

Implementing CLLD in the EU: Experiences so far

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Implementing CLLD in the EU: Experiences so far

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January 2020, revised version

Contents

1. From LEADER to multi-funded CLLD	2
1.1 The variety of ESI Fund combinations for CLLD	3
1.2 The use of CLLD across the European territory	4
2. Some national perspectives	11
2.1 Slovenia	12
2.2 Sweden	14
2.3 Austria (Tyrol)	17
3. Conclusions and recommendations	20
4. References	23
5. Annex	24

Abstract

This paper gives an overview of the extent to which the CLLD instrument has been adopted across the EU. It shows the variety of models in different EU Member States and regions, ranging from a simple continuation of the 2007-13 mono-Fund approach to a country-wide use of multiple Funds in all LAGs. It then presents three country cases from Slovenia, Sweden and the Austrian Land Tyrol, before drawing a number of conclusions and making recommendations for the forthcoming 2021-27 programme period.

¹ This document does not necessarily represent the vision or the views of ELARD or of its members, but only of the authors.



1. From LEADER to multi-funded CLLD

Since its start in 1991, LEADER/CLLD has expanded with each programme period (Table 1). From just 217 LAGs in 1991-93, the number grew to over 800 in 1994-99. Since 2000, LEADER is implemented as part of a monofunded rural (or maritime) programme and in the 2007-13 programme period, not least to the EU enlargement, the number increased to 2,200. In the current 2014-20 period, there are over 3,300 LAGs, with possible discrepancies between sources due to still ongoing processes of approval and withdrawal of LAGs.

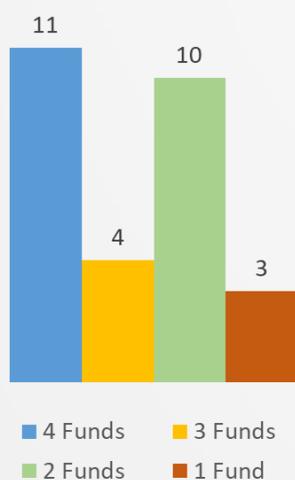
Table 1: Growing number of LAGs over time

Stage	Duration	Funds	Number of LAGs
LEADER1	1991-93	EAGGF, ESF, ERDF	217
LEADER2	1994-99	EAGGF, ESF, ERDF	821
LEADER+	2000-06	EAGGF	893 in EU15 (+ 250 LEADER+ type measures in 2004-06 in 6 MS)
LEADER axis	2007-13	EAFRD, EMFF	2,200 in EU27
CLLD	2014-20	EAFRD, EMFF, ERDF, ESF	~ 3,312 in EU28

Source: EPRC 2014, from European LEADER Association for Rural Development, and updated by own research in June 2019

To understand the implementation of the CLLD instrument, and in particular the possibilities it offers for a multi-Fund approach, it is worth starting from the Member States' declaration of intents at the beginning of the current programme period. Based on the Partnership Agreements, Figure 1 shows how Member States have been planning the use of different ESI Funds for CLLD.

Figure 1: Member State intentions of using ESI Funds for CLLD



Category	Member State
EAFRD, ERDF, ESF, EMFF	BG, DE, ES, FR, GR, IT, PL, PT, RO, SE, UK
EAFRD, ERDF, ESF	CZ, HU
EAFRD, ERDF, EMFF	SI
EAFRD, ESF, EMFF	LT
EAFRD, EMFF	CY, DK, EE, FI, IE, LV
EAFRD, ERDF	AT, NL, SK
EAFRD	BE, LU, MT

Sources: DG AGRI, Partnership Agreements



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11 Member States planned to use all four possible ESI Funds for CLLD, four Member States opted to use a combination of three Funds, but not necessarily all are available for the same territory. When two Funds were planned, the most frequent combination was with EMFF and EAFRD, e.g. in Latvia and Denmark. Just three Member States – Belgium, Luxembourg and Malta – adopted a conservative approach, planning only EAFRD. i.e. sticking to the traditional LEADER model. As regards simultaneous use of several Funds in one area, 20 Member States, about three quarters, were planning to allow for a multi-Fund approach.

Figure 2: Member State intentions of allowing multi-funding for CLLD



1.1 The variety of ESI Fund combinations for CLLD

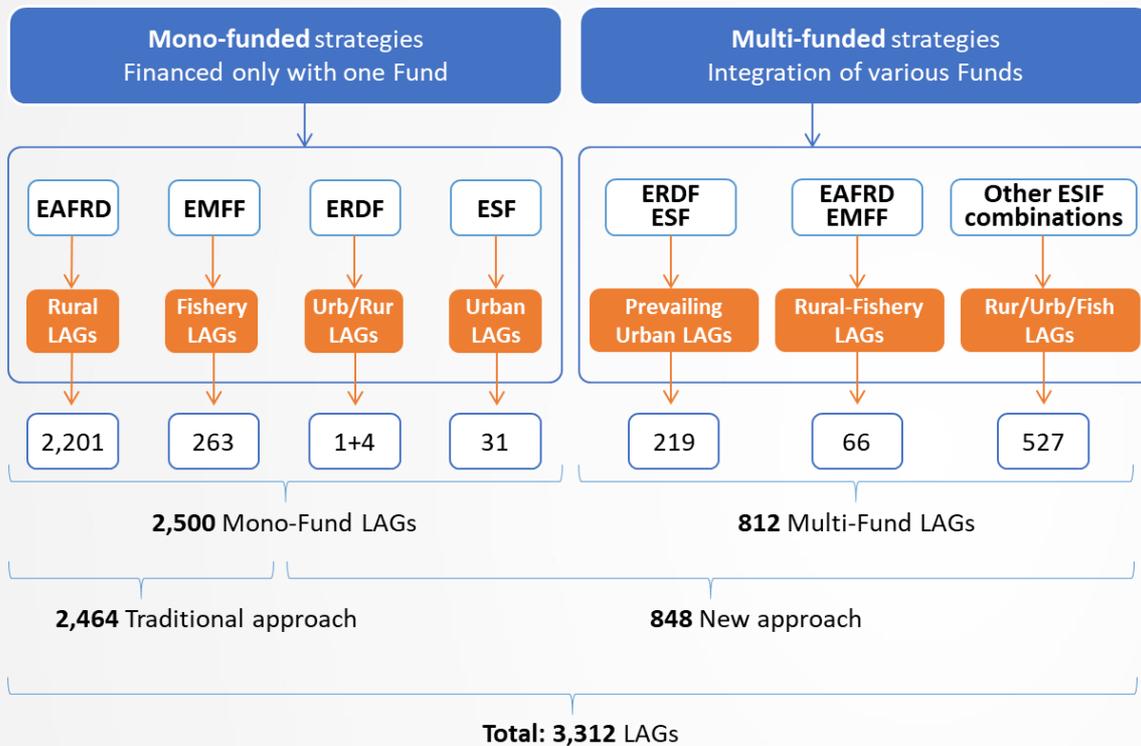
If the declaration of interest in the Partnership Agreements signed by the Member States seemed to allow for a widespread use of a multi-funded approach, and an extensive use of the CLLD instruments, the numbers and the distribution of the various types of LAGs indicate a variegated implementation, with different approaches at national and sometimes regional level. The increased number of LAGs and the implementation size of the multi-funded approach shows an only partial exploitation of the CLLD possibilities, and a reduced correspondance with the intentions in the Partnership Agreements.

