



European Network for
Rural Development

LEADER LAG Survey 2017

Working Paper

Findings at Member State level

Member State: Germany

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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

- Germany (DE).
- 144 LAGs responded, representing 20.3% of total LAG responses.
- 45% of DE LAGs responded to the survey.

Total Number of Responses 144

Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- Germany has 13 national programmes.

Responses were received from all 13 German RDPs.

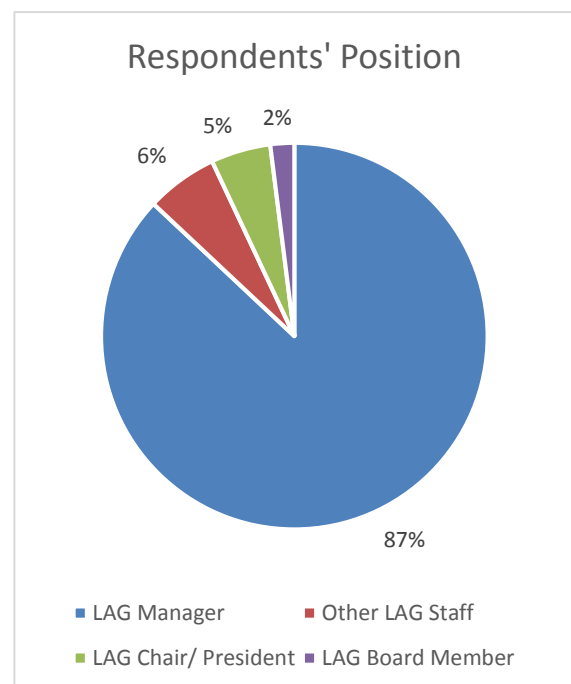
Total Number of Responses 144

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 144



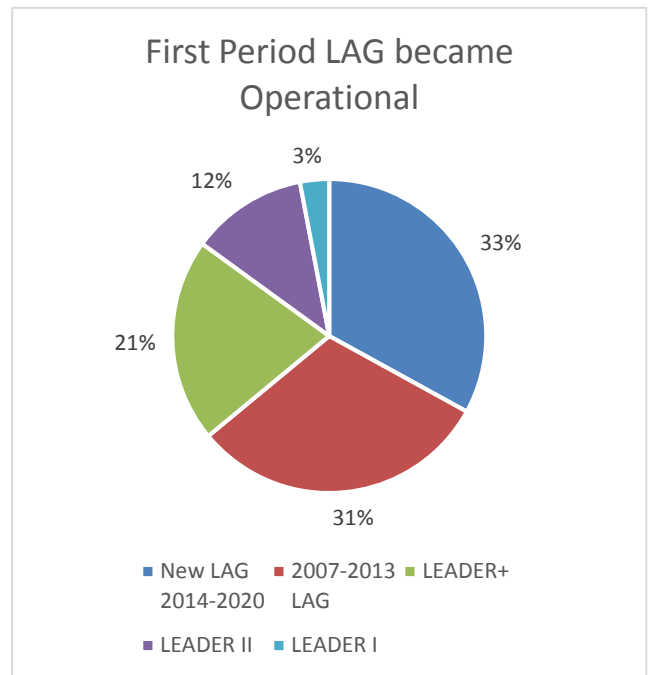
Question 7

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 144

- The composition of the German LAG responses was similar to that of the EU sample. There were only slight differences, for example there were 11% more 'new' German LAGs than at the EU level (33% vs 22%).

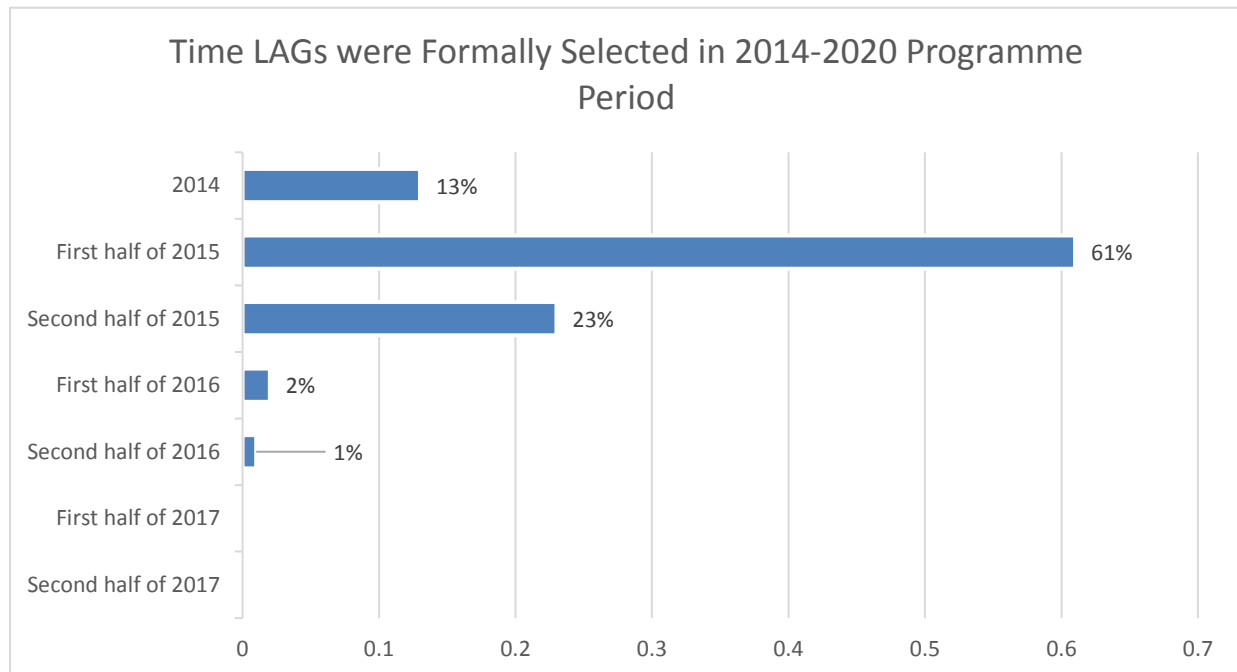


Question 8

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 144



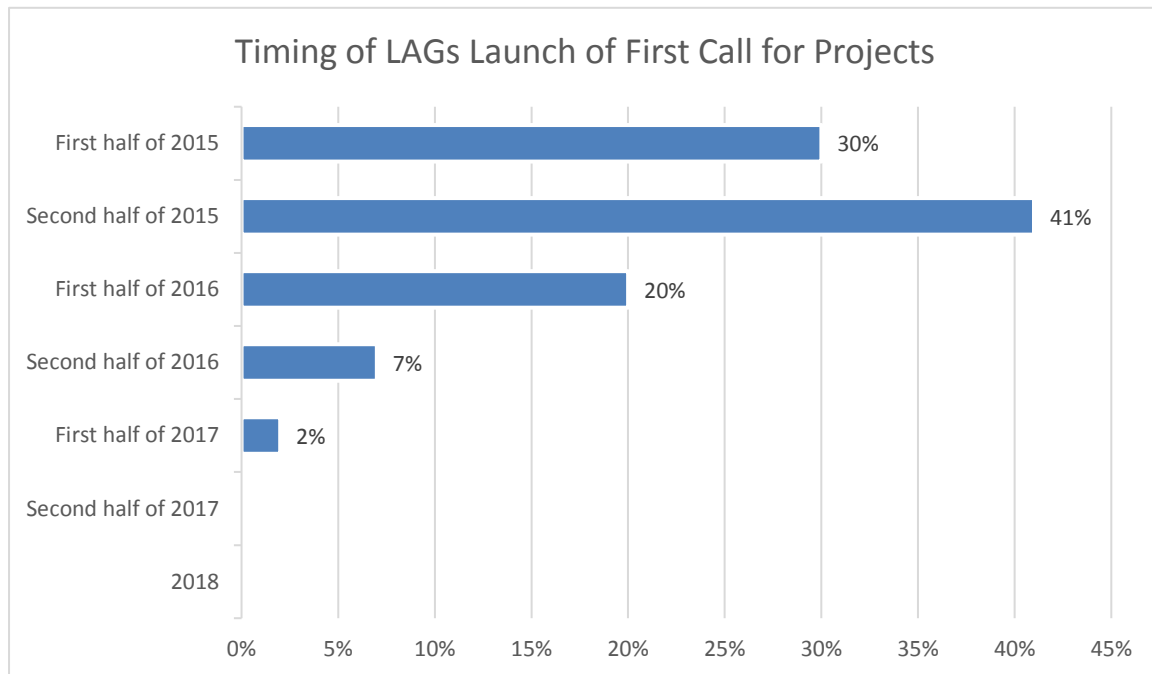
- The vast majority (97%) of German LAGs responding to the survey were formally selected before the end of 2015. By this time, nearly three quarters of the EU survey participants (73%) had also been selected.

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 144



- The vast majority of German LAGs (91%) launched their first calls for projects by mid 2016, in contrast to 51% of the EU sample accomplishing this task at that time.

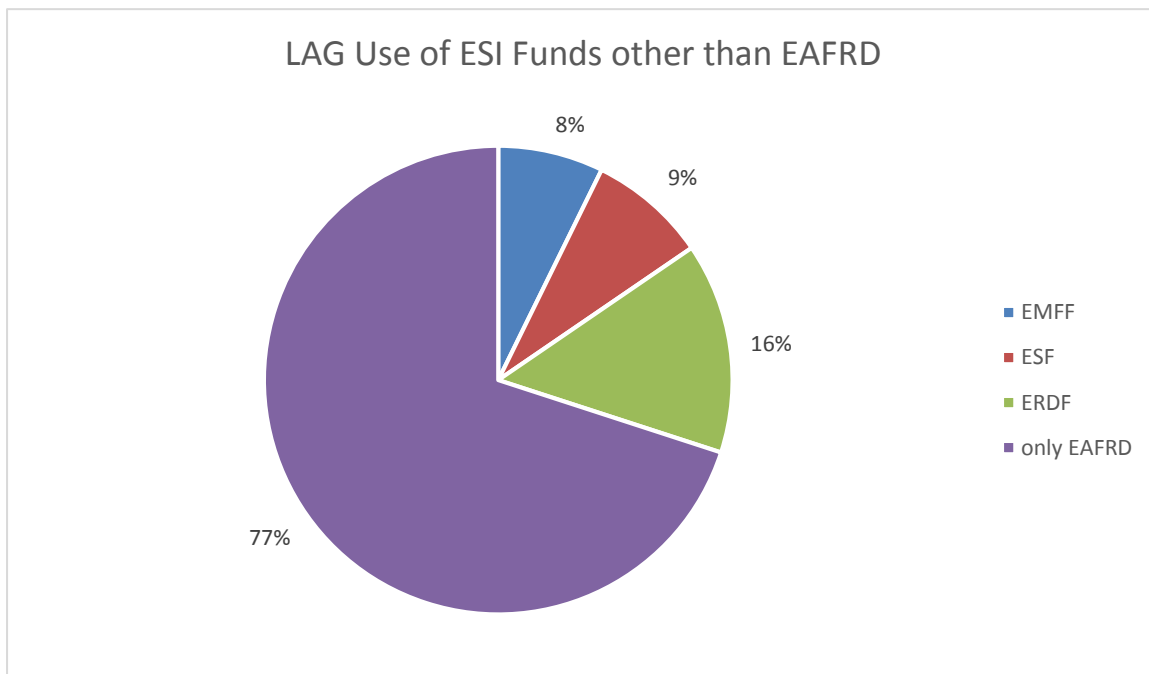
LAG Funding

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 139



Please note, the total percentages in the chart are higher than 100% due to the multiple choice responses possible for this question.

