluation Helpdesk