Figure 3 shows the number of LAGs that make use of the various combination options of different ESI Funds (as in July 2018). Most of the LAGs are monofunded by the EAFRD (2,201), a model that corresponds to the traditional LEADER approach and which fulfills the requirement of a minimum 5% allocation to LEADER in each EAFRD programme. Similarly, there are many, although fewer, LAGs monofunded by the EMFF (263). Monofunded models are much less common in the case of the Cohesion Policy Funds. There are only 31 mono-ESF LAGs, mainly in Lithuania, and 5 mono-ERDF ones, one in an urban area in the Netherlands and 4 cross-border LAGs between Austria and Italy.



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Figure 3: Mono-Fund strategies and various combinations of multi-Fund strategies



Source: adapted from Servillo (2019)

Looking at the multi-Fund models, one of the fundamentally new approaches is the combination of ERDF and ESF (219), which is particularly prevailing in urban areas. A multi-Fund approach amongst the traditional Funds EAFRD and EMFF, combining rural and fishery LAGs, is being used to some extent (66). Finally, there is a large variety of combination amongst different types of ESI Funds (533).² Overall, more than 800 LAGs are multi-funded, and there are 854 LAGs adopting new approaches that were not possible in 2007-13.³

1.2 The use of CLLD across the European territory

The aggregated numbers of LAGs per typology do not provide the full picture of the scattered way in which CLLD has been implemented across the EU. The following maps in figures 4 to 9 show the territorial distribution of different CLLD models.

² See table in annex for all full overview of LAGs and ESI Fund combinations.

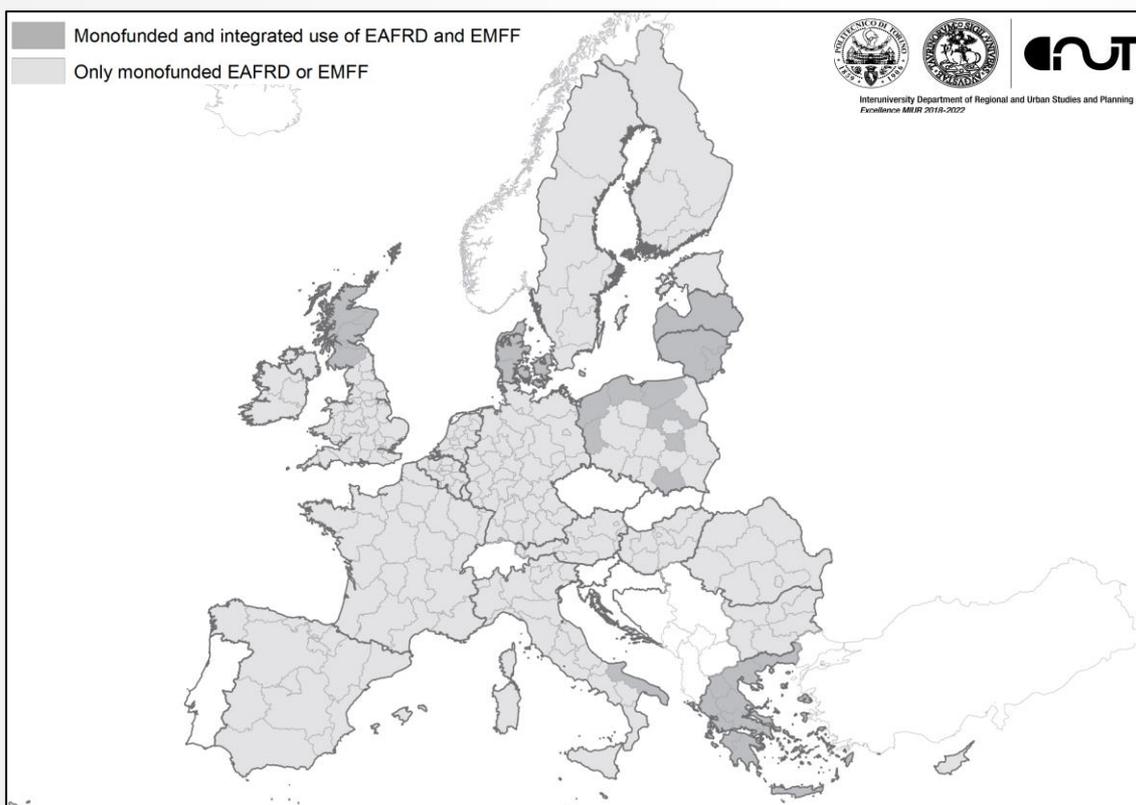
³ For more information see: Servillo L and De Bruijn M (2018) 'From LEADER to CLLD: The Adoption of the New Fund Opportunities and of Their Local Development Options', *European Structural and Investment Funds Journal*, vol. 6, issue 3, pp. 223-33.



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Figure 4 is dedicated to the Funds that were used for CLLD, or rather its predecessors, also in the previous programme period, and indicates the legacy of the previous approach. The map shows where LAGs are using the EAFRD and EMFF in a monofunded way or are combining the two Funds (e.g. in Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Scotland, parts of Italy and Poland). It is worth noting that only a few countries decided not to have any monofunded LAGs at all, such as Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia, while Portugal has monofunded LAGs only in their overseas territories (see table in the Annex).

Figure 4: LAGs combining (exclusively) EAFRD and EMFF

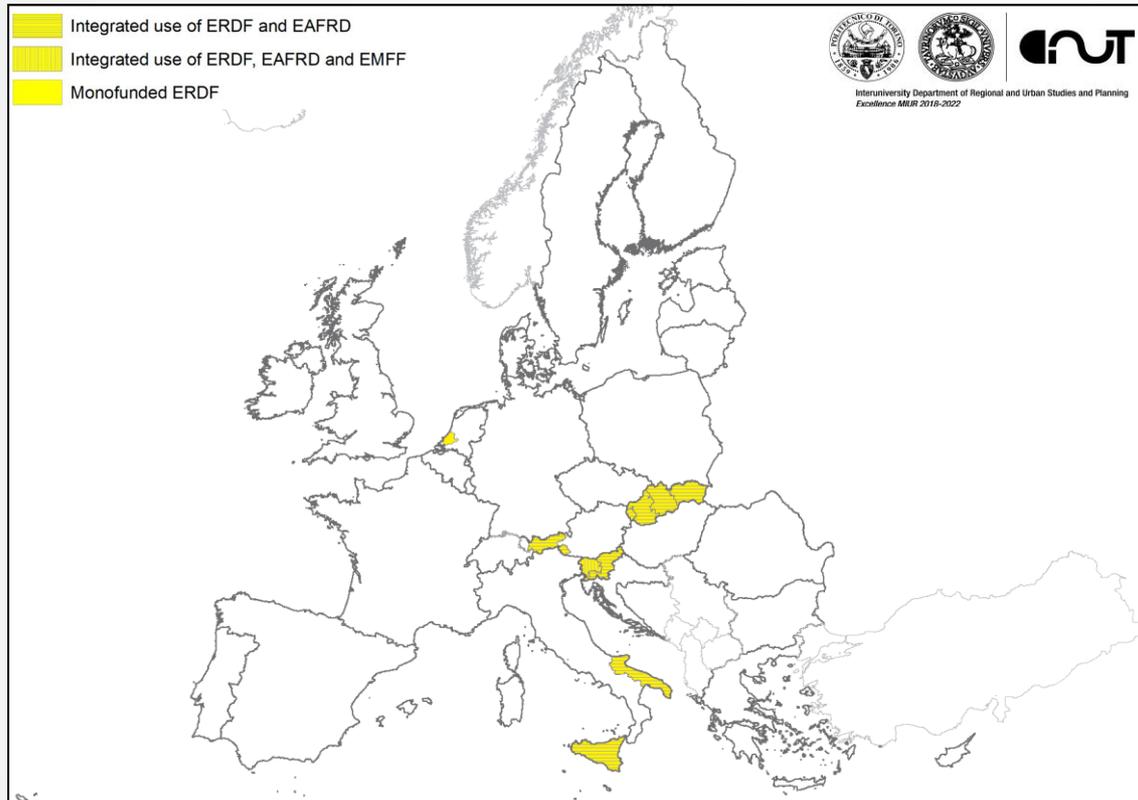


Source of data: Updated version of Servillo L (2019)