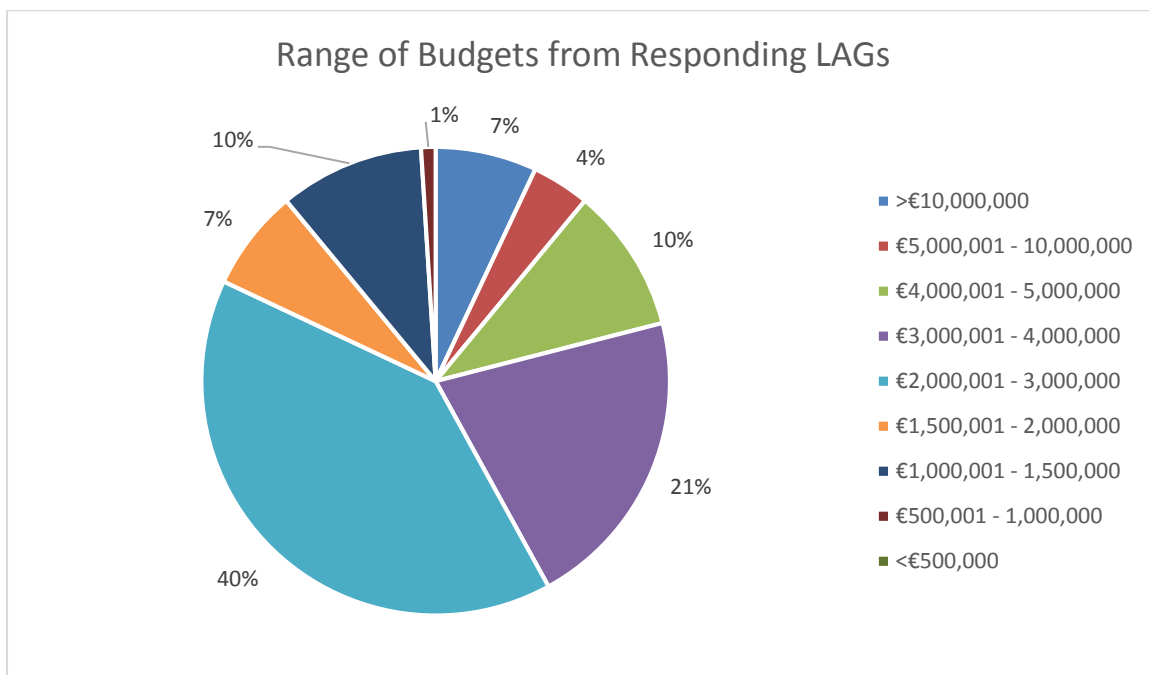
- A slightly higher proportion of German LAGs reported using 'only EAFRD' (77%) than at the EU level (67%).
- The proportions of German LAGs who report they are using ERDF (16% vs 25%) and ESF (9% vs 16%) were lower than in the EU sample.

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 139



- A larger percentage of German LAGs indicated that their budget fell in the range between €2m - €3m than in the overall sample (40% vs 22%).
- The proportion of German LAGs with larger budgets (from over €4m) was slightly smaller than that of the EU sample (21% vs 29%).

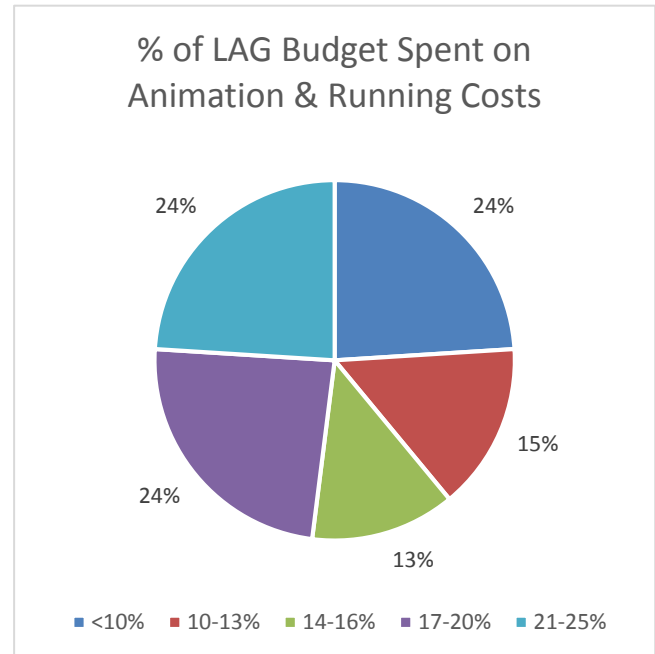
Question 12

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 139

- The proportion of German LAGs that reported a small budget share for animation and running costs (<10%) was higher than that at the EU level (24% vs 11%).
- 48% of German LAGs report a budget allocation of over 17% for animation and running costs vs 64% of the wider sample.



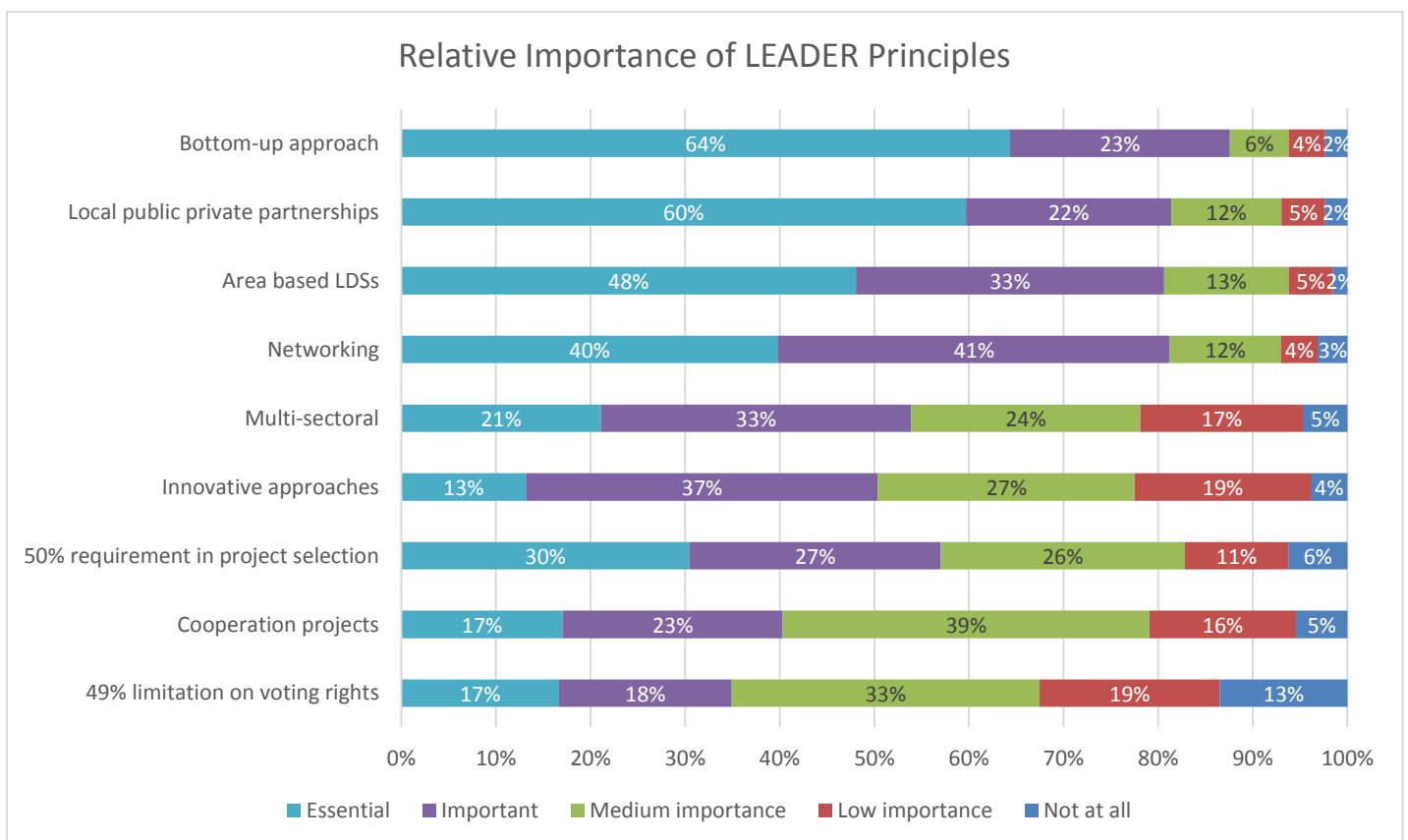
LEADER Principles

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 129



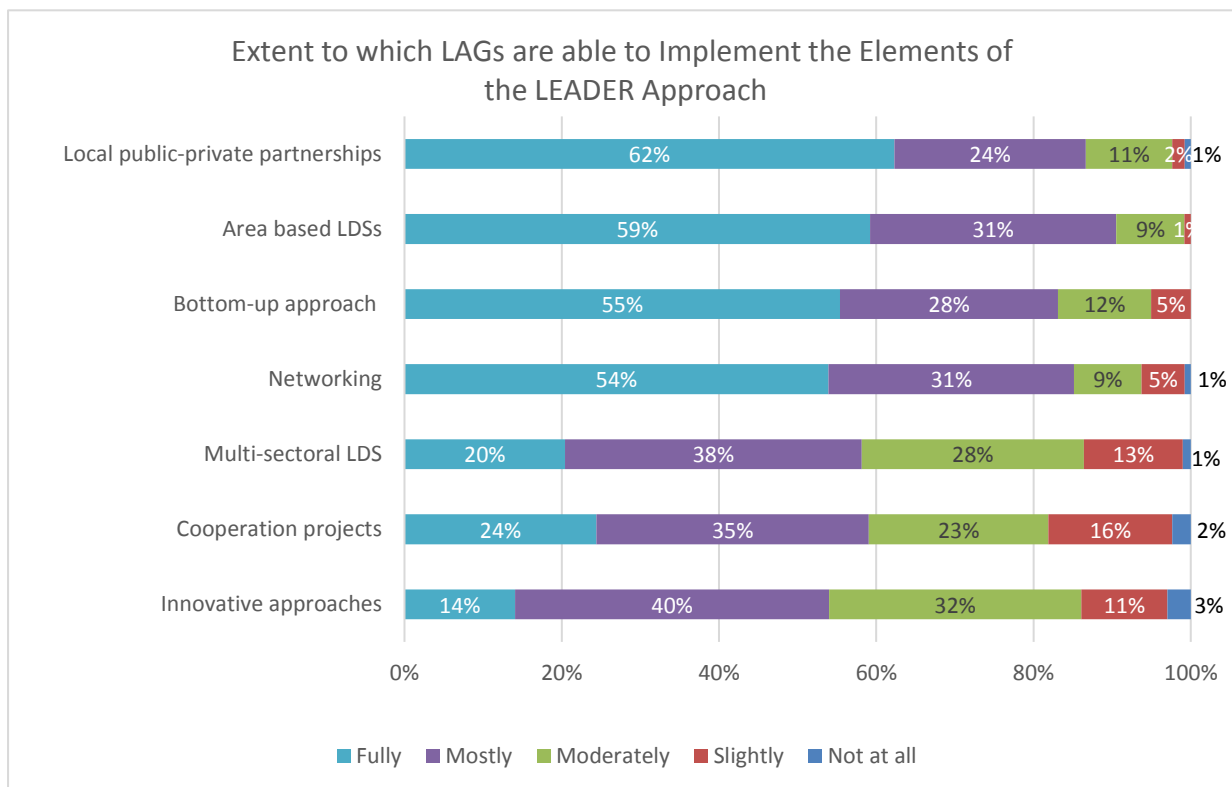
- The German responses are largely similar to those at EU LAG level although the overall level of 'essential' rankings was generally lower
- In comparison to the European level, proportionately fewer German LAGs felt that LEADER principles such as 'multi-sectoral', 'innovative approaches' and '49% limitations on voting rights' were essential or important (German ratings being 22%, 28% and 18% lower than that of the EU survey).

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 128



- The German LAGs responded to this question in a very similar manner to their European peers. However, a slightly smaller proportion of German respondents felt that they were able to 'fully' and 'mostly' implement a 'multi-sectoral LDS' compared to the EU sample (58% vs 69%) whilst a slightly larger proportion of German LAGs report that they were able to implement their 'area based LDS' (90% vs 83%).

