



CLLD country profile: Latvia

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

In Latvia, familiarisation with LEADER started before the country's EU accession in 2004, including the establishment of the first three LAGs from 2000 to 2003. In the period of 2007-13, there were already 40 LAGs, covering the country's entire rural territory. Twenty-four of these LAGs were also using fisheries funding, both in coastal and inland areas.

In the period 2014-20, CLLD in Latvia can be funded from EAFRD and EMFF. 35 LAGs cover all rural areas of Latvia and towns with population of up to 15,000 inhabitants. Six of these LAGs are also FLAGS with multi-funded strategies, covering the whole Baltic coastal area, including bigger cities (except Riga).

The Managing Authority for both Funds is the Ministry of Agriculture. CLLD strategies and their modifications are approved by the CLLD Strategy Selection Committee, which has over 20 members, including representatives from nine Ministries, the Paying Agency, the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre, planning region administrations, the Association of Local and Regional Governments as well as farming, fishery and rural development NGOs.

An active stakeholder involved in LEADER/CLLD is the Latvian Rural Forum – a bottom-up association working to create dialogue and advocate for LEADER/CLLD. It ensures networking, capacity building and other activities, bringing together 34 LAGs and almost 50 other local and regional rural civic society organisations.

2. CLLD used in the following Funds

Planned allocation at programme start. At the end of the planning period there was additional budget added from both Funds.

Fund		CLLD budget from the Fund, €
EAFRD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	53,780,190
EMFF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	21,477,120
ESF	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
ERDF	<input type="checkbox"/>	-

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

It is possible to link both Funds in one strategy, with the EAFRD as the Lead Fund.

4. Number of LAGs

Fund	Number of LAGs using this Fund	
	Multi-funded	Mono-funded
EAFRD	6	29
EMFF	6	-
ESF	-	-
ERDF	-	-
Total number of LAGs	6	29

From a total of 35 LAGs in Latvia, six are multi-funded. For both Funds, the minimum population is 10,000, but the maximum population ranges from 65,000 for EAFRD to

125,000 for EMFF, as support from EAFRD covers towns up to 15,000 inhabitants, but from EMFF all coastal towns are eligible, except the capital.

5. Purposes, objectives for which CLLD is used

The objectives of LEADER/CLLD in rural areas are to promote public involvement in local economic development and strengthening initiatives, thus creating new values in the local area, using local resources more productively, promoting cooperation and local consumption, developing new business models that increase the quality of life, competitiveness and socio-economic development.

LEADER/CLLD in rural areas also aims to promote public involvement in initiatives for the development and strategic and sustainable use of local natural, physical, social, cultural and human capital, thus increasing the resilience, local potential and attractiveness, which can be a precondition for creation and development of new integrated tourism, cultural, health and other services and products.

The main objectives of LEADER/CLLD in coastal areas are to create added value and to promote innovation at all stages of the supply chain of fishery and aquaculture products; to promote diversification of commercial fishing activities; to increase and to use environmental resources and to mitigate climate change as well as to promote fishing and maritime cultural heritage.

6. State of play

First calls for LEADER/CLLD projects were launched in Spring 2016. By 31 December 2020, 96.3% of EAFRD funding was committed, with 74.6% of funding in projects already completed. There are 2,857 activities approved, including 1,228 projects for local economy and 1,629 focusing on community development. 110 jobs were created by December 2020, i.e. 55% of the total amount planned. The projects already approved are planning to create 1,083 jobs within three years after implementation (540% of what was planned in the RDP). Twenty-five inter-territorial cooperation projects (between LAGs in Latvia) and 41 transnational cooperation projects from EAFRD have been approved.

Under EMFF, by 28 May 2020 there were 173 projects approved or implemented, accounting for 77% of the total allocation. Ten FLAG cooperation projects have been approved, but applications of new projects were still open, so more projects are expected.

The proposal to add additional funding for LEADER/CLLD under both Funds is under approval of the Monitoring Committee due to high demand, high achievements of planned results and funding as well as smooth implementation.

7. Key achievements so far

Among key achievements there are good financial results and a high number of approved LEADER/CLLD cooperation projects, as well as tackling of new themes such as circular and bioeconomy, alternative energy, smart villages etc. Jobs expected to be created with EAFRD support are five times as high as planned in the RDP.

There has been good cooperation and networking on a regular basis between all involved stakeholders – LAG managers and their boards, the Managing Authority, Paying Agency and the Latvian Rural Forum.

8. Key barriers encountered

There has been great interest of applicants for support from EAFRD, therefore the available public funding is insufficient, leading to many rejected projects and complaints. This has led to a change in the decision-making process in 2018. Since then, LAGs are rejecting projects and send to the Paying Authority for approval only projects that have positive assessment, and for which there is enough funding. This made it necessary for LAGs to change their

boards, to ensure that all the persons involved receive State Official status and other practical changes in decision making processes.

Bureaucracy in LAG management, changes in decision making procedures and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has created a big workload for LAG managers and increased the time spent on dealing with administrative burdens, leaving less resources for animation and other LAG duties.

Project results (creation of new jobs or increase in net turnover) to be achieved not later than the third year after the start of implementation were planned before the pandemic and set quite high, so there can be situations where these targets will not be met. The need for up-front financing for project implementation, lack of construction experts and high costs have been challenging for project promoters.

9. Some national specificities

The Latvian model is characterised by the following:

- LEADER/CLLD covers the entire rural territory of Latvia.
- Mainly financed by EAFRD, with EMFF just in the six coastal (F)LAGs.
- Strong cooperation and active exchange of information, experience and ideas between LAGs themselves and other stakeholders.
- Differences in size and character of LAGs with different budgets, from relatively big FLAGs including big cities up to very small rural LAGs, and from sub-urban areas near the capital to remote rural in border regions.
- Growing interest and more than half of all support given to entrepreneurs, including start-up businesses thanks to LEADER/CLLD encouragement and financial support. Decreasing interest and support from NGOs.

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