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Figure 5: LAGs using only ERDF or adding it to the EAFRD (and EMFF)



Source of data: Updated version of Servillo L (2019)

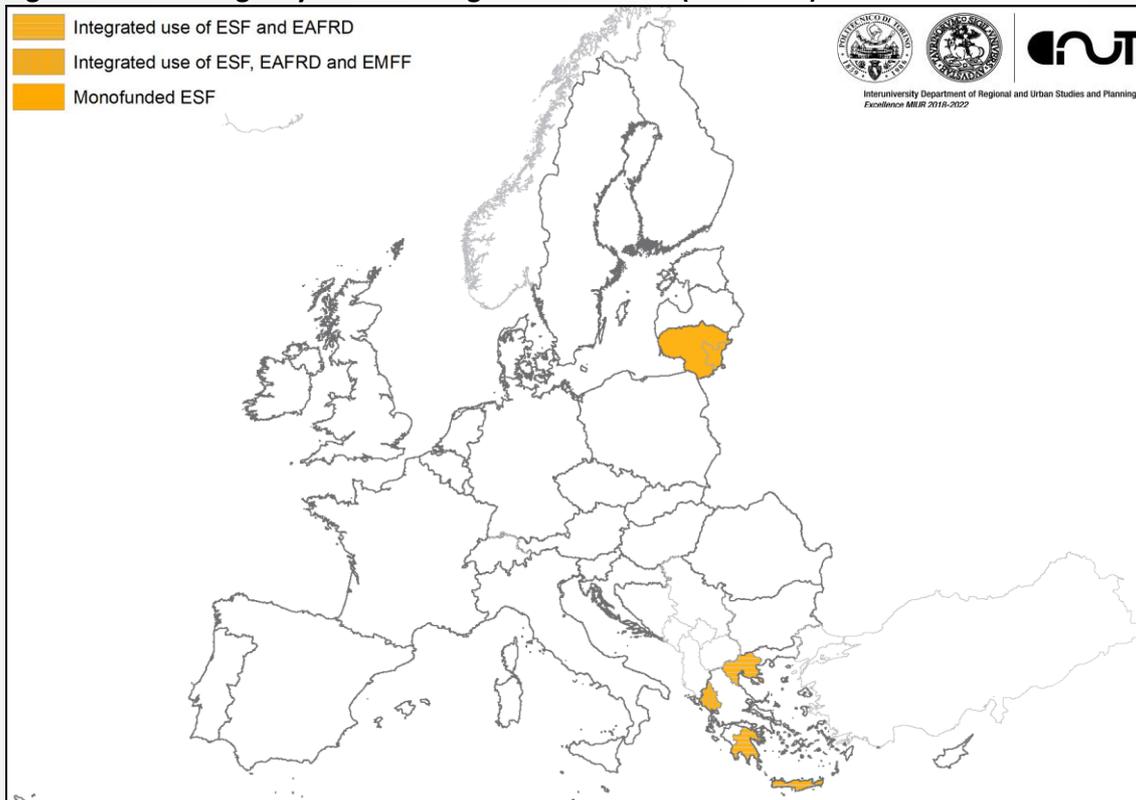
When we move the focus to the new CLLD Funds (ERDF and ESF), the distribution is much more heterogeneous. A first degree of integration can be detected in those cases where the ERDF or the ESF has been used in addition to the EAFRD, which has a minimum percentage that needs to be dedicated to CLLD (5%). Yet, the new Funds has been rarely used in a mono-Fund way.

Figure 5 shows the countries and regions in which the ERDF is combined with the EAFRD. This is the case in Tyrol (Austria), Sicily (Italy), and in Slovakia, with one experiment also in Apulia (Italy). In Slovenia, there are also some LAGs that have added the EMFF as a third Fund. There is only one case of exclusive ERDF use, an urban LAG in the Netherlands.



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Figure 6: LAGs using only ESF or adding it to the EAFRD (and EMFF)



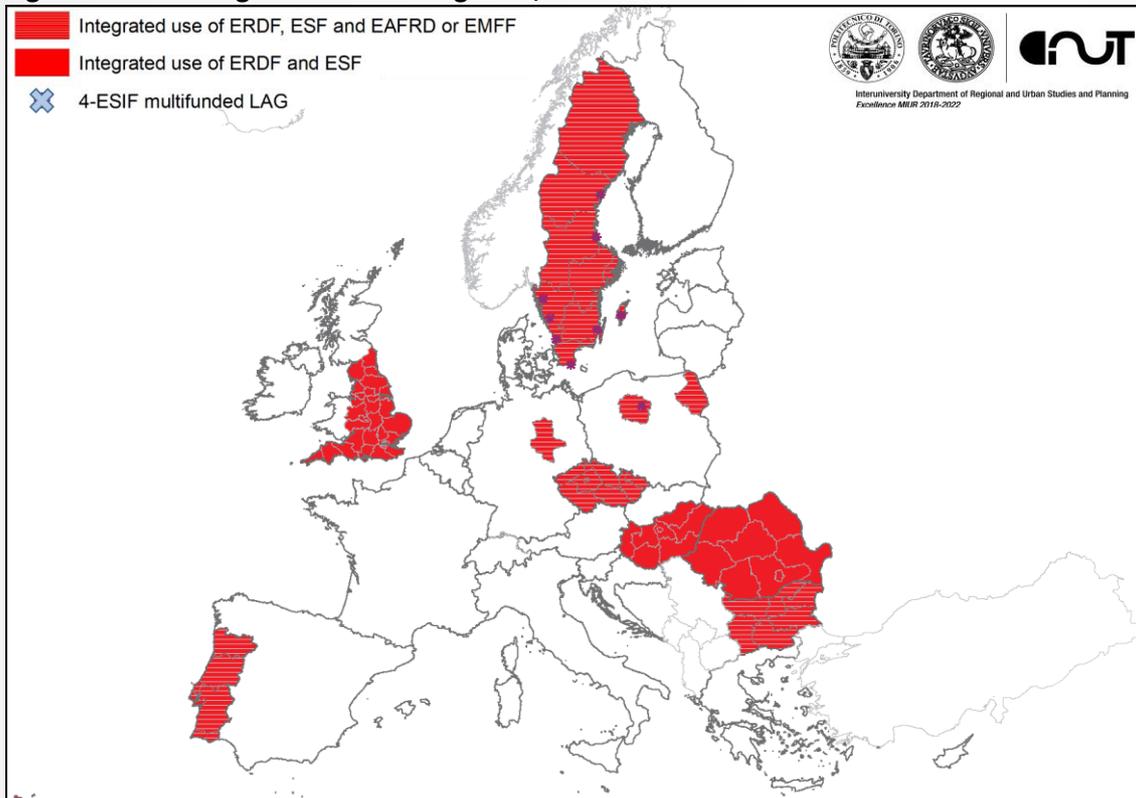
Source of data: Updated version of Servillo L (2019)

Figure 6 shows the cases in which the ESF is used exclusively or has been added to the EAFRD. Here the map shows clearly two different approaches: Lithuania uses mono-Fund ESF LAGs for the regeneration of relatively small urban contexts, while Greece combines the ESF in integration with either the EAFRD or both EAFRD and EMFF in LAGs addressing larger territories.



