

EMFF Operational Programme 2014-2020

Developing Fisheries Local Action Groups



EUROPEAN UNION

This measure is part-financed by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund



Ireland's EU Structural and Investment Funds Programmes 2014 - 2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union



Department of **Agriculture, Food and the Marine**

An Roinn **Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara**



Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Irish Sea Fisheries Board

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation (EU Regulation 1303/2014) ²
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EFF	European Fisheries Fund
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ENRD	European Network for Rural Development
EOI	Expression of Interest
ESI Funds	European Structural and Investment Funds ⁴
EU	European Union
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Group
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l' Economie Rurale i.e. Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy
MA	Managing Authority
Promoter	Promoter of a project (beneficiary of funding).
RDP	Rural Development Programme also known as Operational Programme

Introduction

Union Priority 4 of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) looks to continue the start made with Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) in the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture dependant areas. Central to this is the continuation of the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) approach which *has, over a number of years, proven its utility in promoting the development of fisheries and aquaculture as well as rural areas by fully taking into account the multisectoral needs for endogenous development...*The EMFF seeks to ensure that *this support should be continued and reinforced in the future.*

In the fishery and aquaculture sector, community-led local development should encourage innovative approaches to create growth and jobs, in particular by adding value to fishery products and diversifying the local economy towards new economic activities, including those offered by 'blue growth' and the broader maritime sectors.

The sustainable development of the fishery and aquaculture sector should contribute to achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy of promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction, creating jobs and fostering innovation, at local level. It should also contribute to achieving the objective of territorial cohesion.

According to the 2002 Census, 18% of Ireland's population live in rural, coastal areas. Census data for districts with fishing ports and aquaculture operations has been examined over a number of criteria (unemployment, migration, education, age dependency and employment) to compare these areas with national figures. The results of this analysis highlight the contribution of the seafood industry in coastal areas. For example, the Irish seafood sector currently has an annual estimated sales value of €700 million and employs 11,000 people mostly in peripheral coastal communities. While the sector faces major immediate challenges, the potential exists to capitalise on strong demand to increase revenue to €1 billion and employment to 14,000 full-time equivalent jobs by 2020 in sea fisheries and aquaculture, with a 78% increase in aquaculture volume production.

Despite a recent start for the Axis 4 programme in Ireland, late in the EFF 2007-2013, six FLAGs were established and Local Development Strategies developed for each. The first two FLAGs, FLAG West and FLAG Southeast finalised their strategies in mid-2012 and the remaining four followed in 2013. Over the period 2012-2015 an estimated total of nearly €850,000 grant aid was provided by the six FLAGs generating an investment of €1,285,000 through 300 projects.

This Guide seeks to enable interested groups in coastal areas submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) so that they may be considered for selection as the FLAG for their respective area in order to implement a Local Development Strategy (LDS). Successful applicants will receive preparatory support to develop the LDS, which if of an adequate standard, will be used to prioritise local development projects supported by funds from the EMFF.

This will be a multistage process:

Stage 1 – Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from potential FLAGs that meet the mandatory criteria

Stage 2 – Selection of FLAGs based on selection criteria

Stage 3 – Development of Local Development Strategies

Stage 4 – Evaluation of Local Development Strategies

Stage 5 – Approval of Local Development Strategies

Stage 6 – Implementation of approved Local Development Strategies

Community Led Local Development

Community led local development (CLLD) is a methodology that places the community living in the fisheries and aquaculture dependent area at its centre. Groups of people representing defined geographical areas in the form of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) are charged with identifying the challenges to development in their own communities and developing initiatives to address these challenges. Through Local Development Strategies (LDSs), FLAGs seek to facilitate participation by all parties who wish to contribute to this process, thus ensuring that each LDS is as representative of the community view as possible.

Local Development Strategy (LDS)

An LDS is a plan or method for achieving a specific goal or result. In the context of the EMFF element, the LDS is a plan designed by members of fisheries and aquaculture dependent communities through their FLAGs to support the sustainable development of their own communities.

LDSs are designed through a “bottom-up” process facilitating participation by any member of the community and taking full and comprehensive consideration of not just local needs but also local potential. An LDS should examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that face a particular area and outline the types of actions to be supported to address the weaknesses and threats and exploit the strengths and opportunities.

The strategy should be a realistic reflection of how EMFF funding might best be used to support the sustainable development of the area outlined. It should also fully consider any and all actions that are on-going or planned by other agencies charged with, or involved in, supporting development in their area. In particular, the LDS should be complementary to and support the RDP Programme and overall planning processes and outcomes developed by local authorities in line with the Government’s commitment to a more integrated approach to community development at a local level.

