LEADER LAG Survey 2017

Working Paper

Findings at Member State level

Member State: Denmark

Table of Contents

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

- Denmark (DK)
- 9 LAGs responded, representing 1.3% of total LAG responses
- 43% of DK LAGs responded to the survey

Total Number of Responses 9

Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- DK has one national RDP.

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

Respondents' Position

100%

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

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

- In comparison to the EU sample, the composition of the Danish LAG responses showed a larger proportion of new LAGs from 2014-2020 (34% vs 22%).

- There were no survey participants from LEADER II or LEADER I represented in the Danish responses.

First Period LAG became Operational

22%

34%

44%

- New LAG 2014-2020
- 2007-2013 LAG
- LEADER+
- LEADER II
- LEADER I
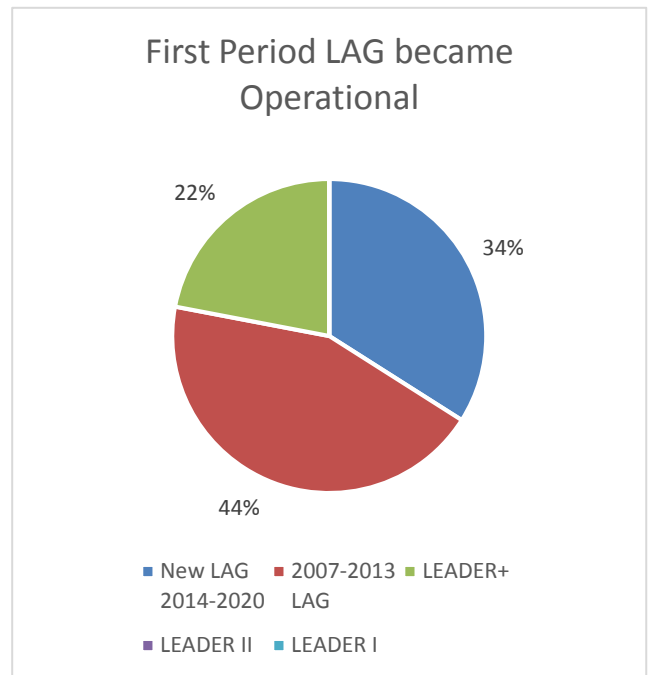
Question 8

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

Time LAGs were Formally Selected in 2014-2020 Programme Period
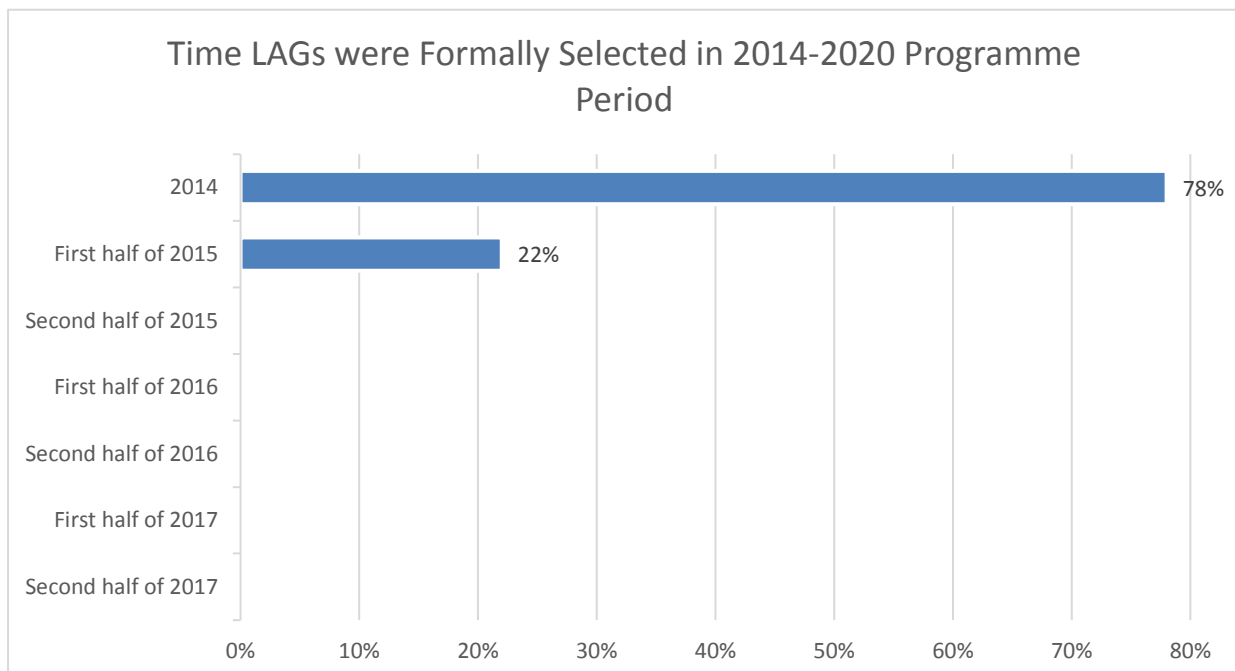
- The majority (78%) of Danish LAGs responding to the survey were formally selected in 2014; only 9% of the EU sample were selected at this time.

