



European Network for  
Rural Development

# **LEADER LAG Survey 2017**

**Working Paper**

**Findings at Member State level**

**Member State: Bulgaria**

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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.

## Basic Implementation Data

### Question 1

*Please select your country*

- Bulgaria (BG)
- 9 LAGs responded, representing 1.3% of total LAG responses
- 23% of BG LAGs responded to the survey

*Total Number of Responses 9*

## Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- BG has one national programme.

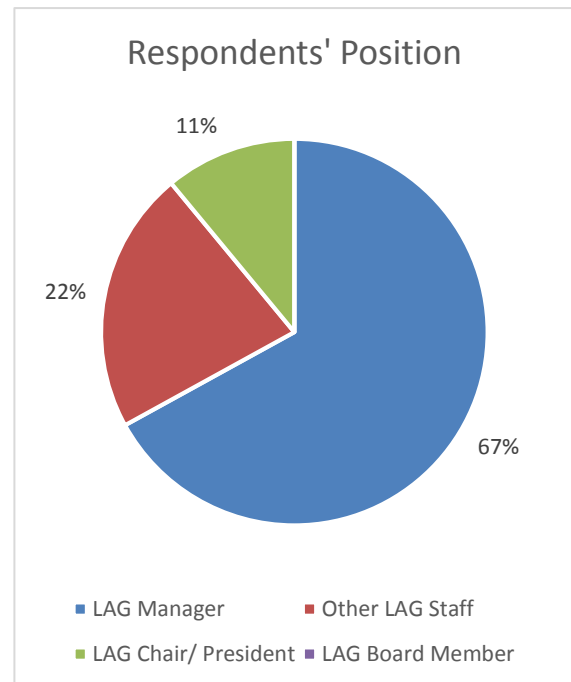
Total Number of Responses 9

## 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 9



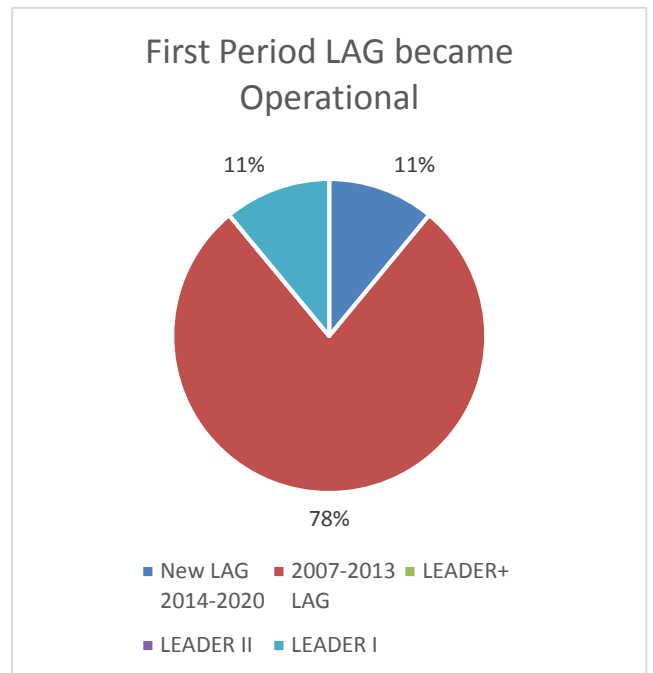
### Question 7

*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 9*

- Bulgarian responses included a larger proportion of LAGs (78%) from the period of 2007-2013 than the EU sample (34%).
- In comparison to the EU sample, 11% of responding LAGs in Bulgaria were 'new' as opposed to 22% at the EU level.
- The Bulgarian responses apparently included one LAG from LEADER I. This appears to be a data entry error.

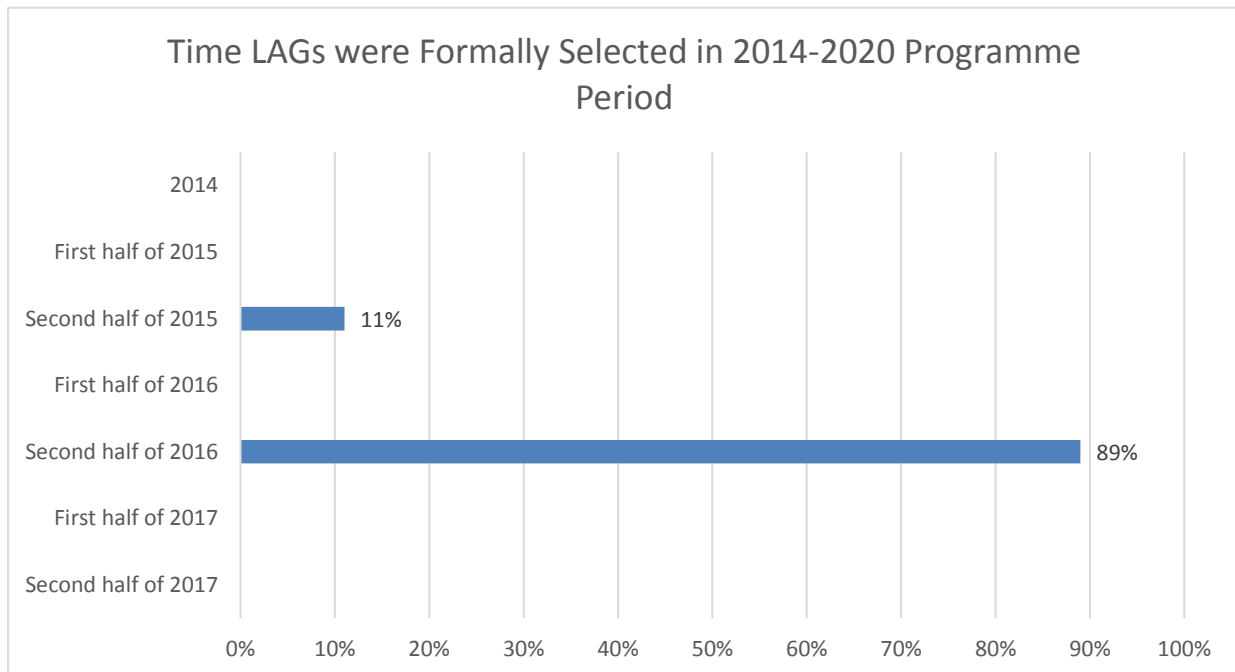


### Question 8

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 9



- By the end of 2016, all of the responding LAGs in Bulgaria were 'formally selected', compared to 90% of the EU sample.

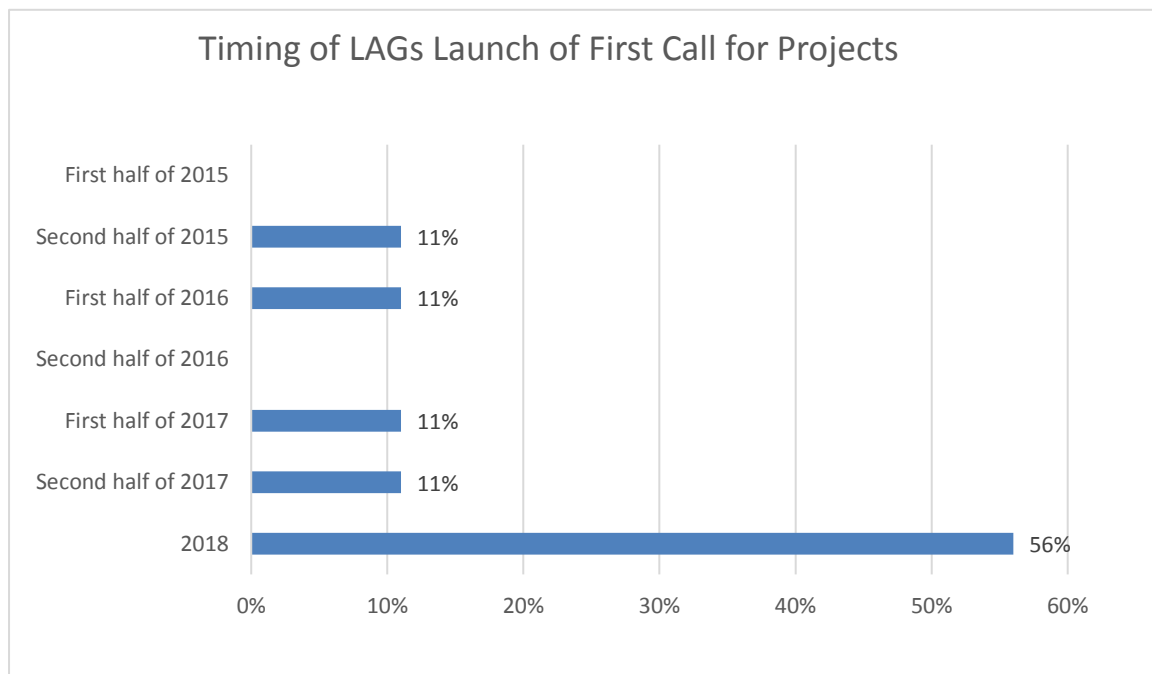


### Question 9

*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 9*



- While four of the Bulgarian LAG's launched their first call within a year of being established, over half (56%) launched their first call in 2018. In contrast, 90% of the LAGs of the EU survey launched their first call for projects before 2018.

## LAG Funding

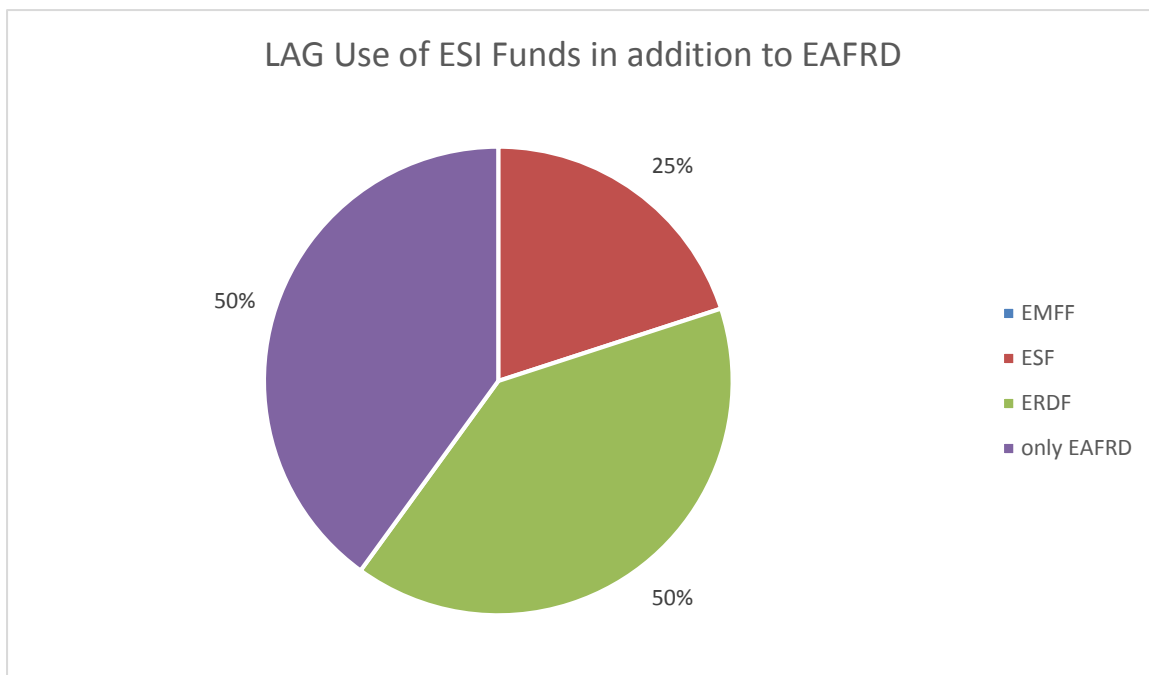
### Question 10

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)

Total Number of Responses 8

The chart sums up to more than 100% due to the multiple responses possible.



