



## CLLD country profile: **Slovenia**

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

In Slovenia, LEADER-like local development processes started in the beginning of the 1990s with national support and continued since then intensively through LEADER and, most recently, CLLD initiatives. Decision-making about the development of a local area rests with the LAGs, which, on the basis of the understanding of development problems and opportunities in their regions, prepare local development strategies (LDSs).

The combination of different financial resources through CLLD enables LAGs to implement comprehensive and more complex projects and is not strictly limited to rural areas, but also include fisheries communities and urban areas. In the 2007-13 period, the bottom-up approach was implemented by 33 LAGs funded by the EAFRD, and one that was set up as FLAG, funded from the EFF. In 2014-2020, LEADER is part of a common CLLD approach, covering three ESI Funds and the entire territory of Slovenia. Altogether 37 LAGs (incl. four FLAGs) are under the responsibility of two Managing Authorities: EAFRD and EMFF within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, and ERDF under the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy. A special CLLD Coordination Committee for all three Funds has been established to ensure successful implementation. The committee's tasks are focused on communication to (F)LAGs, coordination of a national CLLD regulation, as well as coordination and exchange of data between different bodies.

A strong and professional counterpart in the implementation of the LEADER/CLLD approach is the Slovenian Rural Development Network (SRDN), which unites and defends the interests of the majority of (F)LAGs.

### 2. CLLD used in the following Funds

Fund		CLLD budget from the Fund (€)
EAFRD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	45,092,491
EMFF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5,809,593
ESF		-
ERDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30,000,000

*Planned ERDF allocation at programme start*

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

Slovenian LAGs are all multi-Fund and combine at least EAFRD and ERDF. Four of them, the FLAGs, also make use of EMFF funding. In all 37 LAGs, a single local development strategy covers rural areas, small urban areas, and coastal and inland fisheries communities. LAGs are homogeneous geographic and functional areas (the area of an individual municipality must not be divided between several LAGs).

### 4. Number of LAGs

Fund	Number of LAGs using this Fund	
	Multi-funded	Mono-funded
EAFRD	37	-
EMFF	4	-
ESF	-	-

ERDF	37	-
<b>Total number of LAGs</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>-</b>

All LAGs have been selected in 2016 through a joint selection procedure for all three Funds. The LAGs and the local development strategies are approved for the duration of the entire programme period. Each LAG has its own LAG Manager, Lead Partner, and professional organisation with qualified staff.

### 5. Purposes, objectives for which CLLD is used

The LEADER/CLLD approach enables addressing a wide range of challenges in different areas, which correspond to the actual needs of the local area. For that purpose, in 2014-2020 the ERDF has been added to the LEADER measure (EAFRD) and Axis 4 (EFF) of the previous programme period.

The objective of LEADER/CLLD is to promote social inclusion, reduce poverty and enhance the economic development of rural, urban and coastal areas, with an emphasis on promoting local development in these areas. The initiative also contributes significantly to solving other local needs, particularly nature conservation, protection of the environment, cultural landscape, cultural heritage and its elements, and represents a challenge for different target groups in defined areas.

The LDSs cover four themes as key challenges in pursuing the Union's objectives: job creation, development of basic services, environmental protection and nature conservation, and greater inclusion of the young, women and other vulnerable groups. These themes tackle challenges related to high unemployment, increasing competitiveness, improving basic services (including local infrastructure and managing the consequences of depopulation), the preservation of landscape identity, and the protection of the environment and natural resources. Increased social inclusion and a campaign against poverty is also promoted.

### 6. State of play

Most (F)LAGs are fully operational and there is significant progress in implementing LDSs. Regardless of the initial challenges of setting up a delivery system for multi-funded LDSs and an adequate IT system, almost all funding has been allocated for various projects, including cooperation projects.

### 7. Key achievements so far

The bottom-up approach of CLLD has been assessed very positively. Local needs are defined best in a bottom-up way and CLLD is resulting in a visible impact on local areas. The wider range of Funds, i.e. using ERDF in addition to EAFRD and, in some cases, EMFF, allowed LAGs to address local development more widely, not just limiting themselves to rural aspects.

The one-stop-shop role of the CLLD Coordination Committee has proved to be a success as it allowed improving communication and capacity building between MAs, intermediate bodies, the paying agency and LAGs. The operation of Slovenian (F)LAGs using the CLLD initiative has multiplier effects on local development and cooperation, and is evaluated as very successful approach.

### 8. Key barriers encountered

The multi-funded delivery system for CLLD proved to be challenging, but the MAs and (F)LAGs have managed to overcome these obstacles through strong communication and cooperation.

From the perspective of the ERDF MA, which had to deal with the bottom-up approach for the first time, the large number of small-value projects is not something that is commonly the case. This created a significant administrative effort.

A key shortcoming of the implementation of the CLLD approach is an excessive bureaucracy due to working with three different procedures and three different sets of rules. (F)LAGs were thus faced with a huge administrative burden, whilst also having to deal with the lack of sufficient staff. Although (F)LAGs are able to implement their LDSs, they lack the time to carry out the necessary capacity building activities with their local actors.

### **9. Some national specificities**

The Slovenian model is characterised by the following:

- 37 Slovenian (F)LAGs cover the entire country, including the large cities (e.g. Ljubljana and Maribor);
- the CLLD Coordination Committee, gathering all relevant managing authorities, the paying agency and the intermediate bodies, oversees the implementation of CLLD; and
- a significant influence of and close cooperation with the NGO SRDN, which is the representative network of Slovenian LAGs.

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