

6. The authority of the Lead Fund shall provide the authorities of other Funds with information necessary to monitor and make payments in accordance with the rules set out in the Fund-specific Regulations.

Article 32

Community-led local development strategies

1. The relevant managing authorities shall ensure that each strategy referred to in point (c) of Article 31(2) sets out the following elements:

- (a) the geographical area and population covered by that strategy;
- (b) the community involvement process in the development of that strategy;
- (c) an analysis of the development needs and potential of the area;
- (d) the objectives of that strategy, including measurable targets for results, and related planned actions;
- (e) the management, monitoring and evaluation arrangements, demonstrating the capacity of the local action group to implement that strategy;
- (f) a financial plan, including the planned allocation from each Fund, and also, where appropriate, the planned allocation from the EAFRD and each programme concerned.

It may also contain types of measures and operations to be financed by each affected Fund.

2. The relevant managing authorities shall define criteria for the selection of those strategies, set up a committee to carry out this selection and approve the strategies selected by that committee.

3. The relevant managing authorities shall complete the first round of selection of strategies and ensure the local action groups selected can fulfil their tasks set out in Article 33(3) within 12 months of the date of the decision approving the programme or, in the case of strategies supported by more than one Fund, within 12 months of the date of the decision approving the last programme concerned.

4. The decision approving a strategy shall set out the allocation of each Fund and programme concerned and set out the responsibilities for the management and control tasks under the programme or programmes.

Article 33

Local action groups

1. Local action groups shall design and implement the strategies referred to in point (c) of Article 31(2).

2. The managing authorities shall ensure that the local action groups are inclusive, and that they either select one partner within the group as a lead partner in administrative and financial matters or come together in a legally constituted common structure.

3. The following tasks shall be carried out exclusively by the local action groups:

- (a) building the capacity of local actors to develop and implement operations;
- (b) drawing up a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and criteria, which avoids conflicts of interest and ensures that no single interest group controls selection decisions;
- (c) preparing and publishing calls for proposals;
- (d) selecting operations and fixing the amount of support and presenting the proposals to the body responsible for final verification of eligibility before approval;
- (e) monitoring progress towards the achievement of objectives of the strategy;
- (f) evaluating the implementation of the strategy.

4. Where local action groups carry out tasks not covered by paragraph 3 that fall under the responsibility of the managing authority, or of the paying agency where the EAFRD is selected as a Lead Fund, these local action groups shall be identified by the managing authority as intermediate bodies in accordance with the Fund-specific rules.

5. The local action group may be a beneficiary and may implement operations in accordance with the strategy, provided that the local action group ensures that the principle of separation of functions is respected.

Article 34

Support from Funds for community-led local development

1. The Member State shall ensure that support from the Funds for community-led local development covers:
 - (a) capacity building and preparatory actions supporting the design and future implementation of the strategy;
 - (b) the implementation of operations, including cooperation activities and their preparation, selected under the strategy;
 - (c) the management, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and its animation, including the facilitation of exchanges between stakeholders;
2. The support referred to under point (a) of paragraph 1 shall be eligible regardless of whether the strategy is subsequently selected for funding.

The support referred to under point (c) of paragraph 1 shall not exceed 25 % of the total public contribution to the strategy.

CHAPTER III

Technical assistance

Article 35

Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission

1. At the initiative of the Commission, the Funds may support preparatory, monitoring, control, audit, evaluation, communication including corporate communication on the political priorities of the Union, visibility and all administrative and technical assistance actions necessary for the implementation of this Regulation and, where appropriate, with third countries.
2. The actions referred to in paragraph 1 may include in particular:
 - (a) assistance for project preparation and appraisal;
 - (b) support for institutional strengthening and administrative capacity-building for the effective management of the Funds;
 - (c) studies linked to the Commission's reporting on the Funds and the cohesion report;
 - (d) measures related to the analysis, management, monitoring, information exchange and implementation of the Funds, as well as measures relating to the implementation of control systems and technical and administrative assistance;
 - (e) evaluations, expert reports, statistics and studies, including those of a general nature, concerning the current and future operation of the Funds;
 - (f) actions to disseminate information, support networking where appropriate, carry out communication activities with particular attention to the results and added value of support from the Funds, and to raise awareness and promote cooperation and exchange of experience, including with third countries;
 - (g) the installation, operation and interconnection of computerised systems for management, monitoring, audit, control and evaluation;
 - (h) actions to improve evaluation methods and the exchange of information on evaluation practices;
 - (i) actions related to auditing;
 - (j) the strengthening of national and regional capacity regarding investment planning, funding needs, preparation, design and implementation of financial instruments, joint action plans and major projects;
 - (k) the dissemination of good practices in order to assist Member States to strengthen the capacity of the relevant partners referred to in Article 8(1) and their umbrella organisations.