

Recommendations from the Southwest FLAGs:

Skills & Resources for FLAG teams

The people behind Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) are arguably the single most important resource that the programme relies on. The work of a FLAG should go beyond simply delivering grants; its added value is an experienced team that can generate projects that would not happen with a top down approach. Ensuring that the right team is in place is therefore fundamental to ensuring that FLAG strategies are successful in making a difference in local communities.

In September 2014, FARNET and Axis 4 Managing Authorities supported a meeting of 40 FLAG representatives from France, Spain and Portugal to discuss lessons learnt during the first period of implementing local development strategies under Axis 4 of the EFF. The following recommendations emerged from group work that analysed the successes and shortfalls of FLAG teams (both staff and FLAG boards) in the 2007-13 period.

Skills & Resources for FLAG staff

Responsible for the day to day running and animation¹ of a Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG), an experienced, capable and properly resourced staff is paramount to generating results. The Southwest FLAGs proposed that FLAG staff need the following skills and experience:

Experience

- Experience in sustainable territorial development
- Knowledge of the fisheries sector
- Knowledge of the local territory
- Technical experience to support project development
- Knowledge of relevant regulations and legislation
- Administrative capacity to manage (EU) public funds



Skills

- Strong communication skills: capacity to listen & understand; patience and objectiveness; negotiation skills and leadership.
- Ability to work in a bottom-up approach: team working; networking; imagination for new solutions; ability to motivate others.
- Dynamic and committed to making a difference: accessible; available; flexible.
- Credibility & legitimacy in the community
- Driving license and mobility

¹ « Animation » is a key part of a FLAG's work and central to the added value that can be gained by implementing development strategies at a local level and by local people. It involves direct outreach to individuals in the community to generate and support new ideas to become concrete projects that contribute to benefiting the local community.

Being experts in such a range of subjects *and* having the skills necessary to communicate ideas and motivate the local community to act is a challenge for a small team. Indeed, several FLAGs underlined the importance of allocating the necessary, specific resources to training on communication skills as in many cases it is not feasible to employ a communications specialist within the FLAG team. At the same time, managing public funds requires attention to rigorous and transparent procedures. FLAGs identified the following key tasks that make up their daily work – along with an approximation of staff resources needed to complete these tasks, expressed in full-time equivalents (FTEs):

Staff Actions & Resources:

- Animation / community mobilisation	0.5 FTEs
- Project development support	0.5 FTEs
- Project analysis & selection	0.5 FTEs
- Networking & Cooperation	0.3 FTEs
- Communication	0.3 FTEs
- Monitoring & Evaluation	0.2 FTEs
- Management & Coordination	0.2 FTEs
- Administration	0.5 FTEs

⇒ 3 full-time staff members

FLAG work will vary from country to country and FLAG to FLAG depending on procedures laid out at national or regional level as well as on the objectives of the FLAG, the budget it manages and the individuals involved. The above recommendations represent a summary of discussions in Barcelona where three out of four working groups recommended a staff of 3 full-time equivalents, while the other group recommended 5 FTEs.

Skills & Resources for FLAG members

The board members of the FLAGs are responsible for driving the local development strategy and have a vital role to play as FLAG ambassadors and experts in their respective sectors. Board members are responsible for decision-making with regards to projects selected for financial support and, as such, need to be keenly aware of the objectives of the FLAG as well as representative of the local community. The Southwest FLAGs proposed that, together, FLAG members should offer:

Fundamental

- Availability & commitment
- Experience & recognition within the local fisheries sector
- Representativeness & influence in different sectors of the local community
- Ability to communicate FLAG objectives and opportunities in the community and to foster dialogue and exchange

Ideal

- Broad range of relevant experience, skills & knowledge
- Balance between men & women; young & veterans
- Political neutrality
- Open minded, curious and holistic vision
- Knowledge of the territory
- Participative and ability to cooperate with others