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Figure 7: LAGs using ERDF and ESF together, on their own or with other Funds



Source of data: Updated version of Servillo L (2019)

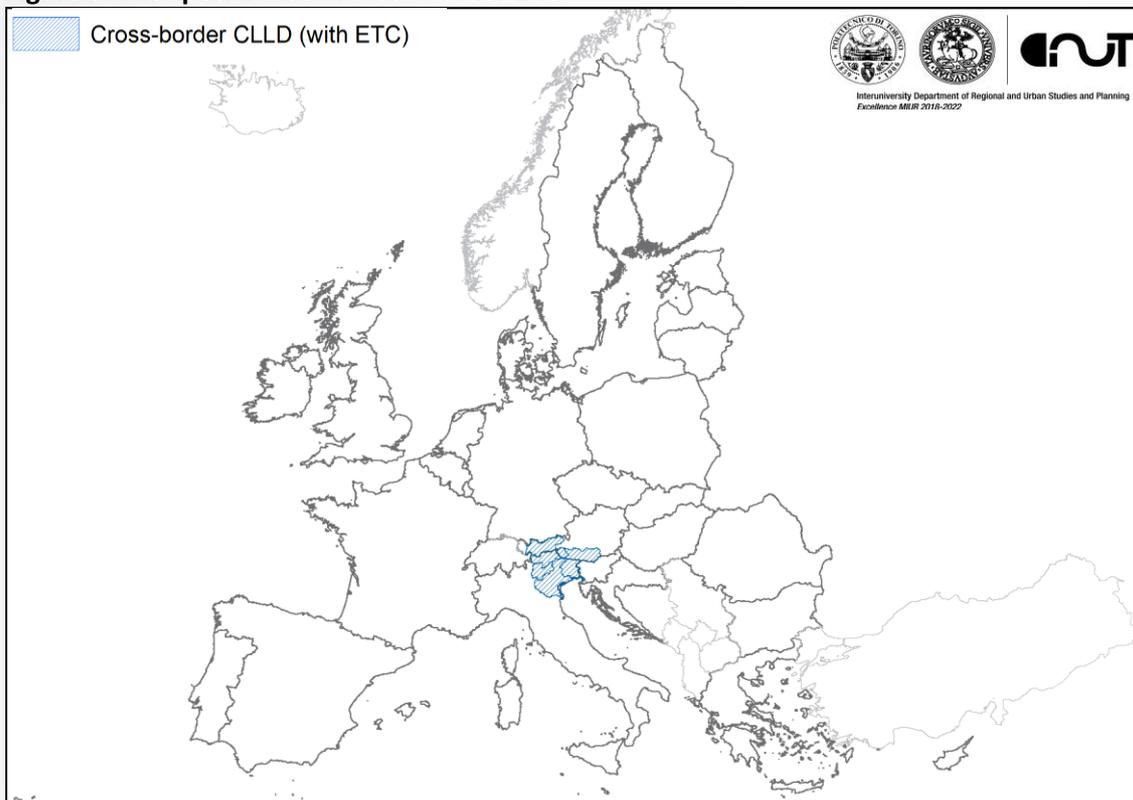
A more articulated map characterises the use of ERDF and ESF when combined together, either just the two of them in a brand-new approach, or integrated with EAFRD and EMFF. As Figure 7 shows, the joint use of only ERDF and ESF can be found in England, Hungary and Romania, in LAGs addressing predominantly urban territories.

A wider integration, with EAFRD as well, occurs in Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Portugal, as well as in one German and two Polish regions and in many LAGs across Sweden. There are also nine ‘best practice’ LAGs, which combine all four ESI Funds, nine of which are in Sweden and one in Poland. These LAGs are mainly dedicated to larger territories in which rural and urban contexts are combined, especially with smaller urban structures.



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Figure 8: The special case of cross-border LAGs



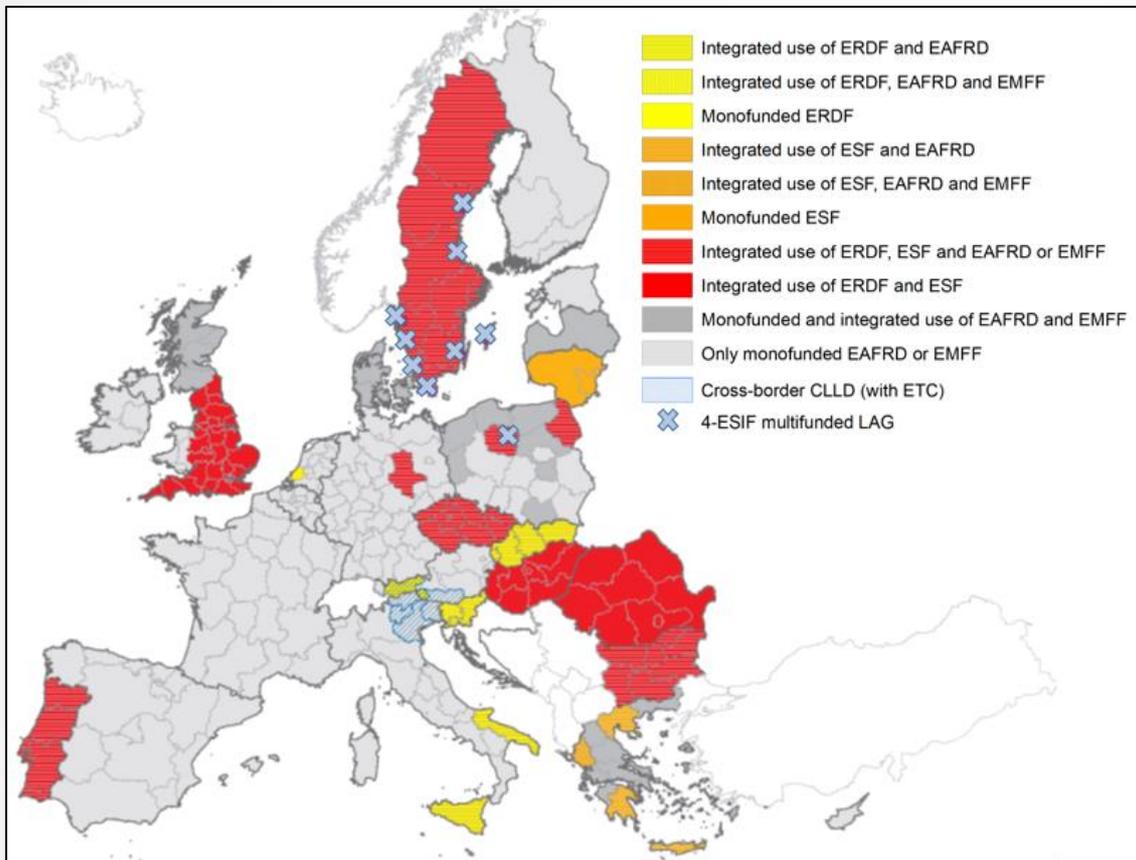
Source of data: Updated version of Servillo L (2019)

In the whole of the EU, there are only four LAGs implementing a cross-border strategy using ERDF (see Figure 8). For more detail, see Section 2.3.