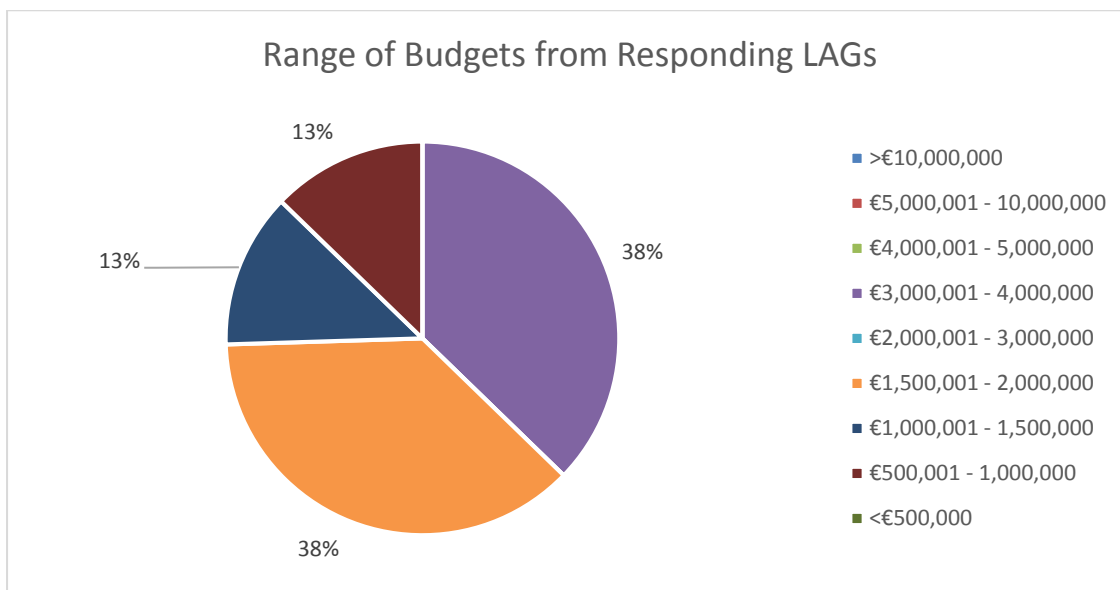
- Half of all responding Bulgarian LAGs (50%) reported using multiple funds. This is a higher proportion than at EU level (33%), a higher proportion of Bulgarian LAGs use ERDF than in the EU sample (50% vs 25%).

### 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 8



- Three quarters of Bulgarian LAGs (74%) stated a budget range from €1.5 to €4m. This compares to 56% of EU LAGs reporting this range.
- None of the Bulgarian LAGs had a budget over €4m as opposed to almost a third of EU LAGs (29%) with this level of financial allocation.
- Two of the eight LAGs responding in Bulgaria reported smaller budgets from €500,000 to €1m, compared to only 12% in the EU sample.

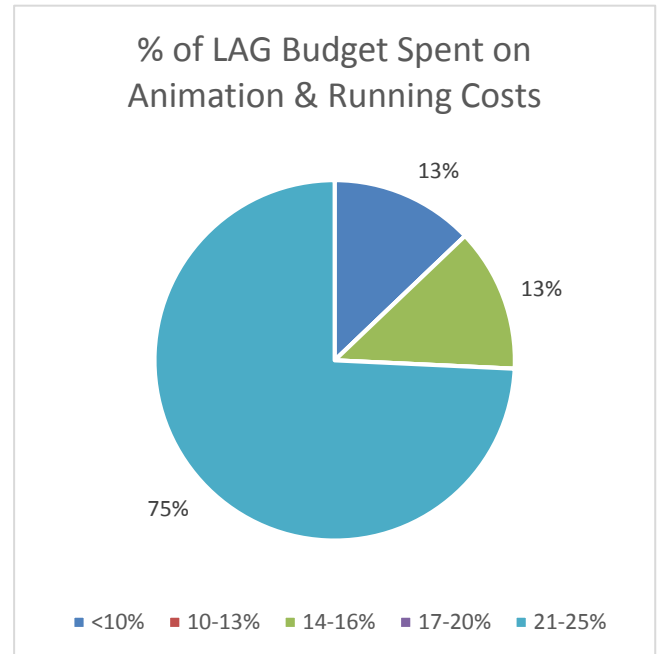
### Question 12

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 8

- The proportion of LAGs who reported a running costs and animation budget allocation between 21% to 25% was significantly higher in Bulgaria (75% of LAGs) than was reported at the EU level (31%).



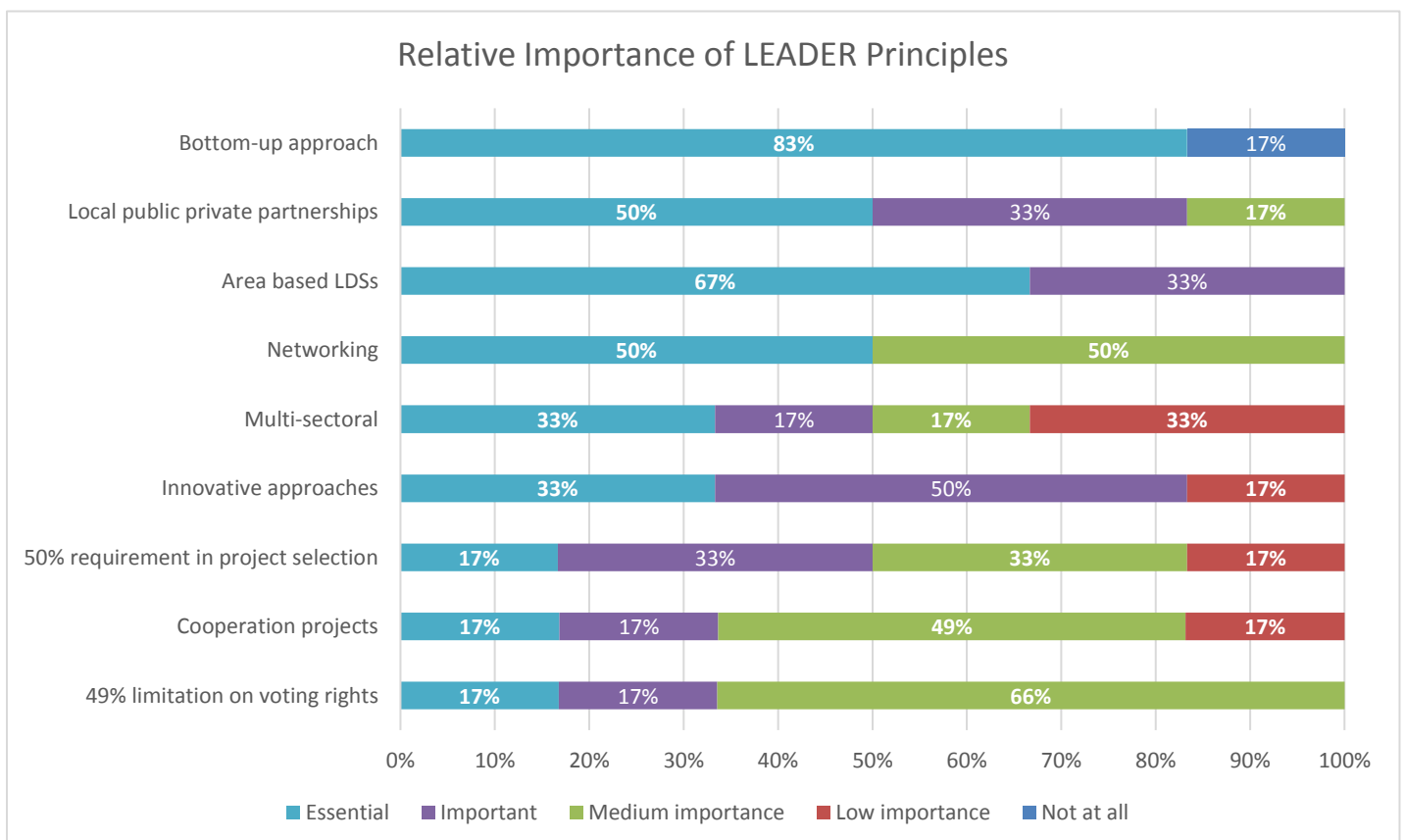
## LEADER Principles

### 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 6



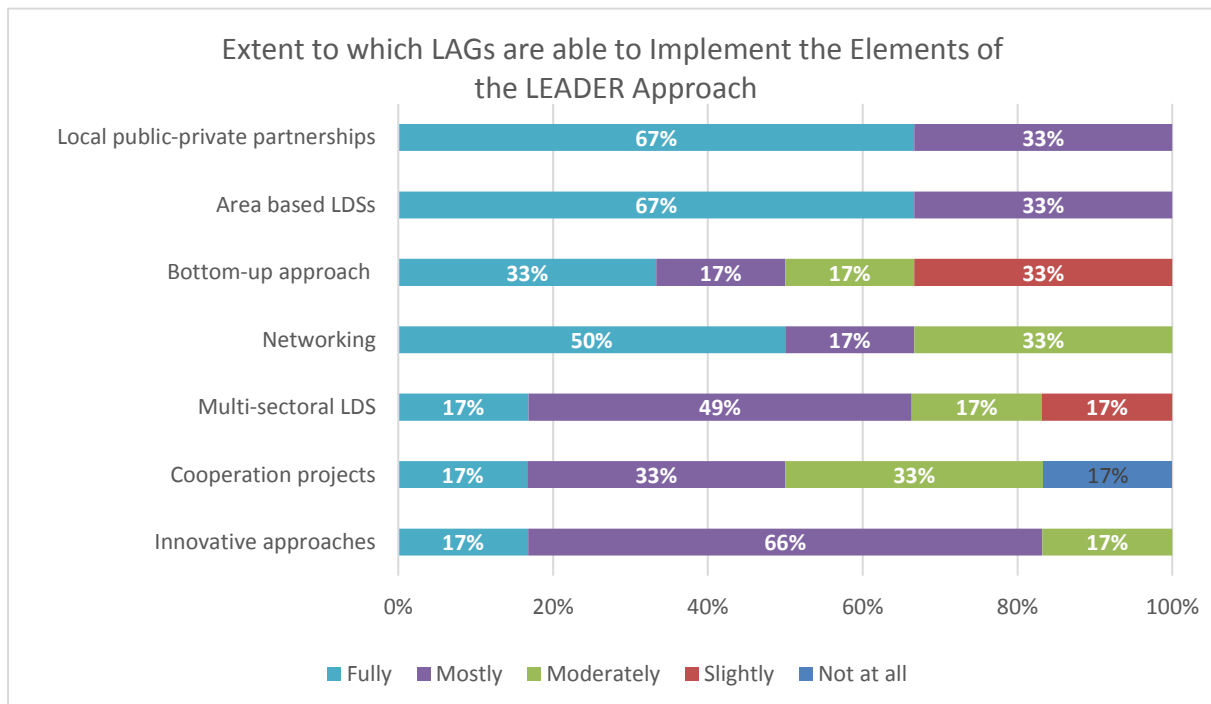
- There were only minor differences between the Bulgarian LAGs responses and those of the EU sample. More Bulgarian LAGs rated the 'bottom-up approach' as 'essential' in comparison to the EU sample (83% vs 72%).
- A number of principles were considered as somewhat less important by LAGs in Bulgaria than by the EU sample, for example the '50% requirement in project selection', the '49% limitation on voting rights', and 'cooperation projects' were all less frequently regarded as 'essential' or 'important'.

### 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 6



- The overall pattern of Bulgarian and EU samples is similar.
- Bulgarian LAGs were more often 'fully' and 'mostly' able to implement 'local public-private partnerships', 'area-based LDSs' and 'innovative approaches' than LAGs at the EU level;
- However, the Bulgarian LAGs rated their ability to implement the 'bottom-up approach' and 'networking' 'fully' and 'mostly' lower than the European LAG sample (50% vs 77% and 67% vs 75% respectively).

