



CLLD country profile: Greece

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

The LEADER approach was introduced in the beginning of the 1990s in the Greek rural areas intrinsically linked to the CLLD/LEADER. Throughout the different programming periods, the LAGs have acted as development partnerships of local authorities and local stakeholders. The LAGs worked as agents of bottom-up planning and implementing agencies highlighting the local needs within specific rural, coastal and insular areas.

In the programming period 2007-2013, 11 FLAGs were created, under EFF Axis 4, in insular and coastal areas, transforming the existing 11 LAGs into F/LAGs. Today, there are 33 multifunded F/LAGs.

In Greece, in the current period, it was decided that CLLD/LEADER can be funded through all four ESI Funds allowed, (EAFRD, EMFF, ESF and ERDF). However, the inclusion of ERDF was not operationalised.

2. CLLD used in the following Funds

Fund		CLLD budget from the Fund (€)
EAFRD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	303,950,000
EMFF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	70,500,000
ESF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10,000,000
ERDF		-

Planned allocations at programme start

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

The majority of Greek F/LAGs implement multi-fund local development strategies (LDS) inter-linking priorities and objectives of the various Funds and national objectives. The adopted combinations of Funds are:

- 1 mono-fund strategy (EMFF)
- 1 mono-fund strategy (ESF)
- 14 mono-fund strategies (EAFRD)
- 22 two-fund strategies (EAFRD-EMFF)
- 4 two-fund strategies (EAFRD-ESF)
- 10 three-fund strategies (EAFRD-EMFF-ESF)

4. Number of LAGs

Greece has approved 52 CLLD/LEADER local development strategies implemented by 50 LAGs (there are some LAGs which manage two strategies).

Fund	Number of strategies using this Fund	
	Multi-funded	Mono-funded
EAFRD	36	14
EMFF	32	1
ESF	13	1

ERDF	-	-
Total number of strategies	36	16

Nationwide, the only initiative nationwide with local development, area-based principles and management, is CLLD/LEADER. The F/LAGs are legal entities, following the representation described in EC Reg.1303/2013, with a balance of public and socio-economic stakeholders in their decision-making process.

There have been two calls for the selection of F/LAGs, first in 2016 when most F/LAGs were selected, and another in 2017. The calls were initiated consecutively by the Rural OP and the Fisheries OP, followed by the Employment OP.

Each Managing Authority is responsible for the implementation of the fund they represent, under one common Local Development Strategy of each F/LAG. This proves to be a quite difficult process with heavy administrative workload due to different implementation systems applying to each MA.

5. Purposes, objectives for which CLLD is used

CLLD/LEADER is applied throughout Greece covering almost all the rural/coastal and insular areas.

Local development strategies focus mostly on entrepreneurship, small-scale food processing and production, artisanal entrepreneurs, thematic tourism and small-scale projects of public interest (up to a 40% of the LDS budget).

Many projects, especially those funded under EMFF, have a strong environmental interest and impact, such as sustainable management of marine biodiversity and protected areas - NATURA and RAMSAR sites. In the private sector there is extra focus on supplementary activities for professional fishermen, such as "pesca tourism". Differentiation and innovation are also important themes.

LAGs have access to ESF funding under designated schemes focusing on employability, small-scale entrepreneurship and social economy.

6. State of play

All F/LAGs are operational since 2017. Although the F/LAG selection process was quite fast, the national administrative rules (due to different administrative philosophies of the different Funds) and insufficient knowledge about CLLD, among all the bodies involved in the IT management system and the Payments system, created serious bottlenecks, resulting in a major delay in the selection and payment of the projects. The implementation process is expected to accelerate in 2021 and beyond. Payments have already started and are expected to increase.

7. Key achievements so far

Despite the challenges of the CLLD implementation system, F/LAGs have managed to support local stakeholders, by launching separate calls for each Fund, throughout the funding period. There has been a remarkable interest of potential beneficiaries, resulting in an average 45% oversubscription of the EAFRD part of CLLD/LEADER.

The most important role of the F/LAGs in their area is animation and support. They act as levers in local development and buffers to the heavy administrative work that has been noticed to increase enormously from one period to the other.

The most significant achievement of the LEADER philosophy is the solid bond of trust between F/LAGs, the local communities and beneficiaries. Also, LEADER has proven its added value on social capital and resilience of local communities.

Each F/LAG is responsible for evaluating its LDS, for added value, delivery mechanism, indicators, and measured impact. The Managing Authorities issue once a year progress reports.

8. Key barriers encountered

The way the combination of different Funds is applied presents F/LAGs with major challenges. The LDSs have different objectives (regarding each Fund) therefore the F/LAG management and strategy implementation systems have a high level of complexity due to the involvement of several uncoordinated Managing Authorities, several national or regional regulations and many IT systems.

Getting multi-funded CLLD off the ground proved quite challenging at the beginning, and the need to deal with different and quite detailed rules relating to each Fund (“gold-plating” effect), remains problematic for most of the beneficiaries.

9. Some national specificities

The option of implementing multi-funded CLLD was introduced by the NRD Programme, but there is no common understanding on what “multi-funded” CLLD means. As a result, it is very difficult to achieve an overall coordination between the Funds.

The Greek model is characterised by the following:

- increased responsibility for F/LAGs with tasks ranging from planning, animating, supporting in implementation, paying project beneficiaries, to post implementation audits;
- significant budget per LDS–F/LAG;
- LAGs/FLAGs as substantial legal entities;
- high level of administrative complexity and “gold plating”;
- high degree of interaction and trust between stakeholders and potential beneficiaries;
- strong role of the Hellenic Network of F/LAGs.

March 2021

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