



IRISH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK POSITION PAPER

Legislative Package of EU Regional, Employment and Social Policy proposals for 2014 – 2020:

The proposal for the EU Legislative Package for the next Multiannual Financial Framework was published by the Commission on 6th Oct 2011. It outlines the key structural instruments to be used to channel funding support to member states for 2014 - 2020. It makes provision for a period of consultation with member states and key partners within states to help shape the next round of EU Funds. In this context ILDN has produced a position paper highlighting initial observations in relation LEADER & other Community-led Funds which are delivered by Local Development Companies.

Summary of key points:

1. 'LEADER' as a percentage of the EAFRD

ILDN would urge that the LEADER element of the RDP in Ireland be retained at the 10% level, reflecting the needs of rural communities and the impact of the recession on rural areas.

2. Local Development Companies are the most effective delivery structure and the 'LEADER' approach is the most successful.

ILDN welcomes European Commission support:-

- a. "Responsibility for the implementation of local development strategies should be given to local action groups representing the interests of the community, as an essential principle" (p.17 (21)).*
- b. Commitment "to strengthen Community-led initiatives, facilitate the implementation of integrated local development strategies, based on the LEADER approach" (5.1.5, P. 9)*
- c. Commitment to continue to use the local legally constituted multi-partner board structure (LDCs) for delivery of local development strategies.*

3. The potential to apply the 'LEADER' approach to other EU funds

The Commission's draft document states that "The CSF Funds need to address multiple development needs at sub-regional and local level. To facilitate the implementation of multi-dimensional and cross-sectoral interventions, the Commission proposes to strengthen community-led initiatives, facilitate the implementation of integrated local development strategies and the formation of local groups, based on the LEADER approach."

Article 29 (3), states where it is "...determined that the implementation of local development strategy selected requires support from more than one Fund, a lead Fund may be designated".

ILDN recommends early and active engagement between the Commission, relevant government departments and ILDN in order to ensure maximum impact of the full suite of EU funding. This will facilitate the design of workable Community-led programmes which better meet needs and are implementable.

4. The common provisions governing all EU structural Funds covered by the ‘Common Strategic Framework’ reinforce the commitment to Community-led, bottom up approaches using what the EU refers to as ‘multi-level governance’ arrangements. These are:

- a. “general principles of support such as partnership and multi-level governance”.
- b. to “ensure the ownership of planned interventions by stakeholders and build on the experience and know-how of relevant actors”.
- c. “to strengthen Community-led initiatives, facilitate the implementation of integrated local development strategies”

ILDN recommends that moves which could weaken this approach in Ireland need to be strongly resisted through robust EU programme fund criteria i.e. recognition of the Local Development model as a separate and distinct multi-governance model which works alongside the state to develop local strategies that:

- Develop integrated local approaches that stimulate the uptake of public programmes
- Influence the targeting of public programmes to better meet local needs
- Combine public programmes with innovative local initiatives and in so doing, provide a crucial brokerage function or ‘glue’ to bring local, national and European actors and resources together.
- Stimulate public and private sector activity and initiatives which counteract market failure and support making communities sustainable.