European Network for Rural Development

LEADER LAG Survey 2017

Working Paper

Findings at Member State level

Member State: Austria

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Introduction

The ENRD Contact Point (ENRD CP) launched a survey of LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) in November 2017 to explore on the ground experiences of implementing LEADER from the LAG perspective. Drawing on the ENRD LAG database over 2,200 LAGs were contacted and 710 confidential responses were received from 27 EU Member States making this the largest and most comprehensive LEADER survey conducted. LAGs from 19 national and 70 regional Rural Development Programme (RDP) 'territories' responded. Germany, France, Spain, Czech Republic and Austria provided over 50% of the total responses.

The online survey included 38 questions in four sections and the questionnaire was provided in six languages. Each section addressed several key themes. The main chapters of this report follow the structure of the questionnaire and are as follows:

1. Basic LAG data.
2. LEADER principles.
3. LEADER operation.
4. LEADER improvements.

This working paper has been prepared by the ENRD Contact Point and its content does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission. The order of results presented for each question is consistent with the ranking from the EU level report to enable direct comparison Please note that this report **does not present a comparative analysis** but where clear and significant differences are evident between the Member State LAG responses and the overall survey sample these have been highlighted.

In this paper all references to LAGs relate specifically to those LAGs who responded to the survey.

Explanatory points

The questionnaire used a multiple choice format allowing respondents to choose the answers most appropriate to their LAG's circumstances. The text of some questions has been simplified in the charts that follow. The full text of each question and all possible answers are listed in the sections below.

The total number of responses for each question is recorded individually as response levels varied between questions throughout the survey.

Questions three, five and six of the original questionnaire are not relevant for this paper being primarily for survey management and have been omitted. Where necessary a limited level of data cleaning has been undertaken to ensure consistency and correct obvious errors.

Please note that there is a degree of variation in the number of responses by RDP and question. Where relevant this should be taken into account when considering or interpreting the wider implications of the findings for some questions. It is not possible to reflect regional RDP differences e.g. the date of RDP approval although this may explain some of the variations within regionalised Member State responses. For example, the date of RDP approval will influence the timing of LAG selection and approval and subsequent LAG actions.

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Basic Implementation Data

Question 1

Please select your country

- Austria (AT)
- 44 LAGs responded, representing 6.2% of total LAG responses
- 57% of AT LAGs responded to the survey

Total Number of Responses 44

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Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- AT has one national RDP.

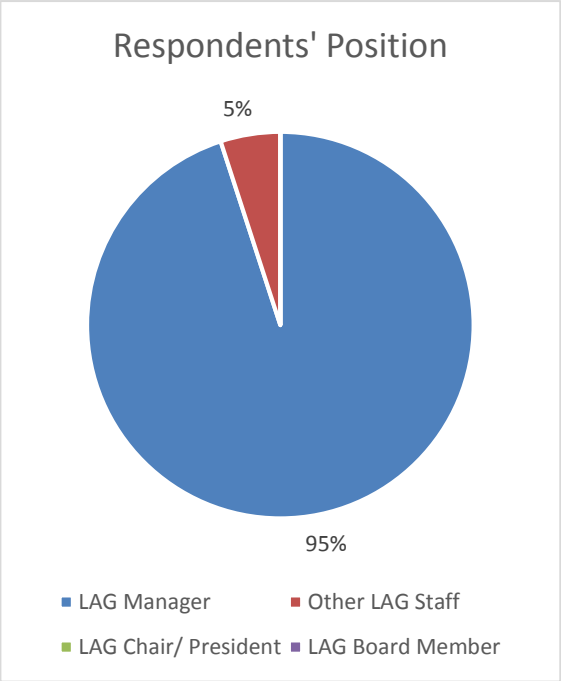
Total Number of Responses 44

Question 4

Respondents were asked to identify which position they held within the LAG.

- LAG Manager
- Other LAG staff
- LAG Chair /President
- LAG Board Member

Total Number of Responses 44



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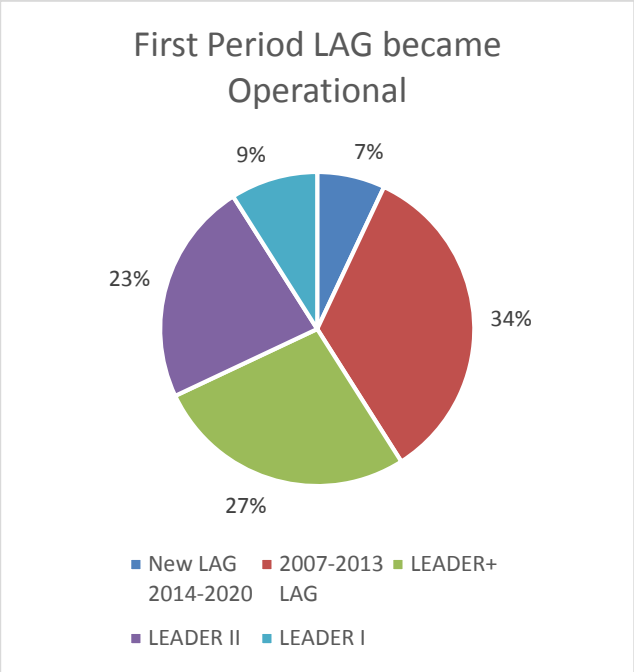
Question 7

In which period did your LAG first begin its operation? Please select the option that applies to you. (i.e. point from where there is a significant degree of continuity in membership or territory)

- Newly established LAG (2014-2020 Programming Period)
- the 2007-2013 Programming Period
- LEADER+
- LEADER II
- LEADER I

Total Number of Responses 44

- Austrian LAG responses included a larger proportion of older LAGs than the EU sample average.
- Only 7% of respondent LAGs in Austria were 'Newly established' as opposed to 22% for the EU.
- The largest grouping of LAGs, 34% began operation during the 2007-2013 Programme. This mirrors the EU position.



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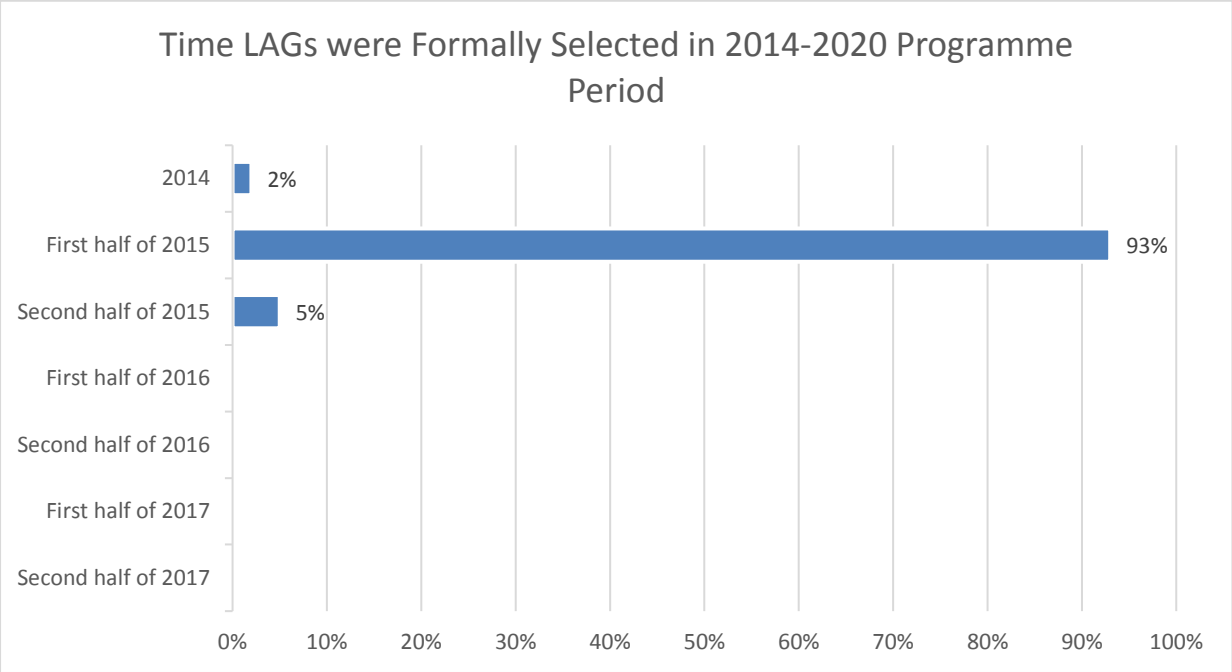
Question 8

When was your LAG formally selected in this (2014-2020) Programming Period?

- 2014
- First half of 2015 (Jan – June)
- Second half of 2015 (July – December)
- First half of 2016
- Second half of 2016
- First half of 2017
- Second half of 2017

Total Number of Responses 44



- At EU level 59% of LAGs responding had been selected by the end of 2015 as opposed to 98% of Austrian LAGs.

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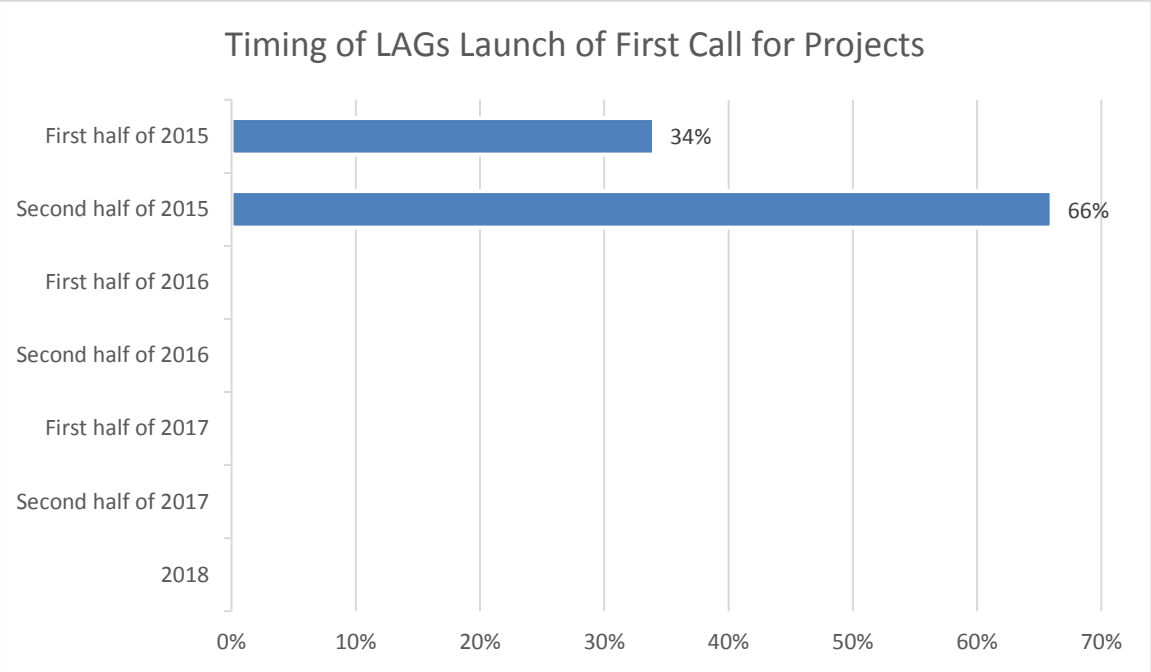
Question 9

When did / will your LAG first launch a call for projects?

- First half of 2015
- Second half of 2015
- First half of 2016
- Second half of 2016
- First half of 2017
- Second half of 2017
- 2018

Total Number of Responses 44



- All responding LAGs in Austria had launched a project call by the end of 2015 compared to 32% of the EU respondents.

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LAG Funding

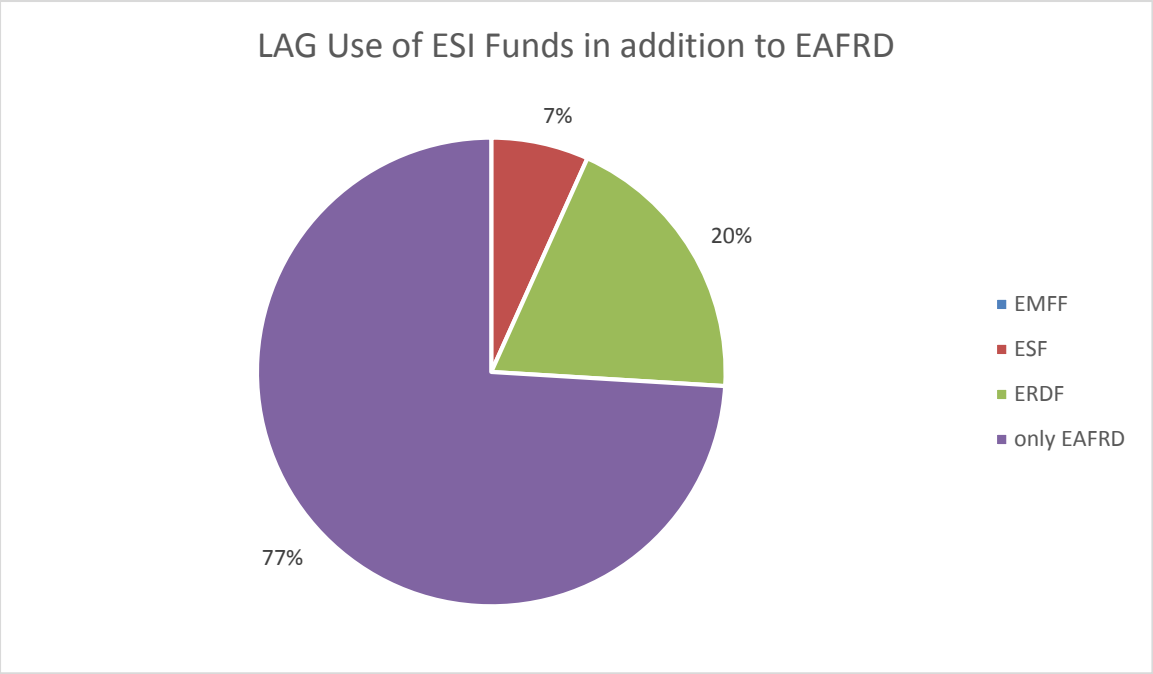
Question 10

Please select all the European Structural and Investment Funds that your LAG uses to financing your Local Development Strategy (in addition to EAFRD).

- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- None of the above (only EAFRD)

It should be noted that the percentages below sum up to more than 100% reflecting LAGs use of multiple funds.

Total Number of Responses 44



- A smaller proportion of Austrian LAGs who responded report using multiple funds (27%) than at EU level (33%). The percentage of Austrian LAGs using ESF was lower than in the EU sample (7% vs 16%) and also for ERDF (20% vs 25%).

