

Feedback Report Discussion Group No 2

The added value of CLLD in addressing different types of problems and different types of territories:

Which local level problems/issues can be best addressed through the CLLD approach



1. Background & context

1.1. Background of the topic

This discussion focussed on the challenges of CLLD with very much peoples experiences of the current programming period (LEADER) in mind. There was a mix

of MA, NRN, NGO and LAG representatives from different Member States in the group. In most cases we started by identifying key challenges and in doing so also suggested potential solutions to address the challenges. Participants were then asked to suggest information/tools that they felt could assist in executing the potential solutions.

The session opened with a presentation by the Scottish MA on the currently live Expressions of Interest for the preparation of LDS under the next programming period. The MA outlined issues with the delivery of LEADER under the current programme and explained how the lessons learnt under the current programme have led to the Scottish Government adopting a pragmatic approach - so that prospective partnerships could adopt an aspirational and forward thinking from the outset, without needing to worry about the detail. The Scottish MA also stressed this was an iterative process and would require transparency and good lines of communication to ensure that the LDS (and ultimately their delivery) are fit for purpose.

The group was then invited to offer perspectives from their experiences with the current programme and in doing so flag up challenges and solutions that could aid the work towards the next programming period. It was agreed that the points made would be un-attributable to allow for a free flowing discussion.

The numbered items listed overleaf correspond – so number 1 in solutions relates to number 1 challenge and so on.

2. Key Challenges

1. Bottom up v top down – in terms of interface both spatially and socially.
2. No emphasis on local communities – with the vision for CLLD diluted or lost since 2011.
3. People don't know how to communicate/articulate what they want. People don't understand EU funds.

4. Funding availability - with specific reference to the experience of Hungary and the burden of administration. LAG Managers can manage multi fund, however no inspiration from PA (who can reject decisions made by LAGs and need not pay the beneficiary and will make a judgement on the basis of risk aversion). The PA does not understand LEADER.
5. Audit does not understand LEADER.
6. Fear of EU Audit (risk averse MA/PA) - it should be noted that at the beginning of the discussion there was a suggestion that the EC were largely to blame. However a few MA's pointed out that the EC framework for the current programme was largely fit for purpose and that it was more likely the interpretation and application of those rules at MS that were having an impact on LEADER and so in a sense the audit issues were of their own making as is the extent of any administrative burden).
7. Cash flow – delays in payments are killing projects
8. What is a community? Some may be being missed or are unmotivated.
9. joint working between urban and rural – blocked by ministries where big cities dominate government thinking. (something here about rural proofing and rural mainstreaming in wider policy)

3. (Good) Practices & possible solutions

1. n.a.
2. CLLD should be Local Community Led Local Development. LAGs should be able to fund projects from a range of EU and domestic sources.
3. There should greater focus on animation, networking and exchange – with participation being undertaken on an equitable basis. Support from government should be transparent and easily understood with one stop shop for potential applicants.
4. Good processes could overcome issues about finances and administrative burden –within both the MA and the LAG. Training should be made available to the PA (perhaps through the NRN).
5. Training should be made available to Auditors about LEADER.

6. Enabling framework – flexible suite of regulations/guidance to accommodate CLLD.
7. Advance payments to LAGs and prompt payments by PA. (this is a particular issue where payments are made directly from PA to beneficiary)
8. Adopt different approaches for different circumstances using the appropriate participatory tools and techniques to engage people.
9. Cross urban rural working within Government and support from government for urban/rural initiatives.

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

Overall key trends emerged from the discussion:

- Role of different layers of government including the EC and Audit in managing the administration, managing the risk and understanding LEADER.
- It was recognised by many that the public sector has a tendency not to understand the underlying rationale for the LEADER approach its application in ‘real life’ situations. The frustration in the group was evident, however the group was able to suggest possible ways forward. (as illustrated in 3)
- The debate on CLLD should not just be about EU funds.
- For the LEADER approach to function well then it needs to be recognised that it LAGs should be able to draw down domestic/private funding to enable them to undertake their functions (and so not rely solely on EU funds). Sharing approaches to highlight the potential opportunities may be worth considering.
- Dominance of vested interests from both a socio-economic and geographical perspective – managing this in an open and equitable way.
 - This observation is not a surprise, and is an issue that is commonplace in the rural development arena. The safeguards put in place at an EU/MA level to ensure that certain geographic/interest groups do not dominate should be as robust as they can be without

killing the enthusiasm and commitment of those individuals/organisations who want to realise positive change.

- Openness and equitability are key elements in how we design/deliver Local Development Strategies.

5. Useful tools and information

A host of sources/tools were mentioned

- OECD reports on rural development in Regions and Member States.
- ECA report on LEADER (2010/11)
- EC Guidance LEADER (2011)
- Suite of methodologies for participation – e.g. action based approach, Planning aid etc.
- Committee of regions report on LEADER/CLLD (2013)
- Information on multi funded projects and how lags have managed EU/domestic funds.