- By mid 2015 all responding Danish LAGs were formally selected, in contrast to 39% 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

Timing of LAGs Launch of First Call for Projects

Category	Percentage
First half of 2015	78%
Second half of 2015	22%
First half of 2016	
Second half of 2016	
First half of 2017	
Second half of 2017	
2018	
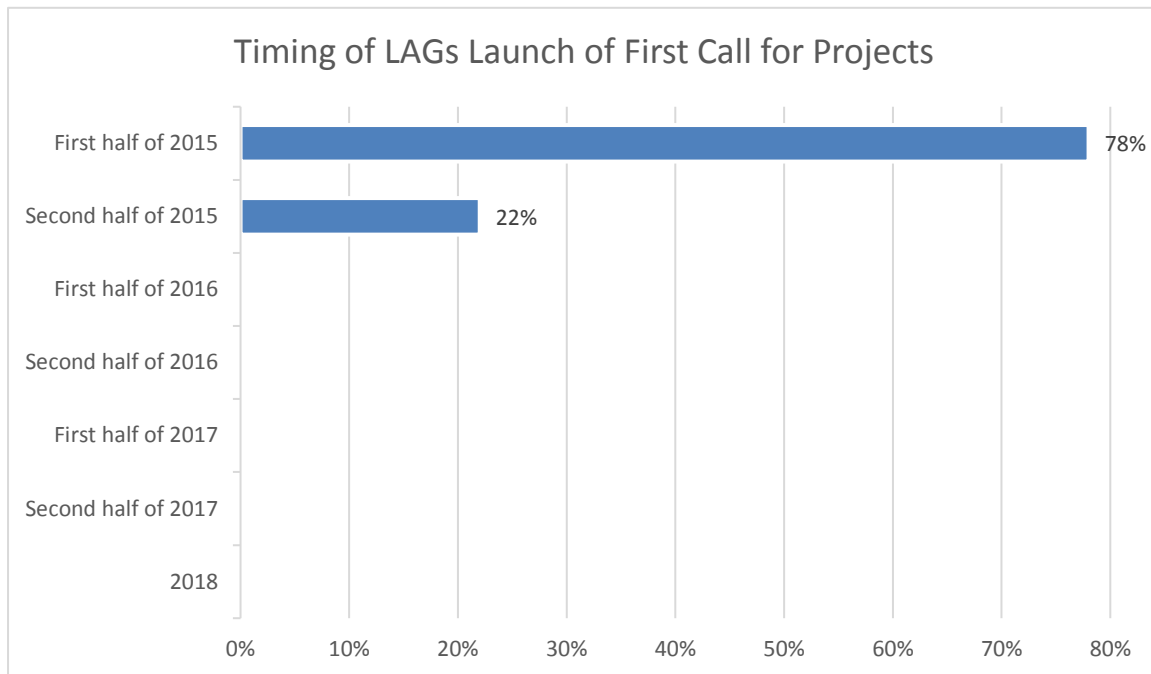
- All of the responding Danish LAGs (100%) had their first calls for projects launched by the end of 2015, in contrast to 32% of the EU sample that had accomplished this task at this time.