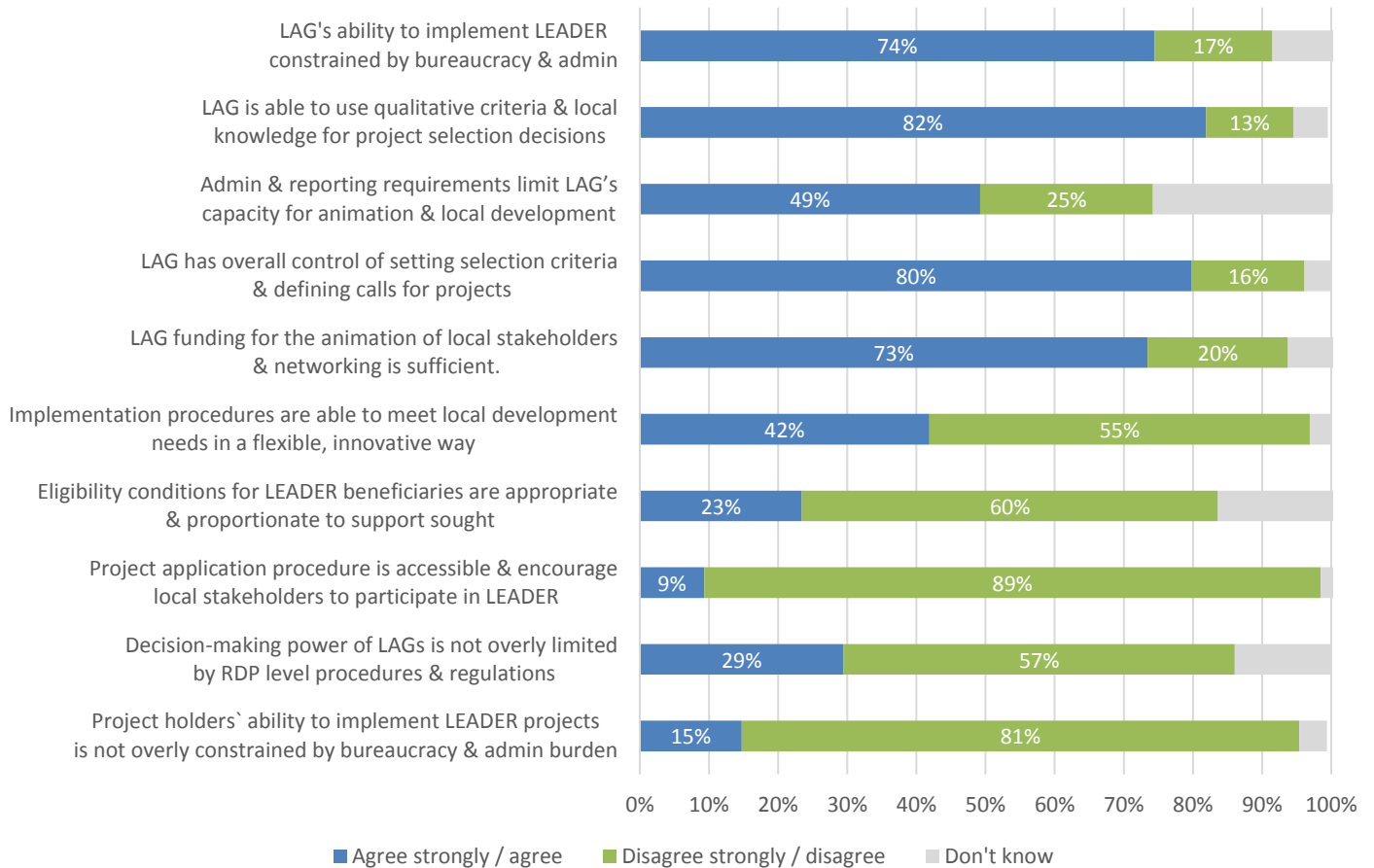
Question 15

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 129

Aspects of LEADER Implementation as seen by Local Action Groups



- The responses from the German LAGs were mostly similar to those of the EU sample. However, German respondents were markedly less satisfied with the 'accessibility of the project application' than the EU sample (89% vs 61% disagreed with the survey statement).
- German LAGs were less satisfied than their EU peers with regard to the appropriateness and proportionality of the 'eligibility conditions for LEADER beneficiaries' (60% vs 44% disagreed with the survey statement).
- However, a greater proportion of German LAGs believed that the 'available LAG funding for animation and networking was sufficient' in comparison to the EU sample (73% vs 54% agreed with the survey statement) and a smaller proportion than the EU sample report that admin and reporting requirements limit their capacity for animation and local development (49% vs 69%).

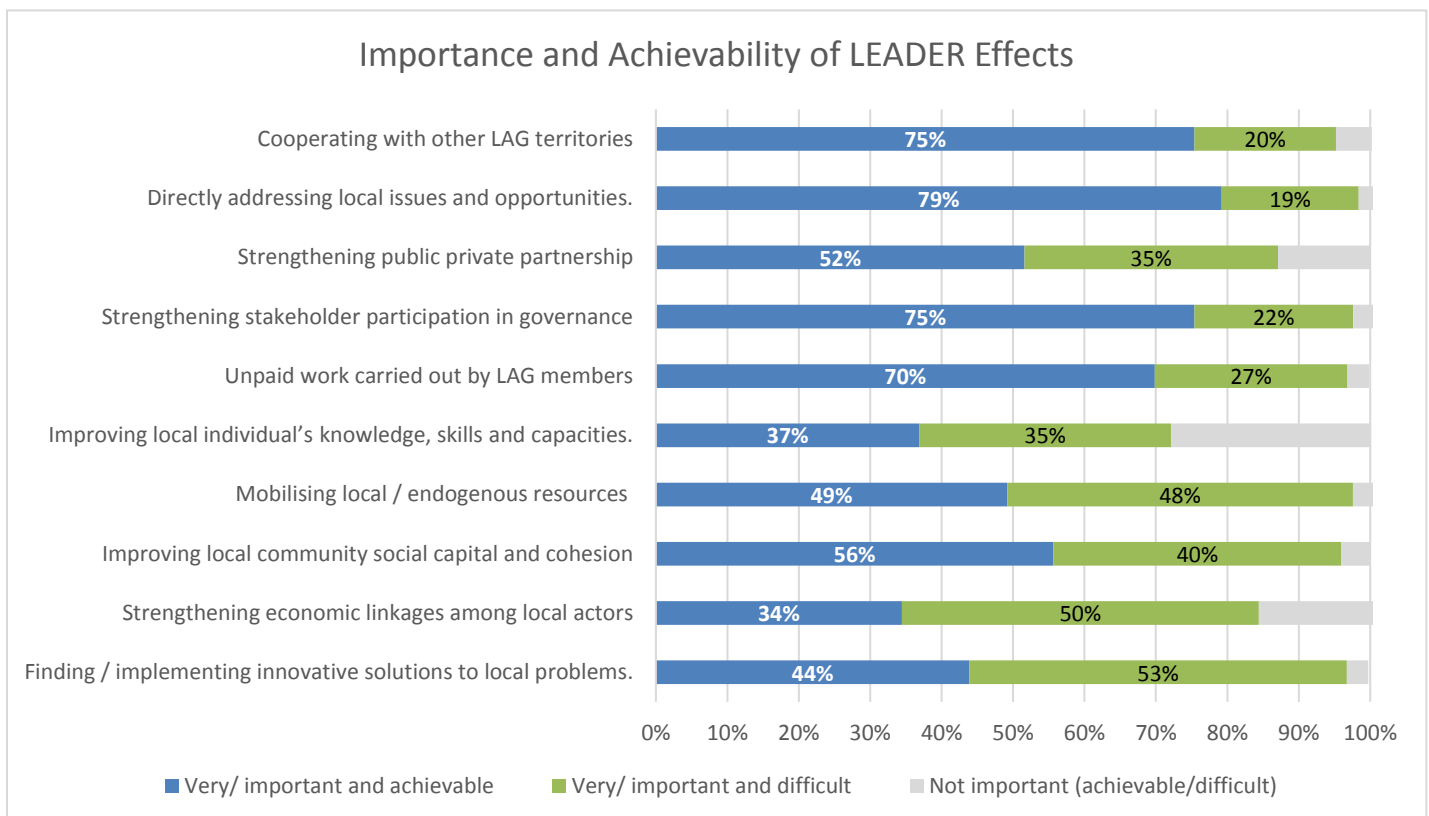
Question 16

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 126



- In comparison to the EU sample, proportionately more German respondents were positive about the achievability of a number of LEADER effects, including ‘strengthening stakeholder participation’, ‘unpaid work carried out by LAG members’, ‘directly addressing local issues and opportunities’, and ‘finding / implementing innovative solutions’, providing between 11% and 19% more positive responses than at European level.
- German LAGs felt less positive than EU LAGs about the achievability of ‘improving local individual knowledge, skills and capacities’ (37% vs 48%) and only 72% of German LAGs felt this effect was important / very important vs 90% of the EU sample.

LEADER Operation

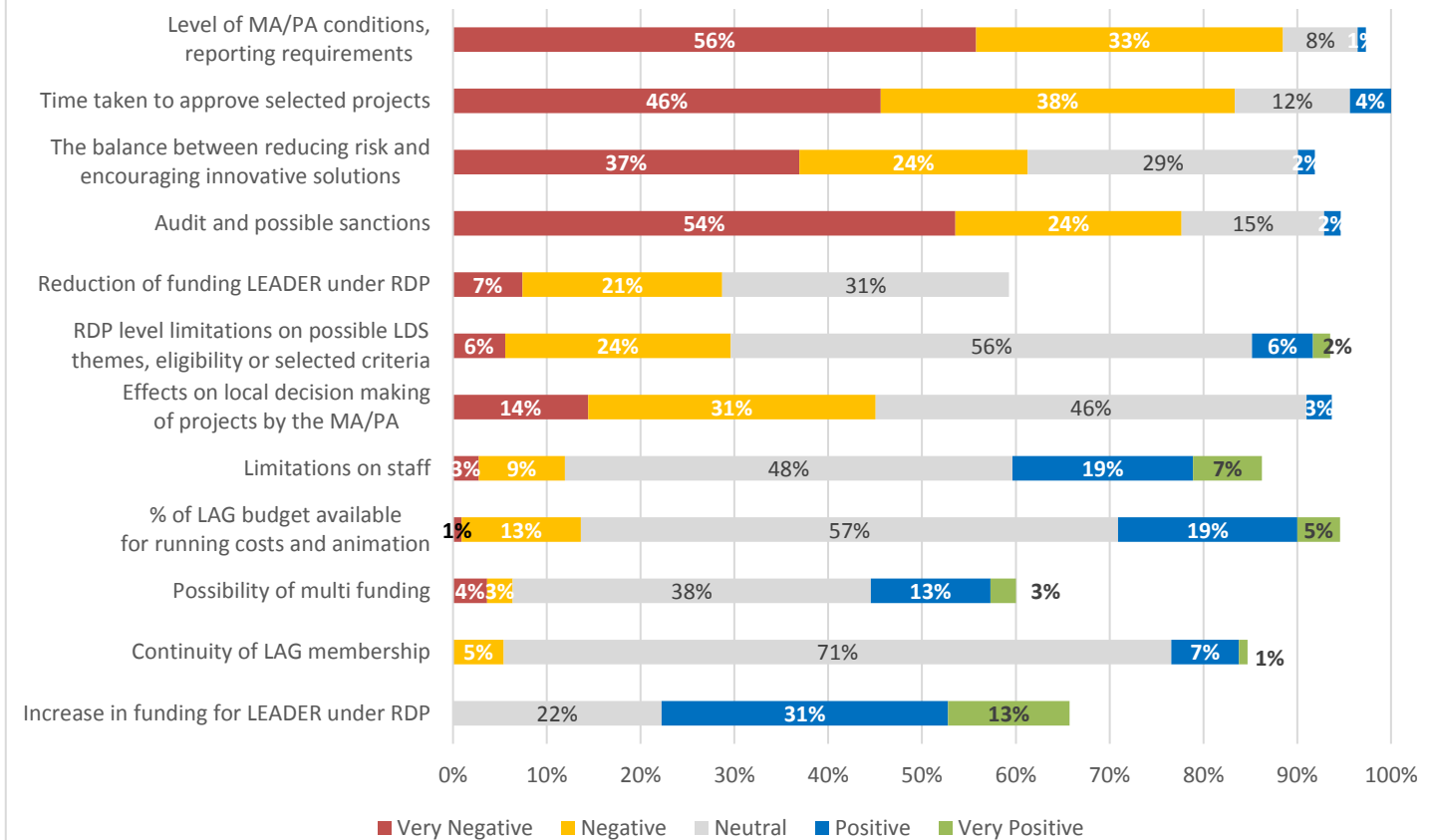
Question 17

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 114

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.