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Figure 9: Overview of all types of ESI Fund combinations for CLLD



Source of data: Updated version of Servillo L (2019).

Figure 9 merges the earlier maps and provides a comprehensive overview of all types of ESI Fund combination that have been applied by LAGs. It shows a **continued prevalence of traditional models**, shown in grey, in the majority of regions in the EU. This is an effect of a compulsory minimum share of funding that needs to be dedicated to CLLD. The voluntary use of other ESI Funds, either monofunded or integrated, is more scattered, with a variety of national and (in a few cases) regional approaches.



2. Some national perspectives

As the maps have shown, it is possible to aggregate the various approaches in terms of attitudes towards the new opportunities provided by the current legislation.

At one side of the range, there are **countries that do not make use of any of the new options** introduced. Ten countries (Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and Spain) only implement CLLD in a traditional mono-Fund way, using either EAFRD or EMFF. Two further countries, Denmark and Latvia, at least combine the two traditional Funds in a number of LAGs.

Then there are **a number of countries that use the new Funds, but only to a limited extent** (e.g. Greece, Lithuania, Netherlands). In Austria and Germany, this is limited to just one federal State each, similar to Italy, where only two regions make use of non-traditional Funds for CLLD.

Several countries make more extensive use. In the United Kingdom, it was left to the devolved administrations to choose their approach and only England decided to make use of both ERDF and ESF. In spite of expanding the range of Funds used, Hungary and Romania maintained the separation between EAFRD and EMFF on one side and Cohesion policy Funds (ERDF and ESF) on the other. In both Bulgaria and Poland, traditional mono-EAFRD LAGs continue to play an important role, but there is a considerable number of LAGs adding ERDF and ESF to rural development funding.

At the other side of the range, there are **countries that pursue a thorough integration of the ESI Funds**. The most comprehensive use of multi-Fund CLLD is implemented in the Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden. Three countries, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. All LAGs makes use of the same Funds, with only minor differences in the Czech Republic (not all LAGs use ESF) and Slovenia (four coastal LAGs also use EMFF). There is a greater diversity of models in Portugal and Sweden, where the ESI Fund mix is more targeted to the specific LAG area.

The following sections briefly illustrate a few national cases from Slovenia, Sweden and Austria.



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2.1 Slovenia

In Slovenia, there are 37 CLLD LAGs (Figure 10) that all have implemented LEADER in the 2007-13 programme period. They all combine ERDF and EAFRD, and four coastal LAGs also include the EMFF. Interestingly, CLLD covers all Slovenian municipalities, including also all 11 cities, where rural areas within the city boundaries are defined as eligible.

Figure 10: CLLD LAGs in Slovenia



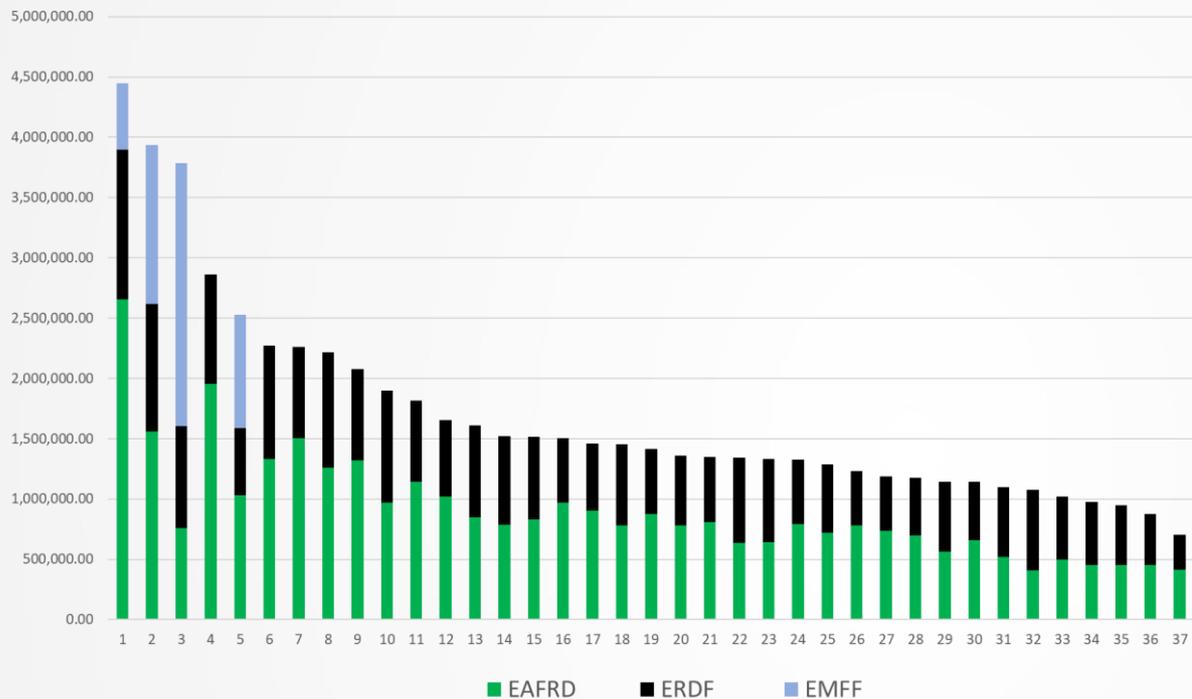
Source: Cunk Perklič A (2019)

There are two national managing authorities involved, one for the ERDF and one for the EAFRD and EMFF, and there are a paying agency and an intermediate body, which are in charge of approving selected operations under EAFRD/EMFF or ERDF, respectively. These four bodies form a CLLD coordination committee that approves the LAGs' local development strategies, ensures the compliance to the national Slovenian decree on CLLD and monitors the implementation of CLLD. In terms of funding, the EAFRD remains dominant in most LAGs (Figure 11).



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Figure 11: ESIF allocation Slovenian LAGs (in €)



Source: Slovenian Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy

The experiences in Slovenia are widely positive, but a number of challenges remain. Policy-makers found the bottom-up approach to be very useful, as local needs can only be defined on the ground by local stakeholders. The multi-Fund model, i.e. adding ERDF to EAFRD and, in some cases, EMFF, gave LAGs to opportunity to address wider regional development issues, not just rural themes. In terms of governance, CLLD also triggered a closer cooperation between the managing authorities responsible for the three ESI Funds.