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 9

LAG Use of ESI Funds in addition to EAFRD

44%

56%

- EMFF
- ESF
- ERDF
- only EAFRD
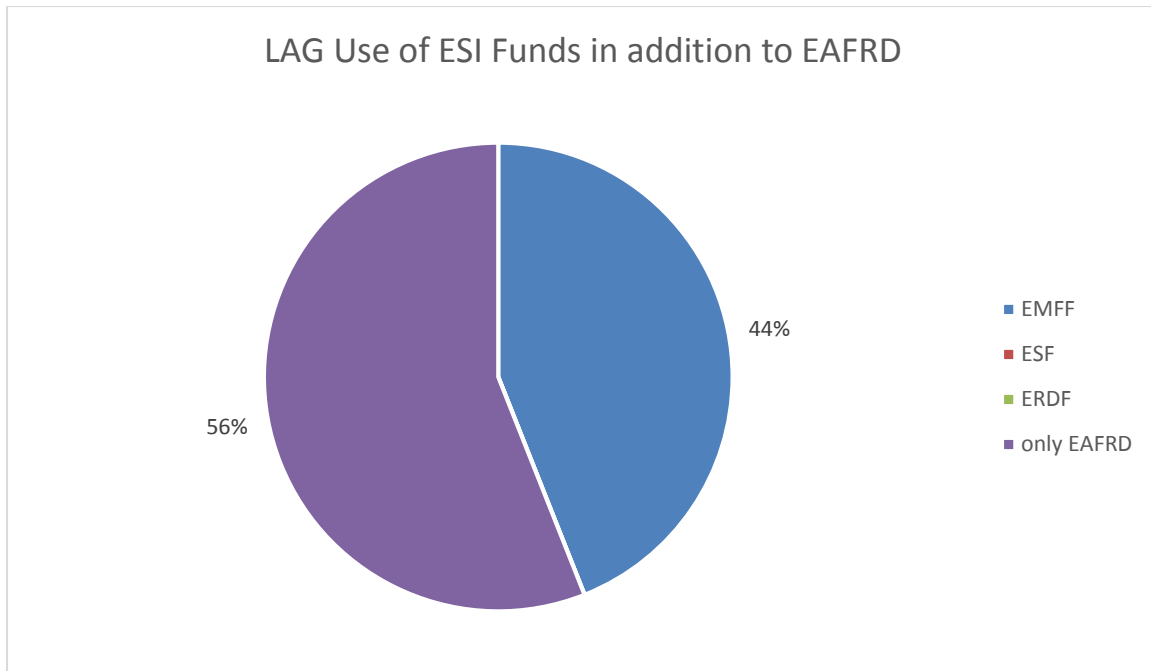
- A lower proportion of Danish LAGs reported using 'only EAFRD' (56%) than at EU level (67%), a higher proportion of Danish LAGs (44%) use EMFF than in the wider sample (9%).

