Feedback Report Discussion Group No 1

CLLD in Partnership Agreements:

How to advance the CLLD approach in the Partnership

Agreements (PAs) further

1. Background & context

1.1. Background of the topic

Developing an overall vision of for the objectives of the implementation of CLLD is one of the most important steps for its successful implementation. Based on the

vision of hat are the expected changes and results from applying CLLD, Member states need to plan what resources are need to implement it, from which Fund and what combination will serve the set targets.

The PA is the framework document where Member States do need to describe their concept on why and where CLLD will be allied and how this will be implemented. Synergy between funds actively expected to be identified and applied

The outline expected to be included in the PA from EC regarding CLLD includes:

- **What** – what are the man challenges expected to be tackled with CLLD?
- **Why** – what are the main objectives for CLLD?
- **Where** – what is/are the type(s) of territories where CLLD is envisaged to be implemented?
- **Which fund** - which fund and what is the approximate planned budget allocation for each fund for CLLD?
- **How to work together** – how the coordination for administration and management will be set up and ensured?

The definitions and identification of the most appropriate tools to plan and implement CLLD is for the MS to develop thus leaving room for creativity. Until the time of the meeting, 9 drafts PA have been submitted to EC and their preliminary reviews show that the most challenging and vague part of the planning is the section on the planned administrative and coordination mechanisms.

In the CLLD programming process necessary for the partnership agreement development is also important to think and plan of the preparatory support needed for all local partnership through which CLLD will be applied.

1.2. Participants

The discussion group involved representatives from the Polish Poland LAG association, Lithuanian MA of EAFRD, Greek MA of EAFRD, Hungarian MA of EAFRD, French MA of EEAFRD and LEADER, Portuguese MA, Hungarian National Economic Planning Unit, DG MARE, DG AGRI. The expectations of the discussion

group participants included sharing of experience and hearing what and how other countries are planning and progressing, to understand better the expected level of details to be included in the PA, still to clarify the possible options for planning of CLLD.

1.3 Summary of information shared

Participants shared and discussed the process and timing for submission of the PAs:

Currently, the process involves informal negotiations with the EC. First draft of PA by MS is shared with DG Regio who consults and shares its content with other DGs. The objective of this process is a maturity check and some feedback to be provided to MS by the EC.

The formal submission will be due four months after the adoption of the Common Regulations Provisions - expected in the spring of 2014.

Information shared from the participant of Poland:

- Ongoing consultation;
- Not clearly yet defined goals;
- Need to highlight that CLLD as a tool for building the social capital ;
- Currently the draft includes maximum of percentage for funding to be allocated from ESF and ERDF – it would have been more instrumental to have minimum and not maximum;
- The PA should already highlight some criteria for PPPs that will lead to the creation of authentic versus quasi CLLD structures.

Information shared from Portugal:

- Three key objectives are defined under CLLD related to social inclusion, support to rural areas, support to fisheries areas;
- Rural areas will be including from 10 000 to 150 000;
- Coastal – from 20 000 to 200 0000;

- CLLD will be applied in peri-urban areas to address social inclusion and poverty;
- The allocation among funds and administrative structures for coordination are still to be discussed and not defined yet.

Information shared from Greece:

- CLLD will be aiming at supporting thematic tourism;
- Synergies and smart growth will be key objectives ;
- Planning to utilize the option for multi-funded strategies to ensure that rural areas have access to all available funds;
- CLLD will be applied in urban areas also;
- Management of CLLD is planned to be delegated to regions .

Information shared from France:

- Management and programming for CLLD will be done on regional level.

Information shared from Lithuania:

Ministry of Finance is responsible for drafting the PA

- CLLD part was developed by the Ministry of Interior who is the MA for the Regional Fund;
- Selection criteria for PPP is the issue of main interest and discussion;
- Urban areas will be supported that are smaller than 6000 people through ESF;
- Through EMFF and EAFRD will be supported fishery and rural areas bigger than 6000 people;
- Specific cooperation project between FLAG and LAGs is planned.