The 2014-2020 regulatory framework set out in EU Regulations 1303/2013 and 508/2014 outlines the basic elements of an LDS as follows:

- (a) the definition of the area and population covered by the strategy;
- (b) an analysis of the development needs and potential of the area, including an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
- (c) a description of the strategy and its objectives, a description of the integrated and innovative features of the strategy and a hierarchy of objectives, including measurable targets for outputs or results. In relation to results, targets may be expressed in quantitative or qualitative terms;
- (d) a description of the community involvement process in the development of the strategy;
- (e) an action plan demonstrating how objectives are translated into actions;
- (f) a description of the management and monitoring arrangements of the strategy, demonstrating the capacity of the FLAG to implement the strategy and a description of specific arrangements for evaluation;
- (g) the financial plan for the strategy, including the planned allocation from the EMFF.

Specifically the FLAG LDS shall:

- (a) maximise the participation of fishery and aquaculture sectors in the sustainable development of coastal fisheries and aquaculture areas;
- (b) ensure that local communities fully exploit and benefit from the opportunities offered by maritime and coastal development and, in particular, help small and declining fishing ports to maximise their marine potential by developing a diversified infrastructure.

The strategy shall be coherent with the opportunities and needs identified in the relevant area and the Union priorities set out in Article 6 of the EMFF (508/2014), in particular Paragraph 4:

Increasing employment and territorial cohesion by pursuing the following specific objective: the promotion of economic growth, social inclusion and job creation, and providing support to employability and labour mobility in coastal and inland communities which depend on fishing and aquaculture, including the diversification of activities within fisheries and into other sectors of maritime economy.

Strategies may range from those which focus on fisheries to broader strategies directed at the diversification of fisheries areas. The strategies shall go beyond a mere collection of operations or juxtaposition of sectoral measures.

Fisheries Local Action Groups

FLAGs are made up of public and private partners from the defined geographical areas and must include representatives from different sectors of the local economy/ community that broadly reflect the main focus of their strategy and the socioeconomic composition of the area through a balanced representation of the main stakeholders, including private sector, public sector and civil society and ensure a significant representation of the fisheries and/or aquaculture sectors

The membership of the FLAG shall broadly reflect the main focus of their strategy and the socioeconomic composition of the area through a balanced representation of the main stakeholders, including private sector, public sector and civil society and ensure a significant representation of the fisheries and/or aquaculture sectors.

The FLAG will support local projects that contribute to the aims and objectives outlined in the LDS.

The regulatory framework for Union Priority 4 requires a FLAG to design and implement the community-led LDS through which Union Priority 4 interventions will be delivered.

The CPR (Art 34) outlines the mandatory tasks of a FLAG for the purposes of delivering Union Priority 4. These are:

- (a) building the capacity of local actors to develop and implement operations (i.e. projects) including fostering their project management capabilities;
- (b) drawing up a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations, which avoid conflicts of interest, ensure that at least 50 % of the votes in selection decisions are cast by partners which are not public authorities, and allow selection by written procedure;
- (c) ensuring coherence with the community-led local development strategy when selecting operations, by prioritising those operations according to their contribution to meeting that strategy's objectives and targets;
- (d) preparing and publishing calls for proposals or an ongoing project submission procedure, including defining selection criteria;
- (e) receiving and assessing applications for support;
- (f) selecting operations and fixing the amount of support and, where relevant, presenting the proposals to the body responsible for final verification of eligibility before approval;
- (g) monitoring the implementation of the community-led local development strategy and the operations supported and carrying out specific evaluation activities linked to the strategy.

These mandatory tasks will be carried out by the FLAG as part of a partnership with BIM, the designated intermediate body for UP4. Specifically BIM will have overall responsibility for the administration of grant aid, including information and publicity, grant administration, financial management and control, as well as monitoring and evaluation. In addition BIM will provide administrative and animation support to the successful FLAGs. BIMs specific responsibilities to FLAGs include:

- Provision of preparatory support to successful FLAGs*
- Information and publicity
- Assessment of eligibility and appropriate grant aid rate of all projects submitted to FLAGs
- Provision of administrative and animation support for FLAGs
- Verification of beneficiary grant claims
- Ensuring that a clear audit trail exists
- Co-Operation with the OP-level evaluations

**Note - this will comprise the provision and facilitation of a service provider to draw up the LDS*

FLAGs will be supported at a local level by BIM Regional Officers who will act as secretary to the FLAG and will be responsible for:

- Facilitating LDS revision/development
- Preparing project summaries in advance of project assessment meetings
- Arranging project assessment meetings
- Arranging and developing agendas for project selection and other FLAG Board meetings
- Formalising project selection decisions for approval by BIM
- Drawing up meeting notes, processing meeting expenses and corresponding with BIM and other groups as required on behalf of the FLAG.
- Providing guidance and assistance with the project application process
- Animation of the FLAG programme in their FLAG region

It should be noted that while a budget for the period 2014-2020 will be allocated to a successful FLAG to support its LDS no funds will be handled by the FLAG. It is anticipated that administration and animation costs will be borne by BIM through the provision of staff in support of the FLAG. All other funds will be administered and disbursed centrally by BIM.