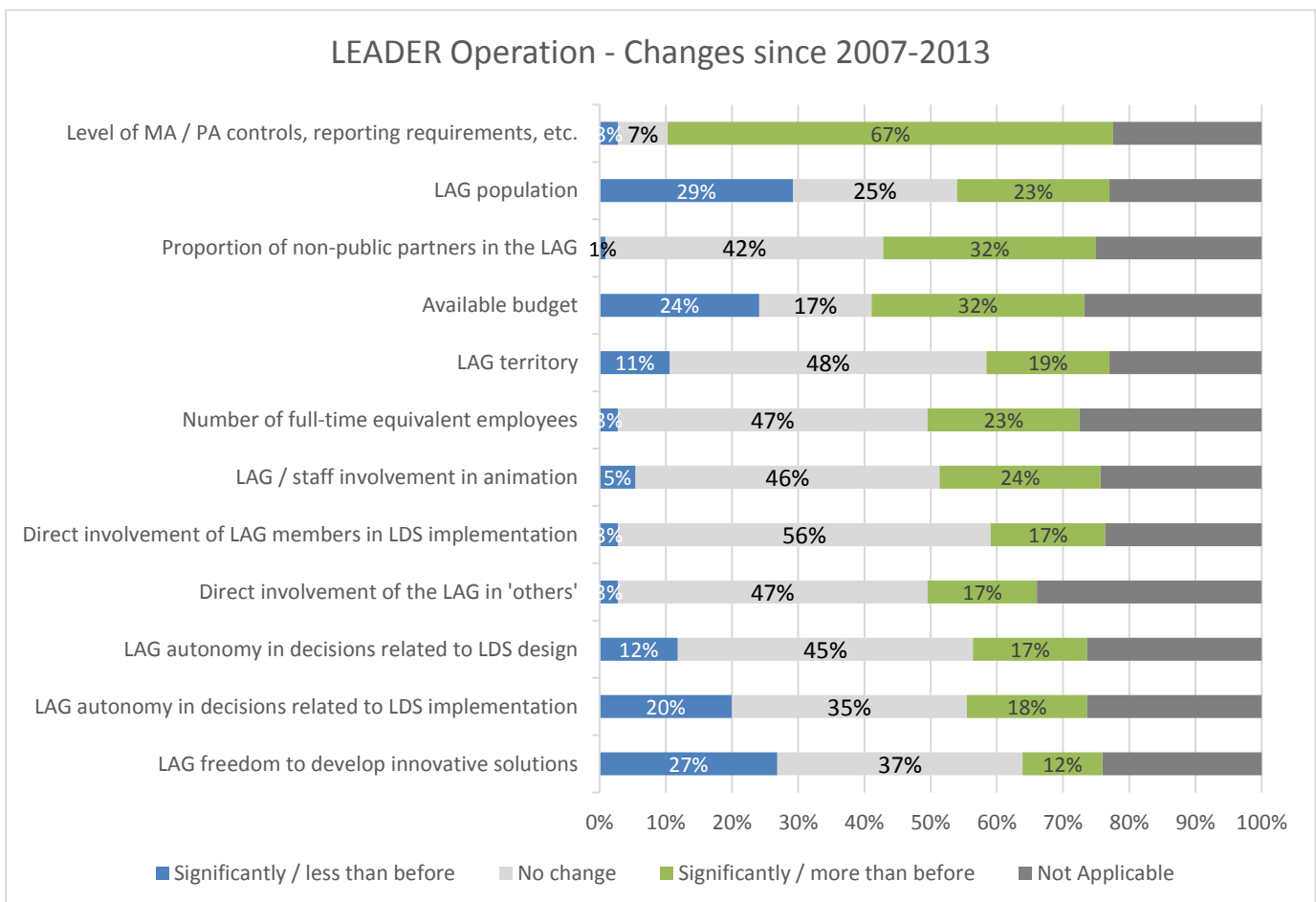
- LAGs in Germany were less negative than their EU peers regarding a number of effects on LEADER including the 'reduction of funding' (28% vs 55% scored very negative / negative).
- This was also the case with regard to 'RDP level limitations on possible LDS themes' where only 30% of the German respondents provided negative scores vs 53% at EU level.
- Levels of negative response were also lower amongst German respondents for 'limitations on staff' (12% vs 40%) and for the '% of LAG budget available for running costs and animation' (14% vs 30%)
- The responding German LAGs were less positive than the EU average about the 'continuity of LAG membership' and the 'possibility of multi-funding' (8% vs 38% and 16% 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 113



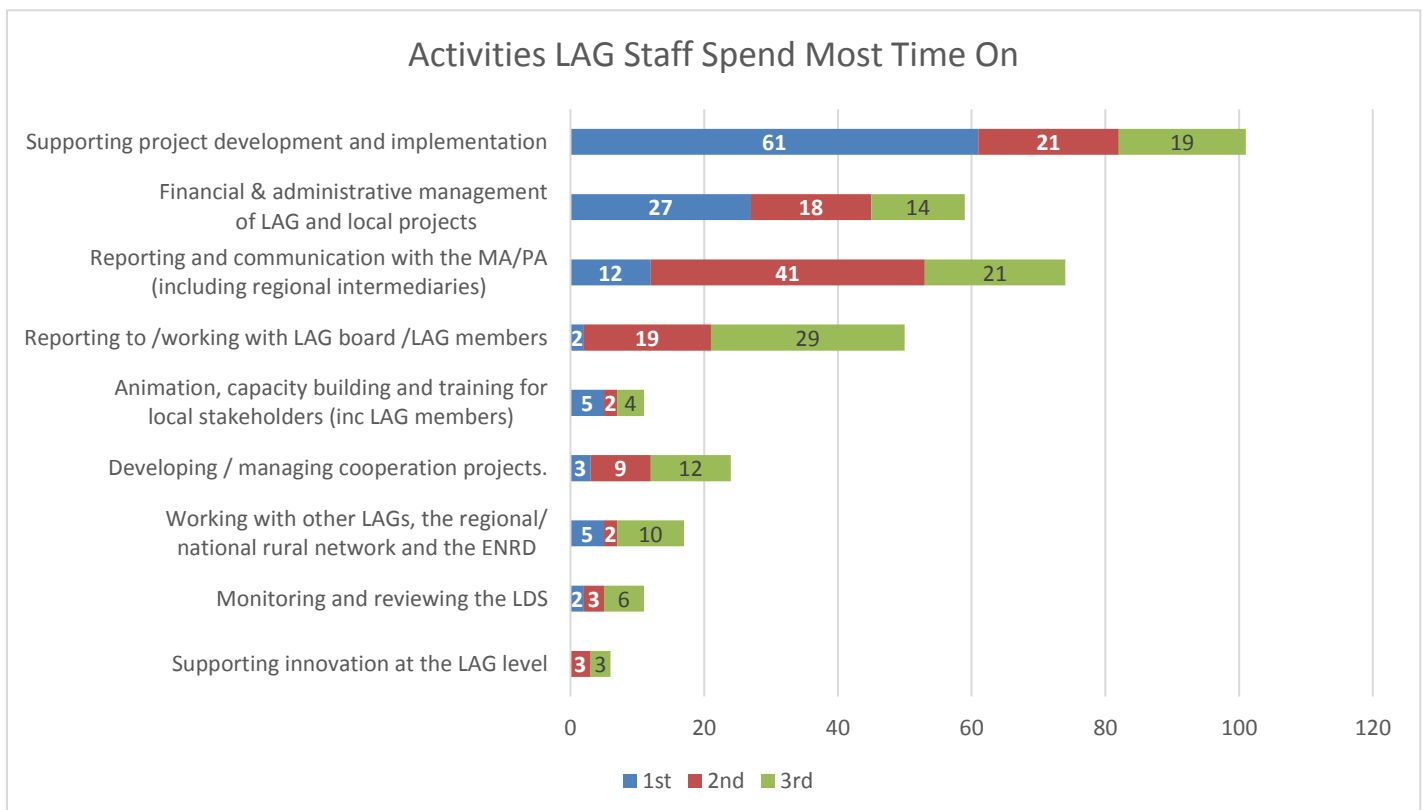
- The most noticeable differences between German respondents and the total sample were that across all aspects of this question, over 20% of German LAGs responded with 'not applicable' and that the levels of 'significantly / less than before' responses was generally lower.
- In comparison, a smaller share of German respondents had experienced 'reduced budgets' (24% vs 43%), less 'LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions' (27% vs 37%) or less 'autonomy in decisions related to LDS implementation' than their European peers (20% vs 33%).

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 119



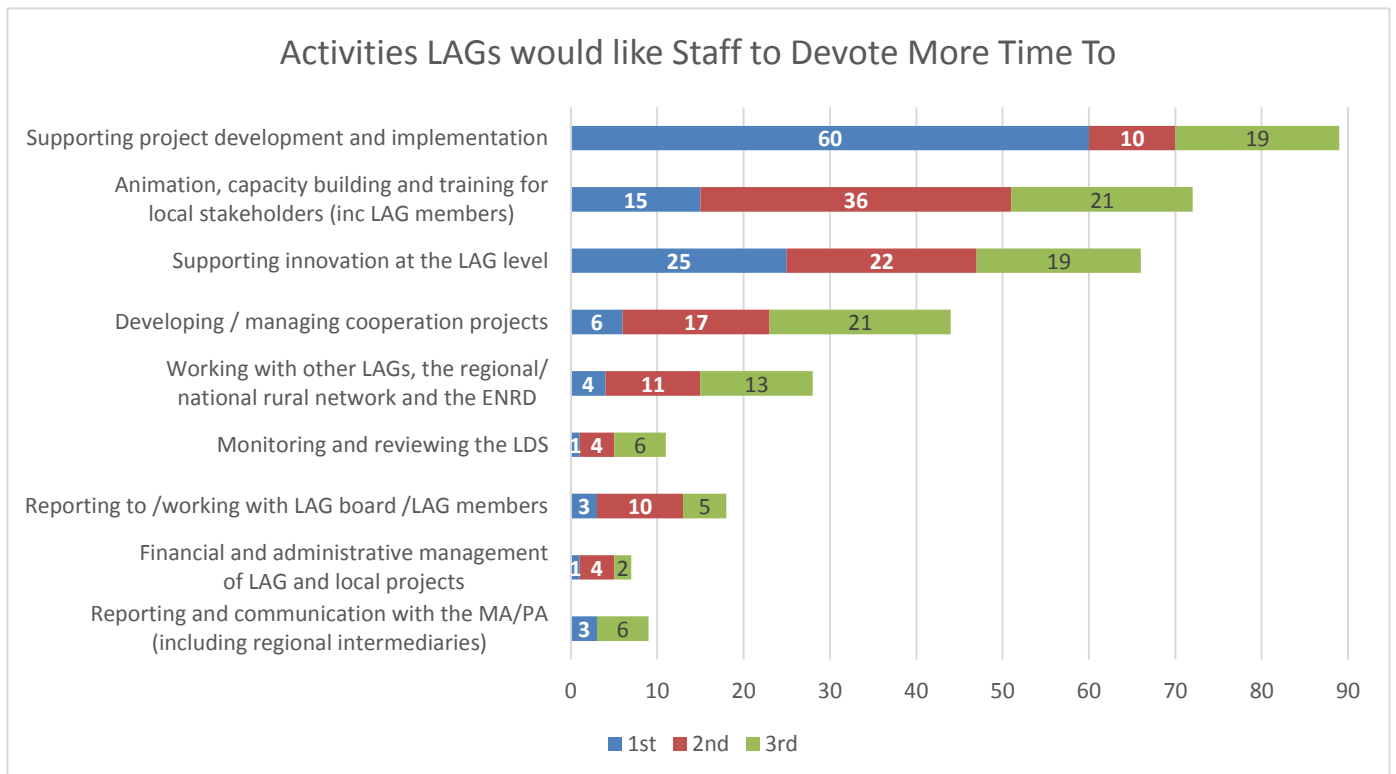
- The responses of the German LAGs largely follow the pattern of the EU sample. Slight differences relate to a lower ranking of time spent on ‘financial and administrative management’ and for ‘animation, capacity building and training for local stakeholders’.

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 118



- There were no major differences between the responses of the German LAGs and the wider EU sample. On a small scale, a smaller proportion of German than European respondents preferred their staff to devote more time to 'monitoring and reviewing the LDS'.