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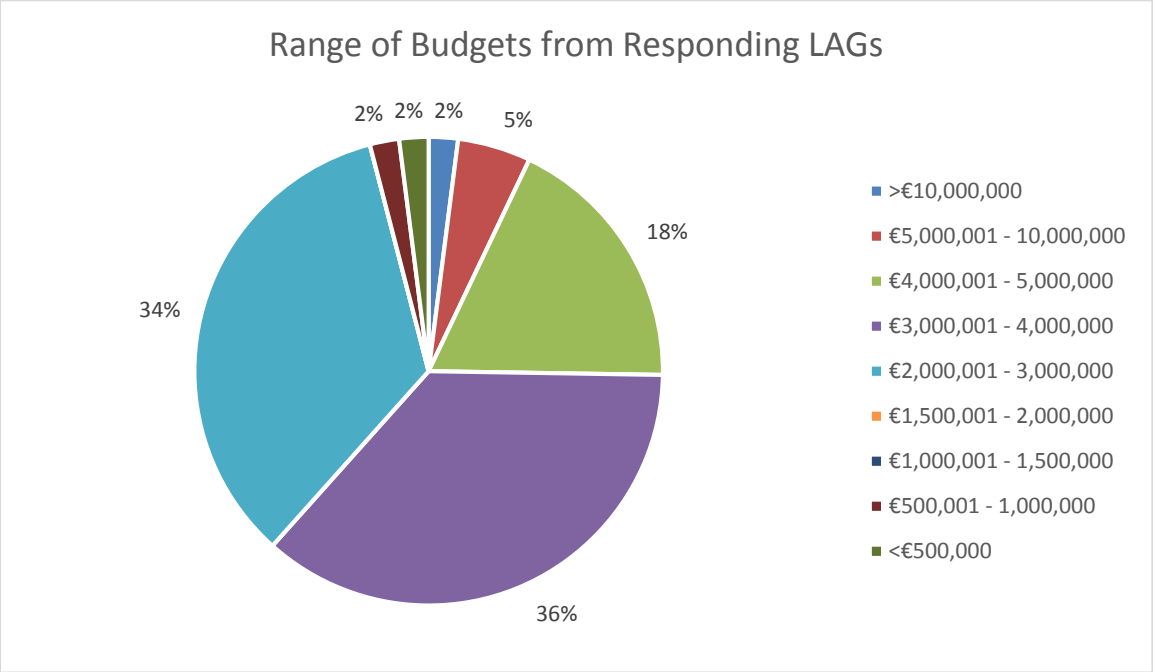
Question 11

What is your LAG budget (total public expenditure Euro, i.e. EAFRD plus all other EU and domestic public funds) for the 2014-2020 Programming Period? Please provide your best estimate if data are not available.

- < €500,000
- €500,001 – 1,000,000
- €1,000,001 – 1,500,000
- €1,500,001 – 2,000,000
- €2,000,001 – 3,000,000
- €3,000,001 – 4,000,000
- €4,000,001- 5,000,000
- €5,000,001 – 10,000,000
- >€10,000,000

Total Number of Responses 44



- 61% of Austrian LAGs who responded had total public expenditure budgets in excess of €3m, 51% of EU LAGs responding had budgets in excess of €3m.
- 95% of Austrian LAGs had budgets exceeding €2m as opposed to 73% of the EU level responses.

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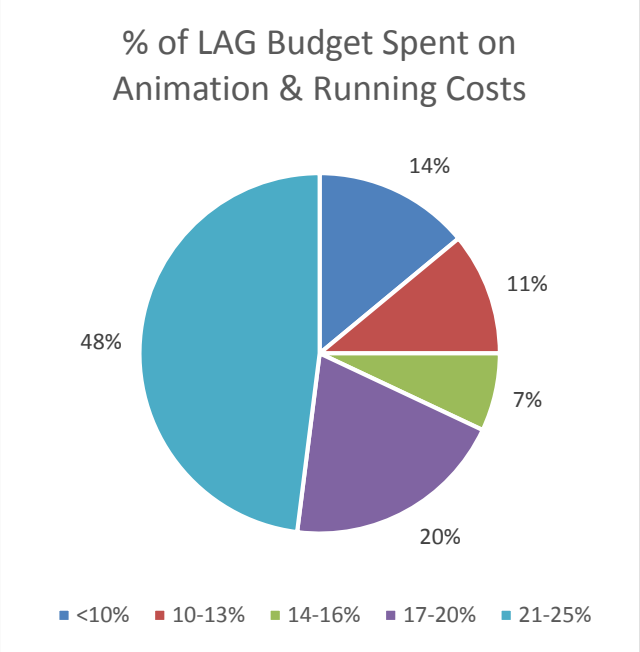
Question 12

What % of this total LAG budget is allocated to running costs and animation?

- < 10%
- 10 – 13%
- 14 – 16%
- 17 – 20%
- 21 -25%



Total Number of Responses 44

- The proportion of Austrian LAGs who report a running costs and animation budget allocation of over 17% is slightly higher (68% of LAGs) than that for the EU (64%).
- A larger proportion of Austrian LAGs (48%) reported that their running costs and animation allocation is above 21% of total LAG budget than is reported at EU level (31%).

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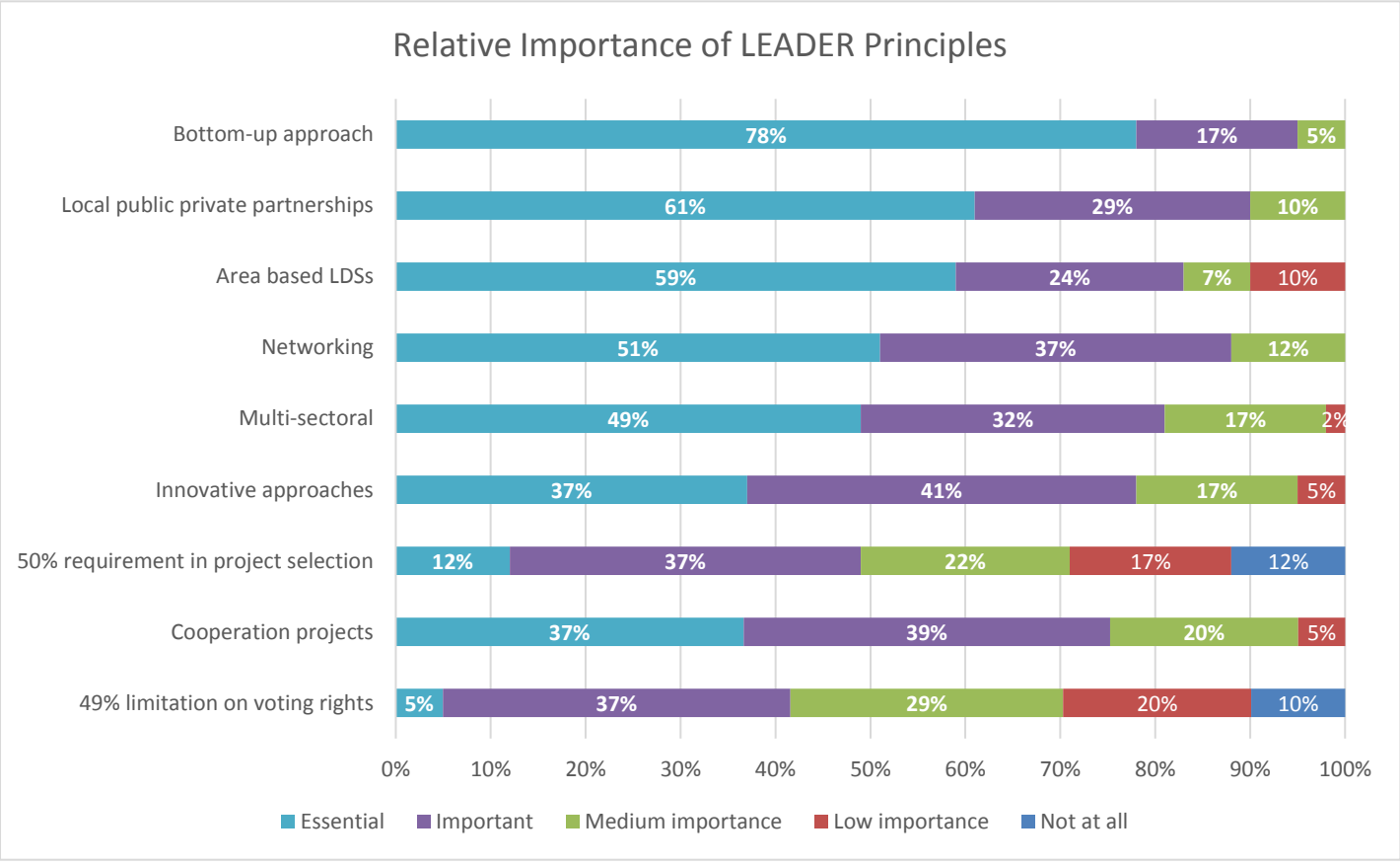
LEADER Principles

Question 13

How important are each of the following LEADER principles for your LAG in delivering real benefits on the ground? (Please rate each option from 1= not at all to 5 = essential).

- Area-based local development strategies intended for well-identified sub-regional rural territories.
- Local public-private partnerships (local action groups).
- Bottom-up approach with decision-making power for local action groups concerning the elaboration and implementation of local development strategies.
- The 49% limitation on voting rights of any single interest group.
- The 50% requirement for non-public sector votes in project selection.
- Multi-sectoral design and implementation of the strategy based on interaction between actors and projects of different sectors of the local economy.
- Implementation of innovative approaches.
- Implementation of cooperation projects.
- Networking of local partnerships.

Total Number of Responses 41



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- Austrian LAGs ranked innovation and cooperation more highly (both 37% essential) than the EU sample average (29% and 28% respectively).
- The Austrian respondents generally ranked all the principles more highly (essential and important) than the EU average with the exception of the 50% requirement in project selection and 49% limitation on voting rights.

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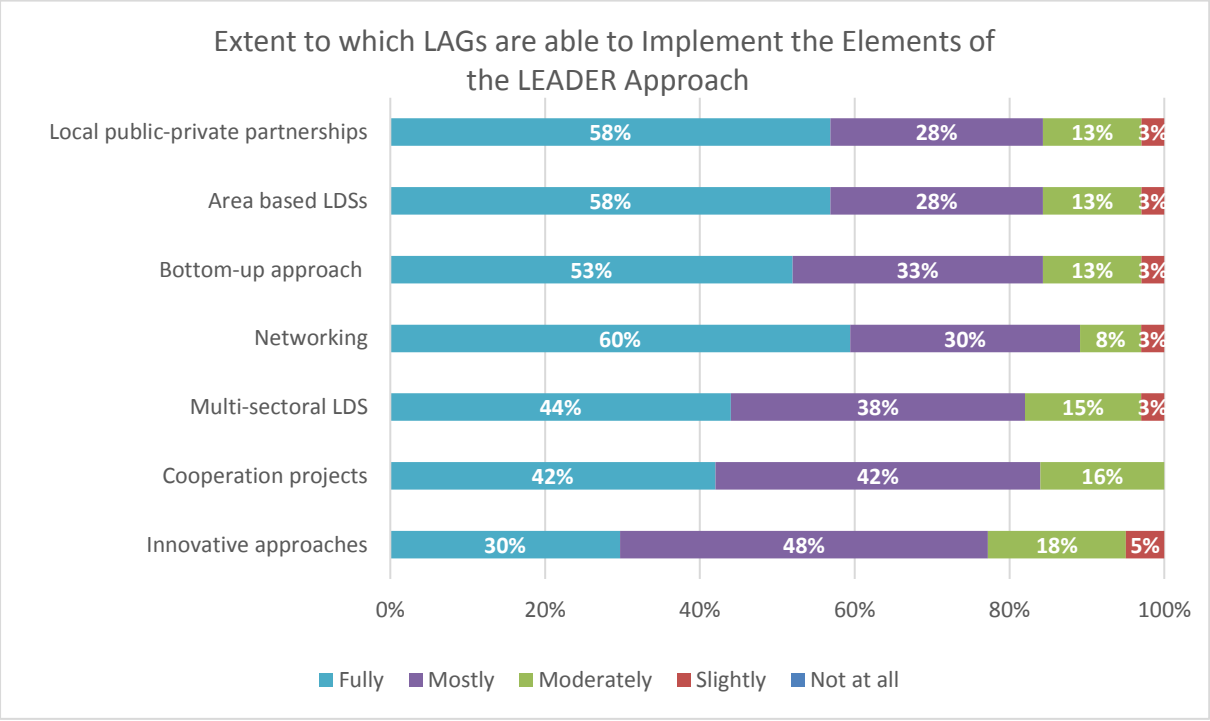
Question 14

To what extent is your LAG able to implement the following elements of the LEADER approach? (please rate each option from 1-5, where 1= not at all, 5 = fully)

- Area-based local development strategies intended for well-identified sub-regional rural territories.
- Local public-private partnerships (local action groups).
- Bottom-up approach with decision-making power for local action groups concerning the elaboration and implementation of local development strategies.
- Multi-sectoral design and implementation of the strategy based on interaction between actors and projects of different sectors of the local economy.
- Implementation of innovative approaches.
- Implementation of cooperation projects.
- Networking of local partnerships.

Total Number of Responses 40



- A greater proportion of Austrian LAGs can implement the elements fully than in the EU sample. For six of these seven elements Austrian LAG responses indicate that they are able to implement them fully or mostly. EU level responses show LAGs able to fully or mostly implement only two of the seven elements.
- The most marked differences for fully and mostly rankings are in relation to innovative approaches (78% vs 44%) and cooperation (84% vs 58%).

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Question 15

Please consider the statements below and for each statement select the option that best reflects your practical experience from this scale:1 = disagree strongly, 2 = disagree, 3 = don't know, 4 = agree, 5 = agree strongly.

- LEADER implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible, innovative way.
- The project application procedure is designed to be accessible and encourage local stakeholders to participate in LEADER.
- The LAG has overall control of setting selection criteria and defining calls for projects.
- The LAG is able to use qualitative criteria and local knowledge to inform project selection decisions.
- The decision-making power of LAGs is not overly limited by Rural Development Programme (RDP) level procedures and regulations.
- Your LAG's ability to implement the LEADER approach is constrained by bureaucracy and administrative burden.
- Project holders` ability to implement LEADER projects is not overly constrained by the level of bureaucracy and administrative burden.
- Eligibility conditions for LEADER beneficiaries are appropriate and proportionate to the amount of support sought.
- LAG funding for the animation of local stakeholders and networking is sufficient.
- Administrative and reporting requirements limit your LAG's capacity for animation and other development oriented activities.