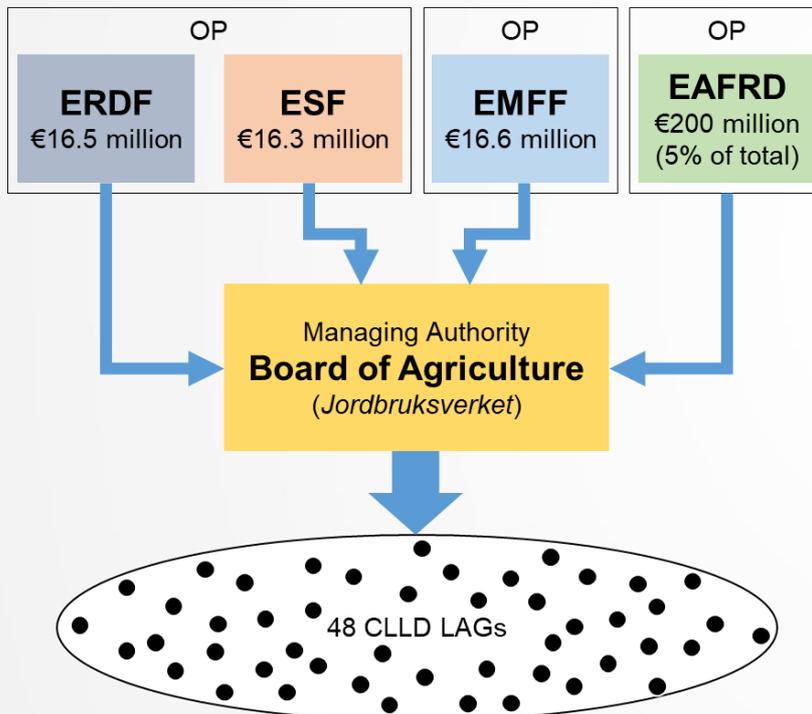
Yet, setting up the CLLD implementation system took a lot of time and created a two-year delay. Also, an additional administrative layer was needed, as the LAGs are not legal entities and could therefore not sign contracts with funding beneficiaries directly. CLLD is characterised by a high number of small-value projects, which creates a lot of administrative effort. Therefore, the use of the European Commission’s Simplified Cost Options became essential.



2.2 Sweden

In Sweden, most LAGs combine two or more ESI Funds. Sweden decided to allow for as much integration as possible by creating a model in which there is one single managing authority (Board of Agriculture, see Figure 12) for all four Funds and where national implementation rules are harmonised.

Figure 12: Joint managing authority for three programmes funding CLLD in Sweden



Source: Kah (2019a), based on Swedish Board of Agriculture

Sweden has 48 LAGs, each with a selection of Funds tailored to their needs. Most LAGs (28) combine ERDF with both EAFRD and ESF, and eight combine all four Funds, while six remain monofunded, either by EAFRD or EMFF only.



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Figure 13: CLLD LAGs in Sweden

Prioriterade områden inom lokalt ledd utveckling 2014 - 2020

- 01 - Tornedalen 2020 - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 02 - Fiskeområde Tornedalen Haparanda skärgård - EHFF
- 03 - Leader Polaris 2020 - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 04 - Spina Mare 2020 - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 05 - Lappland 2020 - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 06 - Leaderområde Vindelälven - EHFF
- 07 - Skellefteå Älvdal - EJFLU, ERUF
- 09 - Leaderområdet Saem - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 10 - Lokalt Ledd Utveckling i Håga kusten: Hämösand, Kramfors, Solettaå och Örnsköldsvik - EJFLU, ERUF
- 11 - Leader Sjö, Skog & Fjäll - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 12 - Leader Mittland Plus - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF, EHFF
- 13 - Utveckling Hälsingbygden - EJFLU, ESF
- 14 - Dalälvarnas utvecklingsområde - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 15 - Leader Gästrikbygden - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF, EHFF
- 16 - Växtlust Värmland - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 17 - Leader Närheten - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 20 - Leader Nedre Dalälven - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 21 - Upplandsbygd - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 22 - Leader Stockholmsbygd - EJFLU, ESF, EHFF
- 23 - Framtidsbygger Dalsland Ärjäng Munkedal - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 24 - Fiskeområde Väneren - EHFF
- 25 - LEADER Mellansjöländet - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 26 - Leader Mälardalen - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 27 - Leader Södermanland - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 28 - Leader Sörmlandskusten - EJFLU
- 29 - Leader Bohuskust och gränsbygd - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF, EHFF
- 30 - Leader södra Bohuslän - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 31 - Långa Göta Älv - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 32 - Göteborgs Inätrike - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 33 - Leader Nordvästra Skaraborg - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 34 - Leader Östra Skaraborg - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 35 - Leader Västern - EHFF
- 37 - Folkungeländ - EJFLU
- 38 - Kustlandet - EJFLU, ERUF
- 39 - Leader Sjuhärad - EJFLU, ESF
- 40 - Leader Västra Småland - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 41 - Astrid Lindgrens Hembygd - EJFLU, ERUF
- 42 - Lokalt Ledd Utveckling Halland - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF, EHFF
- 43 - Leader Linné, Småland - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 44 - Sydost Leader - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF, EHFF
- 46 - Lokalt ledd utveckling Gotland - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF, EHFF
- 47 - Leader Nordvästra Skåne med Öresund - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF, EHFF
- 48 - Leader LAG PH - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 49 - Skånes Ess - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 50 - LLU MittSkåne - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 51 - Lundalund - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 52 - Söderslätt - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF
- 53 - Leader Sydöstra Skåne - EJFLU, ERUF, ESF, EHFF
- Ej prioriterade områden

EJFLU = Jordbruksfonden för landsbygdsutveckling
ERUF = Regionala utvecklingsfonden
ESF = Socialfonden
EHFF = Havs- och fiskerifonden

Kartans numrering kommer uppdateras först, efter den 31 december 2015, när vi vet vilka områden som fått startbesked.

Skapad 2015-04-28



Områden ansökta med havs- och fiskerifonden är markerade med en röd kantlinje och blåa områdesnummer.

Source: Swedish Board of Agriculture

Amarante / Portugal

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In Sweden, the multi-Fund set-up has made the local partnerships broader and allowed the LAGs to explore new areas and themes with LEADER methods. Multi-Fund CLLD also allowed increasing the territorial scope: the ERDF allowed funding bottom-up projects also in towns and smaller cities, areas that were gaps on application maps in the past. The small scale projects under CLLD opens up the ERDF for new, different actors. ERDF-funded projects are smaller than standard ERDF projects in Sweden, but still about 50% larger than EAFRD projects. Yet, the ERDF budget is not only small in absolute terms but also in terms of its relative share. This means that it is difficult to work effectively and create meaningful impacts. Also, some Swedish LAGs missed out on an ERDF share due to limited available funding. Another disadvantage is that the extensive multi-Fund approach in Sweden resulted in quite a complex administrative structure.



2.3 Austria (Tyrol)

The Austrian-Italian cross-border cases represent an original way of complementing different territorial instruments and Funds through a combination of national and cross-border LAGs.

The aim was to activate cross-border strategies supported by different Funds in order to address themes that are shared among the Alpine territories and along the border. However, the different financial and administrative arrangements in the Italian and Austrian regions constituted a major impediment in the construction of the cross-border institution.

Therefore the managing authorities opted for a two-layer structure of sorts (Figure 14), in which the cross-border LAG embeds the national LAGs. The main actors remain the national LAGs, who have the direct management of all the projects. Moreover, their national CLLD strategy includes some additional shared cross-border themes.

The cross-border (CBC) LAGs combine two or three ‘national’ LAGs from both Austria and Italy, whose representatives are formal members of the cross-border LAG. Moreover, one of the Austrian LAGs is also the lead partner, with coordinative function of the cross-border strategy. The four cross-border LAGs (in the grey cells) and their articulation in national LAGs (white cells) are listed in Table 2, which also indicates the lead partners (in bold).

