



CLLD country profile: Portugal

1. Key messages about local development and CLLD in this country

Local development processes started in Portugal's rural areas intrinsically linked to the LEADER approach in the beginning of the 90s. Throughout the different generations of the LEADER initiative, the local development associations were the managing bodies of the Local action groups, making them part of the implementation system. From 2007 on, the EFF Axis 4 FLAGs were created, partly managed by the same associations, partly managed by new associations/bodies in coastal areas.

In the setting of the 2014-2020 period Portugal, CLLD can be funded from all the four ESI Funds which allow this approach: EAFRD, EMFF, ESF and ERDF.

2. CLLD used in the following Funds

Fund		CLLD budget from the Fund (€)
EAFRD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	223 000 000
EMFF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	83 000 000
ESF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	93 000 000
ERDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	35 000 000

3. Possibility of multi-funding (linking several Funds in one strategy)

Portugal decided to split CLLD into "rural", "urban" and "fisheries", with multi-funded strategies (EAFRD/ERDF/ESF for the rural LAGs, ERDF/ESF for the urban LAGs, EMFF/ERDF/ESF for the FLAGs). The challenge lies in the different delivery systems of the Funds.

It was expected that rural and coastal LAGs would add support from the regional ERDF/ESF programmes to their strategies. However, it was not possible to design one strategy only in an area which is both rural and coastal. Territories with both rural and coastal intervention areas have to implement two (overlapping) multi-funded strategies.

Thus, there is little scope for an integrated approach and lack of coordination among managing authorities of the different Funds.

4. Number of LAGs

Fund	Number of LAGs using this Fund	
	Multi-funded	Mono-funded
EAFRD	60	
EMFF	12	3
ESF	c. 92	
ERDF	c. 92	
Total number of LAGs	c. 92	3

Today, eight FLAGs are managed by the same Local development association that takes care of LEADER.

The newly created urban LAGs do often not correspond to the partnership model used for rural LAGs and FLAGs.

5. Purposes, objectives for which CLLD is used

In the preparation of the current programme period, the definition of the general framework of Community-led Local Development (CLLD) in the EU, was supposed to extend LEADER heritage (or LEADER “DNA”), as well as the heritage of Axis 4 of the EFF also to the ERDF and the ESF. It was expected that this framework would broaden the domains of the interventions of LAGs and FLAGs at local level and to increase the resources available for Local Development Strategies. In this context, the Ministry of Agriculture had decided that almost all support from the EAFRD should go into activities related to agriculture and the budget considerably reduced by allocating the minimum 5% of the EAFRD funding to LEADER.

Areas of intervention covered by LEADER in Mainland RDP (EAFRD)

- Simplified scheme of small farm investments
- Small investments in processing and marketing
- On-farm diversification
- Short supply chains and local markets
- Promotion of local quality products
- Village renewal

Areas covered by CLLD in Regional Operational Programmes (ERDF+ESF)

- Support for self-employment, micro-enterprises and business creation
- Conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage (at a very early stage of implementation)

LAGs have also access to ERDF/ESF funding under dedicated schemes focusing on entrepreneurship development, social economy and innovation.

6. State of play

Most of the LDS were approved quite early in time, but the implementation started much later due to lack of national legislation. The “agricultural” calls for LEADER funding from the EAFRD started earlier, due to a very early approval of the Portuguese RDP. The ERDF/ESF and EMFF implementation, after a very slow start, has progressed well.

7. Key achievements so far

Despite the challenges of a not thought-through CLLD implementation system, LAGs and FLAGs have managed to support local stakeholders by launching calls for the different funds throughout the funding period. They still have an important role in territorial animation even if the administrative/paper work had increased enormously.

8. Key barriers encountered

The different combination of funds contributing to LAGs LDS paired with the different objectives of the funds, and LAGs with different settings and level of experiences, is a complex challenge. Moreover, each measure in LAG LDS must be funded by a single Fund, as well as each project has to be submitted to a mono-fund call for projects.

On the level of LAG management and strategy implementation, this means a high level of complexity as they have to deal with several non-coordinated Managing Authorities, several national or regional regulations and several IT systems.

9. Some national specificities

The option of implementing multi-funded CLLD was introduced in the Portuguese Partnership Agreement, but without a common understanding on what “multi-funded” CLLD

means. As a result, it is very difficult to achieve an overall coordination between the funds and implement an integrated bottom-up approach and holistic territorial development.

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