FLAGs will be selected for the 2014-2020 period by a Selection Committee to be put in place by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

FLAG Areas

The experience of Axis 4 demonstrated that some of these areas were quite disparate in terms of fisheries and aquaculture activity as well as population. There is now more flexibility to define areas under Union Priority 4 as the restriction on distance from the coast and the exclusion of towns/cities has been removed so that the FLAG area may now be defined more broadly:

- The area proposed must have at least one boundary comprising the coastline.
- The area must have a significant level of employment in fisheries or aquaculture.
- The population of coastal Electoral Districts for proposed area must be over 70,000
- The area must have a minimum of 150 vessels in all fleet segments on the Fleet Register and preferably not more than 400
- The area proposed must have no more than one National Fishery Harbour Centre.

A prospective FLAG should be mindful of the Axis 4 experience in the area in delineating its proposed area of operation and drawing together its membership while remaining compliant with the criteria above. It is strongly advised that the appropriate BIM Regional Officer is consulted prior to submitting an EOI.

The territory for each FLAG area is required to be unique, so where more than one proposal is received concerning any particular area, BIM will liaise with the groups concerned to ensure the integrity of each FLAG area proposed.

FLAG Selection Process

Selection criteria will be used to select prospective FLAG groups for preparatory support to develop local development strategies. Only strategies developed by these groups will subsequently be considered for funding to implement their strategies.

Selection Criteria

- Size and importance of the fishing and aquaculture sector in the area (employment, numbers and size of boats, nature and type of fishing, landings/production size, value...).
- Character of the area: contiguity, coastal, estuary, protected areas, maximum and minimum population sizes, population density, population decline, remote areas;
- Extent of representation of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the group.
- Group's proposals for local engagement in strategy development.

Development of Local Development Strategies

Successful FLAGs will be facilitated by BIM to develop their Local Development Strategies through:

- Publication of a review of Axis 4 FLAG strategies and lessons learnt from their implementation
- Consideration of any applicable recent LDSs
- Engagement with the relevant local actors from the seafood industry, community and state sectors.

Evaluation & Approval of Local Development Strategies

In order to ensure that the draft LDSs are of adequate standard an evaluation of all strategies will be carried out using the following criteria before groups are allocated funding to implement the strategy:

- Is the LDS consistent with the overarching strategy set out in the Operational Programme, in particular for CLLD as set out in section 5.1.1?
- Clear objectives and vision, based on a SWOT analysis and clear needs definition.
- Demonstrated value added of forming a FLAG with EMFF support.
- Extent to which the local development strategy addresses its objectives and vision.
- To what extent is the strategy focused on issues of greatest relevance for the area?
- To what extent does the strategy respond to the needs and challenges of the area?
- Is the analysis of the area based on reliable data and indicators?
- Does the strategy demonstrate clearly the links between SWOT, needs, objectives, activities and outcomes? (Intervention logic).
- Are the objectives measurable and realistically achievable within the available budget and time frame?
- Is there evidence of the involvement of key local actors, including the fisheries sector?
- Does the strategy provide for strengthening links between different sectors and different types of actors, in particular fisheries? Does it create synergies?
- Is there evidence of the applicant's capacity to deliver the outcomes? Is the action plan clear and robust?

- Is the use of resources (human, financial) justified in relation to the proposed action?
- What mobilisation of other resources (including private funding) is envisaged?
- How have horizontal issues (environment, gender equality) been addressed?
- Extent of representation of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the group.
- Experience and track record of the group in the fisheries and wider seafood area and demonstrated understanding in the strategy of the issues that have affected the communities in the area.
- Strategy's proposals concerning support to coherent sub-areas.
- Strategy for local engagement in strategy implementation.

Only LDSs that meet a predetermined minimum standard as determined by the above criteria will be allocated funding for implementation

Implementation of Local Development Strategies

Under Union Priority 4 support for the implementation of community-led local development strategies may be granted for the following objectives:

- (a) Adding value, creating jobs, attracting young people and promoting innovation at all stages of the supply chain of fishery and aquaculture products;
- (b) Supporting diversification inside or outside commercial fisheries, lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries and aquaculture areas;
- (c) Enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets of the fisheries and aquaculture areas, including operations to mitigate climate change;
- (d) Promoting social well-being and cultural heritage in fisheries and aquaculture areas, including fisheries, aquaculture and maritime cultural heritage;
- (e) Strengthening the role of fisheries communities in local development and the governance of local fisheries resources and maritime activities.

EMFF 2014-2020: Developing Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG)

Application Form – Part 1

PROPOSED NAME OF PROSPECTIVE FLAG:	
---	--

KEY CONTACT	
Contact Name:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
E-mail Address:	

I hereby declare that the information supplied in this application is true and accurate.

Signature:	
-------------------	--

Please note that completed applications should be printed, signed and submitted to BIM.



Section 1: Proposed Geographical Area for LDS

Section 2: Local and Community Participation

Section 4: General Description of Proposed Actions

[Empty content area for Section 4: General Description of Proposed Actions]



Section 5: Preparatory Support and additional information

A large, empty rectangular area with a light blue gradient background, intended for providing preparatory support and additional information.