Table 2: Articulation of the four cross-border LAGs

Terra Raetica		CBC AT-IT	
RegioL Regionalmanagement Landeck	AT	Tirol	LP
Regionalmanagement Bezirk Imst	AT	Tirol	
Comunità comprensoriale Val Venosta	IT	Trentino Alto Adige	
Dolomiti Live		CBC AT-IT	
Regionsmanagement Osttirol	AT	Tirol	LP
Bezirksgemeinschaft Pustertal	IT	Trentino Alto Adige	
Gal Alto Bellunese	IT	Veneto	
Heuopen		CBC AT-IT	
LAG Region Hermagor	AT	Carinthia	LP
Open Leader S.Cons. a R.L.	IT	Friuli Venezia Giulia	
Euroleader S.cons.r.l	IT	Friuli Venezia Giulia	
Wipptal		CBC AT-IT	
Verein Regionalmanagement Wipptal	AT	Tirol	LP
Bezirksgemeinschaft Wipptal	IT	Trentino Alto Adige	

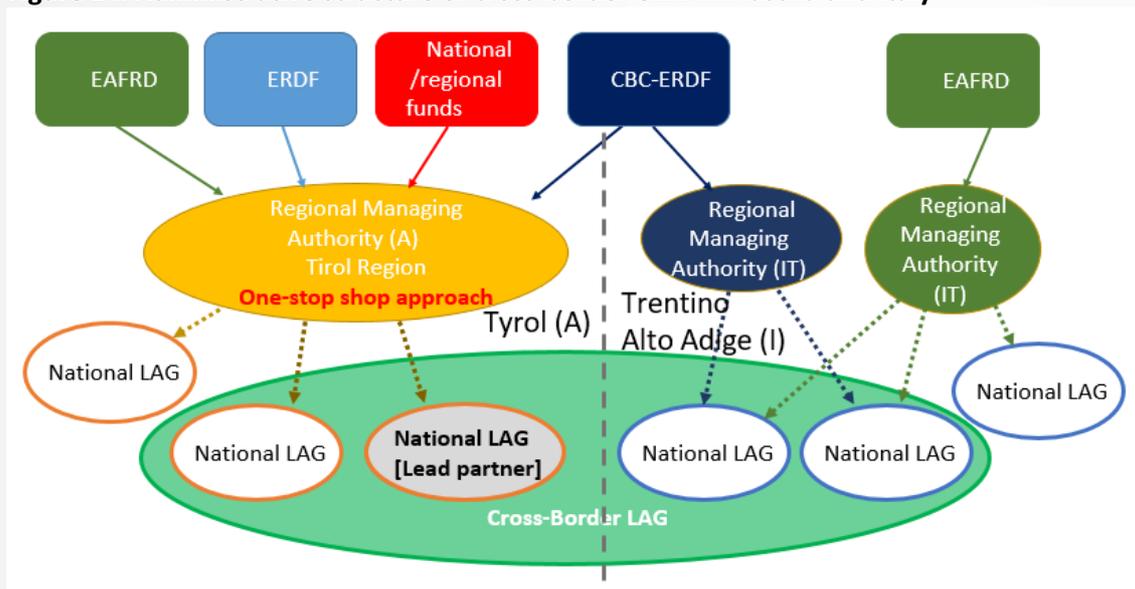
Source: Servillo (2017)

On both sides of the border, the regional authorities frame the activities of ‘national’ LAGs: the Austrian LAGs are multi-funded by EAFRD and ERDF, while the Italian LAGs are



monofunded by EAFRD. The cross-border LAGs are financed by the cross-border ERDF programme. The administrative and financial structure is explained in the scheme in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Administrative structure of cross-border CLLD in Austria and Italy



Source: Servillo (2017)

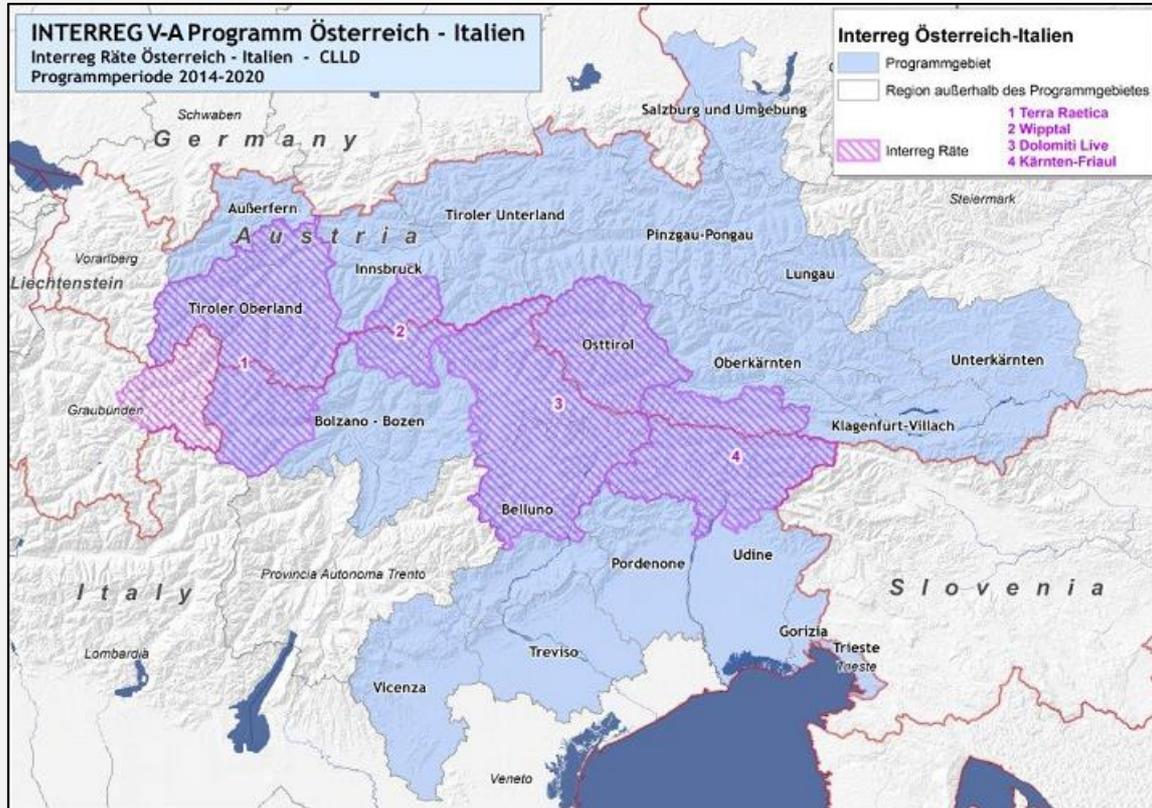
The key territorial actors are the national LAGs, who manage the projects according to their specific strategies. They are also part of the cross-border LAG, and consequently they share a common cross-border strategy and related projects. However, the way of managing the Funds for the implementation of the projects is different in the two countries. In Austria (Tyrol and Carinthia), the cross-border strategies get merged with the national LAGs. In Italy (Bolzano, Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia) the cross-border strategy is managed in addition (or in parallel) to the mono-EAFRD CLLD (former LEADER).

What appears to be crucial is the 'one-stop-shop' approach, as defined by the Tyrol managing authority. It consists of the capacity at regional level to unify the procedures for all the Funds, and to simplify the procedures for the LAGs at local level. The Austrian LAGs are in charge of a strategy that combines interventions supported by different Funds, including cross-border and national ones. Since the integration of the different Funds is operated at regional level, the LAGs have only one interlocutor for the financial implementation of the projects.