Total Number of Responses 40

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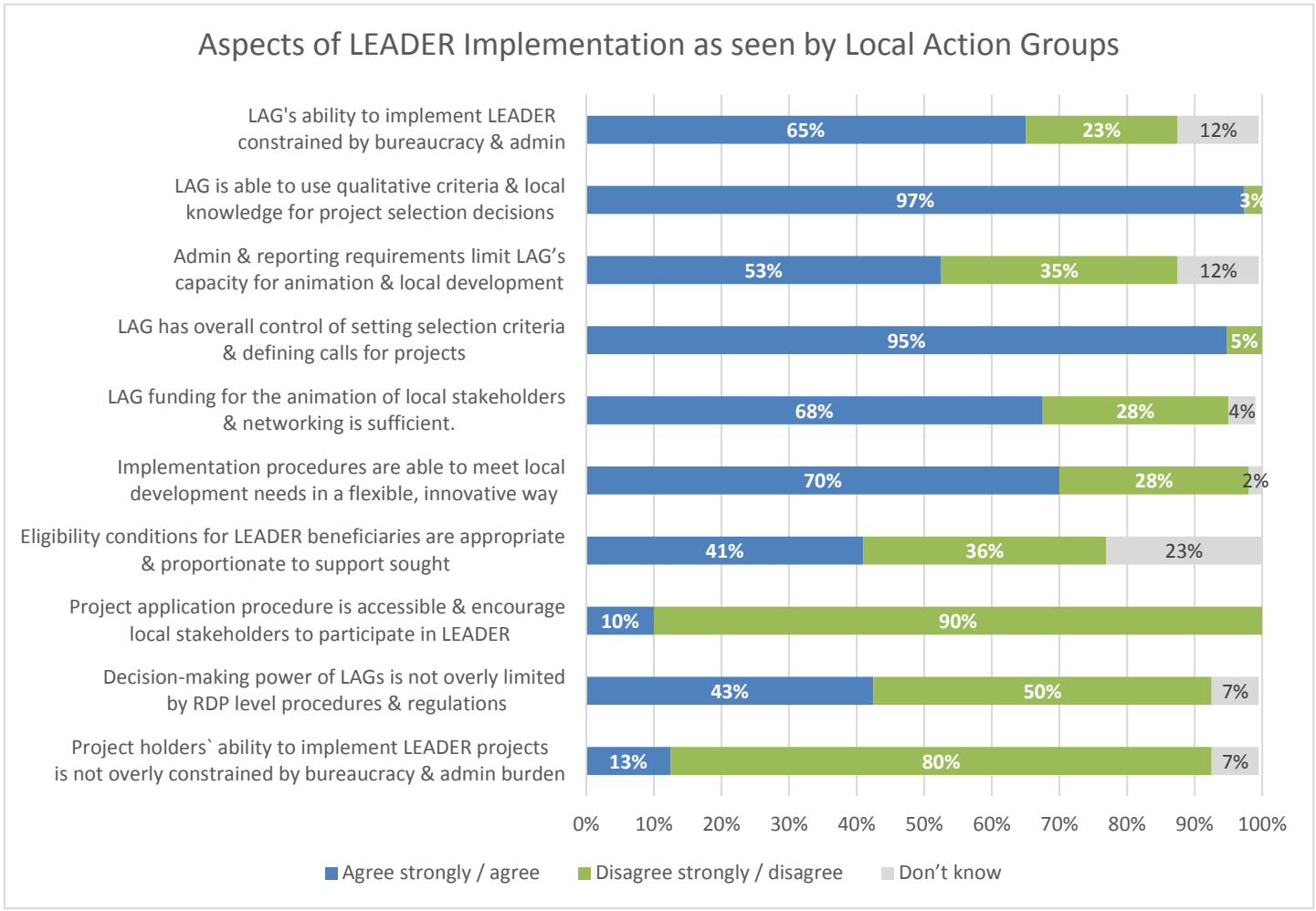

- Austrian LAGs report that they have a higher level of control of setting selection criteria, using qualitative criteria and using local knowledge than the EU average, they regard themselves as less constrained by bureaucracy and administration and RDP level procedures than the EU average.
- Austrian LAGs are markedly less satisfied with the accessibility of the project application procedure than the EU sample.
- Austrian LAGs are notably more satisfied than the EU sample with funding for animation and networking of local stakeholders.

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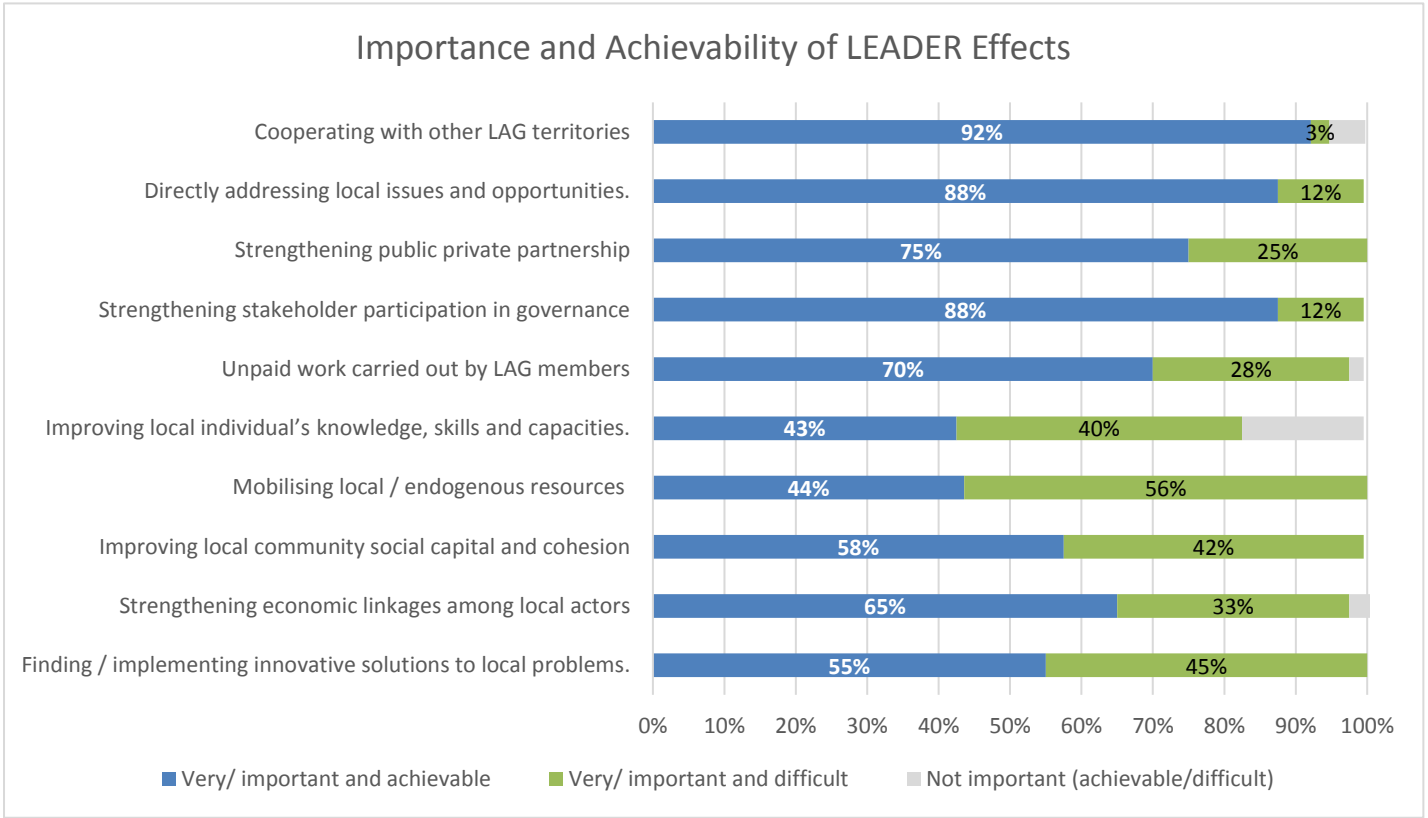
Question 16

The LEADER approach can deliver qualitative local effects which are distinctive from those of other rural development activities. The importance of these effects and how easy they are to achieve may vary by LAG.

Please rank how important and how achievable each of the possible effects is for your LAG according to the following scale. 1= Very important and achievable, 2 = Very important and difficult, 3 = Important and achievable, 4 = Important and difficult, 5 = Not important but achievable, 6= Not important and difficult.

- Directly addressing local issues and opportunities.
- Strengthening stakeholder participation in local partnership and its governance.
- Strengthening economic linkages among local actors.
- Strengthening public private partnership.
- Unpaid work carried out by LAG members.
- Mobilising local / endogenous resources (human, physical, financial).
- Improving local community social capital and cohesion.
- Improving local individual's knowledge, skills and capacities.
- Finding / implementing innovative solutions to local problems.
- Cooperating with other LAG territories.

Total Number of Responses 40



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- With the exception of improving local individual's knowledge, skills and capacities Austrian LAGs record higher levels of achievability than the EU sample.
- Austrian LAGs see cooperation to be much more important and achievable than the EU sample level (92% vs 67%).
- Other prominent examples where Austrian LAGs report notably higher levels of importance and achievability include:
    - strengthening economic linkages among local actors (65% vs 37%)
    - directly addressing local issues (88% vs 63%)
    - finding innovative solutions (55% vs 33%)
    - strengthening stakeholder participation in governance (88% vs 56%).

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LEADER Operation

Question 17

What level of effect have the following factors had on the implementation of LEADER in your LAG territory? (for each option enter either 0 = not applicable, 1 = very negative, 2 = negative, 3 = neutral, 4 = positive, 5 = very positive)

- Reduction of funding for LEADER under the RDP.
- Increase in funding for LEADER under the RDP.
- RDP level limitations on possible Local Development Strategy themes, eligibility or selection criteria.
- Level of Managing Authority/Paying Agency conditions, reporting requirements.
- Time taken to approve selected projects.
- Audit and possible sanctions.
- The balance in implementation procedures effects between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions.
- Effects on local decision-making of final approval of projects by the managing authority or paying agency.
- Percentage of LAG budget available for running costs and animation.
- Limitations on staff (continuity, skills, number).
- Continuity of LAG membership.
- Possibility of multi funding.

Total Number of Responses 37

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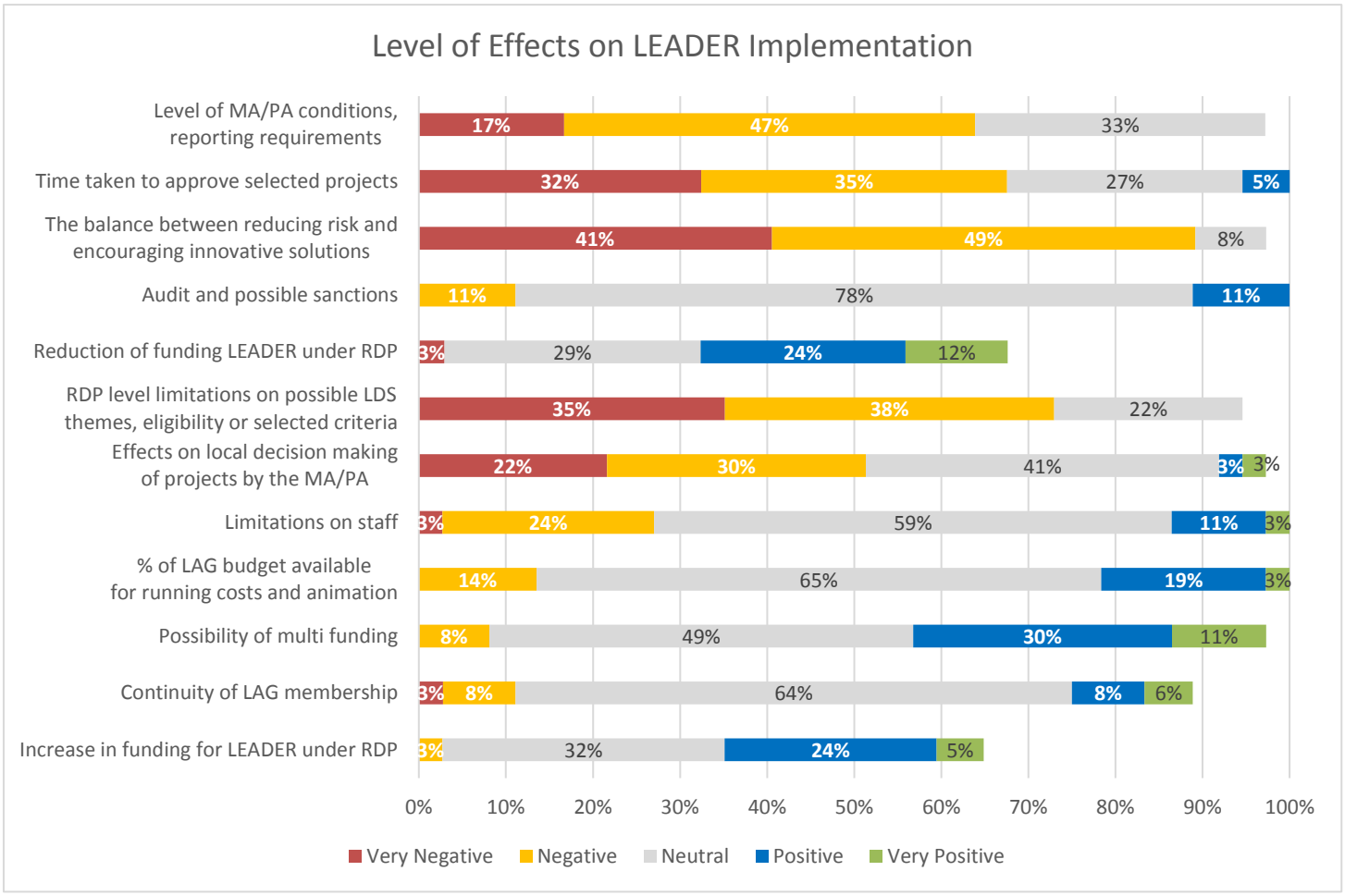

For the purposes of improving the clarity of the analysis the 'not applicable' responses have been removed from the chart.

- LAGs in Austria recorded a lower level of very negative responses than did the EU respondents.
- LAGs in Austria are less positive regarding the effects of increased funding (29%) than the EU average (46%), similarly they are less positive about the effects of continuity of LAG membership (14% vs 38%).
- 90% of the Austrian LAGs regard the effects of balance between risk and innovation as negative or very negative as opposed to 53% of EU LAGs as a whole.
- Only 11% of Austrian LAGs view the effects of audit and possible sanctions as negative as compared to 56% of the whole sample population.