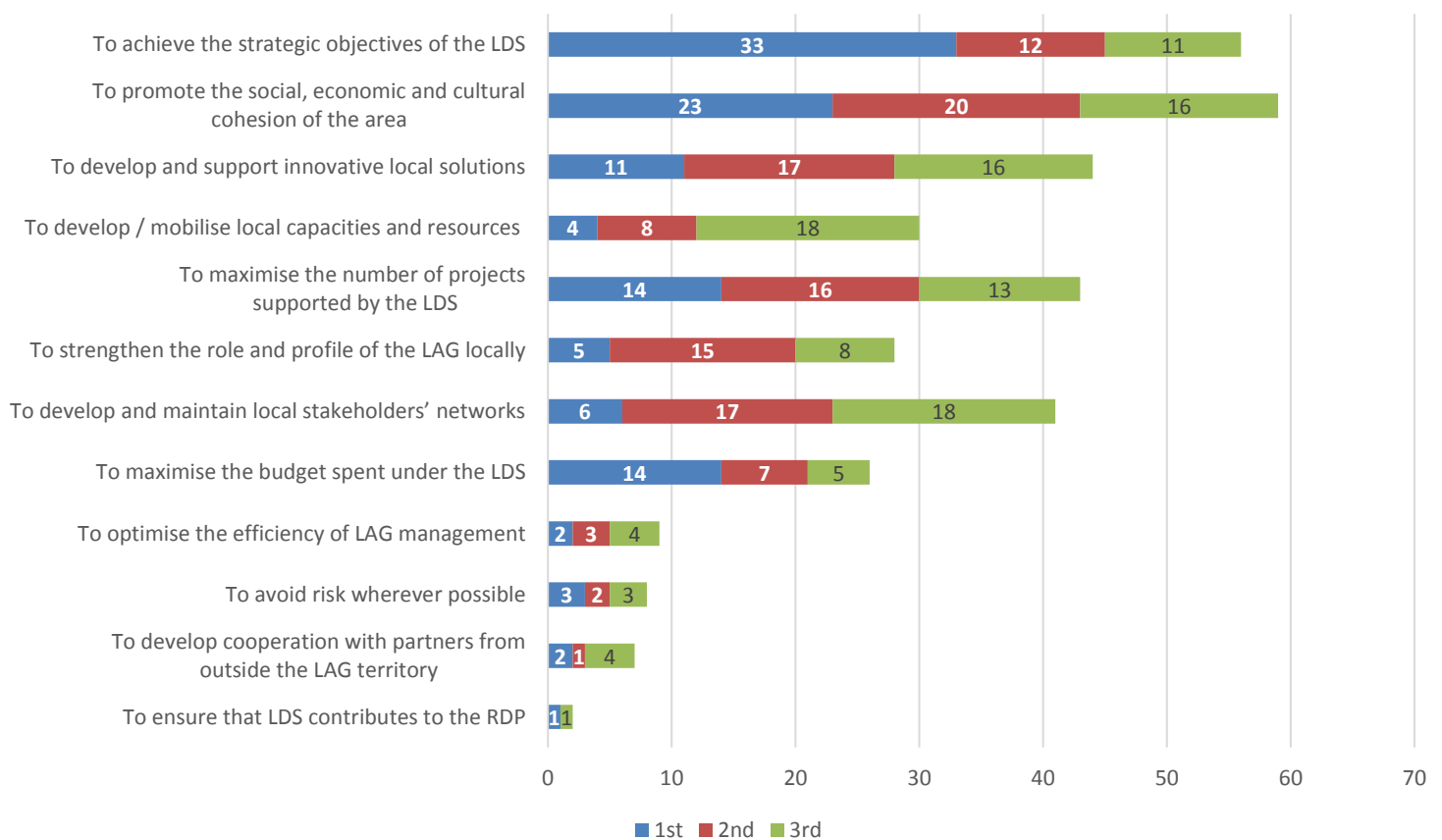
Question 21

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 119

Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs



- The German LAGs ranked the operational priorities in a similar manner to the LAGs of the EU survey. Minor differences include the lower importance placed on 'achieving the strategic objectives of the LDS' and 'to develop / mobilise local capacities and resources' in the German sample than at the EU level.
- Further minor differences exist in relation to areas such as 'maximising the number of projects' and 'maximising the budget spent', where German respondents tended to allocate slightly higher first rankings than their EU counterparts.

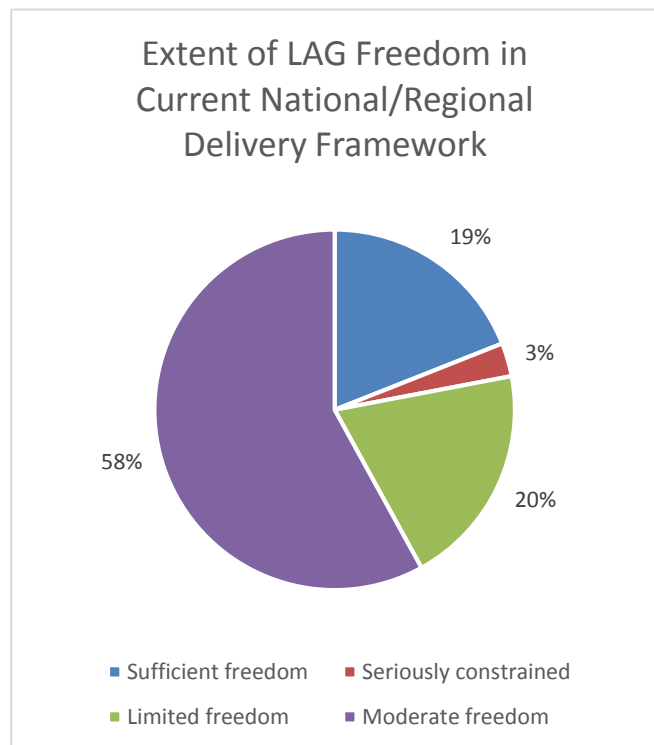
Question 22

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 120

- In comparison to the European LAGs, a smaller proportion of German respondents felt that they suffered 'serious constraints' (3% vs 11%).
- In contrast, a higher proportion of the German sample thought that they were enjoying a 'moderate freedom' (58%) compared to the EU sample (45%).

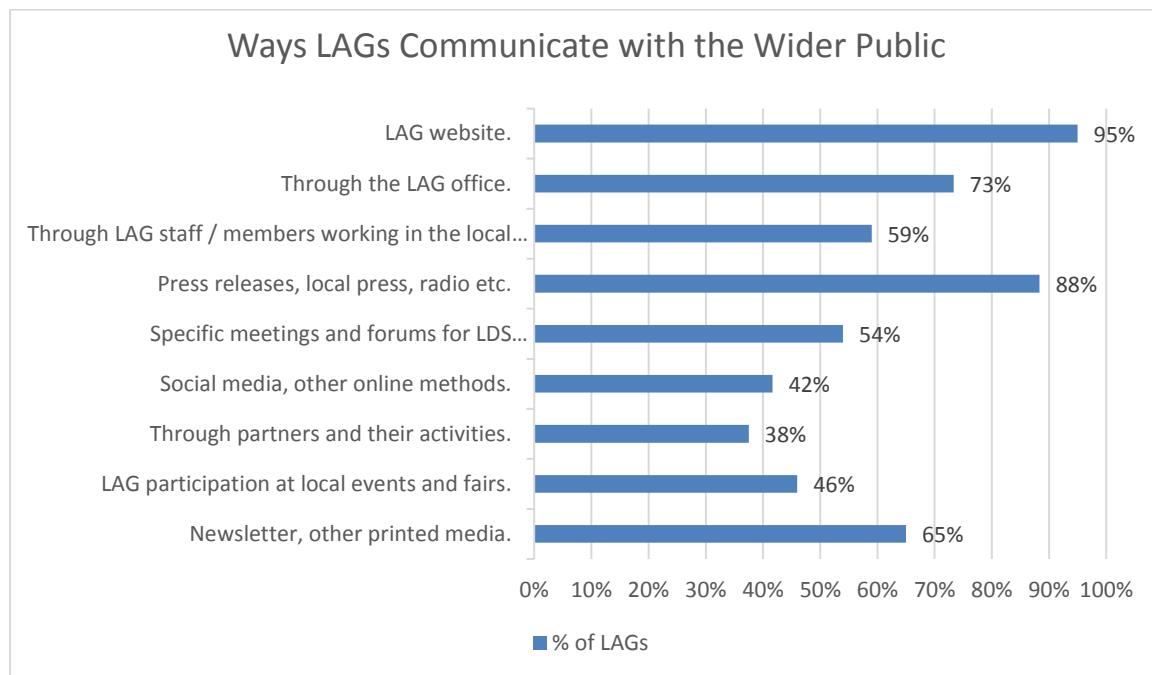


Question 23

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 121



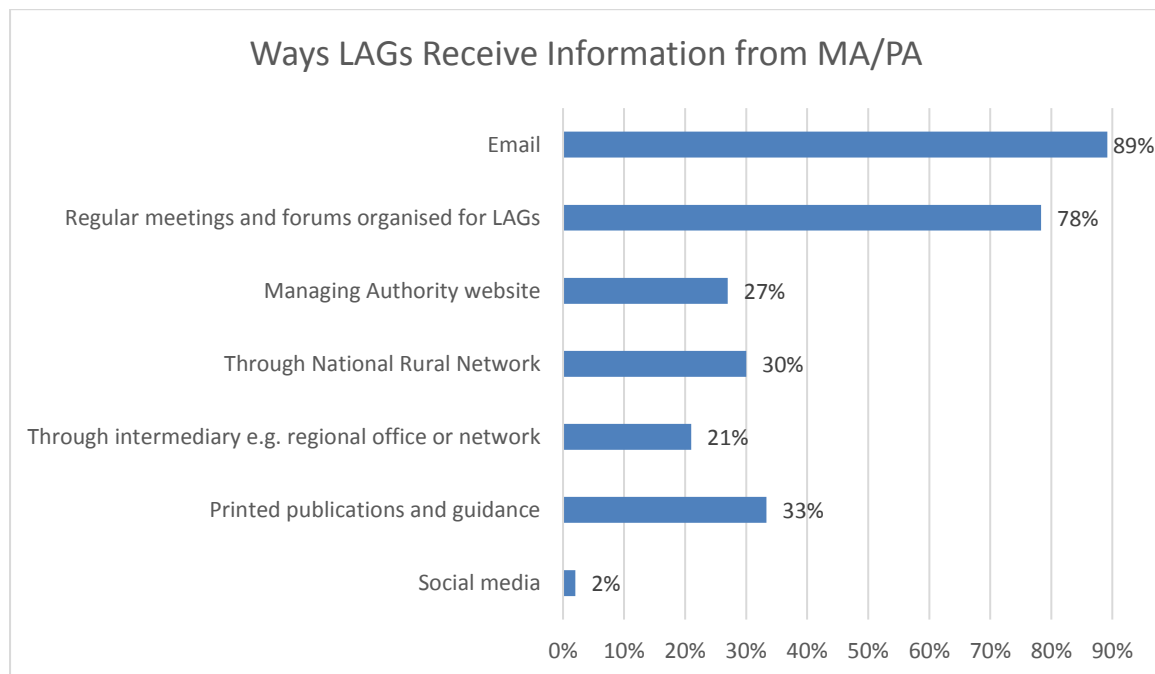
- In comparison to the EU sample, German LAGs appear to make more use of 'press releases, local press etc.' (88% vs 65%). The same applied regarding the use of 'newsletters and other printed media' (65% vs 45%).
- In contrast, German LAGs appear communicate less 'through partners and their activities' than their European peers (38% vs 54%) and 'Social media' (42% vs 61%).