### Question 15

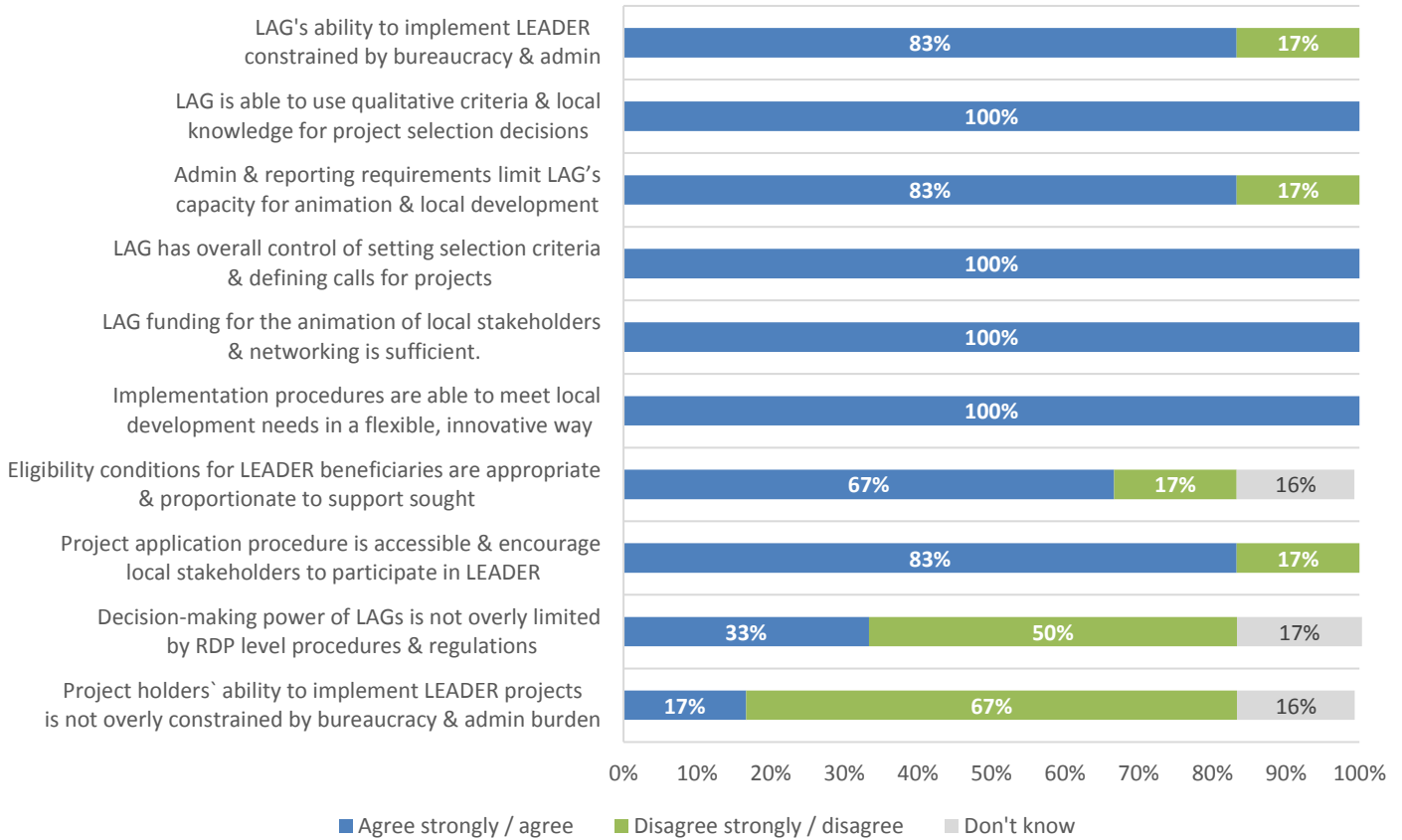
*Please consider the statements below and for each statement select the option that best reflects your practical experience from this scale: 1 = disagree strongly, 2 = disagree, 3 = don't know, 4 = agree, 5 = agree strongly.*

- 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 6*



## Aspects of LEADER Implementation as seen by Local Action Groups



- Overall, a greater proportion of Bulgarian LAGs agreed with most of the statements in this survey question than did the wider sample.
- A larger proportion of LAGs in Bulgaria (83%) agreed with the 'accessibility of project application procedures and encouragement of local stakeholders', in comparison to 33% of the European sample.
- All the Bulgarian respondents agreed with regard to 'LAGs overall control of setting selection criteria and defining project calls' the 'adequacy of LAG funding for the animation of local stakeholders and networking', and with the 'implementation procedures meeting local development needs in a flexible, innovative way'. All of the Bulgarian agreed strongly/agreed vs 66%, 54% and 51% (respectively) of the European LAGs who responded.

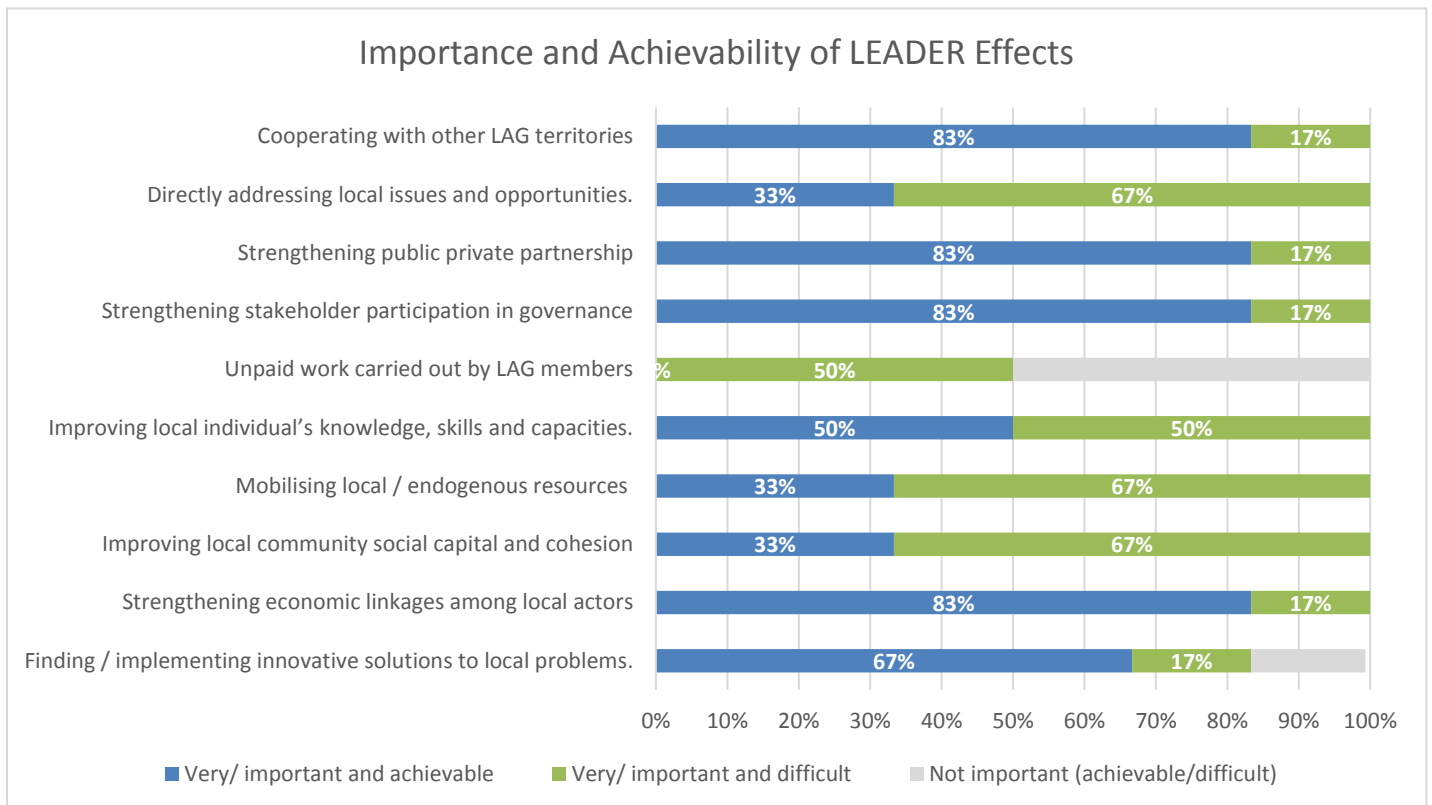
### Question 16

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 6



- With some limited exceptions, Bulgarian LAGs generally felt more positive than the European sample, regarding the importance and achievability of the LEADER effects.
- However, a considerably smaller proportion of Bulgarian than European LAGs felt that 'directly addressing local issues & opportunities' and 'unpaid work by LAG members' (33% vs 63% and 0% vs 55% respectively) were 'important achievable LEADER effects' and felt that these were more difficult to achieve.