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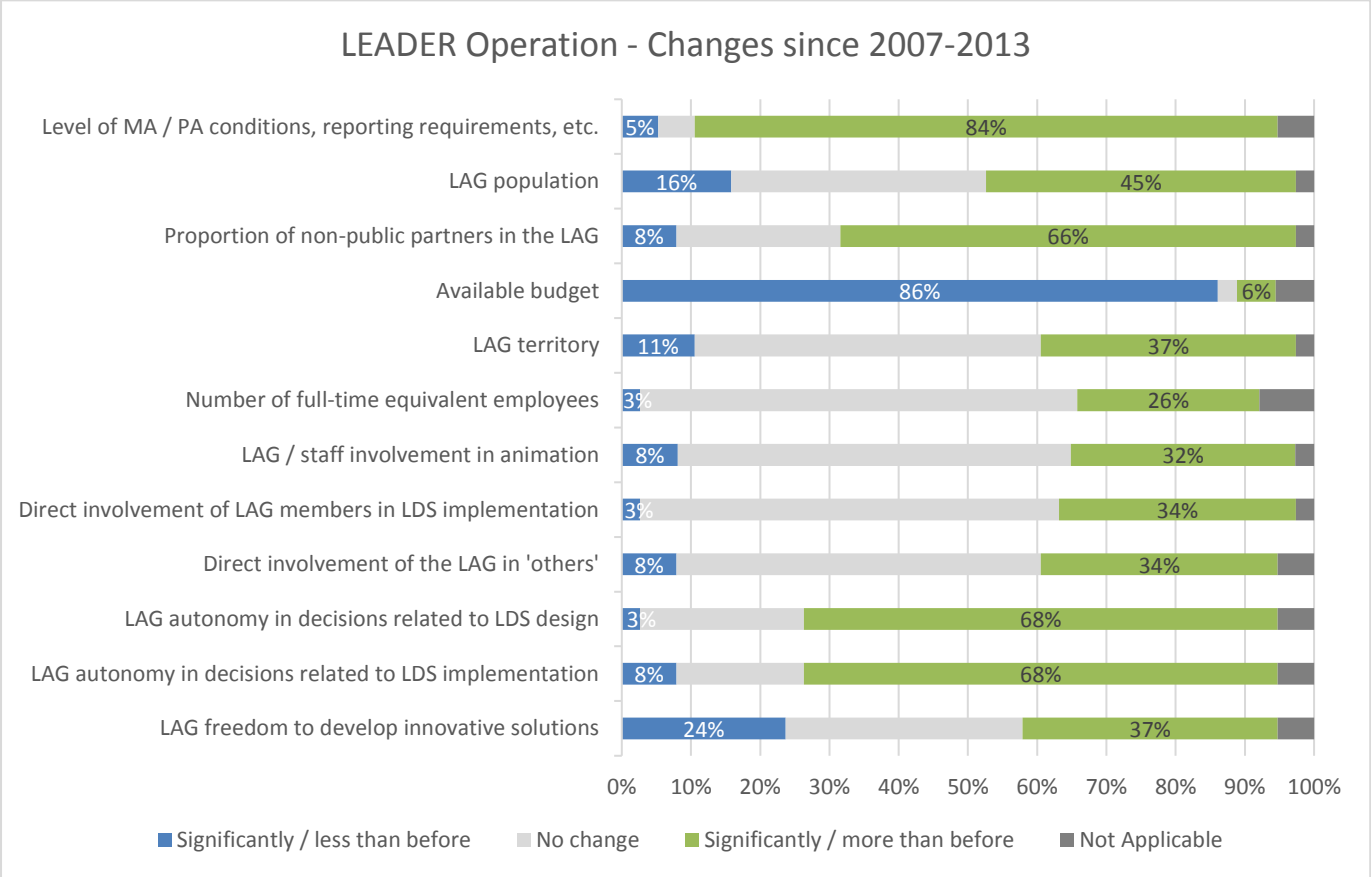
Question 18

How have the following aspects changed for your LAG between the 2007 – 2013 and 2014-2020 Programming periods? (1 = significantly less than before, 2 = less than before, 3 = no change, 4 = more than before, 5 = significantly more than before) (routed for only those LAGs previously operational)

- Available budget.
- LAG territory.
- LAG population.
- Number of full-time equivalent employees.
- LAG / staff involvement in animation.
- LAG autonomy in decisions related to local development strategy design.
- LAG autonomy in decisions related to local development strategy implementation.
- Level of MA controls, reporting requirements etc.
- LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions.
- Proportion of non-public partners in the LAG.
- Direct involvement of LAG members in LDS implementation.
- Direct involvement of the LAG in other regional and territorial development actions or structures.

Total Number of Responses 38



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- The largest difference between Austrian respondents and the total sample relates to the available budget where 86% indicate this is less or significantly less than before vs 43% for the EU. At the same time Austrian LAGs report bigger increases in territory and population than the EU sample.
- Overall the various forms of LAG involvement tend to be showing higher levels of increase in Austria than in the wider sample of LAGs, there is a particularly big difference in the increase in involvement of non public sector LAG members, 66% report this in Austria vs 30% overall.
- The reported increase in LAG autonomy in Austria is very much greater than the average reported for the EU (68% vs 17%), this applies equally for both strategy design and implementation. There is also a significantly greater increase in the freedom to develop innovative solutions than the EU average (37% vs 14%).

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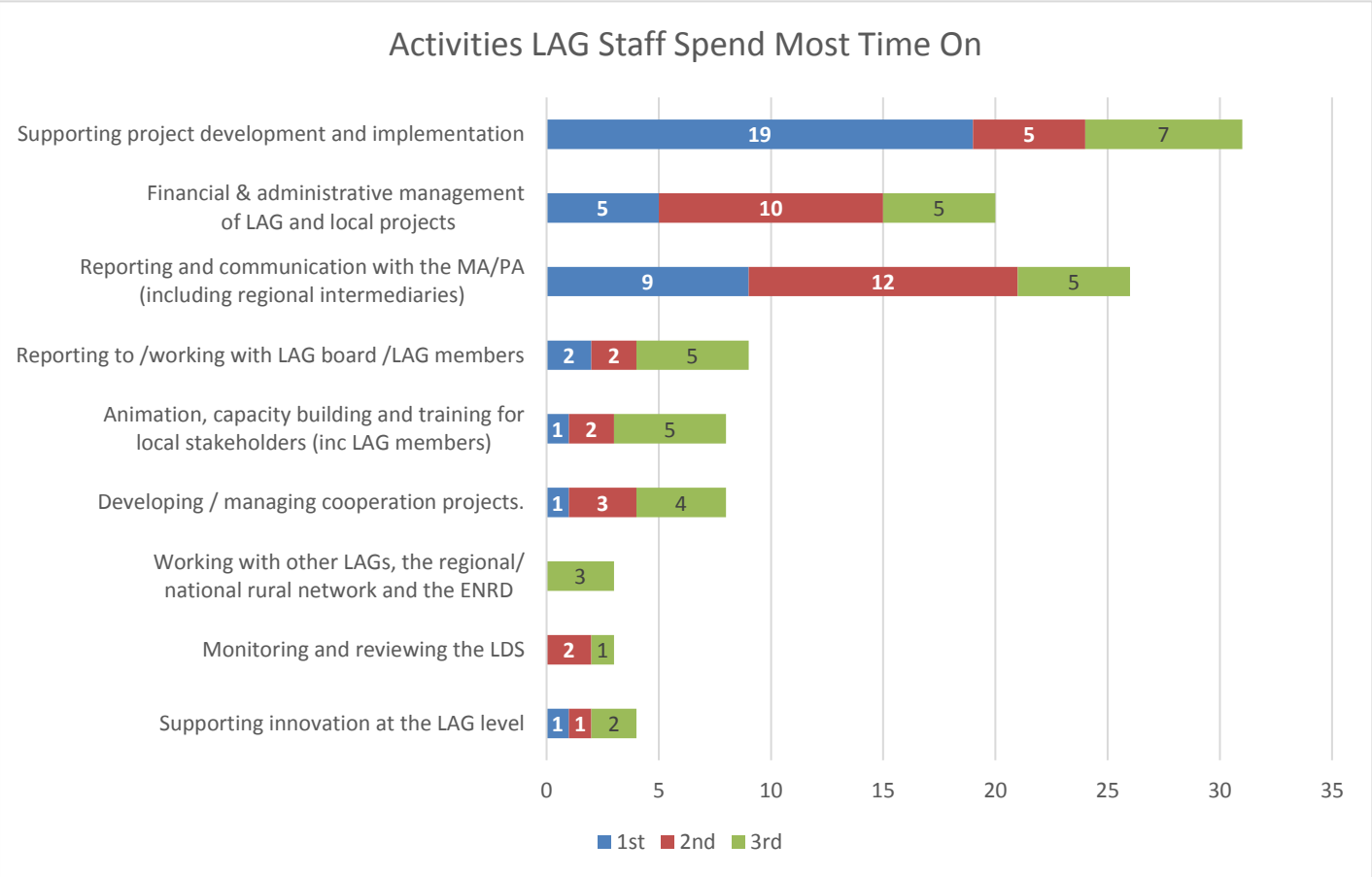
Question 19

Please think about your day-to-day work in the LAG and rank the three types of activity which your LAG staff spend most time on overall on a scale of 1 – 3 where 1 = most time spent.

- Reporting to /working with LAG board and members.
- Supporting project development and implementation.
- Financial and administrative management of LAG and local projects.
- Reporting and communication with the Managing Authority and Paying Agency (including regional intermediaries).
- Animation, capacity building and training of local stakeholders (inc LAG members).
- Supporting innovation at the local level.
- Monitoring and reviewing the local development strategy.
- Developing /managing cooperation projects.
- Working with other LAGs, the regional/national rural network and the ENRD.

Total Number of Responses 38



- There are no major differences between Austrian LAGs and the overall sample, the only significant difference is in the respective ranking of the selected second and third priorities.

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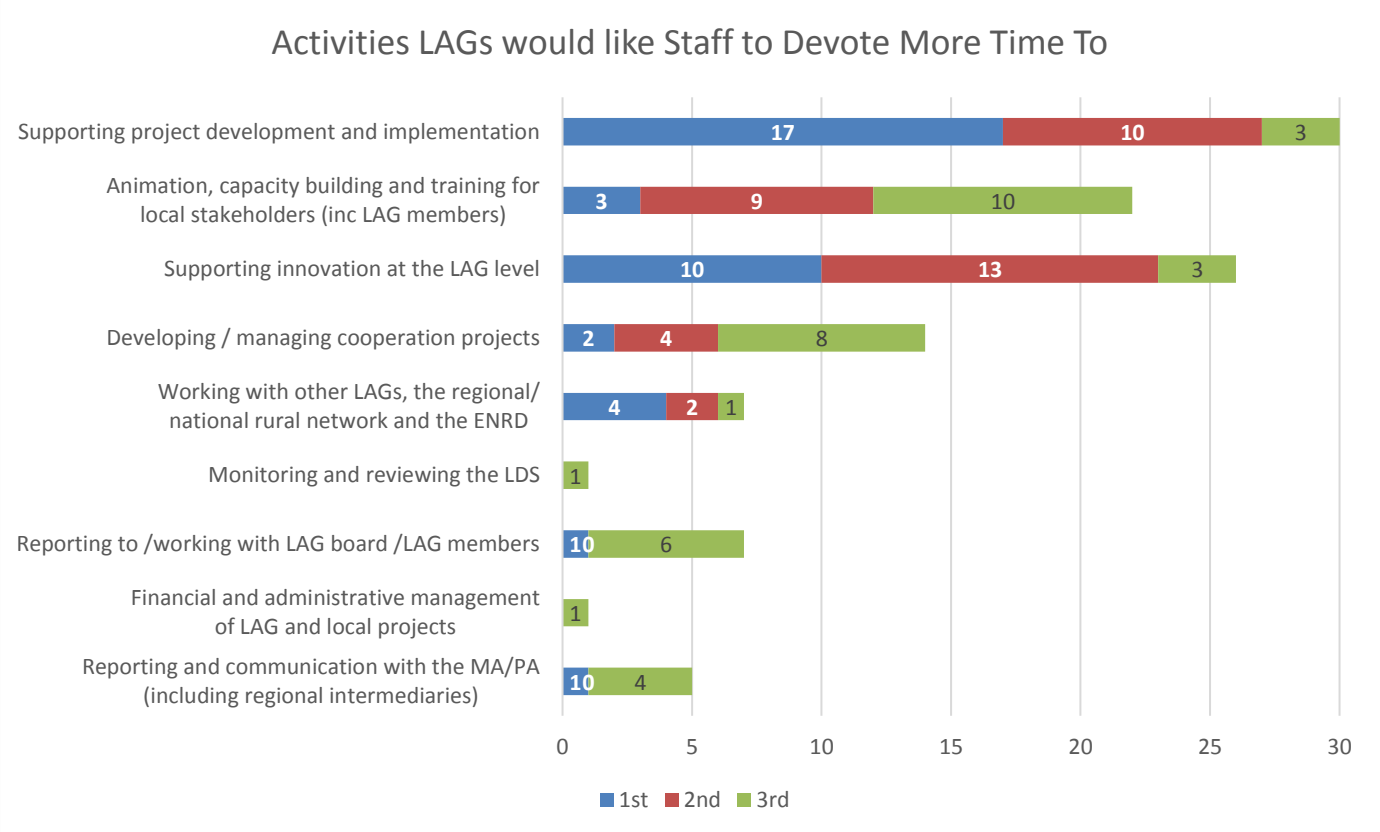
Question 20

Where would you like to be able to devote more of your LAG team`s time or resources in order to maximise the benefit of LEADER to your LAG territory? Please rank the three most important options below on a scale of 1 – 3 where 1 = most important.

- Reporting to /working with LAG board /LAG members.
- Supporting project development and implementation.
- Financial and administrative management of LAG and local projects.
- Reporting and communication with the Managing Authority and Paying Agency (including regional intermediaries).
- Animation, capacity building and training of local stakeholders (inc LAG members).
- Supporting innovation at the local level.
- Monitoring and reviewing the local development strategy.
- Developing /managing cooperation projects.
- Working with other LAGs, the regional/national rural network and the ENRD.

Total Number of Responses 38



- There are no major differences here between Austrian LAGs and the wider sample, the ranking of second and third activities is reversed in Austria and a greater priority is placed on supporting innovation.

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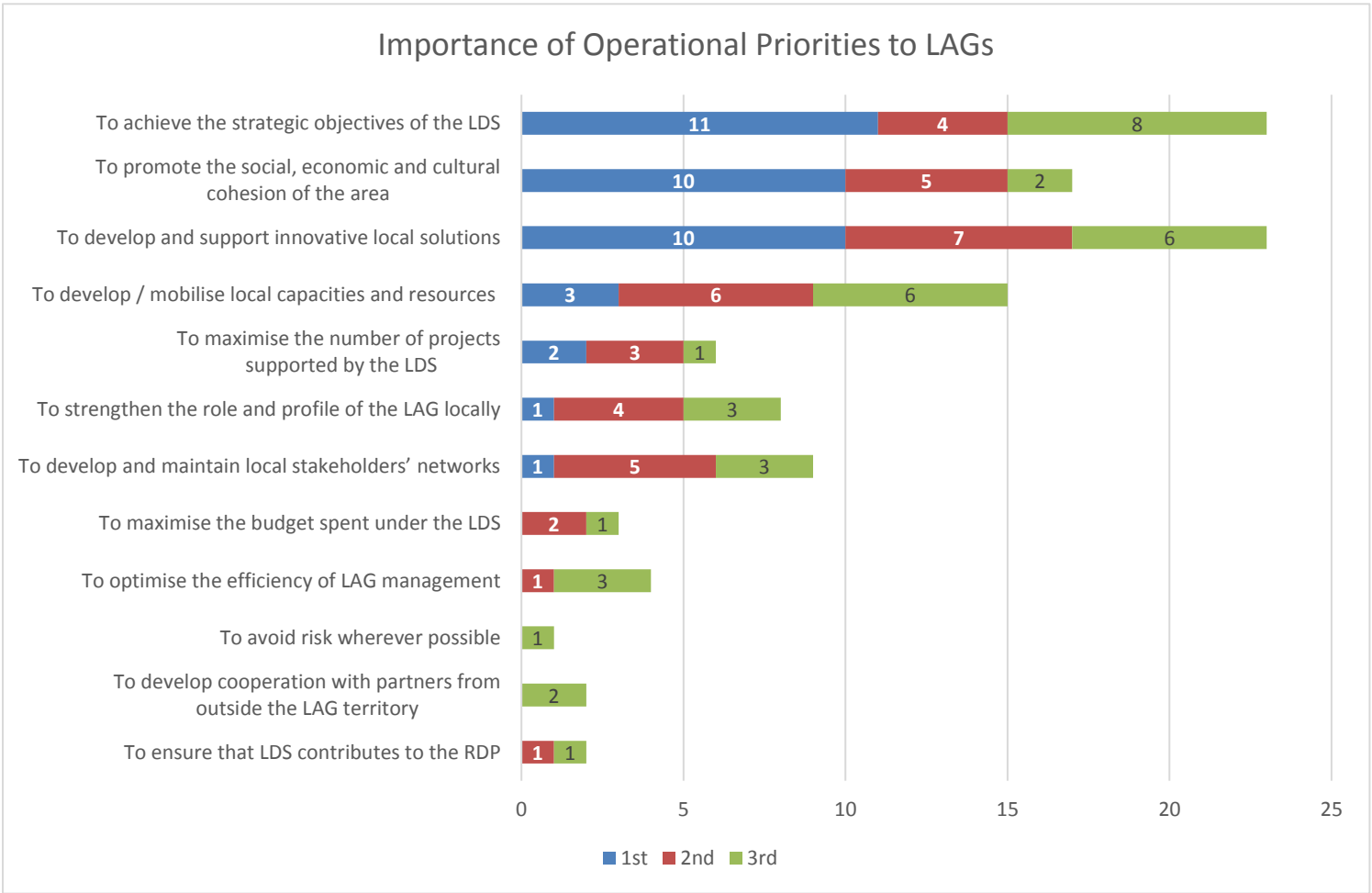
Question 21

How important are the following operational priorities to your LAG? Please select your top 3 most important options below in order of importance on a scale of 1 – 3 where 1 = most important.

- To achieve the strategic objectives of the local development strategy (LDS).
- To maximise the number of projects supported by the LDS.
- To maximise the budget spent under the LDS.
- To ensure that LDS contributes to the RDP.
- To optimise the efficiency of LAG management.
- To strengthen the role and profile of the LAG locally.
- To promote the social, economic and cultural cohesion of the area.
- To develop and support innovative local solutions.
- To avoid risk wherever possible.
- To develop and maintain local stakeholders' networks.
- To develop cooperation with partners from outside the LAG territory.
- To develop / mobilise local capacities and resources (human, funding, knowledge, etc.)

Total Number of Responses 38



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- The ranking of operational priorities for Austria is similar to that for the survey sample as a whole other than a stronger ranking for developing and supporting innovative local solutions and a lower ranking for the importance of avoiding risk wherever possible.

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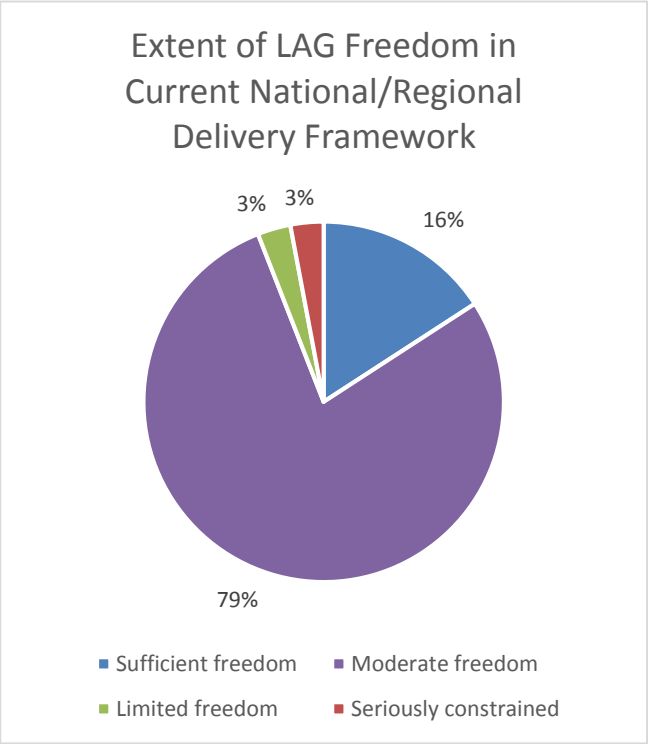
Question 22

To what extent does your national or regional LEADER delivery framework enable your LAG to pursue these operational priorities? Please select the option most appropriate to your LAG.

- The LAG has sufficient freedom to allow it to pursue its preferred priorities.
- The LAG has a moderate degree of freedom which allows it to partially address its priorities.
- The LAG has a limited degree of freedom which substantially compromises its freedom to address its priorities.
- The LAGs freedom to address its operational priorities is seriously constrained

Total Number of Responses 38

- There is a very marked difference between the Austrian LAGs response to this question and the overall survey, 79% of Austrian LAGs rank their level of freedom to pursue their priorities as moderate as opposed to 45% overall.
- A much higher proportion of the overall sample think they are limited or constrained (38%) than Austrian LAGs (6%).



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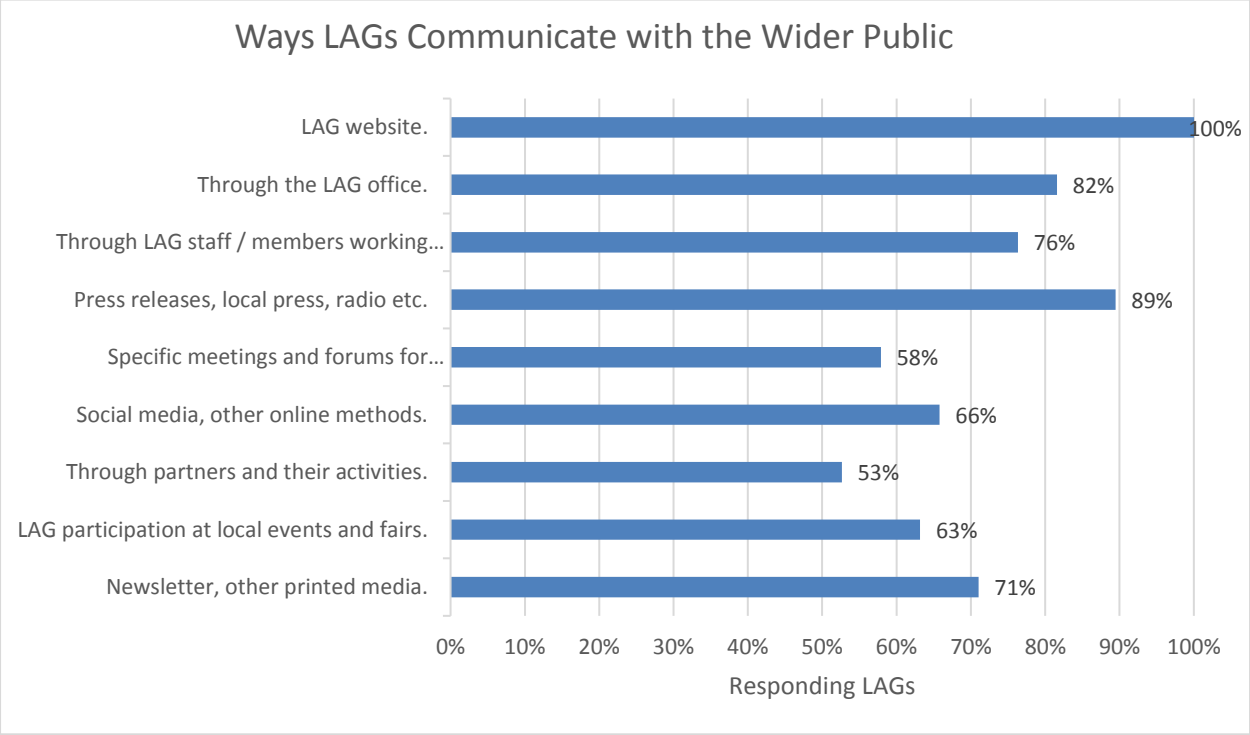
Question 23

What is the main way your LAG communicates with the wider public in your LAG Territory (including potential beneficiaries)? Please select those methods which your LAG uses.

- LAG website.
- Specific meetings and forums for LDS implementation.
- Through the LAG office.
- Through LAG staff / members working in the local community.
- LAG participation at local events and fairs.
- Press releases, local press, radio etc.
- Newsletter, other printed media.
- Social media, other online methods.
- Through partners and their activities.

Total Number of Responses 38



- Austrian LAGs appear to make more use of press releases, local press etc than the overall LAG sample (89% vs 65%).
- They also make significantly more use of newsletters and other printed material (71% vs 45%), communication through LAG office, staff and members is also noticeably higher.

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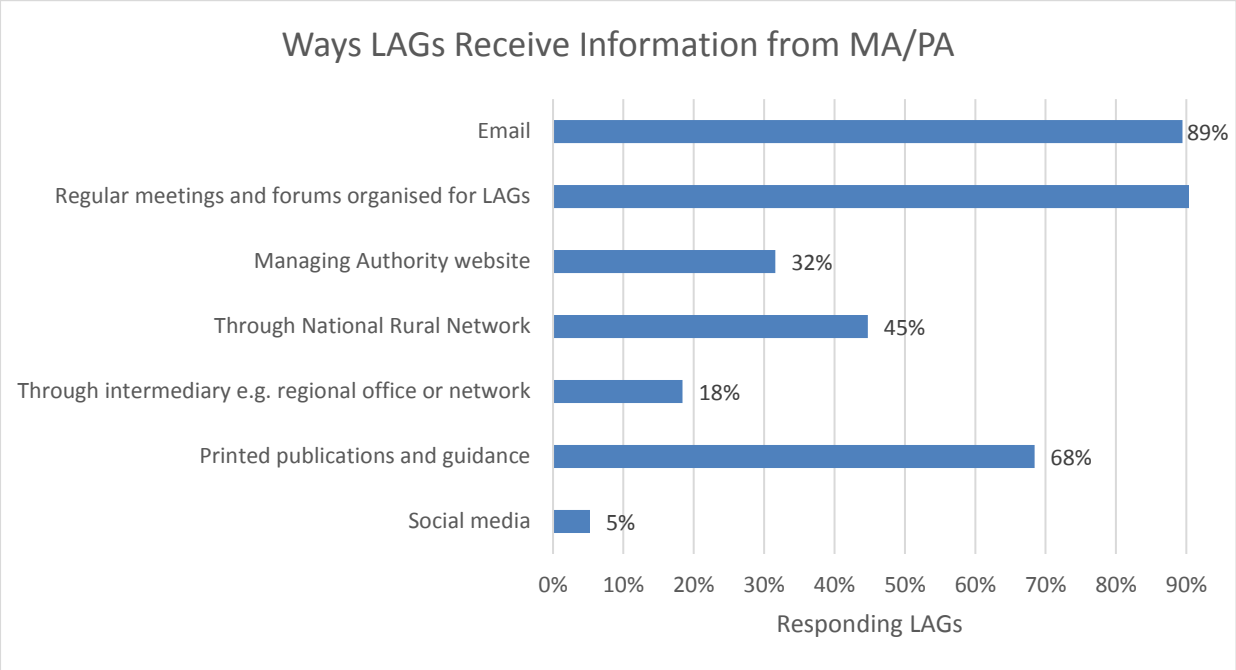
Question 24

What are the main ways in which you receive information from the Managing Authority? Please select those methods which are most used

- Managing Authority website.
- Regular meetings and forums organised for LAGs.
- Through National Rural Network.
- Social media.
- Printed publications and guidance.
- Email.
- Through intermediary e.g. regional office or network.

Total Number of Responses 38



- In Austria it appears that there is greater involvement of the NRN in communicating information than is reported overall (45% vs 31%), the use of meetings is also greater than in the wider sample (90% vs 68%).
- The use of printed publications and guidance is much higher in Austria than elsewhere (68% vs 22%).

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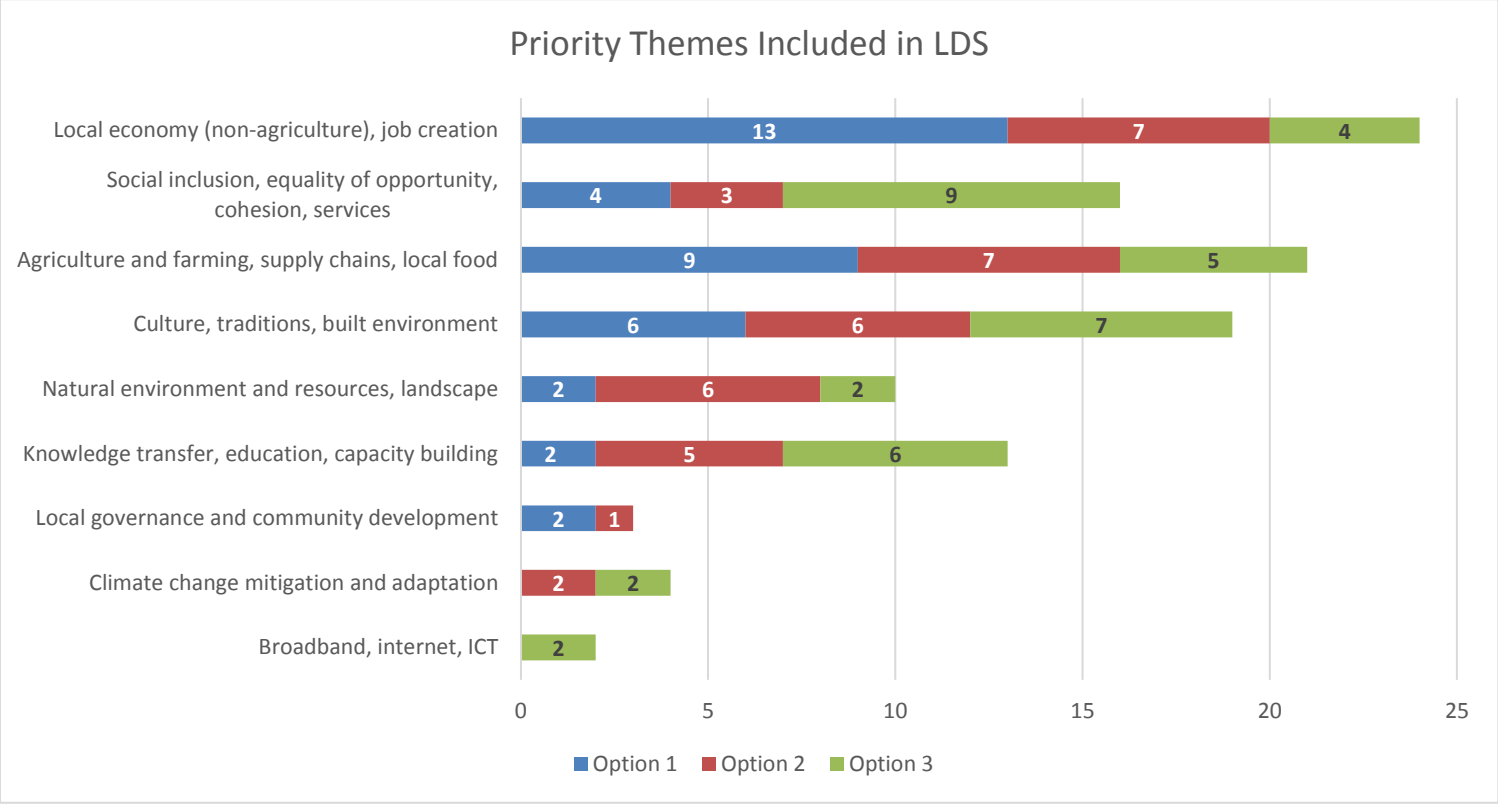
Question 25

Which of the following priority themes relate most closely to your Local Development Strategy objectives? Please select (up to) the three most relevant ones from the options provided.

- Knowledge transfer, education, capacity building.
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Agriculture and farming, supply chains, local food.
- Local economy (non-agriculture), job creation.
- Culture, traditions, built environment.
- Natural environment and resources, landscape.
- Social inclusion, equality of opportunity, cohesion, services.
- Local governance and community development.
- Broadband, internet, ICT.

Total Number of Responses 38



- There are only minor differences between Austrian LAGs and the wider sample, the main differentiation is the higher rank for Agriculture, farming, supply chains and local food in Austria but this is marginal.

Funded by the European Commission

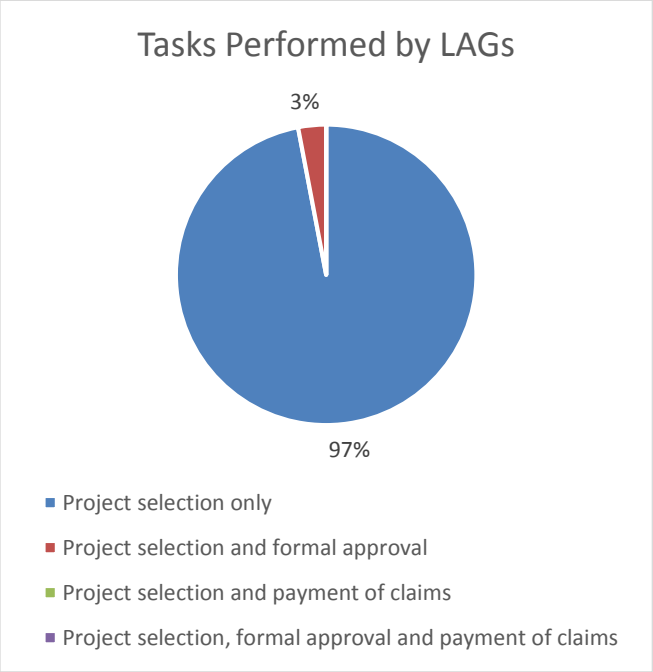
Question 26

What tasks does your LAG perform in relation to LEADER projects as part of your LDS implementation? Please select one of the options.

- Project selection only
- Project selection and formal approval
- Project selection and payment of claims
- Project selection, formal approval and payment of claims

Total Number of Responses 38

- The major difference evident here is that 97% of Austrian LAGs only carry out project selection whilst 53% of the overall sample also carry out other tasks.



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LEADER Improvements

Question 27

What is most important to address in helping LAGs to be effective in implementing LEADER now? Please select and rank your top five priorities from the following items in order of their importance in (where 1= highest importance and 5 = 5th most important)

- Better common knowledge and support through networking of LAGs, Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies and National Rural Networks and exchanges on transferable experience and practices
- The eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas, e.g. the use of feasibility studies, LAG led projects, pilot projects, preparatory work etc. should be ensured from the EU level down.
- Setting aside a significant and specific budget for LAG animation activities.
- Allocating resources for cooperation to the LAG level.
- Ensuring better common knowledge of and support for LAGs to take advantage of using simplified cost options.
- LAGs setting selection criteria and defining calls
- LAGs using qualitative criteria and local knowledge to inform project selection decisions.
- Ensuring better common knowledge of and support for LAGs to take advantage of using different delivery tools e.g. 'Umbrella projects'.
- Improving MA or intermediary body turnaround time on approving selected projects.
- Improving timeliness of payments of beneficiaries` claims.
- Simpler and more proportionate systems of controls (for smaller projects?).
- Simplification, harmonisation and flexibility to support LAGs in the practical use of multi-funding.
- Greater clarity on LAG level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements in LEADER.
- Strengthening communication, coordination and cooperation between LAGs, Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies in delivering LEADER.
- A dedicated EU/national platform for information sharing among LEADER actors.
- Simpler application forms/application process.
- Allowing LAGs to act as a 'platform', signposting and brokering support from multiple (third party) sources to further LDS objectives.

Total Number of Responses 37

- The main difference between the Austrian responses and the overall sample of respondents is the greater importance placed on the eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas, (ranked equal second as opposed seventh in the overall rankings).

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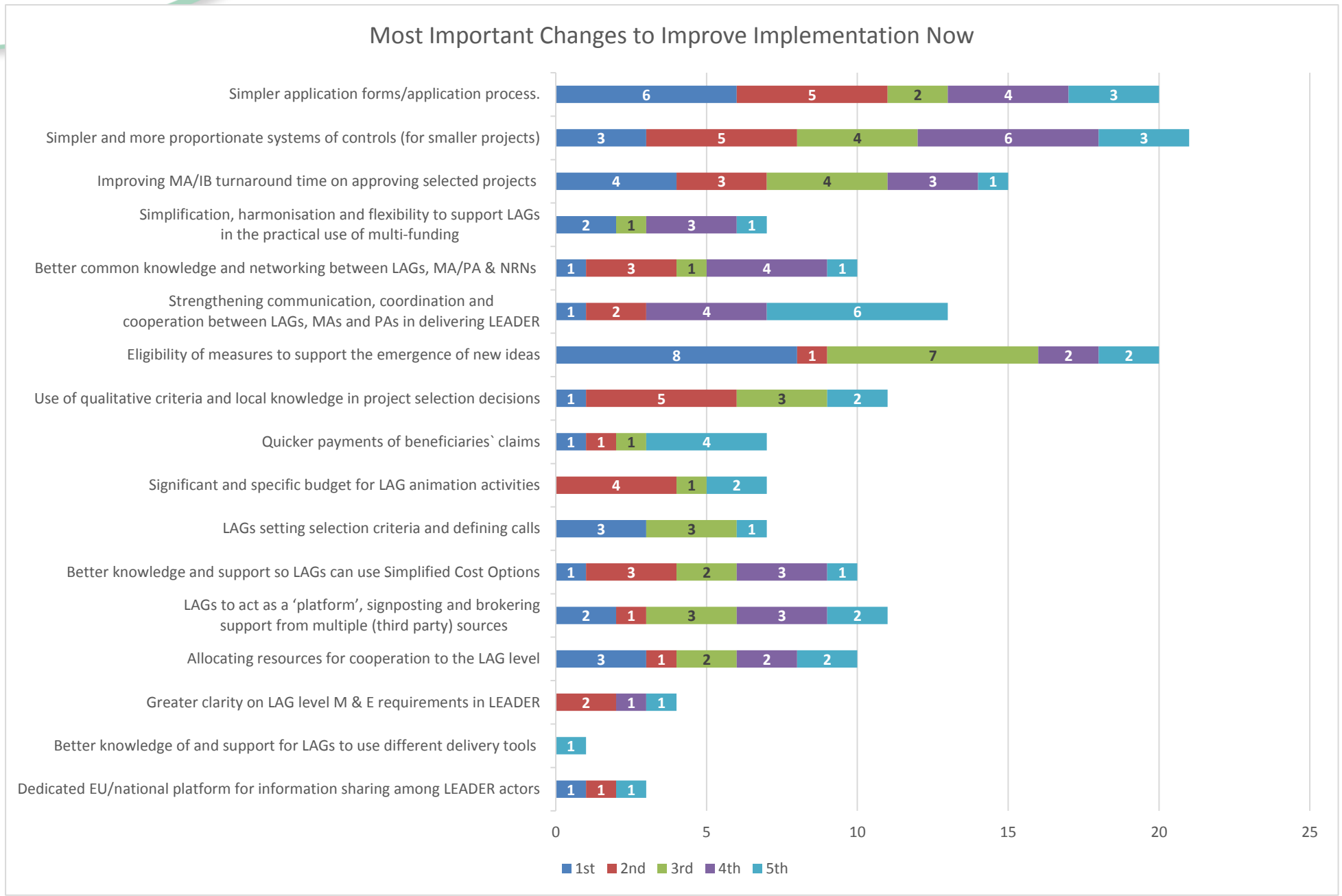
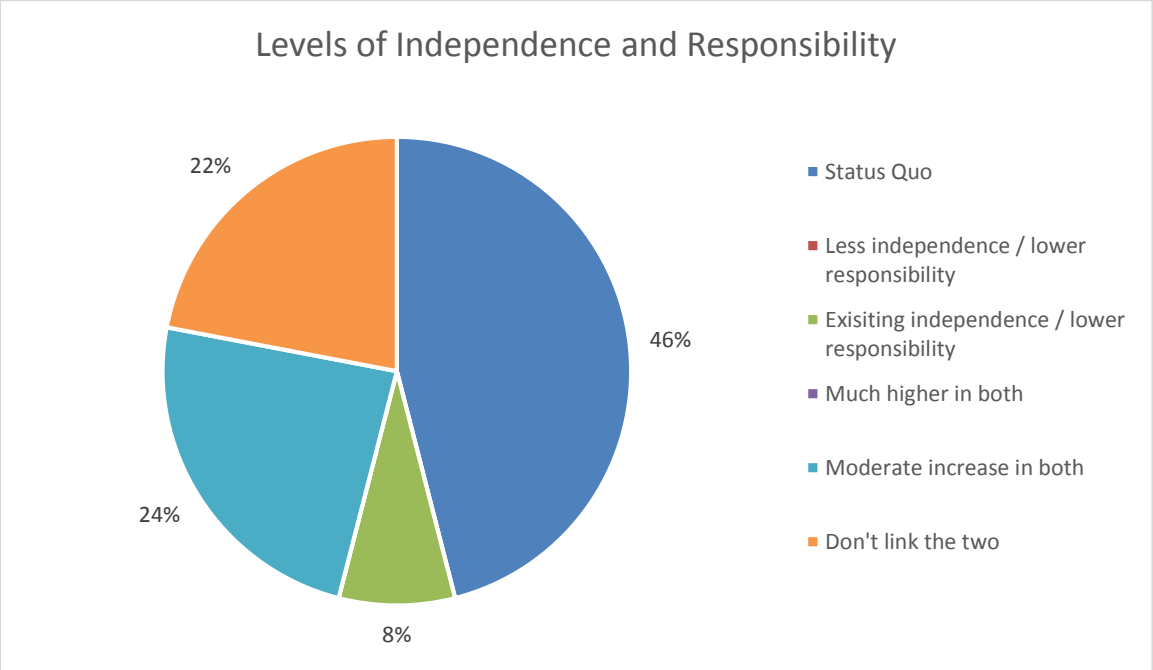

Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now
Simpler application forms/application process.
6 5 2 4 3
Simpler and more proportionate systems of controls (for smaller projects)
3 5 4 6 3
Improving MA/IB turnaround time on approving selected projects
4 3 4 3 1
Simplification, harmonisation and flexibility to support LAGs in the practical use of multi-funding
2 1 3 1
Better common knowledge and networking between LAGs, MA/PA & NRNs
1 3 1 4 1
Strengthening communication, coordination and cooperation between LAGs, MAs and PAs in delivering LEADER
1 2 4 6
Eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas
8 1 7 2 2
Use of qualitative criteria and local knowledge in project selection decisions
1 5 3 2
Quicker payments of beneficiaries` claims
1 1 1 4
Significant and specific budget for LAG animation activities
4 1 2
LAGs setting selection criteria and defining calls
3 3 1
Better knowledge and support so LAGs can use Simplified Cost Options
1 3 2 3 1
LAGs to act as a 'platform', signposting and brokering support from multiple (third party) sources
2 1 3 3 2
Allocating resources for cooperation to the LAG level
3 1 2 2 2
Greater clarity on LAG level M & E requirements in LEADER
2 1 1
Better knowledge of and support for LAGs to use different delivery tools
1
Dedicated EU/national platform for information sharing among LEADER actors
1 1 1
0 5 10 15 20 25
1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th

Question 28:

Some LAGs desire greater independence in their operations with more power and responsibility e.g. in project selection and approvals, project management, use of funds, managing risk etc. Which one of these statements best reflects your LAG`s position?