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 121



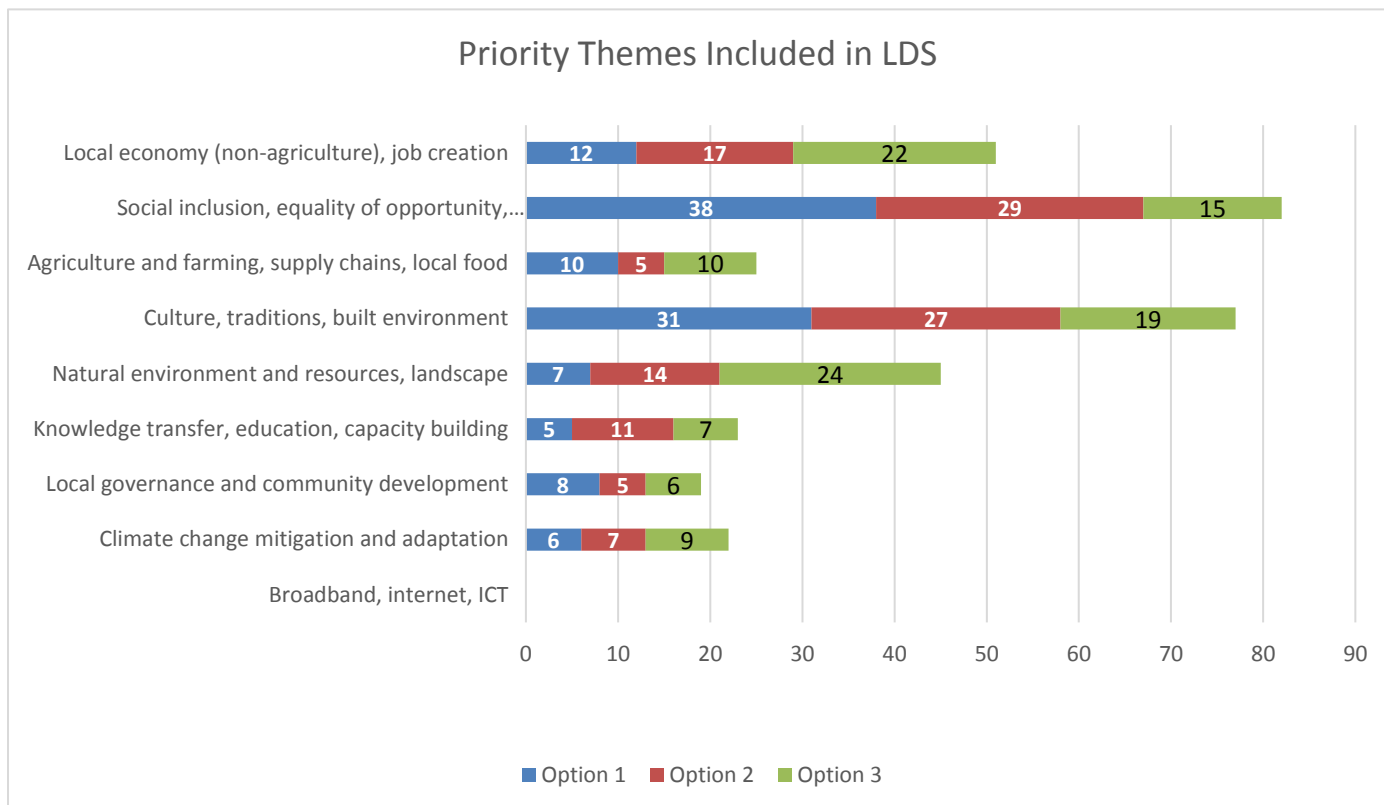
- Proportionately, more German LAGs stated to receive information from MA/PA through 'regular meetings and forums' than identified by the EU sample (78% vs 68%).
- The use of 'printed publications and guidance' was somewhat higher amongst responding German LAGs than in the EU sample (33% vs 22%).

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 117



- In comparison to the EU sample, a much smaller proportion of German LAGs reported that their LDS relates closely to ‘agriculture and farming, supply chains, local food’. The theme ‘local economy and job creation’ was also notably less frequently identified as being relevant to the LDS than at the European level.
- At the same time, the theme ‘culture, traditions, built environment’ was reported to be more prevalent in German LDS than elsewhere.

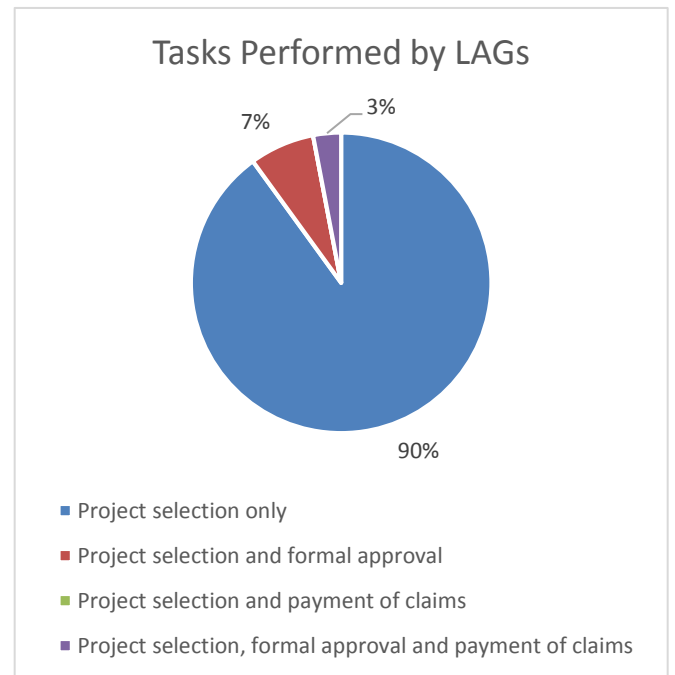
Question 26

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 120

- A significantly larger percentage of German LAGs (90%) reported that they are responsible for 'project selection only'. At EU level 48% of LAGs performed this task exclusively.
- In contrast, a smaller proportion of German respondents stated that they were in charge of 'project selection and formal approval' (7%) in comparison to 31% LAGs across Europe.
- A small proportion (3%) of German LAGs dealt also with the 'payment of claims', while at EU level 19% reported this responsibility.



LEADER Improvements

Question 27

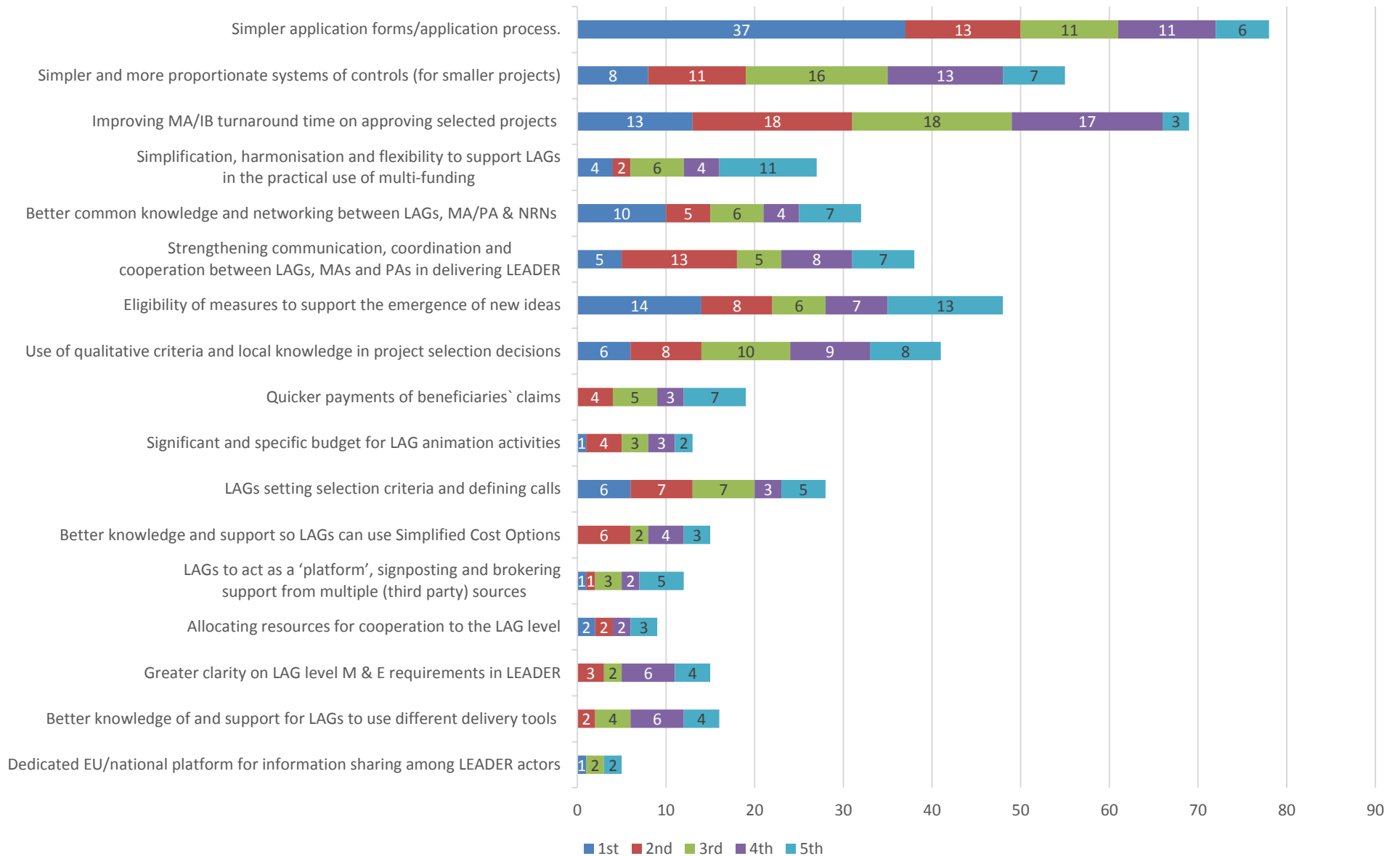
What is most important to address in helping LAGs to be effective in implementing LEADER now? Please select and rank your top five priorities from the following items in order of their importance in (where 1= highest importance and 5 = 5th most important)

- 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 109

- Generally, the responses of the German LAGs were similar to those in the EU sample with a limited number of exceptions.
- Less priority was given by the German respondents to improvements concerning 'simplification, harmonisation etc re multi-funding', 'better common knowledge and networking between LAGs, MA/PA and NRN', 'strengthening communication etc. between LAGs, MA/PA', 'quicker payments' and 'significant and specific budgets for animation activities'.

Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now

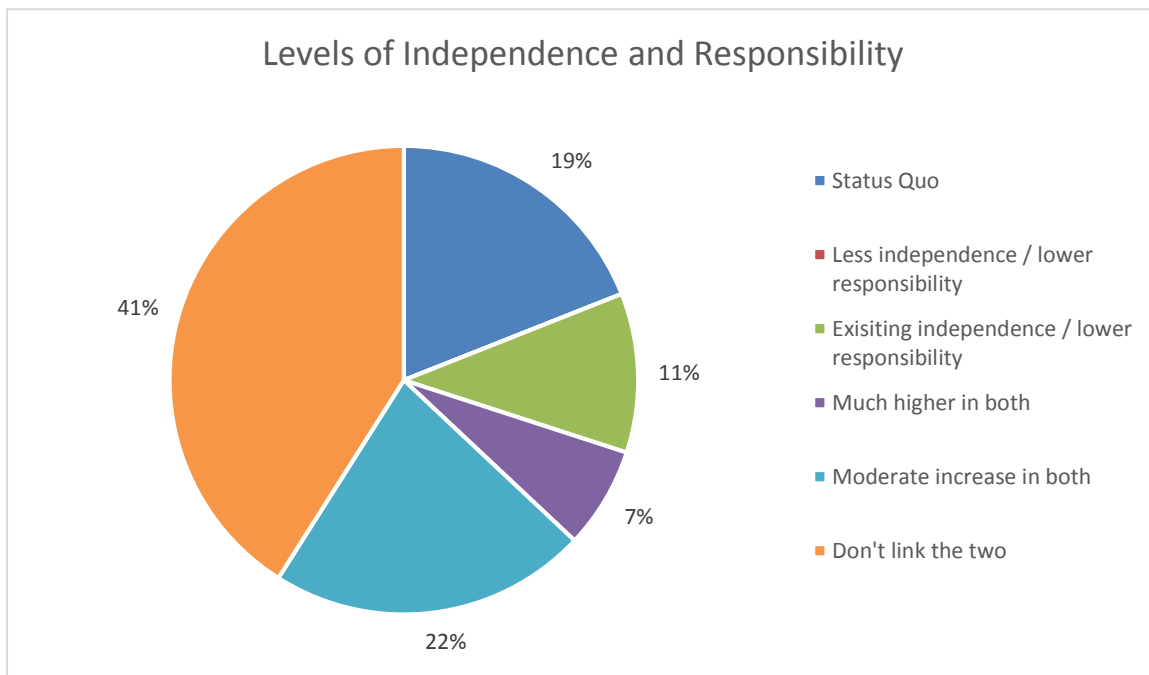


Question 28:

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 – 110



- Few German LAGs (7%) were in favour of increasing the levels of independence and responsibility to 'much higher levels' than in the overall EU sample where 19% expressed this wish.
- There was also a considerably higher percentage of German than EU LAGs who suggested 'not linking the two' topics (41% vs 24%).