2. Key Challenges

2.1. Goals and objectives – It was reiterated by a number of participants that the process of clearly defining what are the objectives and expected results

from applying CLLD has been challenging and is still under discussion. Having a clear vision will lead to rational programming of what areas need to be eligible to achieve these goals and what funds and resources are needed. The process of objectives setting needs to be based on the needs analysis conducted on the country, analysis of LEADER and AXIS 4 within EMFF implementation and consultation with stakeholders. The objectives description within the PA does need to be linked and based on the country analysis and not mechanically and only technically linked to the EU thematic objectives and focus areas.

2.2 Consultation and shared understanding – The planning of main parameters for CLLD requires engagement of specific stakeholders who have already applied CLLD approach through EAFRD and EMFF. Some concerns have been shared that the consultation should be wider and that the understanding and attitude towards CLLD of the different MA is different related to whether they have had experience with this approach. "Other funds do not understand principles of LEADER/CLLLD and decision making principles adherent to bottom up" one participants shared.

2.3. Common coordination and administration mechanisms – This section has not yet been developed and discussed by almost any of the countries whose representatives attended the group discussion.

2.4. Demarcation vs. integration – the questions and issues of whether there should be demarcation defined between areas/territories and funds appeared to be a question needed clarification. Participants from the EC clarified that it is an issue of coordination in implementation and not demarcation. For instance there could be two parallel strategies in the same parts of a territory that have to be complementary and aiming at synergies.

3. (Good) Practices & possible solutions

3.1. Consultation leading to a clear vision – a further and deeper consultation is needed to define and agree on common objectives for CLLD that are country specific and build upon experience.

3.2. Common coordination mechanisms – some examples were provided that are further detailed in the EC Common Guidance on CLLD (p.36) such as:

– joint monitoring committee,
– one Ministry coordinating,
– common regional structure.

4. Other key issues and suggested further actions / guidance needed

4.1. Online sharing and further guidance – continuous sharing of practices, questions and comments regarding the PA that relate to also general programming for CLLD.

Some of the major issues appearing from the discussion on the status of development of the PAs regarding the CLLD part and the progress towards its completion include:

– the different understanding within different funds MA on CLLD,
– defining clear objectives, and
– planning on the management and administrative coordination mechanisms for CLLD.

It seems that people working on programming and developing the CLLD sections for the PA need to be able to pose questions, see examples, and be in active communication with peers and also with the EC on CLLD specifics. It was noted that

it will be very useful to receive **some general comments after the maturity check on the CLLD section from the EC** that are accessible and relevant to all.

4.2. Consultation - It is recommended that a sound consultation process is conducted while developing the CLLD section to define the main parameters in consultation with key stakeholders to CLLD (current LAG, FLAG groups, MA of EAFRD and EMFF with experience with LEADER, other key stakeholders for territorial development).

4.3. Clear vision and objectives – the PAs are expected to clearly define the expected changes aimed at through the CLLD approach in a MS.

As presented by different speakers CLLD is tested and perceived to have potential to significantly contribute to some of the following:

– creating ownership within communities for the necessary changes needed to occur and ensuring long lasting support and mobilization of resources to maintain any made investments in social, physical and organizational infrastructure;

– producing better quality projects based on needs from within communities (bottom up) which are not funding driven but rather needs driven;

– increasing participation, social capital and inclusion through the empowering practice of sharing decision making among the public, private and civic sectors;

– integrating urban and rural development;

– tackling of civic resources;

– leveraging resources;

– working in coordination for comprehensive responses to address complex issues where work in coordination is needed and where different funds and tools are needed (i.e. climate change).

5. Useful tools and information

- Proposed template with information that should be included by Member states on CLLD in the Partnership agreement, Common guidance on the EC's DGs AGRI, EMPL, MARE and REGIO on CLLD in ESIF, 29 April, 2013
- Article 28 -31 Common Provision Regulation
- Article 9 European territorial Cooperation
- Fund specific regulations of the EAFRD, ESF, EMFF and ERDF