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 9

Range of Budgets from Responding LAGs

Legend:
- >€10,000,000
- €5,000,001 - 10,000,000
- €4,000,001 - 5,000,000
- €3,000,001 - 4,000,000
- €2,000,001 - 3,000,000
- €1,500,001 - 2,000,000
- €1,000,001 - 1,500,000
- €500,001 - 1,000,000
- <€500,000
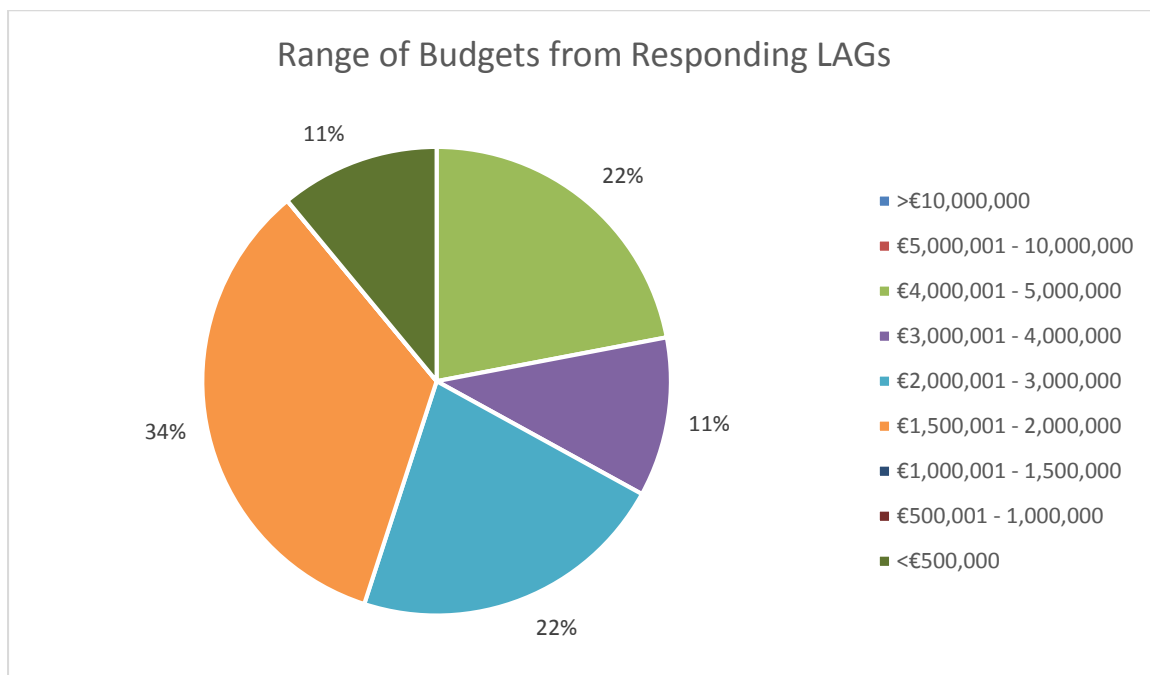
- The respondents from Denmark reported a larger share of the budget range €1.5m – 2m than their European peers (34% vs 12%).

- 15% of the EU sample had large budgets over €5m, whereas none of the Danish LAGs reported this size of budget.

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 9

- The vast majority of Danish respondents (89%) reported that their budget allocation for animation and running costs was between 17-20%. In comparison, only 30% of the EU sample stated this size of budget, with one third reporting smaller and one third larger allocations for this purpose.

% of LAG Budget Spent on Animation & Running Costs

11%

89%

■ <10% ■ 10-13% ■ 14-16% ■ 17-20% ■ 21-25%
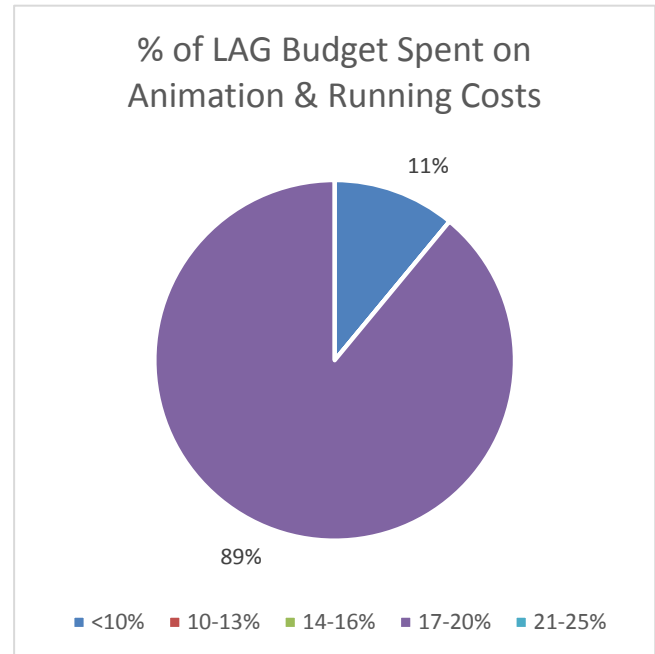
LEADER Principles