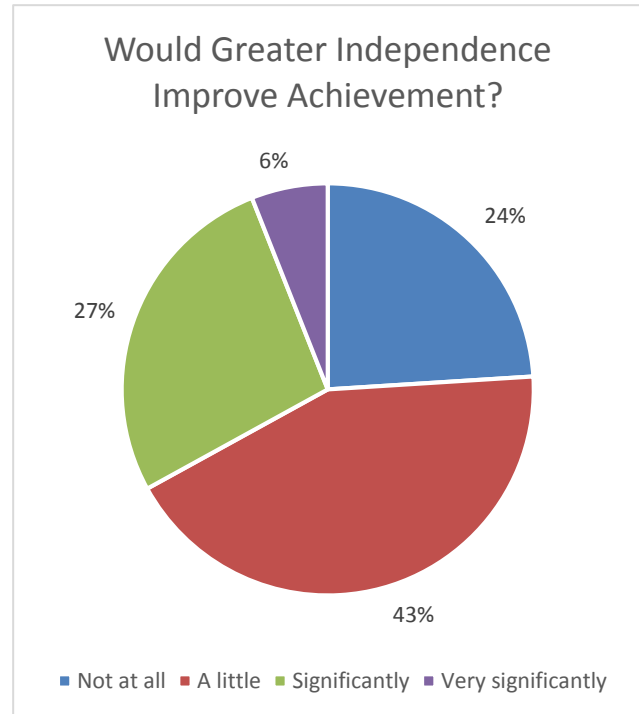
Question 29

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 106

- A larger proportion of responding German LAGs thought that greater independence would either have 'no effect at all' or only 'a little' in contrast to the EU sample (67% vs 46%).

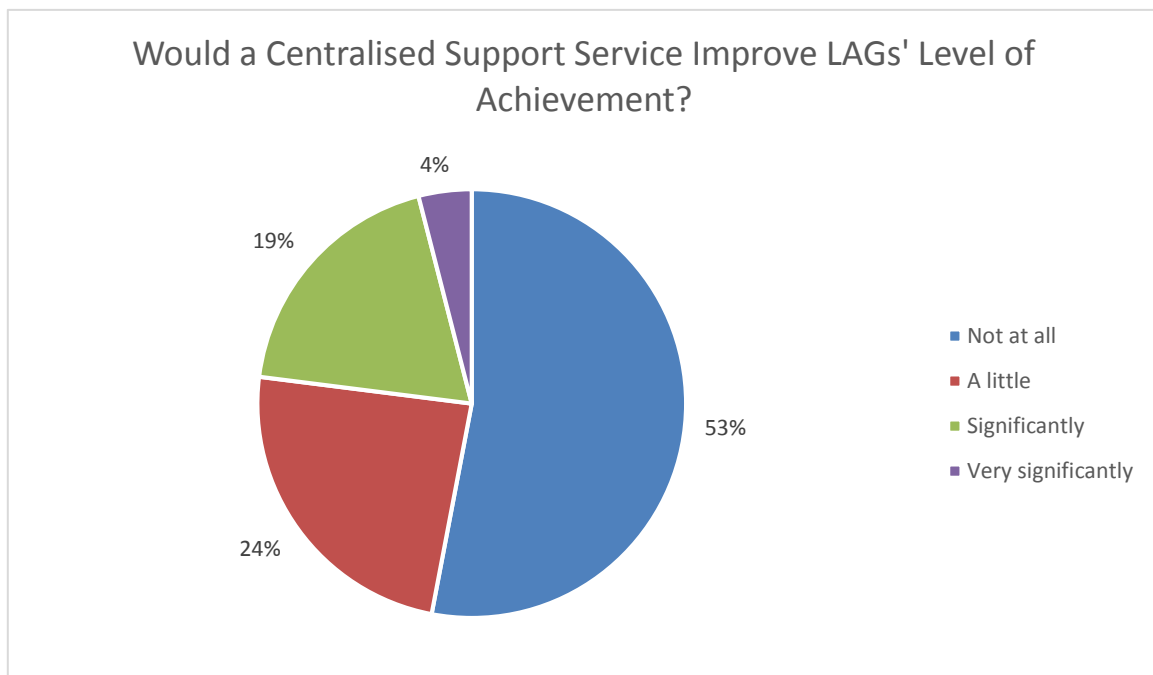


Question 30

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 108



- Over half of the German respondents thought that a centralised support service would 'not improve LAG's performance at all'. This was a considerably larger proportion than at EU level (53% vs 36%).

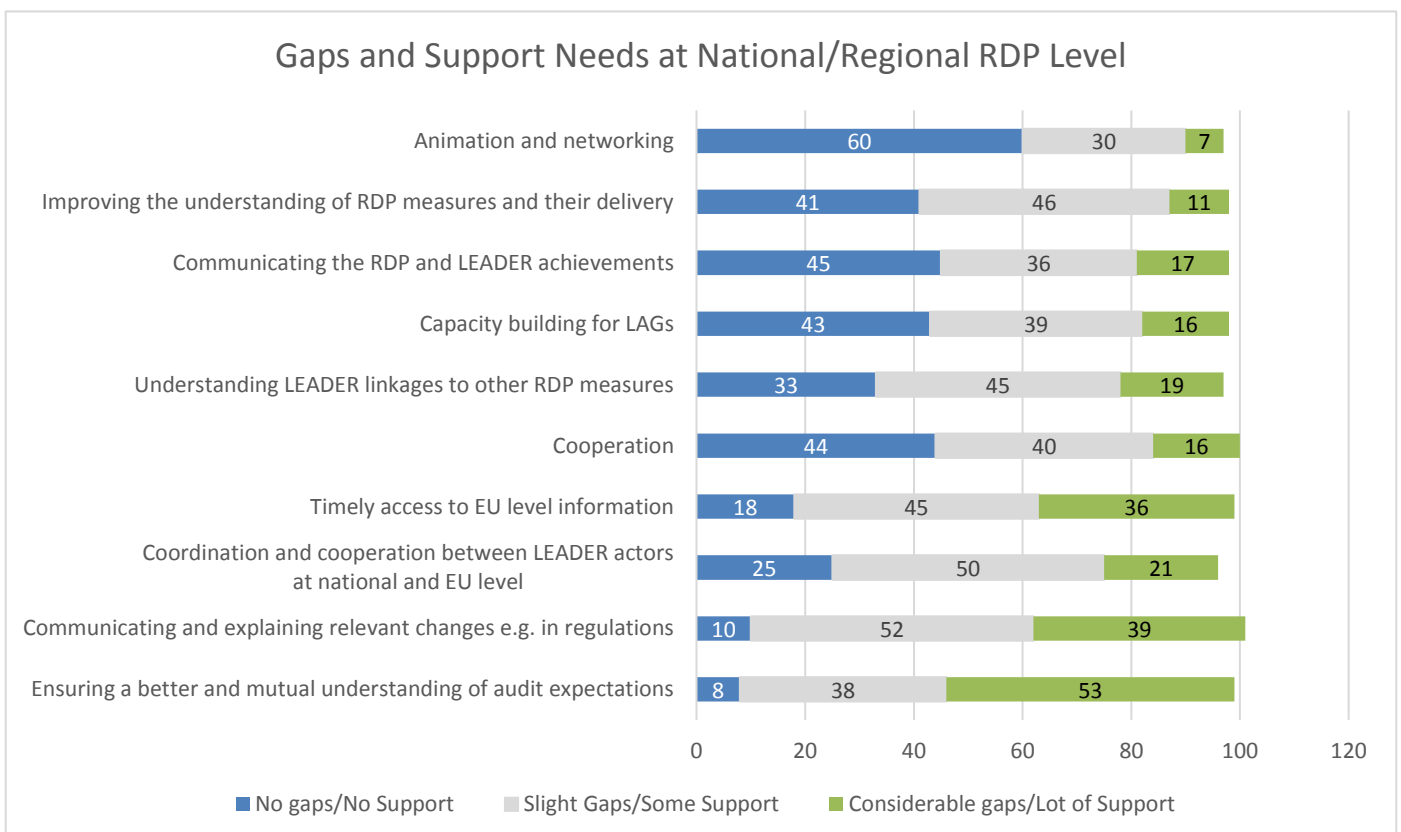
Question 31

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 102



- The gaps and support needs identified by German LAGs were largely similar to those of the overall EU sample, across the range of topics German LAGs report 'no gaps / no support' more frequently than at EU level. This included topics such as 'coordination and cooperation at national level', 'cooperation', and 'animation and networking'.

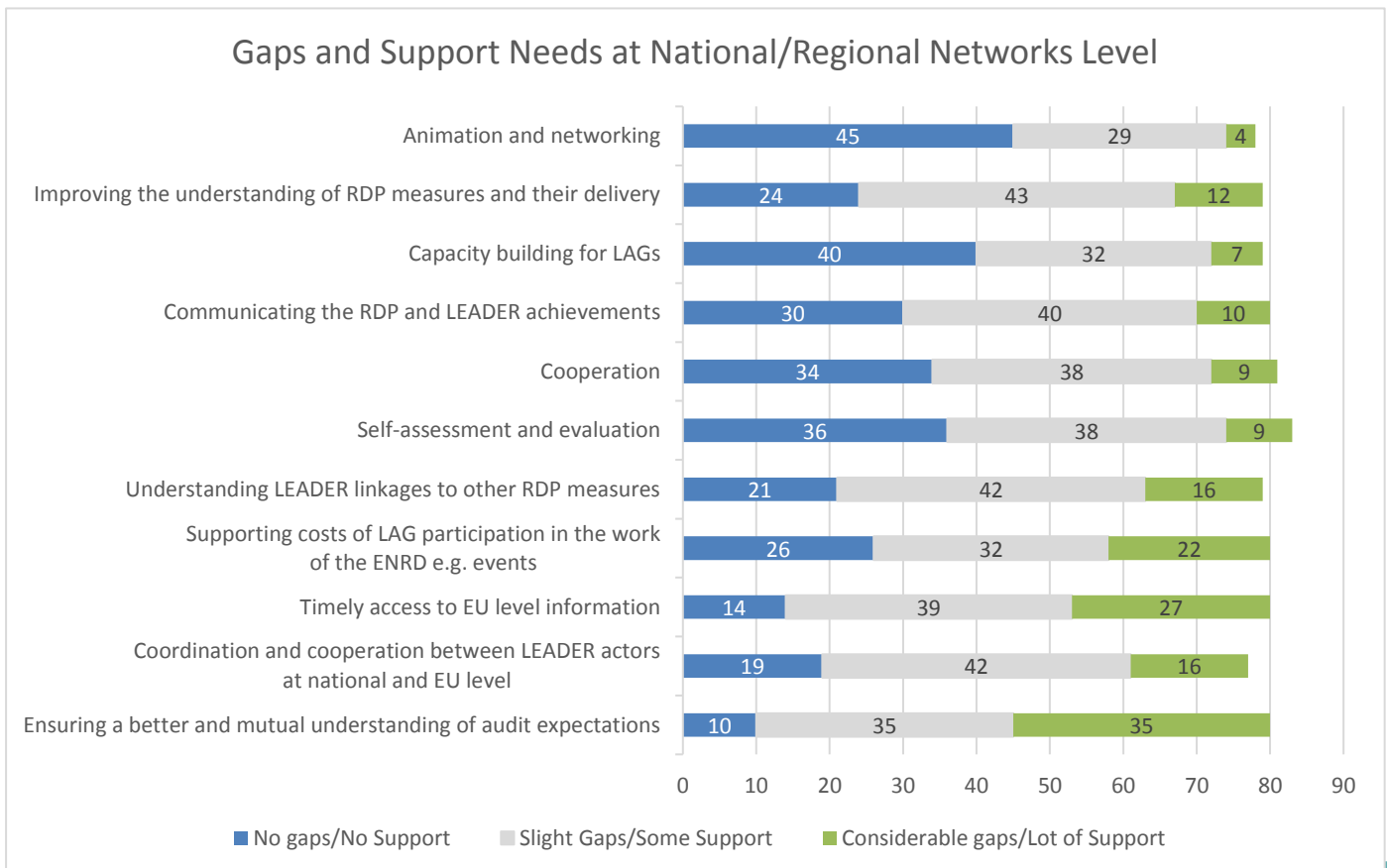
Question 32

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 84



- Proportionately more German LAGs believed that there were 'no gaps and no support need' in a number of areas at the national and regional networks level in comparison to the EU sample. Categories of lower need included 'self-assessment and evaluation', 'cooperation', 'capacity building for LAGs', and 'animation and networking'.