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Figure 15: Austrian and Italian territory with cross-border CLLD LAGs



Source: Land Tyrol

In Tyrol, the move from mono-Fund LEADER (EAFRD) in 2007-13 to multi-Fund CLLD (EAFRD and ERDF) in 2014-20 allowed a change of thematic focus. There is now more support for SMEs, innovation, mobility, climate change and protection, rural-urban linkages and social innovation. CLLD also wider benefits, as it enables the bottom-up development of ERDF measures on the ground, not only of EAFRD ones. CLLD also improved the governance at local, regional and national levels, regarding both strategic and implementation aspects. There is a more integrated approach, also helped by the Austrian specificity that ERDF and EAFRD have been under the same Ministry since 2018.



3. Conclusions and recommendations

There are indications that most of the about 20 managing authorities that currently implement **multi-Fund CLLD will continue** to do so. The 2014-20 programme period allowed to make experiences and build capacities and the Member States aim to build on these potentials. Also amongst the LAGs and the various stakeholders involved in CLLD delivery on the ground there is an expectation to have continued access to multiple Funds. An open question is to what extent there will be any new entrants to CLLD.

Looking at the country cases presented earlier, Slovenia plans to **expand the range of ESI Funds used in CLLD**, including the ESF in addition to the EAFRD, EMFF and ERDF. It also plans to give LAGs more responsibilities, particularly for project approval. There are concerns about future CLLD funding beyond EAFRD, where there is a minimum LEADER/CLLD share of 5%. Under current plans, ERDF funding for CLLD will shrink significantly, from currently 3% of the total ERDF allocation to just 1%.

Tyrol (Austria), for instance, plans to **expand the range of themes addressed via CLLD**. One will be the topic of Smart Villages and its with Smart Specialisation processes at Land level. Themes such as climate change, climate adaption and mobility will be further strengthened and the efforts to improve rural-urban linkages will continue. Tyrol also wants to use CLLD to create links between the bioeconomy (EAFRD theme) and circular economy (ERDF theme). Social innovation will remain an important aspect, but any increased emphasis depends on whether the ESF will be willing to participate in CLLD.

In terms of wider main lessons from 2014-20, the experiences are mixed, both those of policy-makers at managing authorities and those LAG managers on the ground. There have been major teething problems and delays in many countries, but now, already towards the end of the programme period, implementation is finally in full flow.

Compared to LEADER, multi-Fund CLLD offers a number of significant advantages.

- It enables a **genuine bottom-up approach**, by offering a broader range of eligible themes due to the use of different Funds with different aims.
- It allows targeting of **urban territories**, something that was not possible before, when LAGs funded by EAFRD and EMFF could exclusively be set up only in rural and maritime areas.
- It increases **synergies** between different policy areas, by facilitating the combination of different funding sources on the ground.
- It brings **simplification** – admittedly mostly for beneficiaries – by making the LAG management a one-stop-shop for a variety of project applicants.
- It creates **economies of scale**, e.g. in relation to communication or marketing efforts, where one LAG management covers a wider range of fields.



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- It allows **capitalising on existing LEADER experience**, which has been able to build up capacities and networks over the course of almost 30 years in some places, and allows new expertise to come in from actors experienced in other ESI Funds.
- It gives LAGs an **increased funding allocation**, which is a rather formal aspect, but can be crucial for LAGs to give them the opportunity to increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

In spite of these obvious benefits, **there remain many challenges and open questions for 2021-27.**

There is going to be a **loss of integration** between the different ESI Funds and policy areas. The Common Provisions Regulation will not cover the EAFRD anymore and the Partnership Agreement will not be compulsory for all Member States and it will not cover rural development programmes anymore.

It will be challenging to **ensure sufficient funding**. The compulsory 5% allocation of EAFRD funding to CLLD (i.e. LEADER) will continue, any funding from ESI Funds will remain at the discretion of each Member State.

In 2014-20, actual CLLD project implementation started very late and these **significant delays** need to be avoided. For 2021-27, Member States will be able to build on existing structures and procedures, and there will be stricter timetables for LAG strategy approval.

Both managing authorities and LAGs feel that the **administrative effort is disproportionate**. Combining different Funds requires dealing with different sets of rules and with different sectoral actors, both at domestic level (e.g. ministries) and EU level (Directorate-Generals).

Policy silos remain, mainly between the rural/fisheries actors on one side and Cohesion Policy actors on the other. Usually, two (or more) different ministries are in charge of different ESI Funds and the persisting mentality of maintaining control over 'own' funding needs to be avoided. Related to this, instead of a framework for genuinely integrated policy delivery, CLLD is still often perceived to be a form of LEADER with some added funding from other sources.

In more practical terms, a number of **recommendations** can be made:

- The multi-Fund CLLD model allows **LAGs to act as one-stop-shops**. This key advantage needs to be facilitated by policy-makers that put a framework in place that allows as much integration as possible.
- To allow for a genuine bottom-up approach, the size of funding needs to be **sufficiently high under each of the Funds involved**. Thereby it can be avoided that strategic LAG choices are made based on funding and not on actual needs on the ground.

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- The general discussion around CLLD needs to move away from regulatory complexities and governance challenges to the **actual policy content and the opportunities** that CLLD offers.
- There should be as much **continuity between programme periods** as possible. Policy-makers can make CLLD work if they can make the most of the capacities and experiences built in the current programme period, both at LAG level and in programme management. Any changes to legal frameworks or governance set-ups cause delays.
- Finally, there could be some framework that allows for an **international exchange of experiences** amongst CLLD actors. There is some important work in this field by the ENRD (focused on the EAFRD) and FARNET (focused on the EMFF), but there are no equivalent structures for ERDF and ESF perspectives. This reduces the chances of the currently prevailing perception of CLLD as LEADER changing in the forthcoming programme period.



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5. Annex

Table 3: Use of ESI Funds by CLLD LAGs in the EU28

Country	Mono EAFRD	Mono EMFF	EAFRD-EMFF	Mono ERDF	Mono ESF	Mono ETC	EAFRD-ERDF	EAFRD-ESF	EMFF-ERDF	EMFF-ESF	ERDF-ESF	EAFRD-EMFF-ERDF	EAFRD-EMFF-ESF	EAFRD-ERDF-ESF	EMFF-ERDF-ESF	All 4	
Austria	69						8										77
Belgium	32																32
Bulgaria	25	9					4	6						29			73
Croatia	54	14															68
Cyprus	4																4
Czech Rep							27							151			178
Denmark	19	3	7														29
Estonia	26	8															34
Finland	55	10															65
France	330	23															353
Germany	298	29												23			350
Greece	14	1	22		1		4				1		10				53
Hungary	103										99						202
Ireland	29	7															36
Italy	168	46	9				23										246
Latvia	29		6														35
Lithuania	46	10	3		23												82
Luxembourg	5																5
Malta	3																3
Netherlands	20			1													21
Poland	251	24	11		7						1			29		1	324
Portugal					1						20			54	12		87
Romania	239	16									37						292
Slovakia							110										110
Slovenia							33						4				37
Spain	251	41															292
Sweden	2	4					3	2					1	28		8	48
UK	129	11	8		3						21						172
CBC AT-IT						4											4
TOT	2201	256	66	1	35	4	208	12	0	0	179	4	11	314	12	9	3312

Source: updated in June 2019, based on Servillo L (2019) 'Tailored polities in the shadow of the state's hierarchy. The CLLD implementation and a future research agenda', *European Planning Studies*, 27:4