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 8

Relative Importance of LEADER Principles
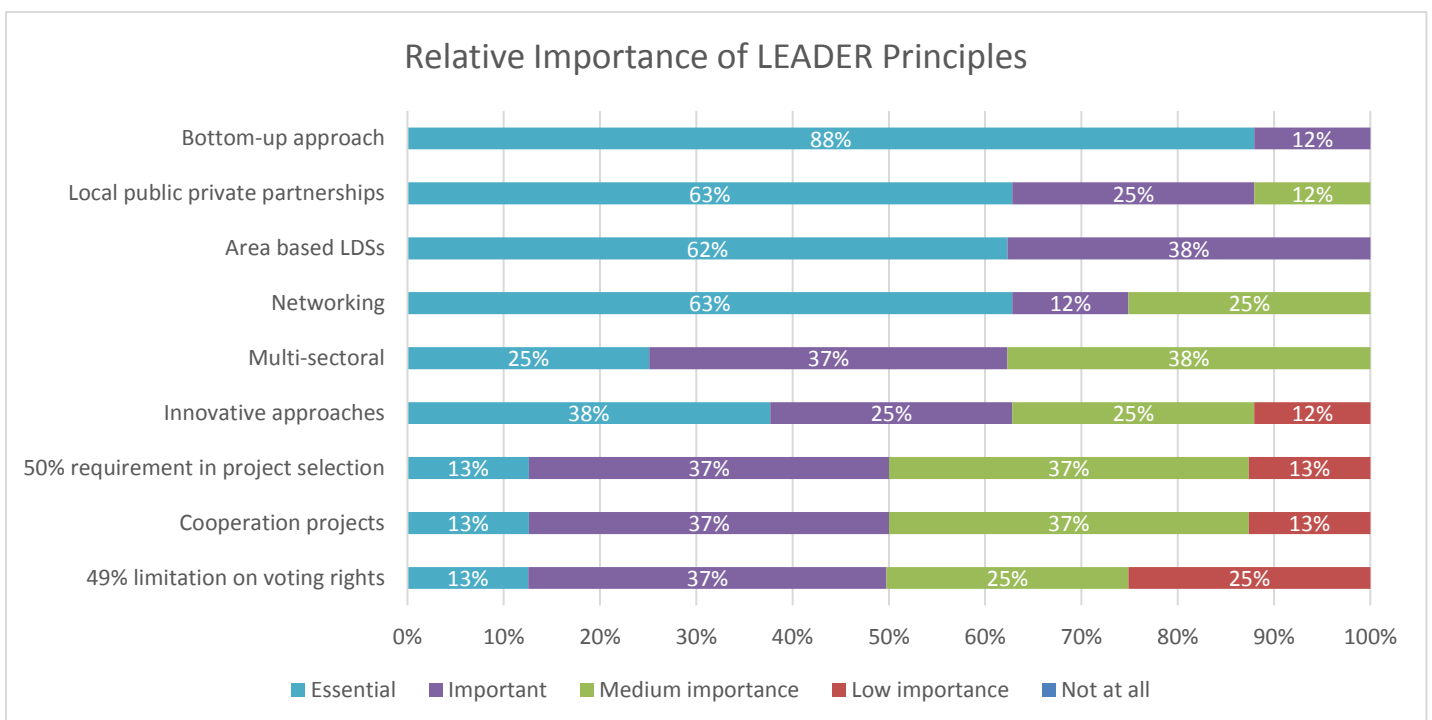
- A greater proportion of Danish respondents identify the bottom-up approach as essential than LAGs at the EU level (88% vs 73%).

- Proportionately fewer Danish LAGs indicated that a number of approaches were 'essential' than the EU sample. This included the 'multi-sectoral' (25% vs 41%), '50% requirement in project selection' (13% vs 34%) and 'cooperation projects' (13% vs 28%).