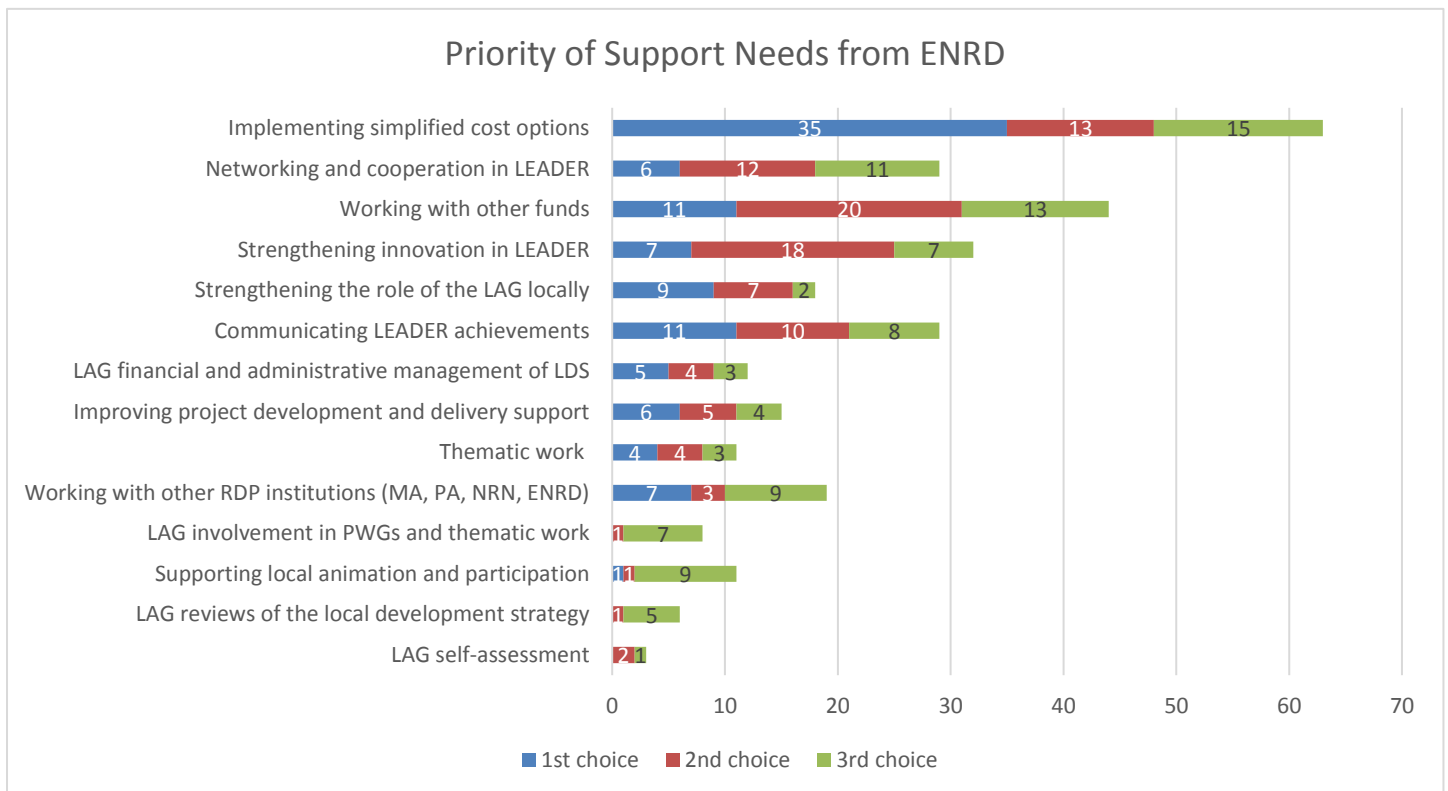
Question 33

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 103



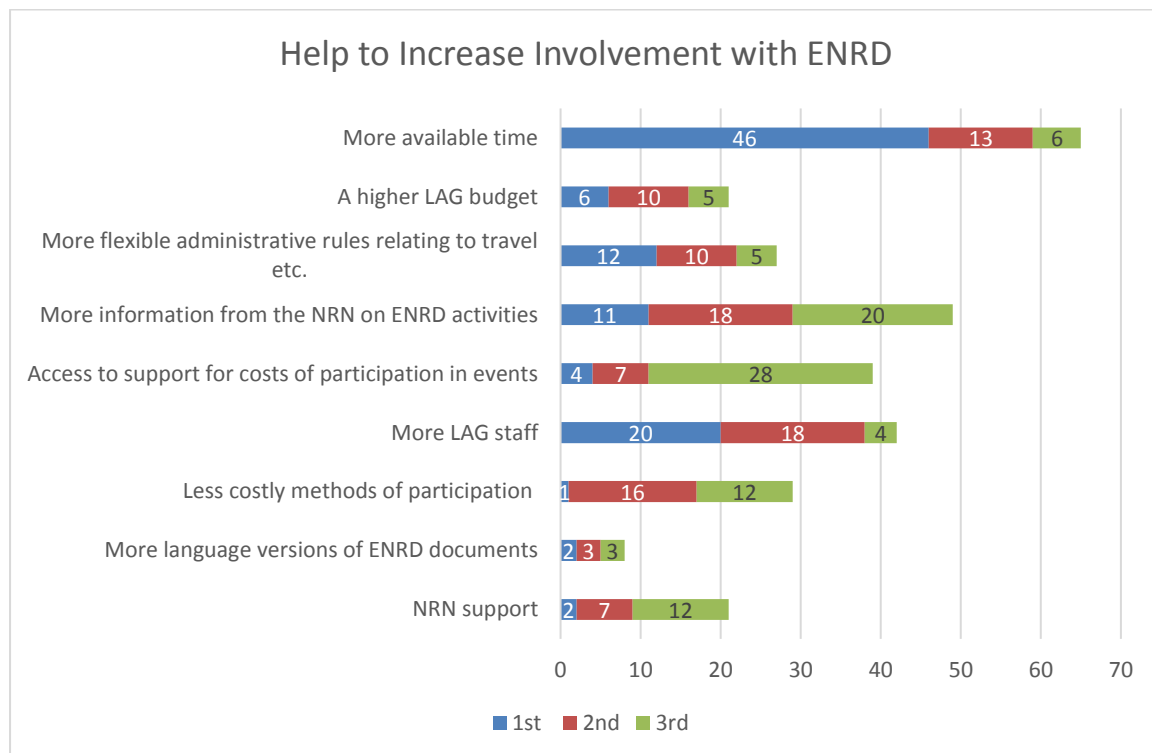
- The German responses generally followed the pattern of priorities identified in the EU sample.
- However, German LAGs ranked a number of topics somewhat lower than their European peers, such as support for 'networking and cooperation', 'strengthening the role of the LAG locally', and 'LAG financial and administrative management of LDS'.

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 105



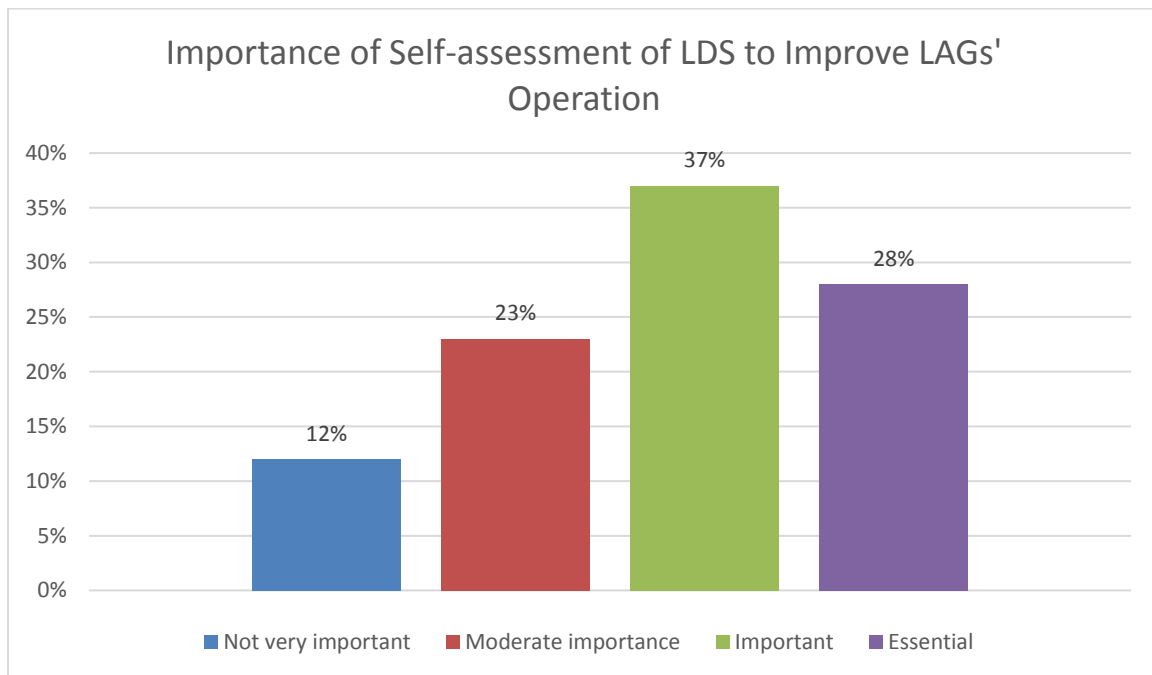
- A smaller proportion of German than EU LAGs who responded believed that a ‘higher LAG budget’, ‘more flexible administrative rules relating to travel’ or ‘more language versions of ENRD documents’ would help to increase involvement with ENRD.
- Slightly more emphasis was given by German respondents than by the EU sample to ‘more LAG staff’ and ‘NRN support’ as ways to increase involvement.

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 112



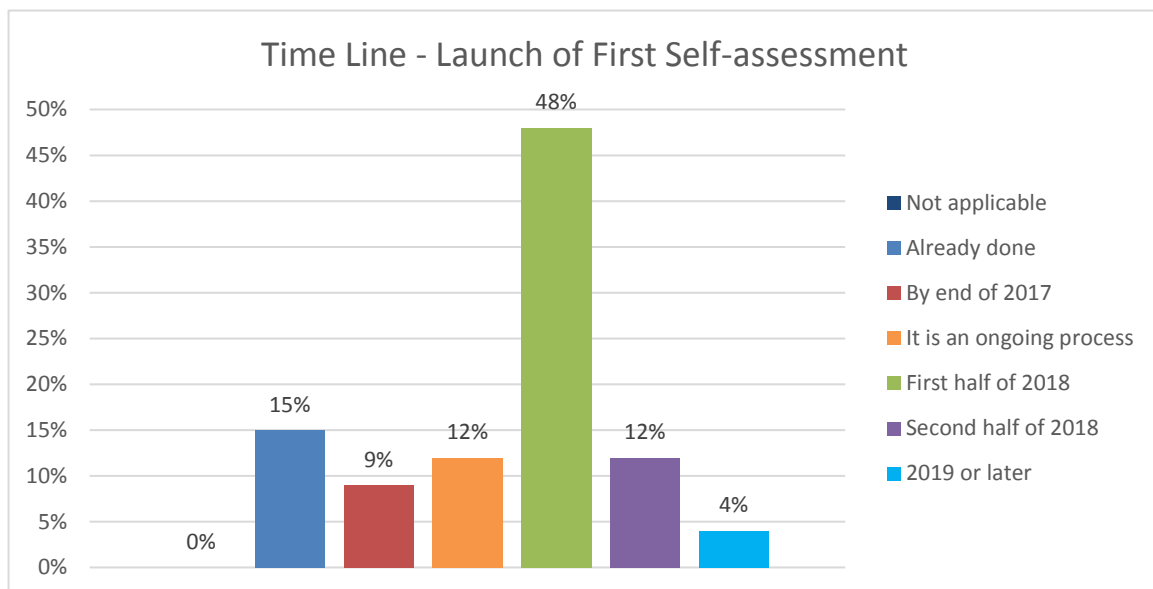
- The responses from German LAGs were very similar to those by the EU sample. However, slightly more German respondents considered self-assessment of LDS to be 'not very important' than at EU level (12% vs 6%).

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 112



- Almost half of the responding German LAGs (48%) intended to have their first self-assessment undertaken in the first half of 2018 (25% indicated this in the EU sample). A smaller proportion of German than EU LAGs would undertake this work later.
- The proportion of German LAGs that stated they would undertake self-assessment as an ‘ongoing process’ (11%) was smaller than that of the EU sample (18%).

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 – 77%
- No – 23%

Total Number of Responses 104