

Community Led Local Development

Guidance Note: Document Retention

What is it and why is it important?





CLLD Document Retention

Introduction

One of the requirements when you receiving European funding is that you will need to keep **all** your project documentation for several years after the project finishes. In the case of the CLLD programme, you will need to keep everything until December 2033.

Why do I need to keep everything for so long?

There are often several audits associated with funded projects; these could be carried out by the funder, by the national body auditing them or by European auditors. The latter of these can take place several years after a project has finished. So make sure you keep and store your documents in a way that will be easy to find and follow at a later date.

What will I be required to keep?

It is probably safer to keep everything related to your project but here is a list of the most common documents you will have to keep:

- Financial documents e.g. invoices, receipts, bank statements, cheque stubs, cash books, salary and payroll records;
- Output documents e.g. beneficiary and output forms, evidence collected from beneficiaries to confirm they are eligible for support from your project;
- Evidence that you procured goods and services in a fair and transparent way (e.g. advertising, quotes, tenders, scoring etc.)
- Match funding e.g. letters from other funders, grant agreements from other funders, bank statements showing funding received;
- Publicity e.g. photos, leaflets, posters, press releases, press articles, screen shots of websites etc.;
- Evidence of what you did to promote equal opportunities and environmental sustainability;
- Evidence that State Aid rules have been met e.g. declarations from businesses, letters issued to businesses;
- Grant Agreement with us, copies of all the claims and forms submitted to us.

Ideally, you need to keep originals of all documents. If it is not possible, you can keep copies but they need to be certified as a true copy of the original. The easiest way to do this is to write the following statement on the copy:

I certify that this is a true copy of the original document.

Signed:

Date:

Name and surname:

Position in the organisation:

Name of the organisation:



Electronic documents are acceptable as evidence but will also need to be kept for as long as any paper documents. Electronic documents might include scans of original documents (they will need to be certified as true copies – as explained above) or documents that exist in electronic version only e.g. a spreadsheet with a project budget.

If you are likely to have any electronic documents you will need to make sure that equipment and software is maintained so that the files can be accessed several years later. If the files contain personal or sensitive information about ESF participants you need to make sure they are stored securely for the retention period in the same way you did during your project delivery.

I think the timescale may be a problem for my organisation

If you think you will be unable to keep all of the necessary records for the required length of time, let the team know and we will discuss the possibility of us archiving them at no cost to you.

What do I do next?

Once you have an idea about where your match funding will come from, contact your local facilitator and they will help you develop your plan.

The official stuff

We have tried to set out sufficient information in these guidance notes for you to be able to work up your project but if you would like to read the information on document retention issued by the funder, follow the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-fundsdocument-retention>