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)
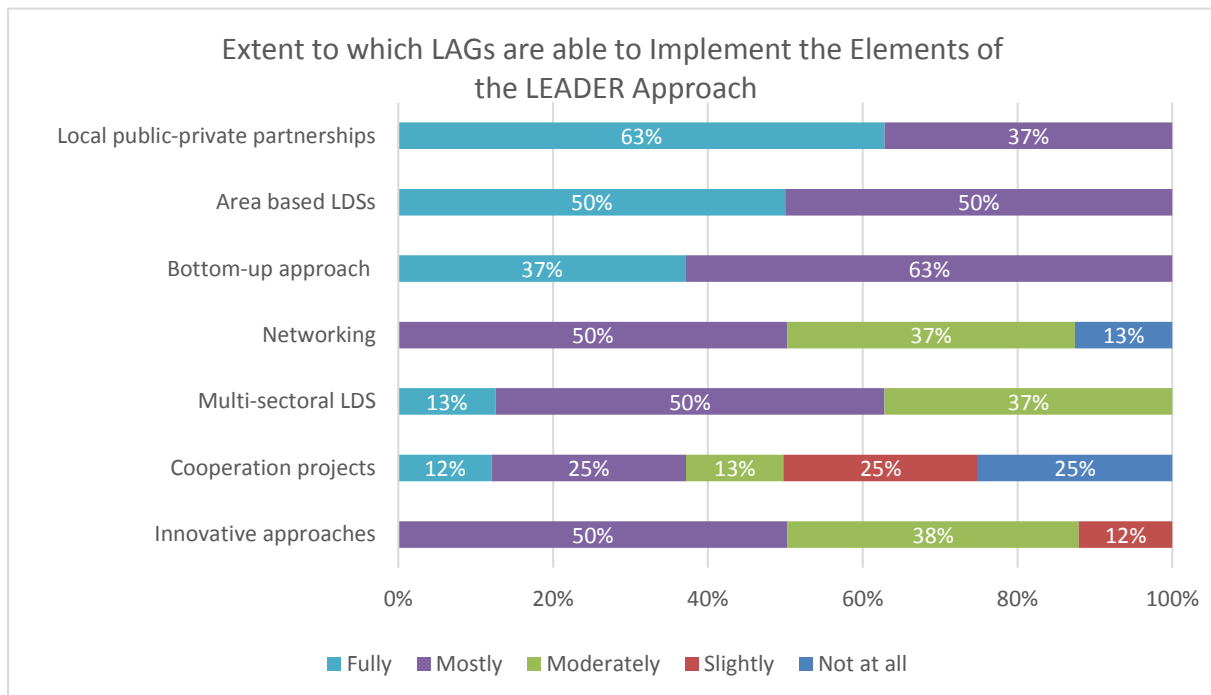
- Area-based local development strategies intended for well-identified sub-regional rural territories.
- Local public-private partnerships (local action groups).
- Bottom-up approach with decision-making power for local action groups concerning the elaboration and implementation of local development 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 8

Extent to which LAGs are able to Implement the Elements of the LEADER Approach

	Fully	Mostly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
Local public-private partnerships	63%	37%			
Area based LDSs	50%	50%			
Bottom-up approach	37%	63%			
Networking		50%	37%		13%
Multi-sectoral LDS	13%	50%	37%		
Cooperation projects	12%	25%	13%	25%	25%
Innovative approaches		50%	38%	12%	

- All the Danish LAGs responding could fully or mostly implement the top three elements of the LEADER approach selected in the wider sample, this exceeds the EU level reported in each case.

- The Danish LAGs were less able to 'fully' and 'mostly' implement 'networking' (50% vs 75%) and 'cooperation projects' (37% vs 58%) approaches than their EU peers. This included.

- Proportionately more Danish LAGs felt 'not at all' able to implement 'cooperation projects' (25% vs 8%).