## LEADER Operation

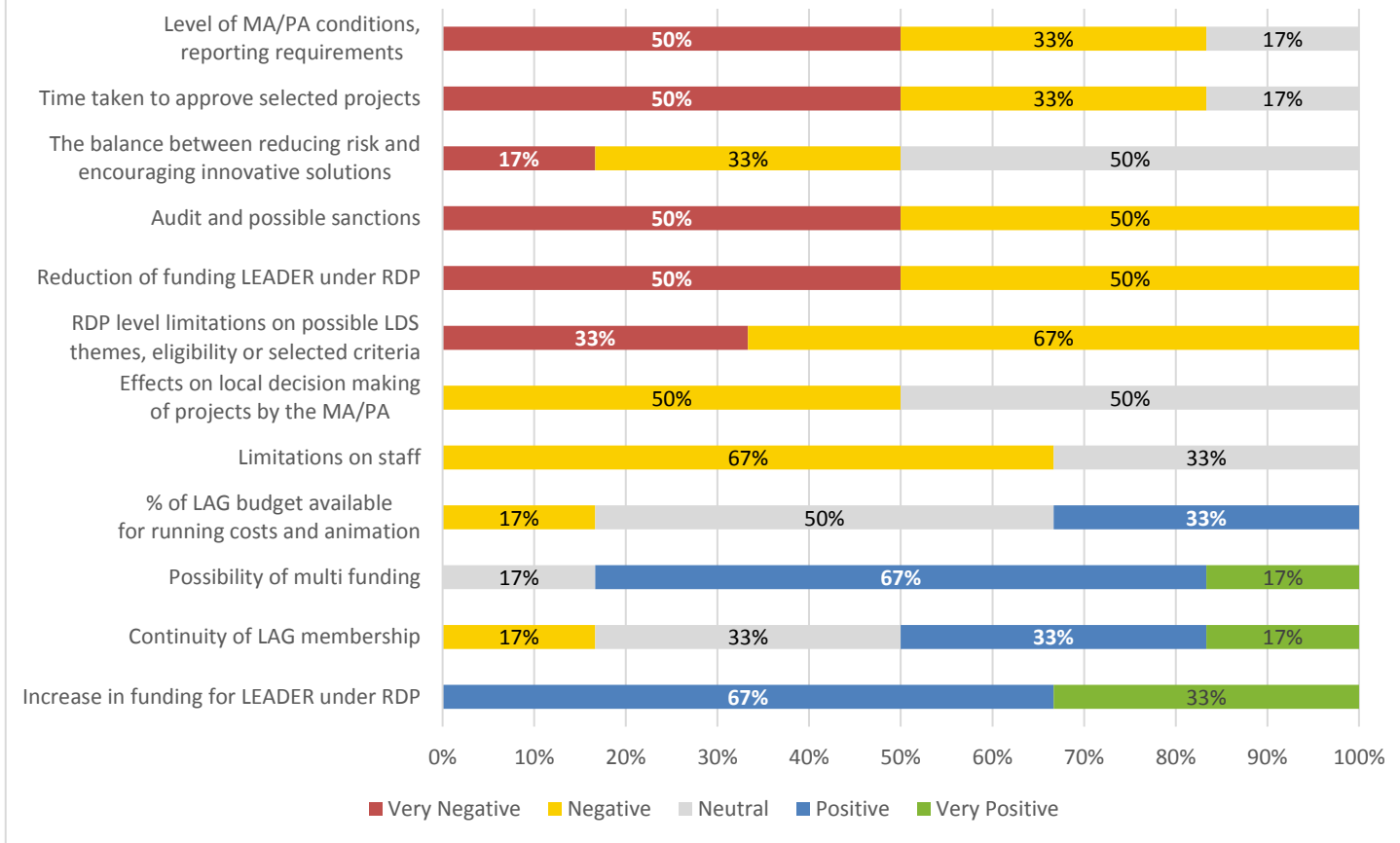
### Question 17

*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: 6*

### Level of Effects on LEADER Implementation



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

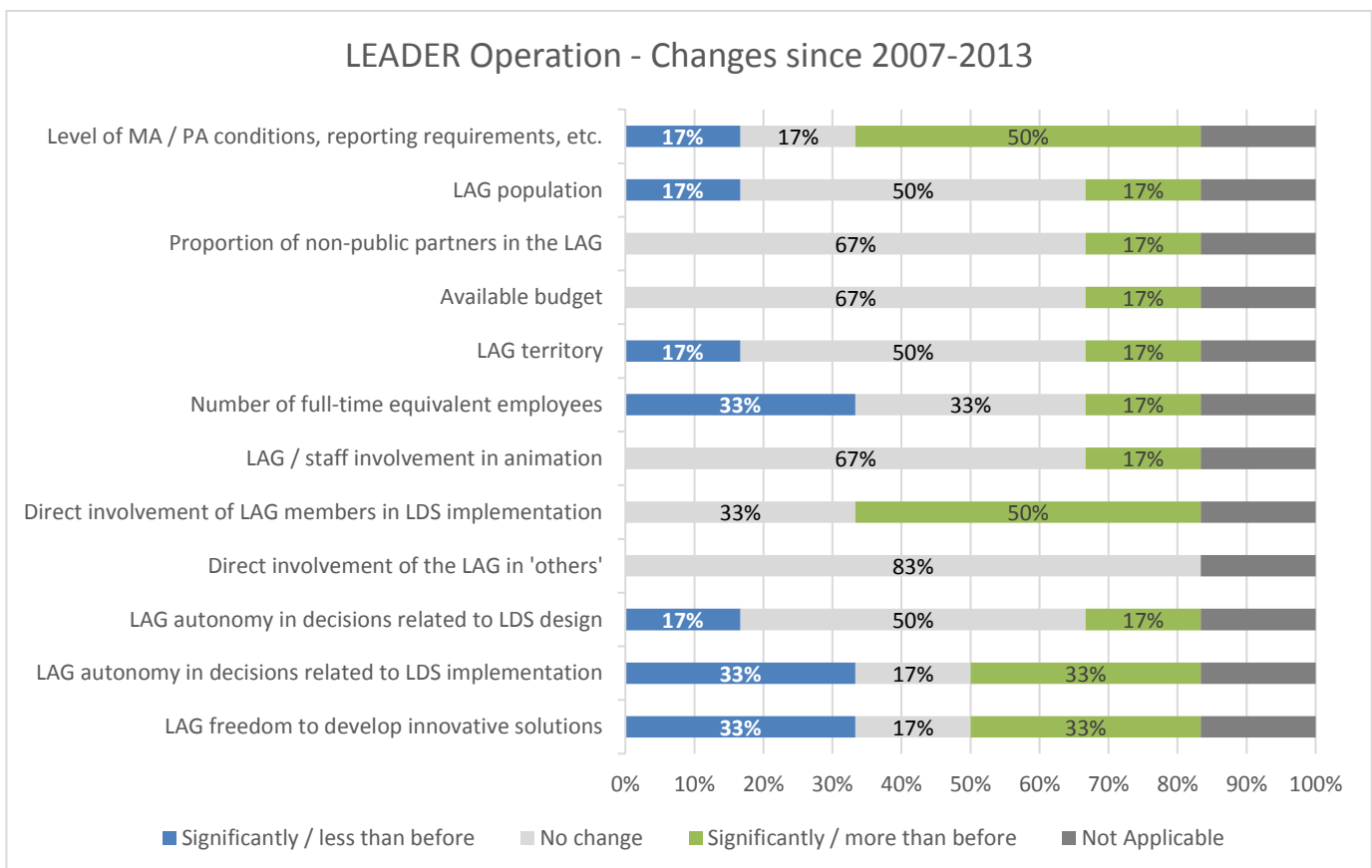
- LAGs in Bulgaria generally rated many of the statements of this survey question more negatively than the European sample. This was particularly the case for ‘reductions of funding LEADER under RDP’, ‘RDP limitations on possible LDS themes’ and ‘audit and possible sanctions’. In all three statements, all of the Bulgarian LAGs (100%) chose ‘very negative’ or ‘negative’, in comparison to 55%, 53% and 56% of the European sample (respectively).
- Only in the cases of ‘increase in funding for LEADER’ and ‘possibility of multi-funding’ did a significantly greater proportion of Bulgarian LAGs score more positively than the European sample (100% vs 46% and 84% vs 37% respectively).

### 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 6



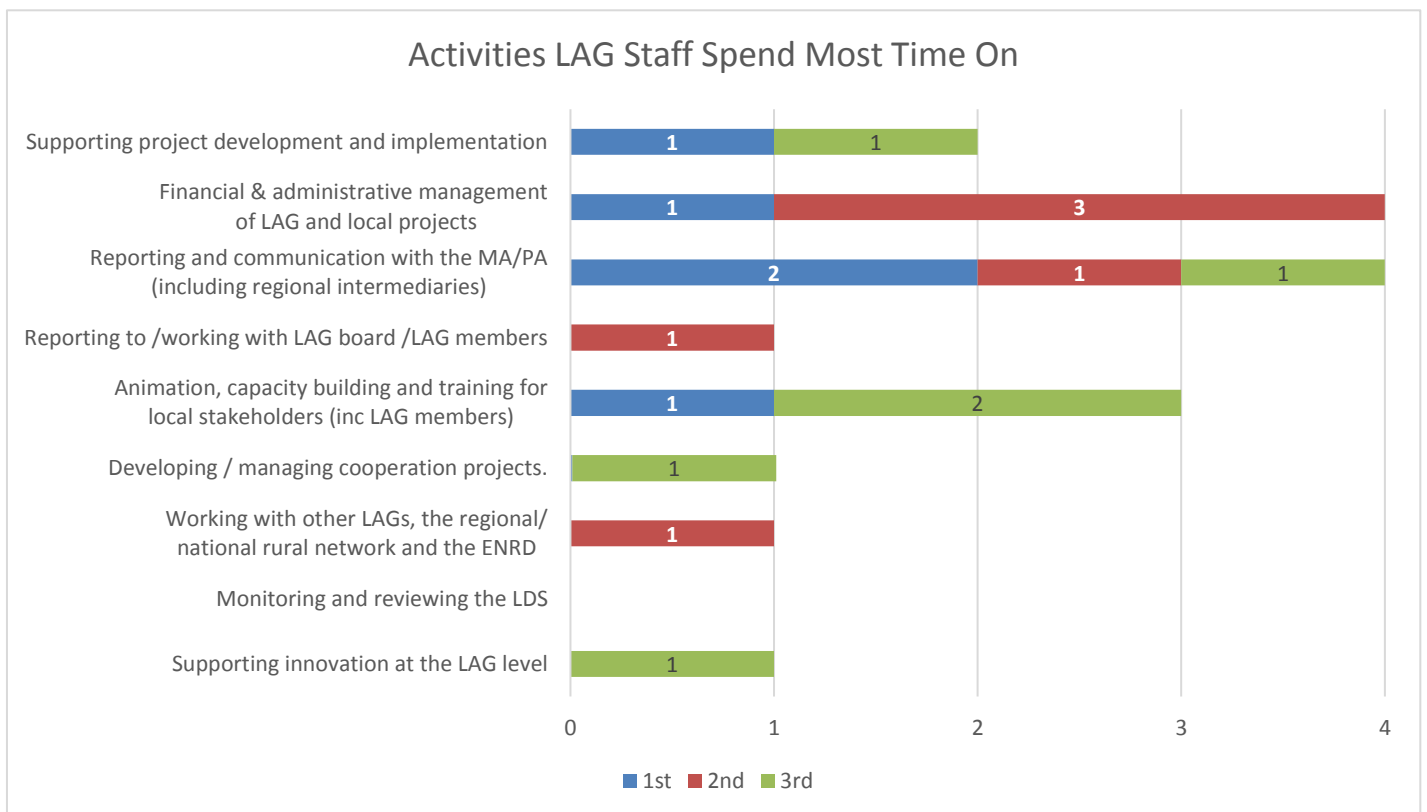
- The most significant difference between Bulgarian respondents and the total EU sample was in relation to the 'available budget' where 73% of the European sample had experienced changes ('more' as well as 'less'), while 67% of the Bulgarian LAGs experienced 'no change'.
- Furthermore, a much higher percentage (83%) of Bulgarian respondents indicated that there was 'no change' with regard to being involved in 'other regional and territorial actions or structures'. In contrast, only 45% of the EU sample experienced 'no change'.
- A higher proportion of Bulgarian than European LAGs stated that they had 'more freedom to develop innovative solutions' (33% vs 14%), 'more autonomy in decisions relating to LDS implementation' (33% vs 17%), and 'more direct involvement of LAG members in LDS implementation' (50% vs 26%).

### 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 6



- The majority of Bulgarian respondents felt that most of their staff's time was spent on 'reporting and communication with MA/PA' and 'financial and administrative management of LAGs and local projects'. This was in line with the European sample findings.
- A smaller proportion of the Bulgarian respondents prioritised 'project development and implementation', while this task received highest ratings in the EU sample.

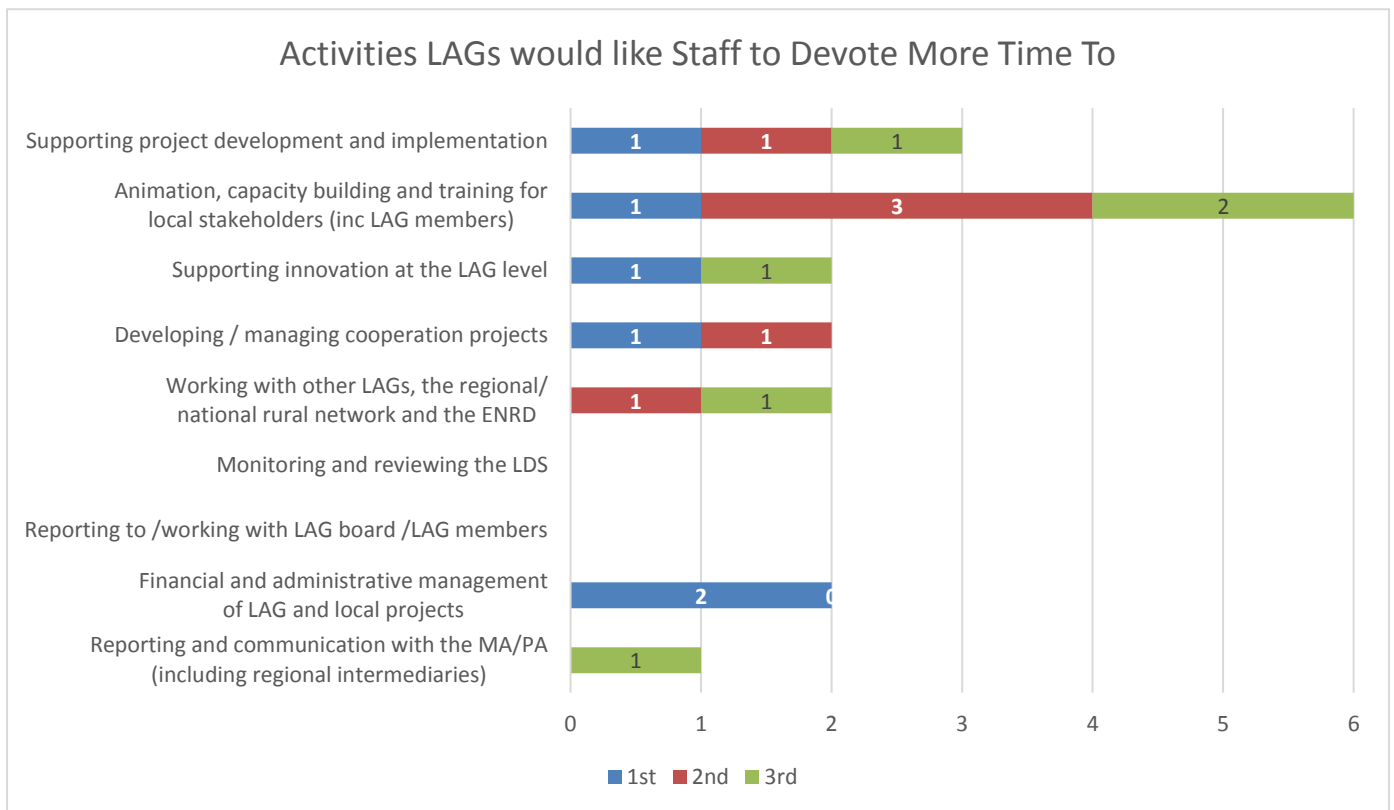


### Question 20

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 6



- The majority of LAGs in Bulgaria felt that they would like their staff to devote more time to 'animation, capacity building and training'. This was in line with the European sample findings.

- At European level, the majority of LAGs indicated that ‘supporting project development and implementation’ is the highest priorities to increase staff time spent on. In contrast, only one of the Bulgarian respondents identified this task as the highest priority to increase.

