



Swedish Association
of Local Authorities
and Regions



Open Days 2012 Workshop:

“Local Development as a key pillar of EU integrated territorial development policies 2014-2020”

Purpose

Inter-disciplinary Workshop aimed at bringing together EU officials, elected representatives from Member States and practitioners to jointly examine the case for Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), as proposed in the new General Regulation. By looking at integrated local development approach we will analyse how the ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMMF can be jointly used to deliver urban, peri-urban and rural development policies under EU Territorial Development policies.

In close cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission, the Council for European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) aims at gathering key players from the Committee of the Regions, European Commission, European Parliament and the Council Presidency. This will be an ideal occasion to take stock of discussions at EU level and, conversely, to discuss how key policy makers and practitioners will enable the new proposals on community led local development to deliver in the next programming period.

Our purpose is to organise the main EU-wide policy discussion event of the Open Days 2012 that will support and complement more specific or geographically focused presentations on local development best practices held elsewhere during the Open Days 2012.

In addition, this event aims to have a particular focus on the development of the "ERASMUS for Local and Regional Elected Representatives" initiative and how it can help deliver strong local ownership of the EU legislative and programming proposals.

Who will be organising it

This conference is a partnership between CEMR, some of its member associations (the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Welsh Local Government Association, the Association of Romanian Municipalities, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, and the associations of Estonian cities and municipalities) and the European Commission Directorates General responsible for the implementation of Community-Led Local Development (DG REGIO, DG EMPL, DG AGRI, DG MARE).

Key questions to be addressed

1. What lessons have been learnt from the 2000-2006 and current programming periods?
2. How can European regional and rural development policies better serve the purpose of local development?
3. Is there a contradiction between the central government and the local views on this?
4. Where are the main challenges and obstacles towards a community led approach for local development? What can EU and national authorities do in order to improve the situation?
5. What are the other forms of cooperation at local level to meet local objectives and needs?

Background

The European Commission's new Regulations propose to fully develop community led local development partnerships. CEMR and its member associations have been actively advocating on this matter in the response to the 5th report on social, economical and territorial cohesion, taking stock of the earlier discussion CEMR and its members organised in November 2011 a first discussion of the proposals in the General Regulation. The Open Days 2012 Workshop will be an unique opportunity to further explore how these provisions will be put into practice in the development of Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes for the 2014-2020 programming period.

The European Commission new common regulation Article 2 Definitions 'local development strategy' means a coherent set of operations to meet local objectives and needs, which contributes to meeting the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and which is implemented in partnership at the appropriate level.

Identifying regional development needs and priorities for investment should also allow the use of different forms of collaboration and partnerships between municipalities (cooperation between municipalities on regional or county level) at the appropriate level. Part Two of the General Regulation of the EU Structural and Local partnerships will be able to define, bottom up, Integrated Local Development Strategies that can be simultaneously supported by ERDF, ESF, EFF and EAFRD. To this purpose common rules are provided for them to facilitate integrated delivery on the ground.

In that regard the Council of European Municipalities and Regions as the largest representative voice of local governments in Europe particularly welcomes the opportunity to organize a high level political debate during Open Days 2012 to discuss different forms of collaboration and partnerships between municipalities (cooperation between municipalities on regional or county level) at the appropriate level.

The case for Local Development now extends to the European Social Fund and it will link with the already successful experience of LEADER in the EAFRD.

Definition

The Commission developed the ideas originally proposed in the Barca report: “the solution to local problems requires the contribution of local actors and local resources: an area-based strategy is essential as it “promotes the supply of integrated goods and services tailored to contexts, and it triggers institutional changes. In a place-based policy, public interventions rely on local knowledge and are verifiable and submitted to scrutiny, while linkages among places are taken into account”.

This establishes a larger focus on the development of the surrounding local environment rather than solely on the specific target group of activity to be addressed. For instance, rather than aiming only at increasing the number of local businesses, it focuses on the wider local conditions that stimulate/refrain economic performance. Hence, Local Development places a larger focus on the impact of institutional performance, characteristics of civil society and social capital on the performance of regional economies.

Furthermore, activating local partnerships in a bottom-up strategy, multi-level cooperation, local networking and capacity building are its main tools. Many territorial and social policies promoted by the European Union both during the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 programming periods adopted a local development approach to better achieve the expected outcomes.

The story so far

The review of the pre-2006 and the evidence already gathered during this period showed that the mainstreaming of the local development initiatives into the operational programmes has not provided the expected results. Following the so-called Kiruna paper published in late 2009, a local development study fleshed out this concept further in March 2010. This resulted in Local Development being proposed in the 5th Cohesion Report, alongside a new urban, rural-urban and functional area approaches as new drivers of the policy at sub-regional level.

DG REGIO has, however, continued working on this concept and is currently undertaking a study on Local Development to achieve a common and clear definition of local development and operational recommendations on how and when local development could be used to deliver Cohesion Policy and how to monitor and evaluate the effects of local development interventions on economic, social and territorial cohesion at regional and national level.

The Commission's Proposal

This process resulted in the new General Regulation covering the ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF tabled on 6th October 2011 to contain, for the first time, common provisions for Community-led local development that can be delivered through a combination of all these funds (Chapter II, Part II, Art. 28-30 CPR). The EC proposes to focus on specific sub-regional territories and local development projects led by local action groups. These would be composed of local authorities and representatives of the public and private local socio-economic interests, and would develop and implement integrated local development strategies. Local Development will also be integrated as it will be supported by the Structural Funds, EAFRD and EMFF, with one of them acting as lead fund.

This meeting wants to take stock of the state of negotiations at EU level of this discussion and, on a more practical level, how local, regional and national authorities are putting these provisions in place in the Partnership Agreement and the Operational Programmes. The specific focus is precisely to explore how far local communities can exploit the potential of this concept and to help EU institutions and practitioners to increase their understanding of how the local level assesses its value for the post-2013 programmes. In close cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission Regional Policy Directorate General, CEMR, as the largest representative body of local government in Europe, is aiming to organise a high level discussion bringing key policymakers and practitioners that enable the new proposals community-led Local Development feature highly in the delivery of the next programming period.

In so doing our aim is to make this meeting the main EU-wide policy discussion event of the Open Days that will support and complement more specific or geographically focused presentations on local development best practices held elsewhere during the Open Days 2012.

In cooperation with:

