# Aquaculture Funding Guidance Sheets

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>FUND</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fishery Local Action Groups</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Acronym:</strong> FLAGs</td>
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## Fund synopsis

**Type**
European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI)

**Scale**
European (2014 – 2020) but with UK-centrally held funds

**Fund amount**
UK FLAGs 2007 - 2013. Total budget €20.7 million (£15 million). 50/50 split between EFF and national funding. (Individual FLAG funding depending on the size and needs of the area in question).

## Fund purpose

### Overview

Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) 2007 - 2013 provided support for the sustainable development of fisheries areas. It supported measures to promote economic diversification and an improved quality of life in areas affected by decline in fishing activities. An important innovation element in the implementation of Axis 4 was the emphasis on encouraging and mobilising local actors from all sectors to work together as partners through a Fishery Local Action Group (FLAG).

**FLAGs** are established to design and implement integrated local development strategies. All current FLAGs have applied to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to deliver benefits for the fishery and aquaculture sectors in their area. In February 2014, there were 312 FLAGs across Europe, involving thousands of stakeholders. In the UK alone, there were 23 different FLAG partnerships ([see map](#)), which together have delivered 346 separate projects across the UK, as of October 2014.

FLAGs are partnerships between fisheries actors and other local private and public stakeholders. Together, they design and implement a bottom-up strategy that fits and addresses their area’s needs to increase economic, social and environmental welfare.

In the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014 – 2020, the EU is looking for FLAGs to build on the [Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) approach](#) that is central to this funding stream. This [CLLD approach](#) was previously developed through the LEADER programme but now represents the backbone of many of the projects the FLAGs are looking to develop. FLAGs are the CLLD ‘brand’ for fisheries.

The majority of current FLAGs are looking to reapply for FLAG status in the next funding period (2014 – 2020) but they will need to demonstrate how they qualify. More questions and answers about FLAGs can be found through the [Fisheries Areas Network (FARNET)](#) who supports much of the delivery of FLAGs across Europe.

### Aims and objectives

FLAGs aim to improve the sustainable development of fisheries sectors in a given area by working through public-private partnerships at the local level. Each FLAG manages a budget to support a range of projects proposed and delivered by a wide variety of local stakeholders.
The FLAGs we have contacted would welcome approaches from the aquaculture sector(s) in their area with either new project ideas, or as partners in other ongoing projects.

**Priorities**

There are four key priority theme areas for the FLAG network to deliver:

- **Adding value to fisheries products**: sales and short-circuits; new products; support to businesses; promotion and awareness-raising
- **Diversification of businesses**: tourism; by-products; new activities and products
- **Environment, culture and society**: environment; culture and fisheries heritage; society and fishing communities; infrastructure
- **Governance and management**: working with fisheries organisations; working with other local actors; working with protected areas; delivery models

Each FLAG will have its own separate list of priorities related to the regional strategies they have developed for fisheries and aquaculture. Research these priorities for your own relevant FLAG. The links above provide access to good practice examples of projects in all the four key priority themes.

**Proposed supportable activities**

With many FLAGS up and running, there is a growing number of project examples which can inspire other good practices or provide potential partners for transnational cooperation.

**How does it work?**

At the beginning of the funding period 2007-2013, the FARNET Support Unit collected a number of examples and guidance documents intended to help Managing Authorities (MAs) and FLAGS implement Axis 4. Although most of these documents were developed in 2008 - 2010, some of them can still be useful in preparing CLLD in fisheries areas in the 2014 - 2020 period. FARNET have re-arranged the existing material to be a source of information to MAs and FLAGs who are preparing for the new funding period. FARNET intend to add new tools as and when they become available. Take a look at the map of current FLAGS in the UK, if there is one near you, contact them directly to see if they are intending to reapply for FLAG status in 2014 - 2020. From there, you will be able to access their Strategic Plan that will be the framework upon which all projects will be considered and developed. You will need to register directly with them.

The MMO holds the central pot of funds from which all FLAGs are funded. Each FLAG will be able to support you with the development of your project ideas, provide advice about how to make a grant application, and will administer the grants for suitable projects. The funding for each FLAG is then awarded for each project on merit. Each FLAG has its own local partnership agreements with both EU Funds and other monies from private, public or regional sources.

It is likely that you will need to be able to fund the project delivery up-front and reclaim the finance through your FLAG. These rules may change in the next funding period, so stay tuned to your local FLAG for more information on this and how to apply in 2015.

Tools available on the FARNET website can help you find out more about how to prepare for working with the FLAG in your area.

**Grant (the full UK grant will be confirmed in 2015)**

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<tr>
<th><strong>Size of grant</strong></th>
<th>Each UK FLAG has its own funding arrangements and you will need to research these with the help of your local FLAG representatives.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Restrictions</strong></td>
<td>All projects must be match-funded, and you are not able to use other EU funding streams as match funding. Projects should be in place before you apply for funding (under current rules). You will not be able to fund: road-going vehicles; repairs and maintenance; actions to meet statutory requirements; wages of the applicant; standard computers and software; ICT used for commercial fishing; product or service branding or rebranding; purchases through hire purchase.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Match funding</strong></td>
<td>Each FLAG may have its own match funding framework, but for illustration, the North Devon FLAG provides 60% of funds for voluntary and community projects, and 40 - 50% for businesses and business groups (i.e. as an aquaculture business, if your project is for the benefit of your company, you will need to find at least 50% of the finance yourself).</td>
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## Guide to eligibility

### Overview
To qualify for FLAG funding, you are likely to be one of the following:

- A project related to fish, fishing, maritime activity or benefiting the marine environment
- A business trading address that is within the relevant FLAG catchment area; a set of accounts will be needed if you have been trading for over 12 months; a cash-flow forecast and evidence of financial viability will be needed

### Exceptions and restrictions
Each FLAG will provide information on any exemptions and restrictions on those wishing to apply. Please look at the restrictions on the funds themselves (Grant section above) for more information.

### Industry involvement
FLAG represent an interesting and, as yet, under-developed opportunity for the aquaculture industry. It is important to contact your local FLAG to see if they are welcoming approaches from aquaculture. You may well be the first in your area. You will need to be interested in the strategic development of your local area as well as your own business interests as FLAG projects require an element of CLLD.

### Stakeholder involvement
FLAGs depend on wide stakeholder engagement, and you will need to register your interest with the central FLAG network initially. Most projects will require an element of cooperation with other sectors and actors in your area, so you need to be open to this way of working if FLAG funding is going to work for your business.

### Contact details for applicants

#### Managing Authority
The MMO and Defra manage the FLAG projects overall (Each FLAG must apply to the MMO directly to obtain their own pot of funding). Each FLAG will then have its own administering body and support networks. You will need to contact these directly for more information in your area.

#### Contact details
Please visit the FARNET website for a list of all UK contacts for each FLAG. Follow this link to their website or visit the FLAG contacts pages.

### Useful websites and where to go for other information

#### European Commission
Beginners Guide to EU Funding

#### FARNET
The home of all information on FLAGs in the EU

#### UK
- Marine Management Organisation central funding pages,
- Information on Axis 4 and FLAGS in Scotland
- FLAG review for Wales
- NI FLAGs
- Central UK Government information on applying for EFF monies. We expect this to be updated for the new round of funding in the EMFF