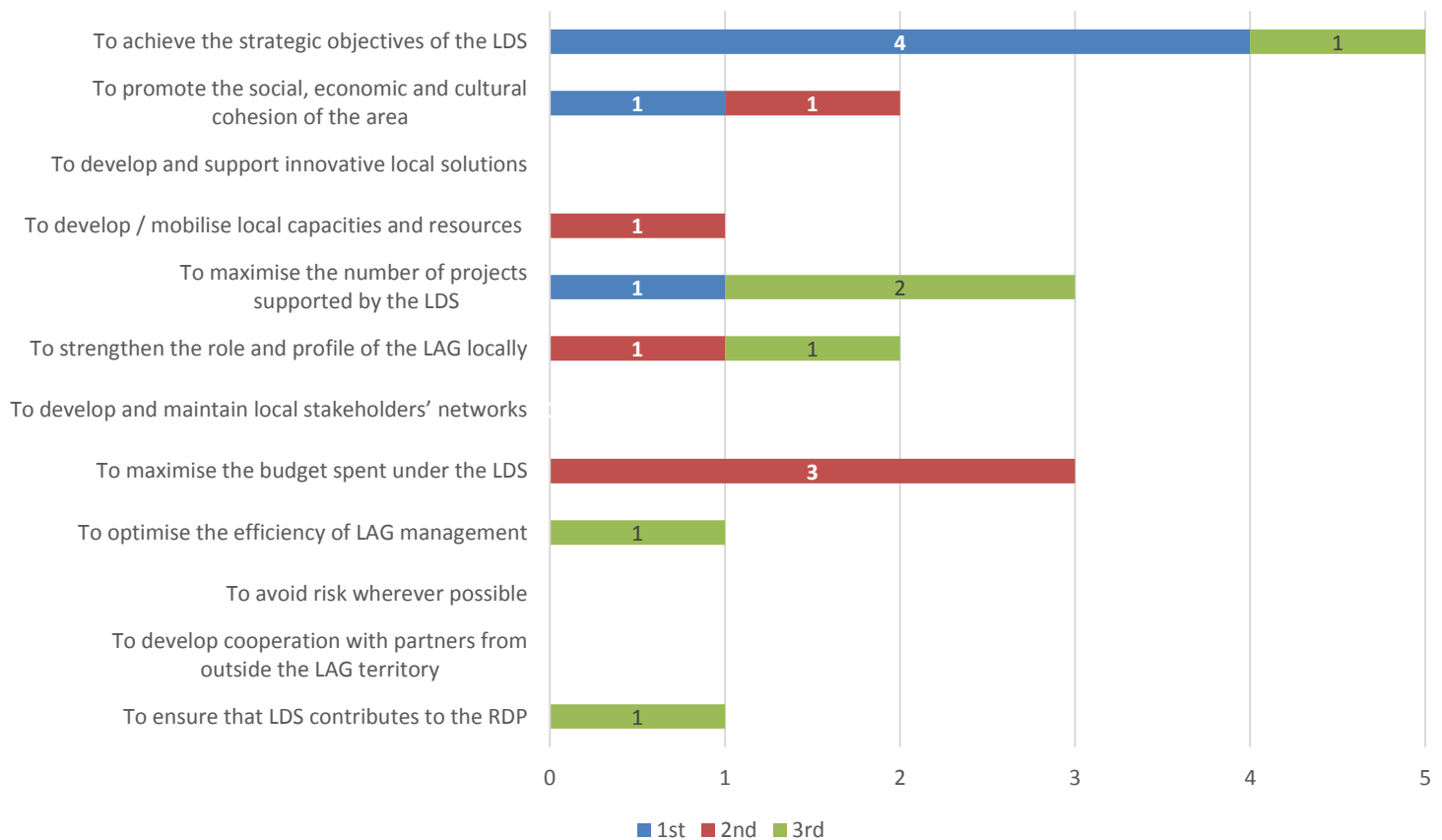
### Question 21

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 6

#### Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs



- The responses of the Bulgarian LAGs are broadly in line with those of the EU sample. The main exceptions are that the third ranked EU priority, 'developing and supporting innovative local solution' was not ranked a top three priority by any Bulgarian LAG whilst slightly more emphasis was given by the Bulgarian respondents to 'maximise the budget spent under the LDS'.

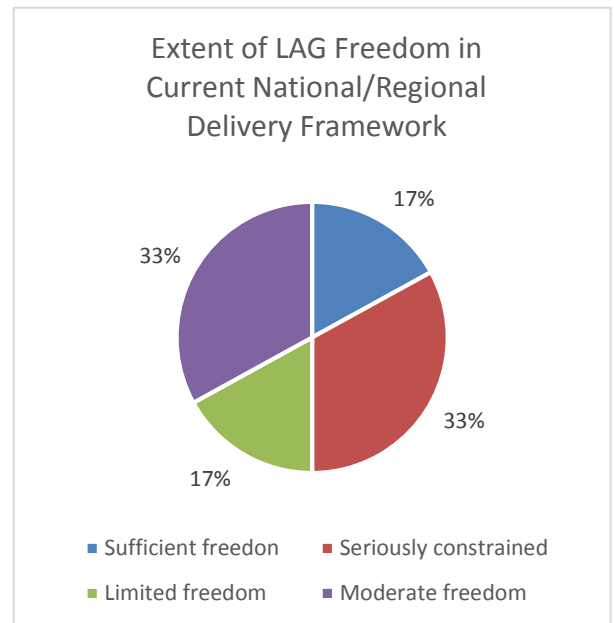
## Question 22

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 6

- Half of the Bulgarian LAGs reported that they felt either 'seriously constrained' or had 'limited freedom' in their current national/regional delivery framework. This was a larger percentage than at EU level (50% vs 38%).

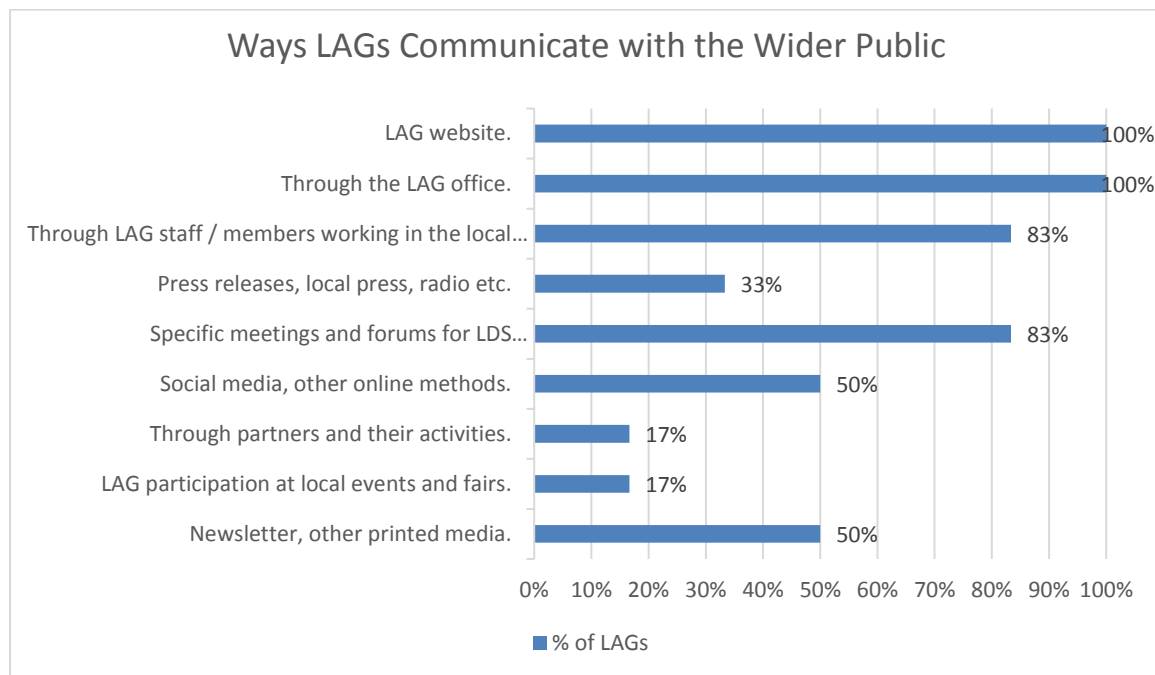


### Question 23

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 6



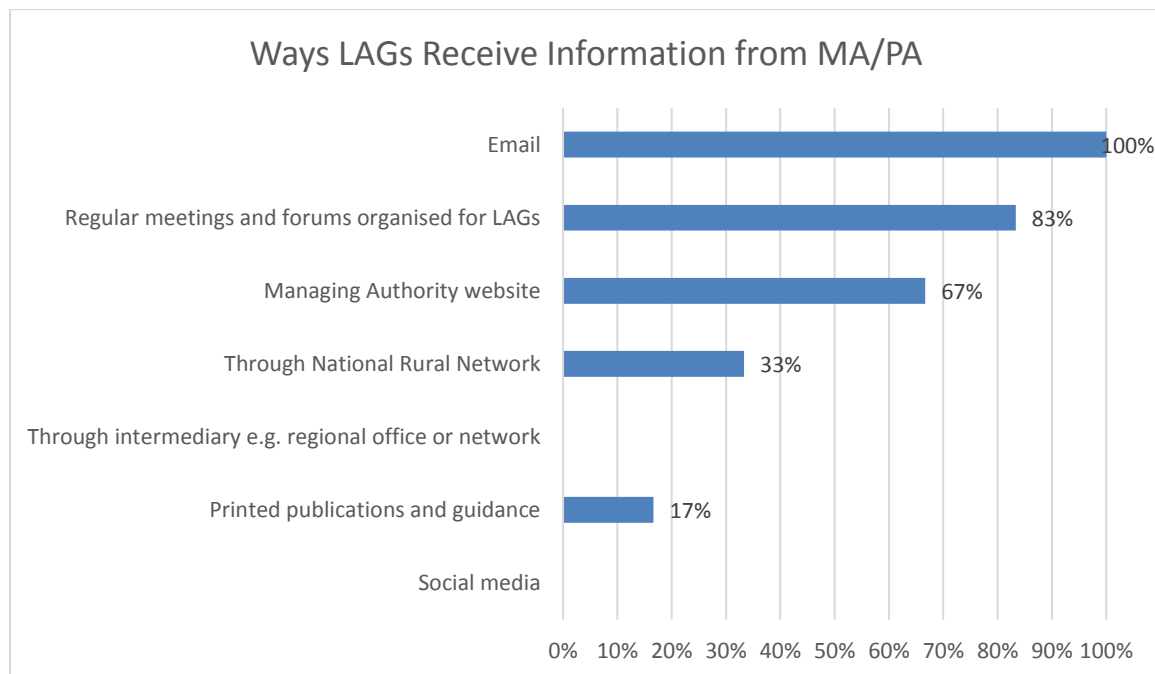
- Bulgarian LAGs indicated that they communicate substantially more through ‘specific meetings’ (83% vs 62%), ‘the LAG office’ (100% vs 71%), and ‘LAG staff / members’ (83% vs 66%) than the European average.
- At the same time, Bulgarian LAGs appeared to make considerably less use of ‘press releases, local press etc’. than the overall sample (33% vs 65%).
- Communication ‘through partners’ and ‘LAG participation at local events and fairs’ was also much less used than at European level (17% vs 54% and 17% vs 52% respectively).