- We are happy with the existing levels of responsibility, independence and accountability
- We prefer less independence with a lower level of direct LAG responsibility and financial accountability
- We prefer the existing level of independence with a lower level of direct LAG responsibility and financial accountability
- We prefer a much higher degree of independence and would be happy with a significantly higher degree of direct responsibility and financial accountability
- We prefer a moderate increase in independence with a moderate increase in direct responsibility and financial accountability
- Any increase in independence should not be linked to increased LAG responsibilities and accountability

Total number of responses – 37



- Austrian LAGs (46%) are much more in favour of the status quo in this regard than the overall sample population (20%), there is zero demand for much higher levels of independence and responsibility (EU sample = 19%), otherwise the desired levels are similar.

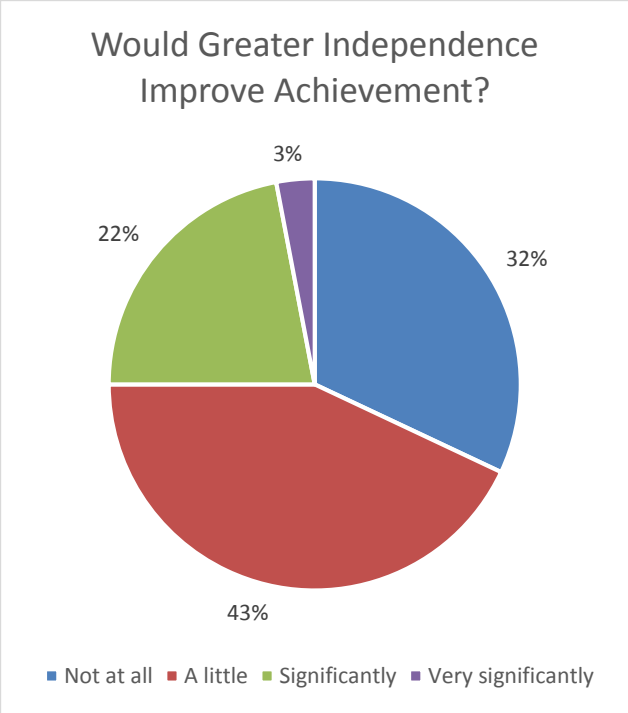
Question 29

To what extent would greater independence, power and responsibility for your LAGs improve what you are able to achieve? Please select one option.

- Not at all
- A little
- Significantly
- Very significantly

Total Number of Responses 37

- Austrian LAGs thought greater independence would have much less effect on improving achievement than did the overall sample, 75% rank this as 'a little' or 'not at all' as opposed to 46% of the total sample.



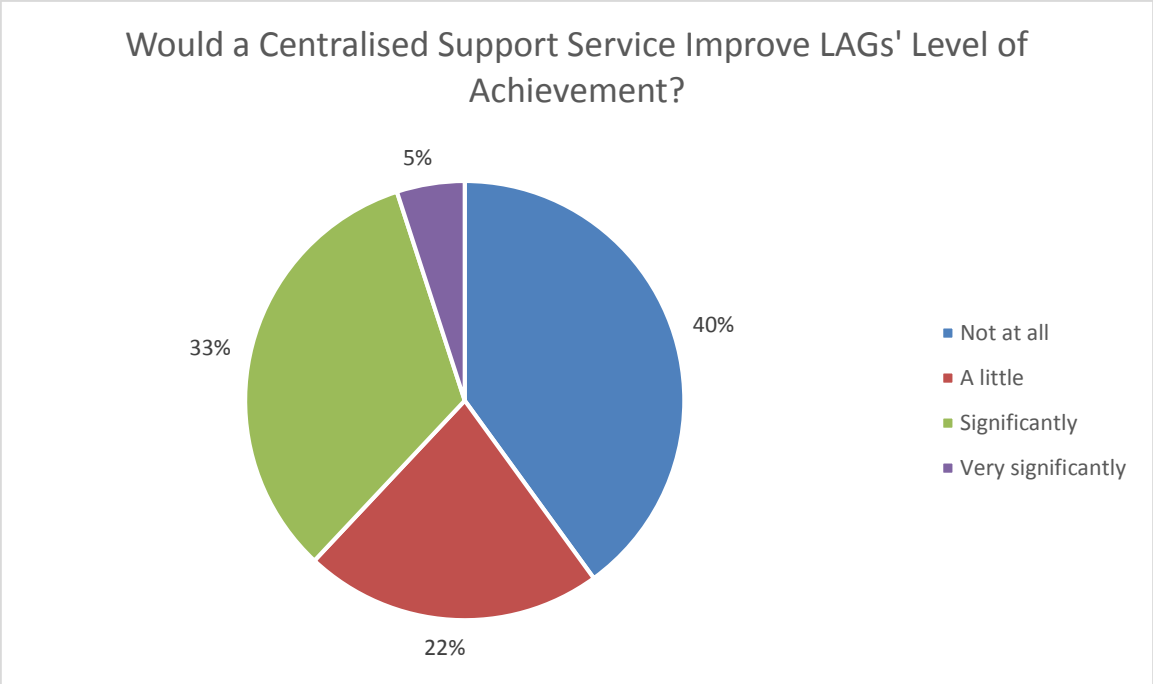
Funded by the European Commission

Question 30

If it was possible to reduce LAG administration through the provision of a centralised support service (e.g. shared and managed by multiple LAGs) to what extent would that improve your LAGs level of achievement?

- Not at all
- A little %
- Significantly
- Very significantly

Total Number of Responses 37



- There were no significant differences between Austria and the wider sample here.

Funded by the European Commission

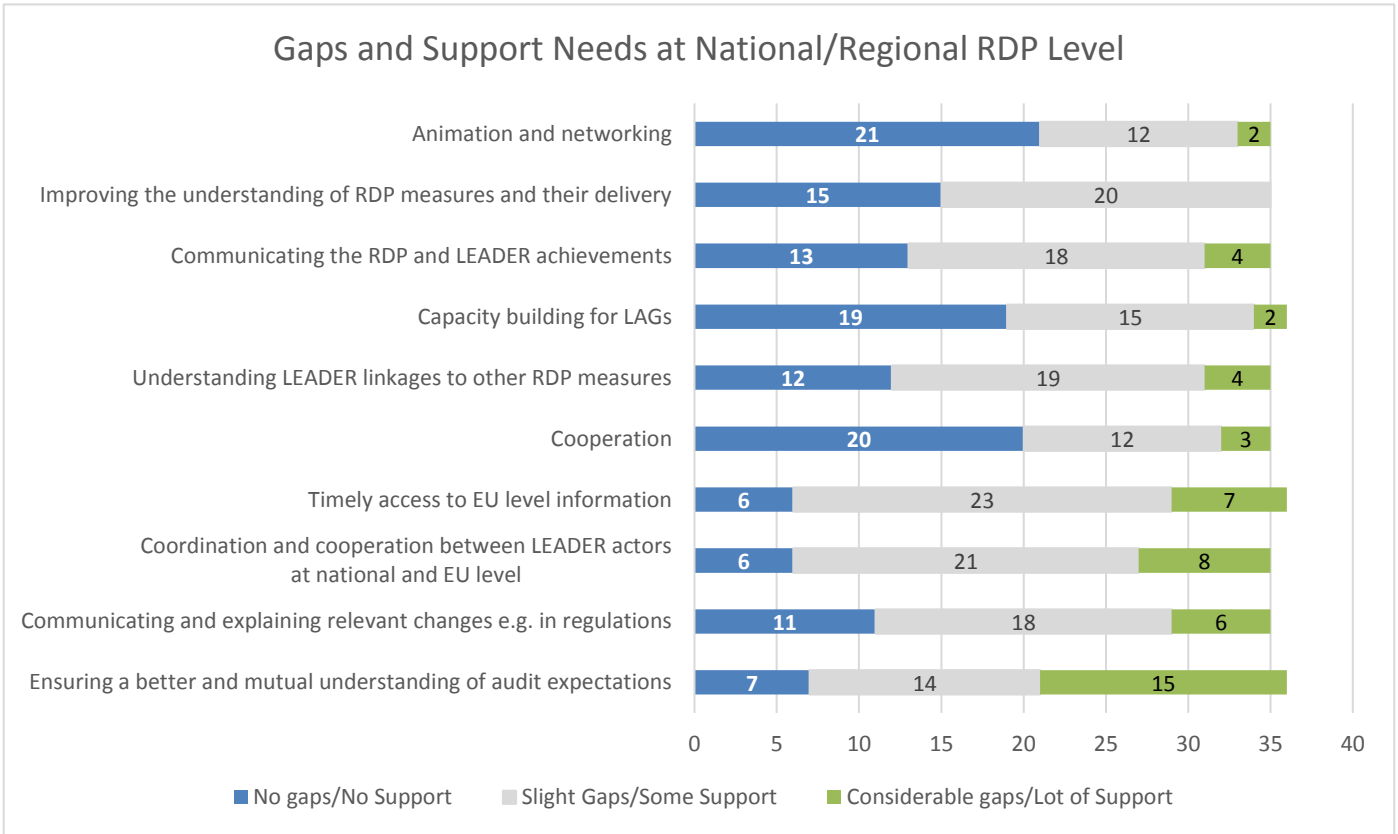
Question 31

To what extent does support from national and regional Rural Development Programme authorities (e.g. Managing Authority, Paying Agency) meet LAG needs and enhance LEADER implementation? Please, use the following scale to rank the provision against the specified needs:

1= no gaps in support – no support needed,
2 = slight gaps – some support needed,
3 = considerable gaps – lot of support needed.

- Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery.
- Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements.
- Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures.
- Capacity building for LAGs.
- Animation and networking.
- Cooperation.
- Timely access to EU level information.
- Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level.
- Communicating and explaining relevant changes e.g. in regulations.
- Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations.

Total Number of Responses 36



Funded by the European Commission

- The gaps and support needs identified by Austrian LAGs largely match those of the overall sample, there appears to be better provision / less need in relation to cooperation, animation and networking and LAG capacity building.

Funded by the European Commission

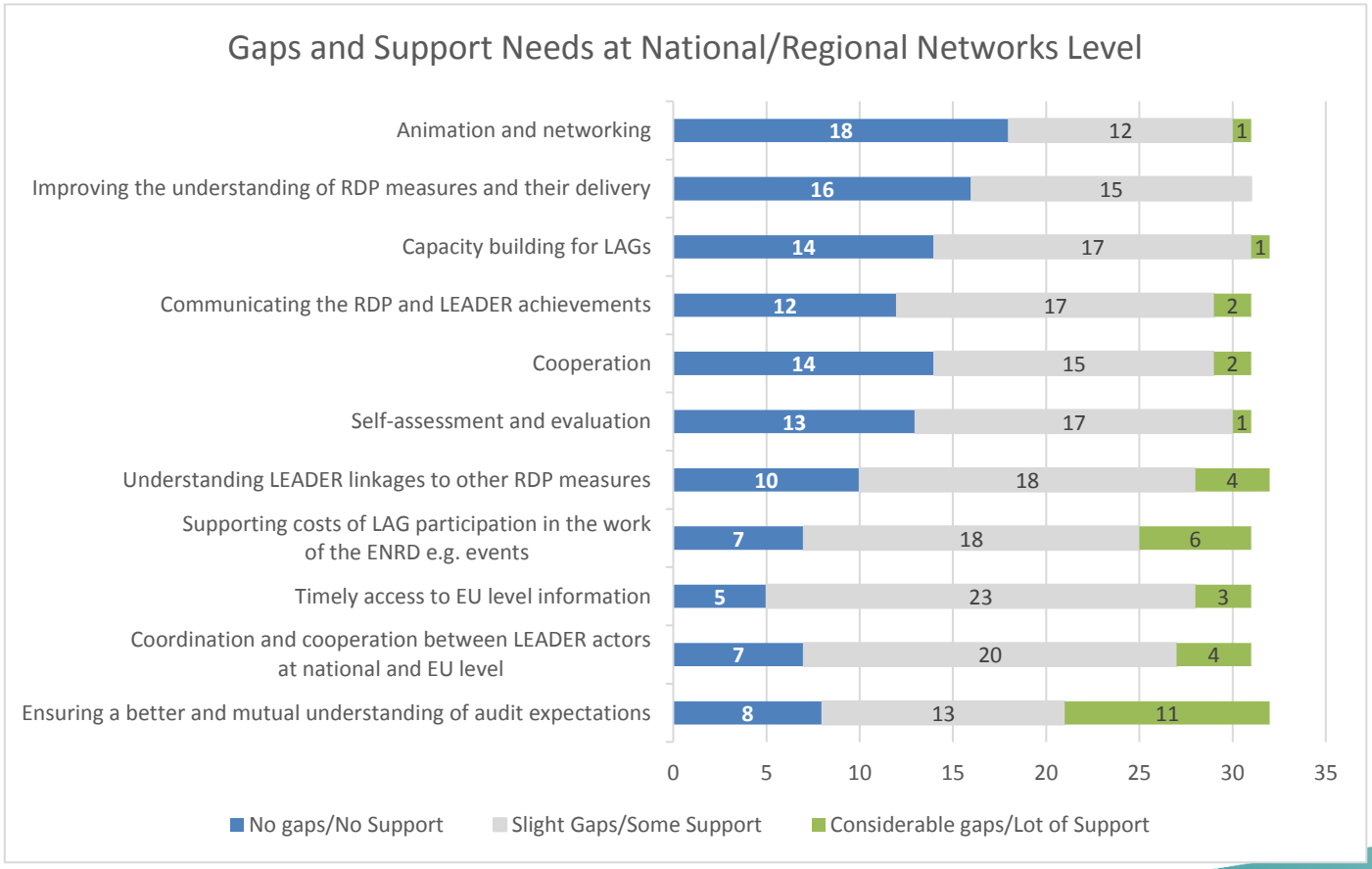
Question 32

To what extent does support from national and regional Rural Networks meet LAG needs and enhance LEADER implementation? Please, use the following scale to rank the provision against the specified needs:

1= no gaps in support – no support needed,
2 = slight gaps – some support needed,
3 = considerable gaps – lot of support needed.

- Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery.
- Self-assessment and evaluation.
- Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements.
- Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures, e.g. EIP Operational Groups.
- Capacity building for LAGs.
- Animation and networking.
- Cooperation.
- Timely access to EU level information.
- Supporting costs of LAG participation in the work of the ENRD e.g. events
- Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level.
- Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations.

Total Number of Responses 32



Funded by the European Commission

- The gaps and support needs from the networks identified by Austrian LAGs largely match those of the overall sample, there appears to be better provision / less need in relation to cooperation, animation and networking and for LAG capacity building.

Funded by the European Commission

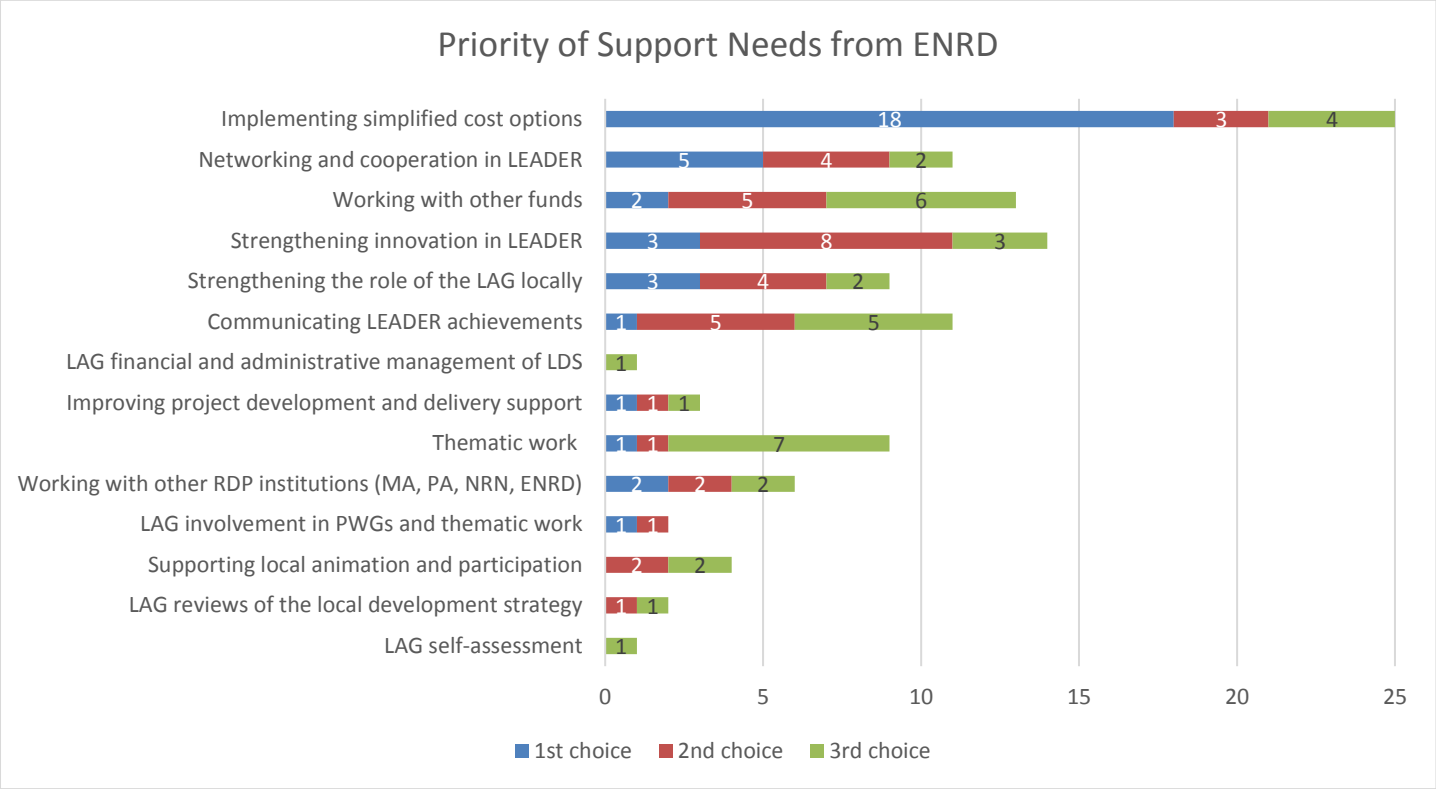
Question 33

Which of the following areas of your LAG's activity are the priorities which the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) should work on to help your LAG most?

Please rank the three most important options below on a scale of 1 – 3 where 1 = most important.

- LAG reviews of the local development strategy.
- LAG financial and administrative management of local development strategy implementation.
- Improving project development and delivery support.
- Implementing simplified cost options.
- Networking and cooperation in LEADER.
- Communicating LEADER achievements.
- Strengthening innovation in LEADER.
- Strengthening the role of the LAG locally.
- Supporting local animation and participation.
- Thematic work (e.g. Greening the local economy, social innovation, ICT & broadband, smart villages, etc.).
- Working with other RDP institutions (MA, PA, NRN, ENRD).
- LAG self-assessment.
- Working with other funds.
- LAG involvement in practitioner-working groups and thematic work.

Total Number of Responses 37



Funded by the European Commission

- There were no significant differences between Austrian responses to this question and the wider sample.

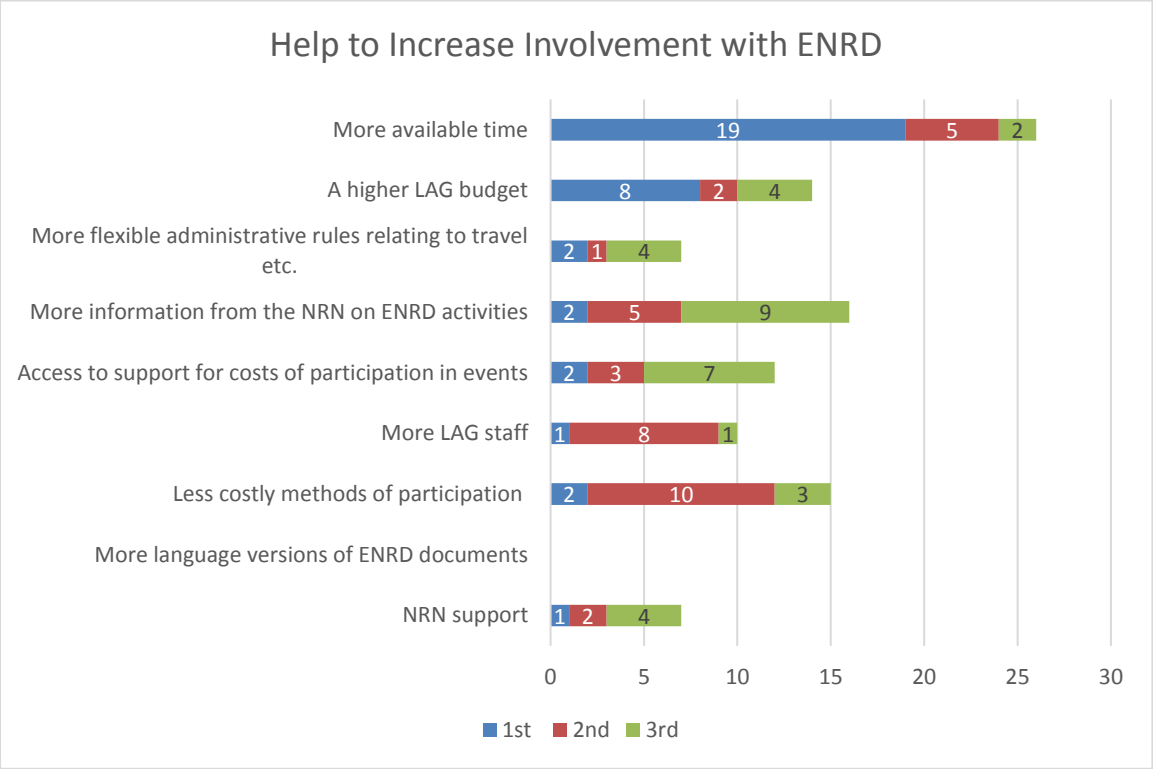
Funded by the European Commission

Question 34

What could help you get more involved in the work of the ENRD? You may select up to three of the options below. Please rank the three most important options below on a scale of 1 – 3 where 1 = most important.

- More flexible administrative rules relating to travel, participations in conferences etc.
- A higher LAG budget
- More available time
- More LAG staff
- More language versions of ENRD documents
- More information from the NRN on ENRD activities
- NRN support
- Less costly methods of participation (e.g. Online meetings)
- Access to support for costs of participation in events
- Other, please describe

Total Number of Responses 37



- Austrian LAGs place a higher priority on less costly methods of participation and a lower priority on more flexible administrative rules for travel than is seen in the overall sample results.

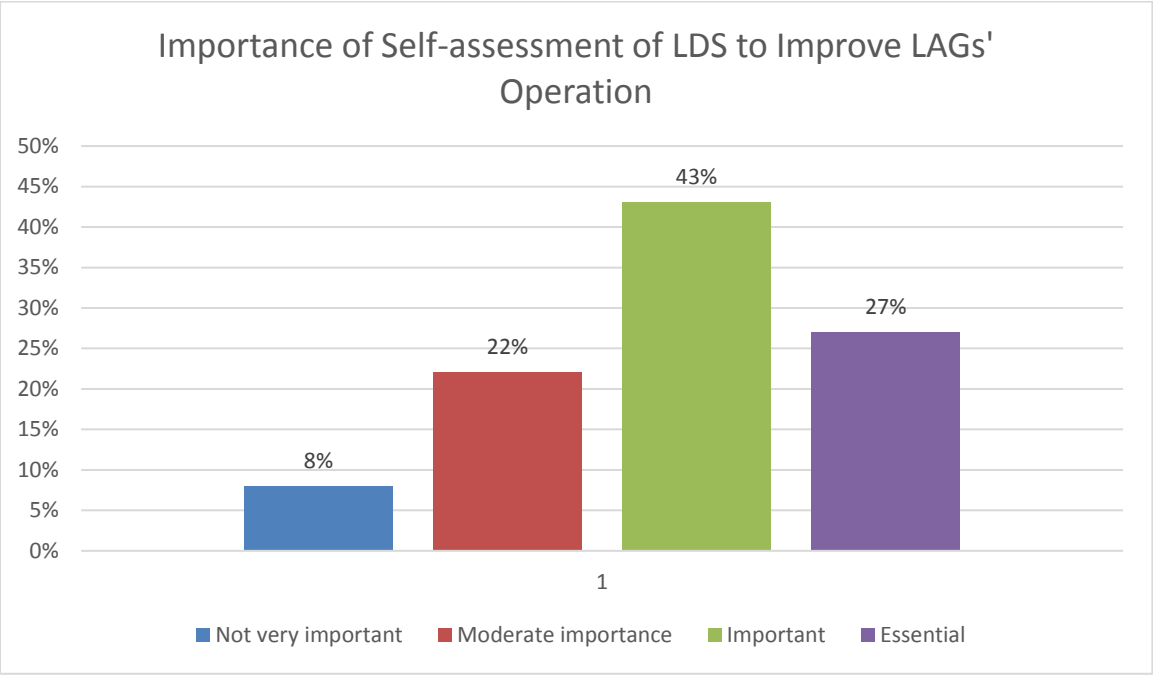
Funded by the European Commission

Question 35

How important do you think self-assessment (internal review) of your own Local Development Strategy is to improving your LAG`s operation?

- Not very important
- Moderate importance
- Important
- Essential

Total Number of Responses 37



- Austrian responses to this question are very consistent with the whole sample.

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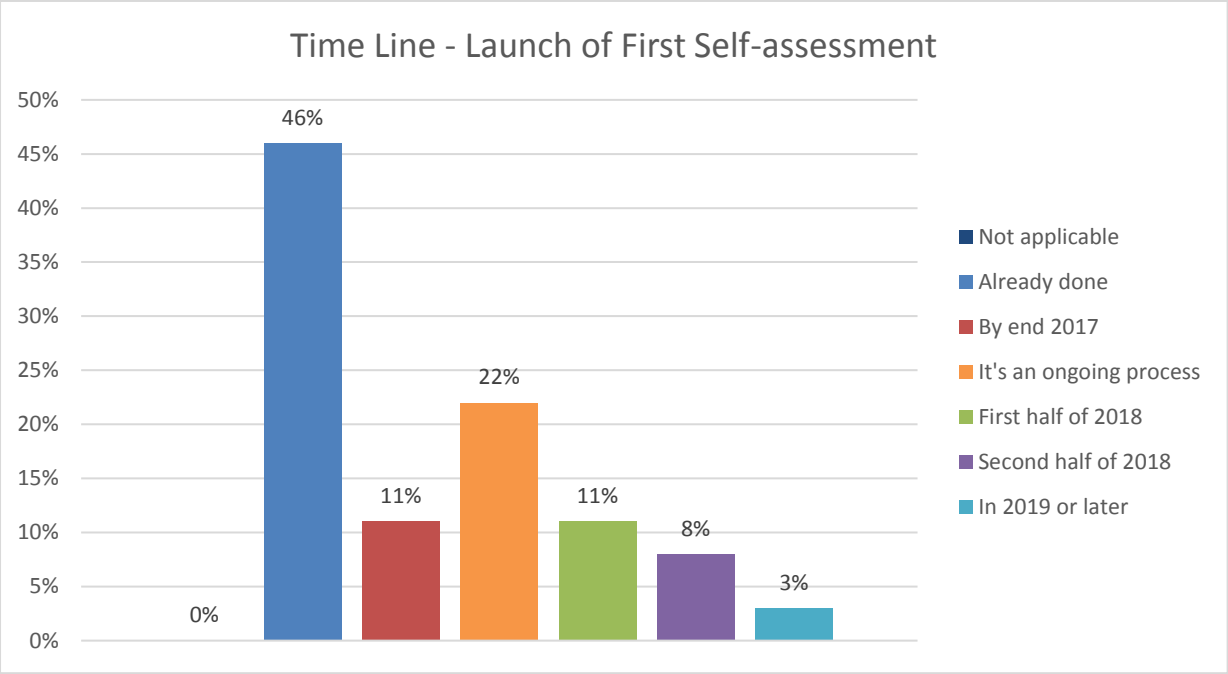
Question 36

When are you planning to launch your first self-assessment?

- Already done
- By end 2017
- First half of 2018
- Second half of 2018
- In 2019 or later
- It is an ongoing process
- Not applicable

Total Number of Responses 37



- With 46% having already done some self-assessment work Austrian LAGs are significantly more progressed in this than the overall sample (14%).

Question 37

Are you willing to participate in further LEADER work with the ENRD (e.g. a focus group, practitioner-working group, other forms)?

- Yes – 86%
- No – 14%

Total Number of Responses 37

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