### 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 6



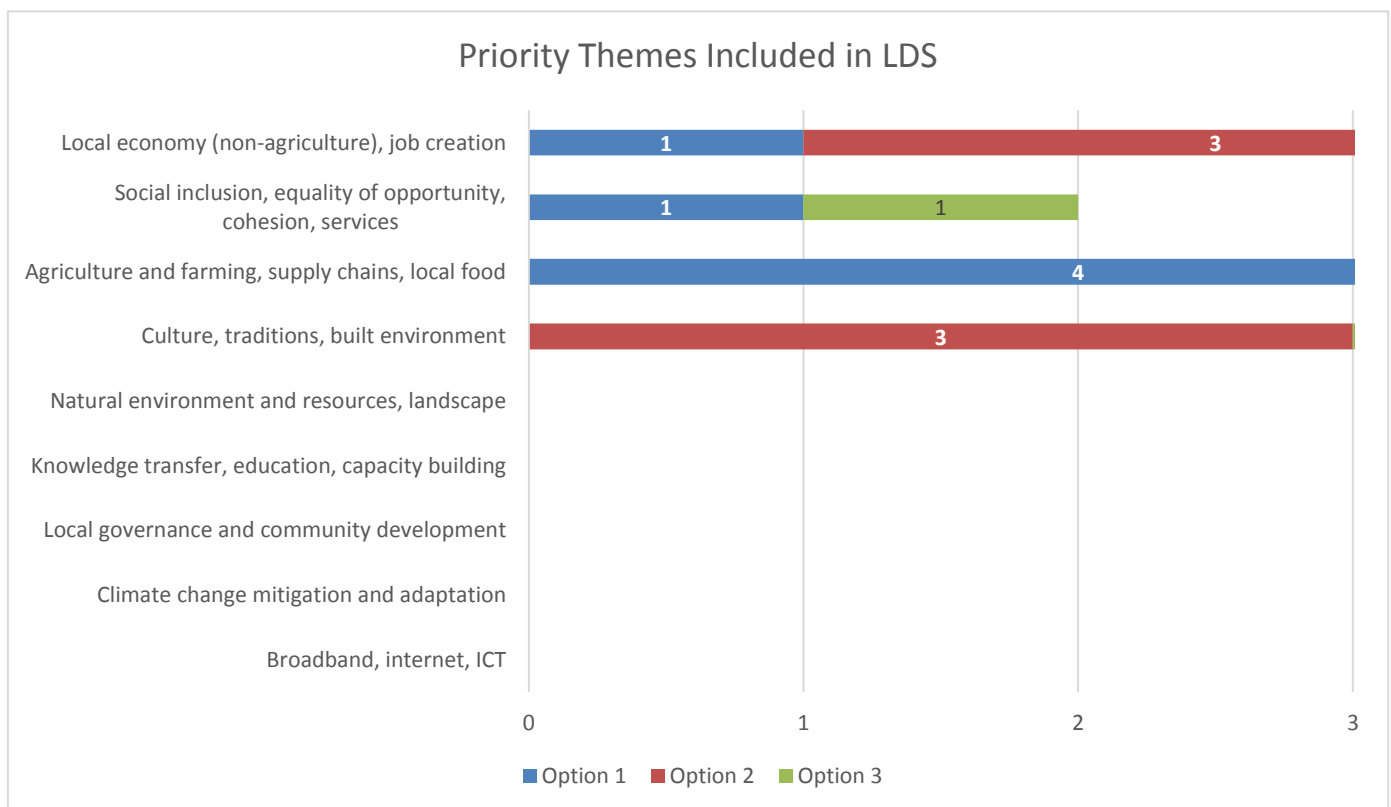
- The pattern of responses from the Bulgarian LAGs was largely similar to those of the EU sample, with the following differences:
- In Bulgaria, proportionately more LAGs indicated to receive information through the 'website of their Managing Authority' than at the European level (67% vs 34%).
- None of the Bulgarian respondents received information 'through intermediaries', compared to 22% at the European level.

### 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 6



- The Bulgarian responses were largely in line with the priority themes identified at the European level. Within this ‘agriculture, farming, supply chains, local food’ is highest ranked in Bulgaria vs third overall whilst ‘social inclusion’ was identified more frequently in the EU sample.



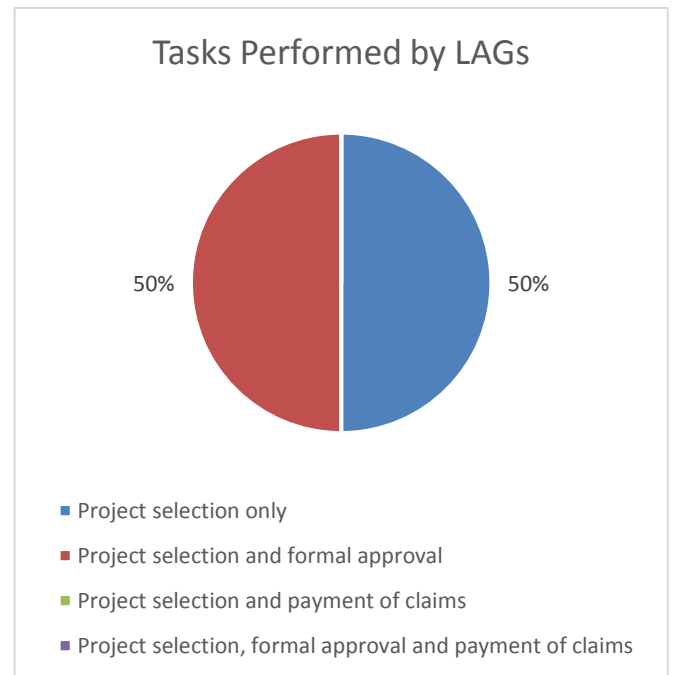
### Question 26

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 6

- Similar to the EU sample, half of the Bulgarian LAGs performed 'project selection only'. The other half performs 'project selection and formal approval'.
- None of the Bulgarian respondents performed tasks relating to the 'payment of claims' (21% at EU level).



## LEADER Improvements

### Question 27

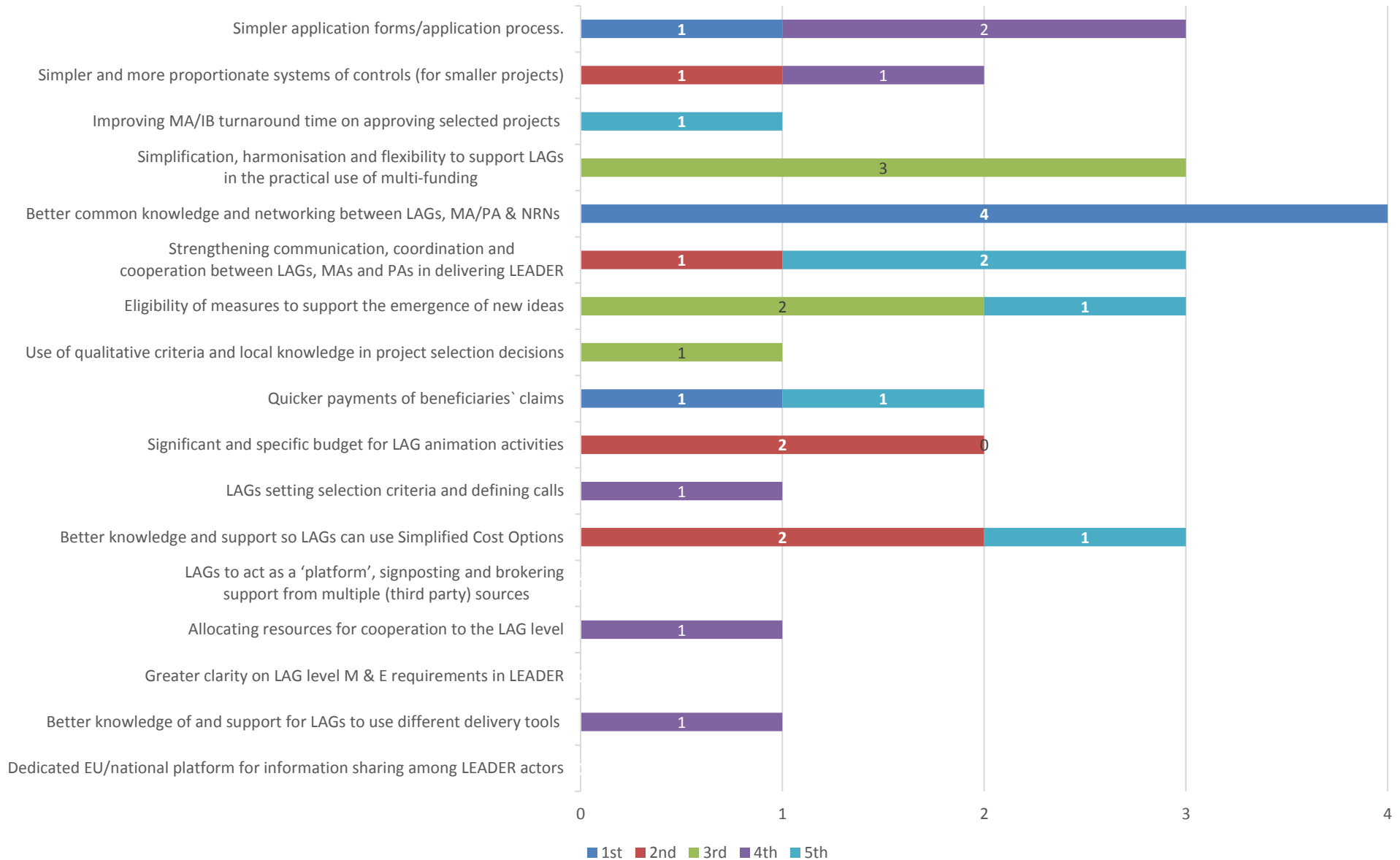
*What is most important to address in helping LAGs to be effective in implementing LEADER now? Please select and rank your top five priorities from the following items in order of their importance in (where 1= highest importance and 5 = 5th most important)*

- 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 6*

- The majority of Bulgarian respondents suggested that 'better common knowledge and networking between LAGs, MA/PA and NRN' should be considered as the most important change now.
- Markedly lower priority was placed on 'improving MA / IB turnaround time' and 'simpler and more proportionate systems of controls' in the Bulgarian responses.

## Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now

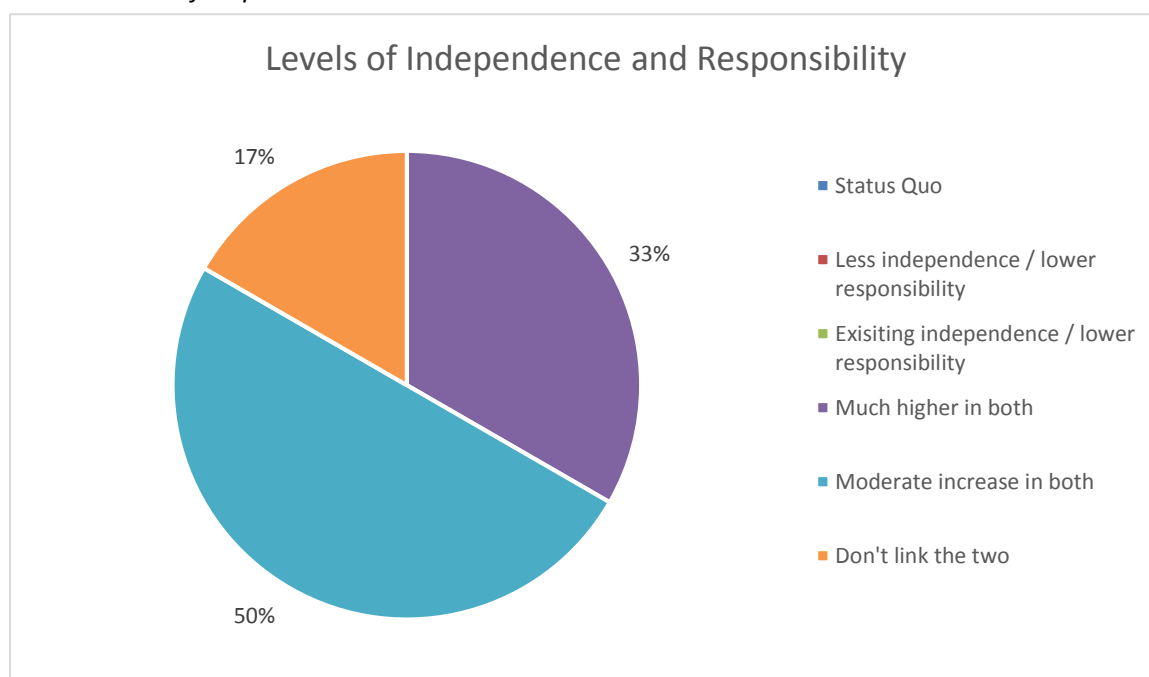


### Question 28:

*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 – 6



- Half of the responding Bulgarian LAGs (50%) were in favour of a 'moderate increase in both', independence and responsibility, higher than the overall European survey population (28%).
- A third (33%) of the Bulgarian respondents preferred a 'much higher increase in both', whereas at European level only 19% desired this.

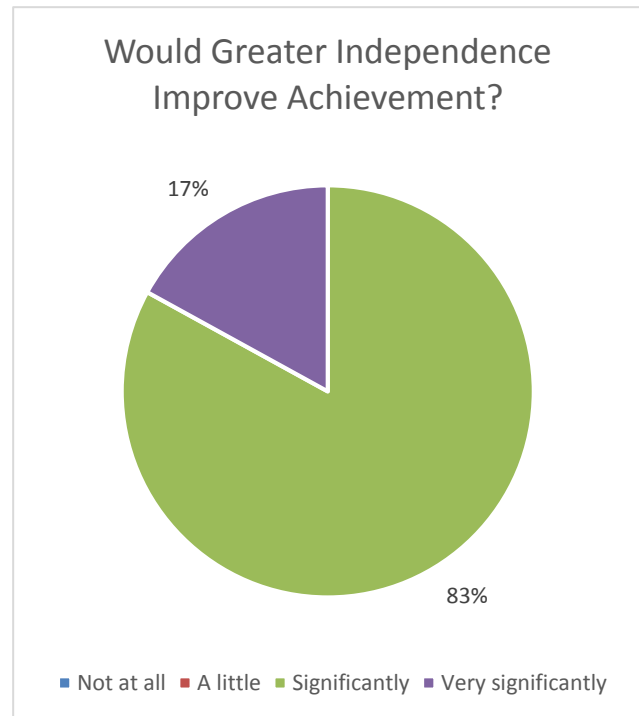
### Question 29

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 6

- The majority of Bulgarian LAGs (83%) thought greater independence might 'significantly' improve the achievement of LAGs. At European level, only 42% expressed this view.
- None of the Bulgarian respondents felt that greater independence would have 'little' or 'no effect at all', in contrast to 46% of the EU sample.

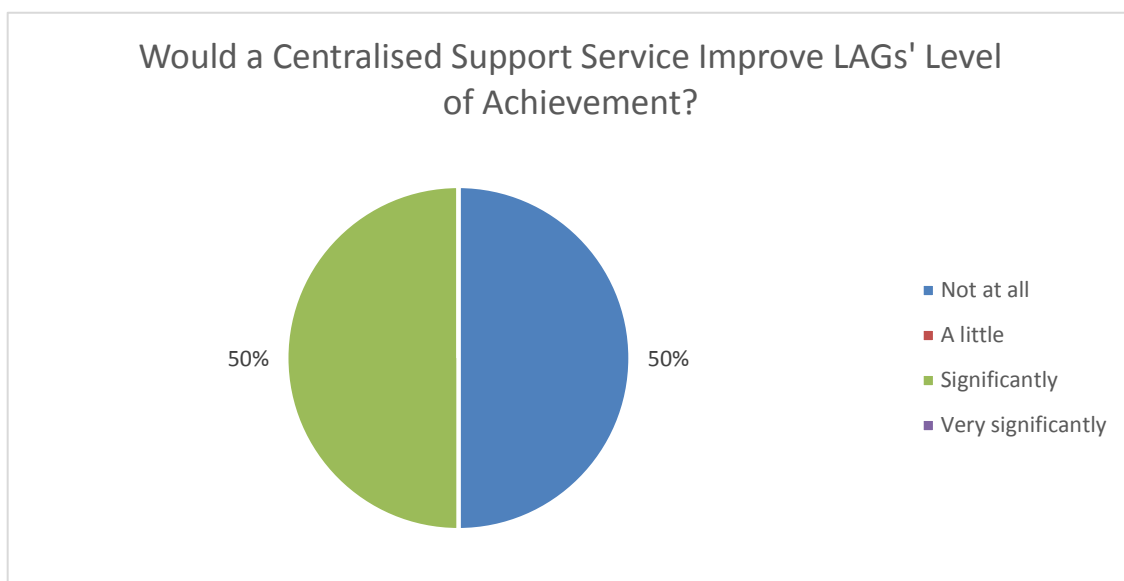


### Question 30

*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 6



- The responding Bulgarian LAGs were 50/50 split in their views if a centralised support service might improve LAGs' level of achievement or not. At European level, the views were more diverse, with 27% believing that a 'little' and another 9% a 'very significant' improvement could be gained.

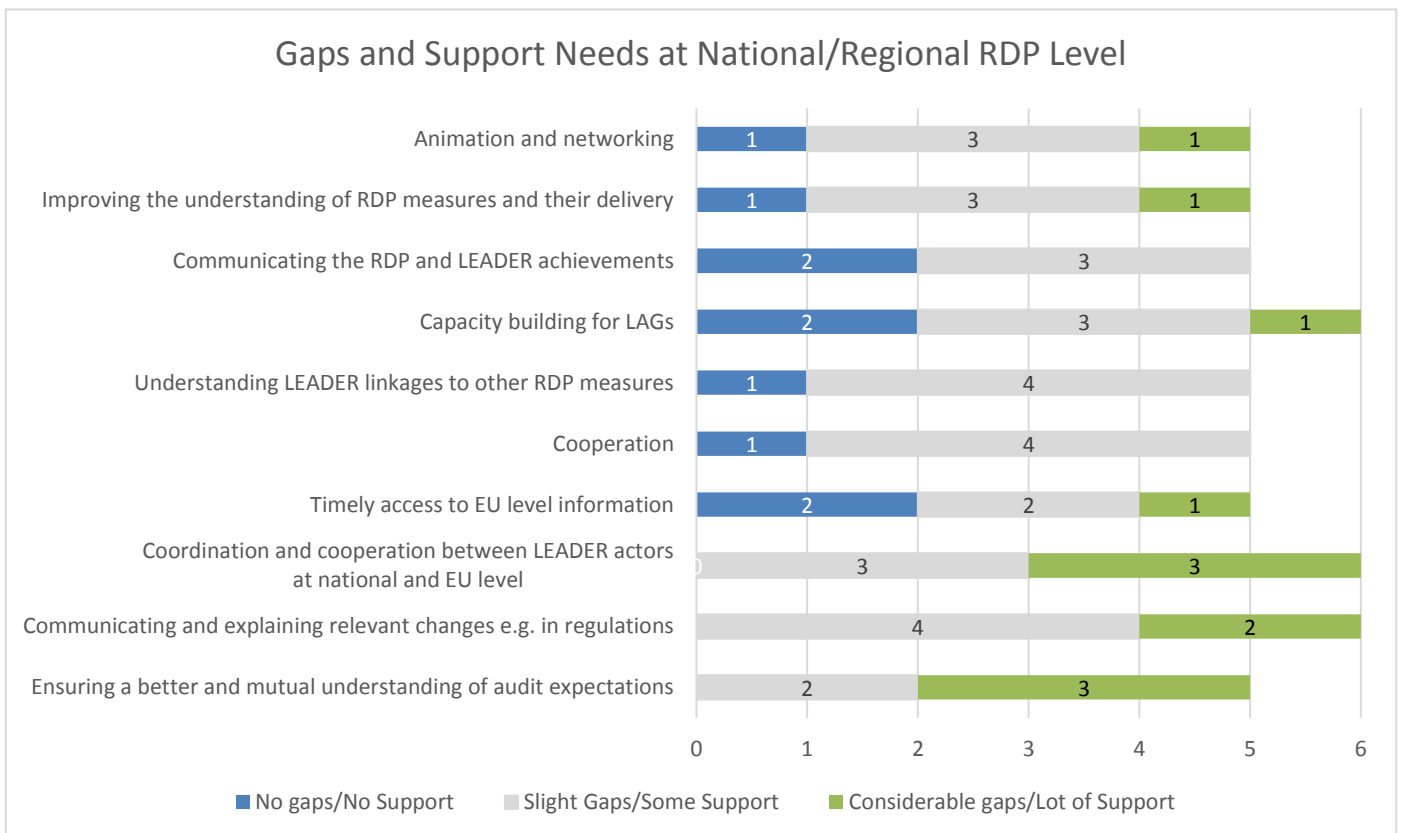
### Question 31

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 6



- The main gaps and support needs identified by Bulgarian LAGs largely matched those of the overall sample, particularly with regard to the three top needs ('ensuring better and mutual understanding of audit expectations', 'communicating and explaining relevant changes', and 'coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors and national and EU level').
- The Bulgarian LAGs indicated less gaps and needs regarding 'cooperation' and 'understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures', than the European LAGs.



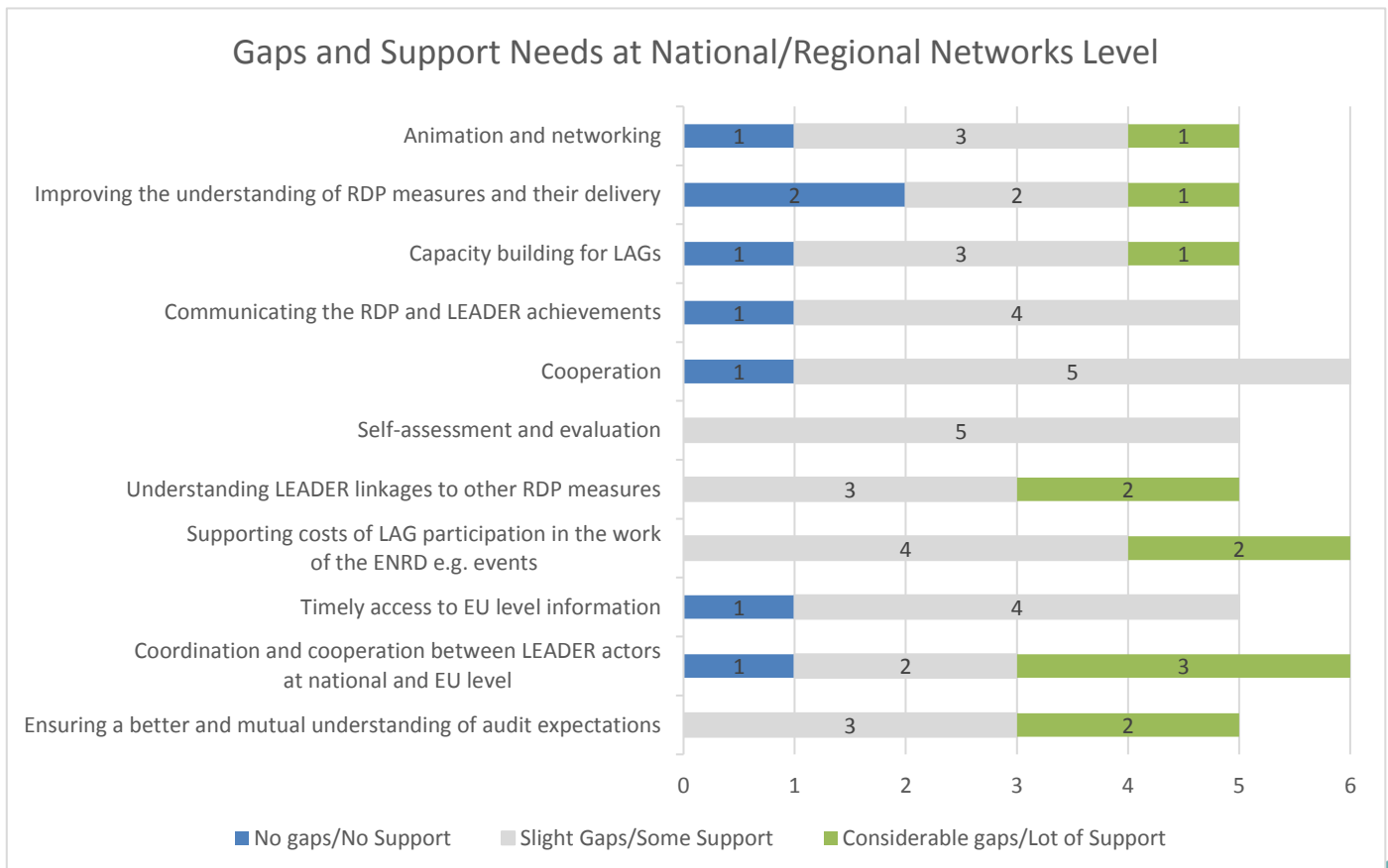
### Question 32

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



- The gaps and support needs from the networks identified by Bulgarian LAGs largely matched those of the overall EU sample.
- The main area of differentiation is the greater level of need identified for 'coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors' in the Bulgarian responses.

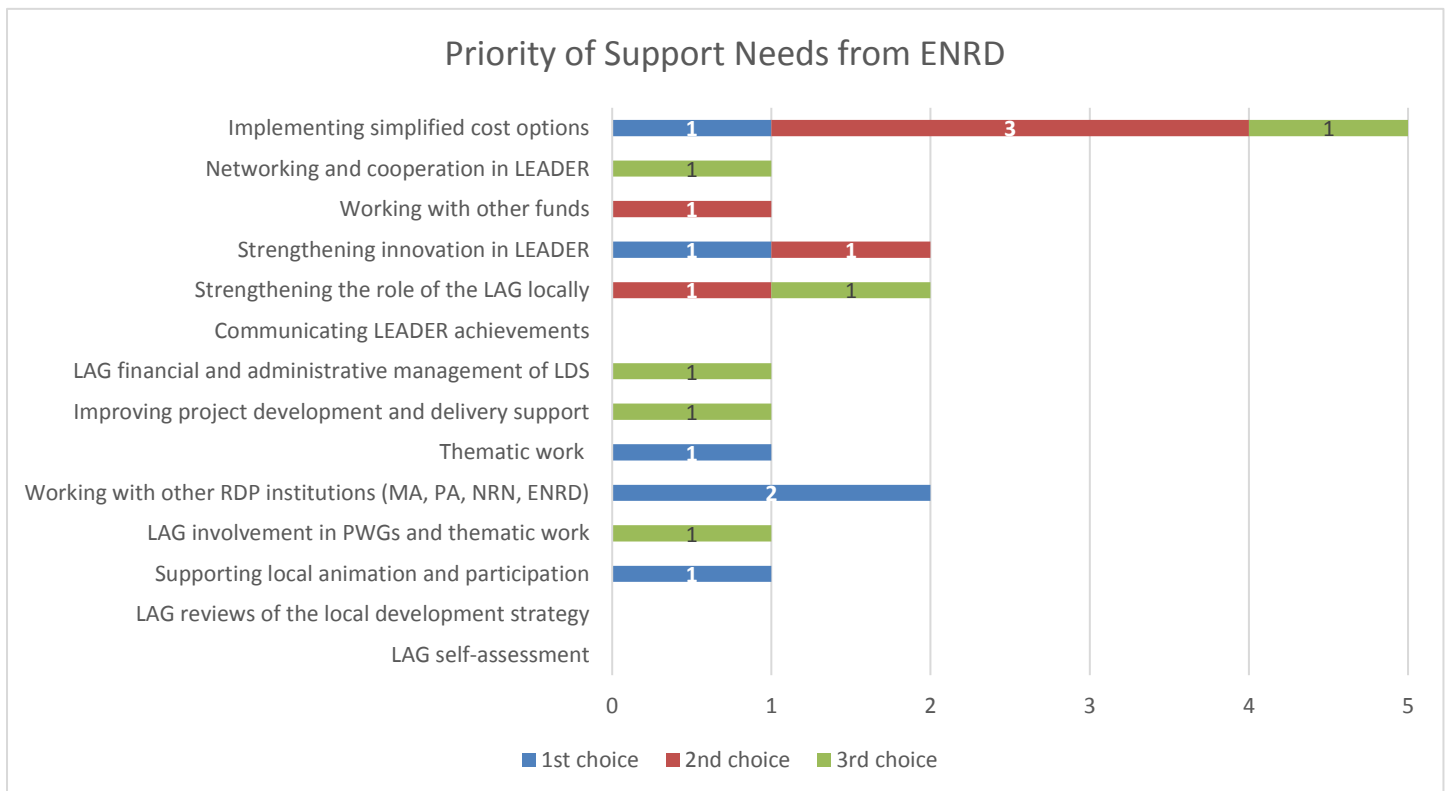
### Question 33

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 6



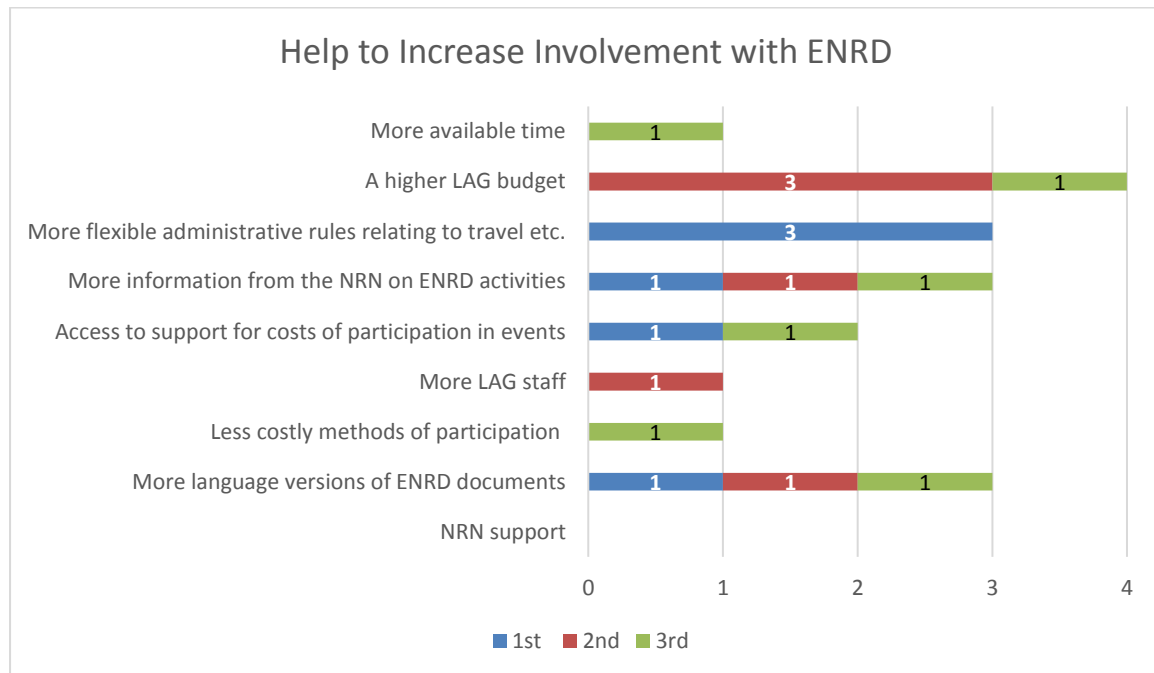
- Most Bulgarian LAGs identified the need for support with ‘implementation of simplified cost options’, this also featured as the most identified need amongst other European LAGs.
- Slightly more emphasis was given to ‘working with other RDP institutions’ in proportion to the EU survey and less to ‘networking and cooperation’ working with other funds’ and ‘communicating LEADER achievements’.

### 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 6



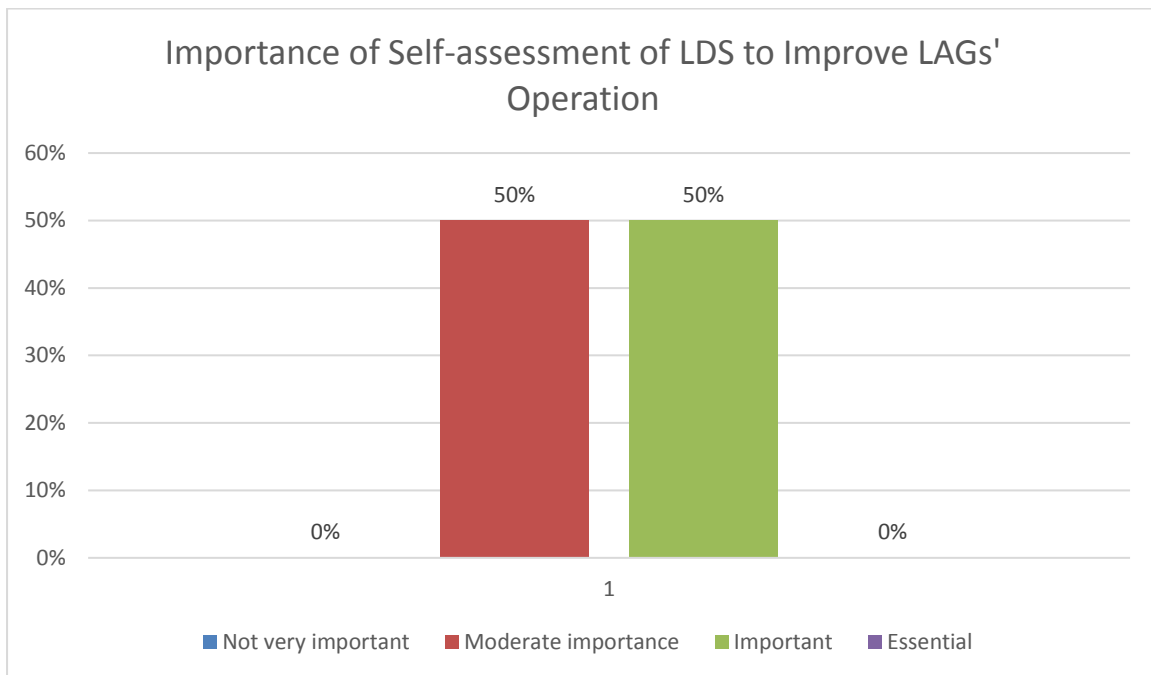
- Bulgarian LAGs placed much less priority on 'more available time' to increase their involvement with ENRD than their European peers. The Bulgarian concern focussed more on 'more flexible administrative rules on travel' and 'more language versions of ENRD documents', than those of the EU sample.

### 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 6*



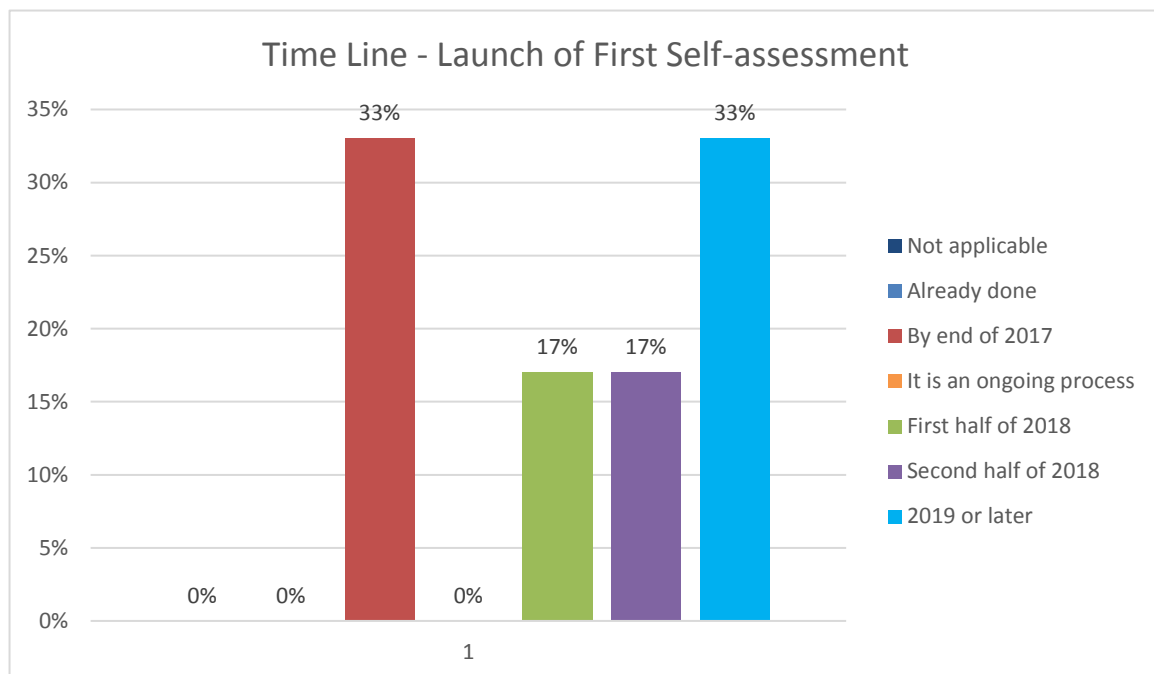
- The Bulgarian LAGs considered self-assessment either to be of 'moderate importance' or 'important'. In contrast to the EU sample, none of the Bulgarian responses expressed a stronger view, whereas 28% of EU LAGs thought self-assessment was 'essential' and a further 6% considered it as 'not very important'.

### Question 36

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

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

*Total Number of Responses 6*



- 50% of Bulgarian LAGs stated that they have already launched their self-assessment work by the mid of 2018. This was roughly in line with the EU sample. However, in Europe 18% of LAGs reported that they undertake self-assessment as an ongoing process, which none of the Bulgarian respondents indicated.

### 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 – 100%
- No – 0%

*Total Number of Responses 6*