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 8

Aspects of LEADER Implementation as seen by Local Action Groups
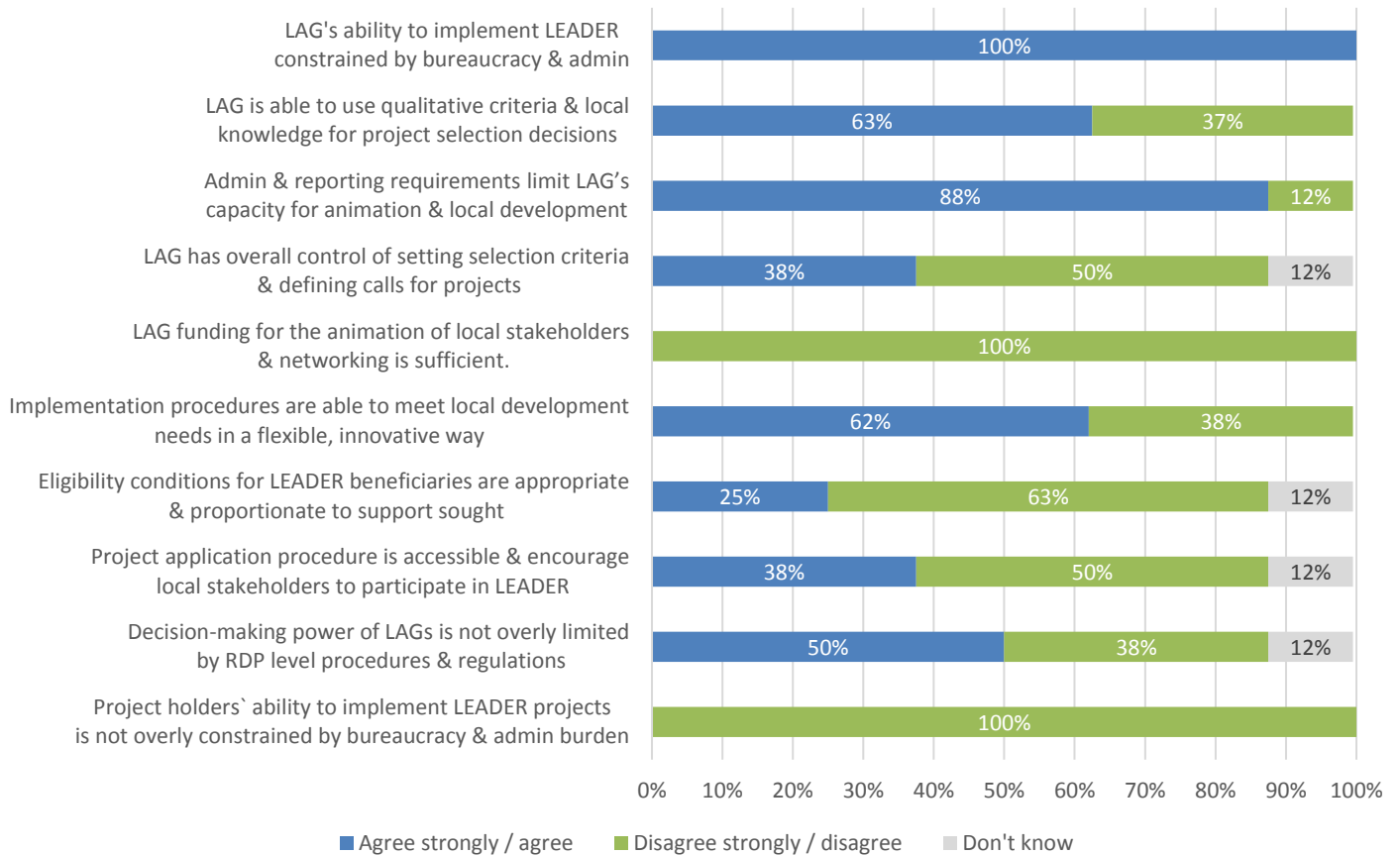
- All of the Danish respondents 'disagreed' that 'LAG funding for animation and networking was sufficient' (vs 39% EU)and all also thought that project holders' ability to implement LEADER projects was constrained by bureaucracy and admin burden(vs 78% EU).

- There was also substantially more disagreement about the 'appropriateness of eligibility conditions for beneficiaries', 63% of the Danish respondents 'disagreed' in comparison to 44% of the EU sample.

- In addition, a lesser proportion of Danish LAGs agreed that 'LAGs had overall control of setting selection criteria and defining calls' (38% vs 66% at EU level).

- However, 50% of Danish respondents 'agreed' that the 'decision-making power of LAGs is not overly limited by RDP level procedures', in contrast to 29% of the EU sample.
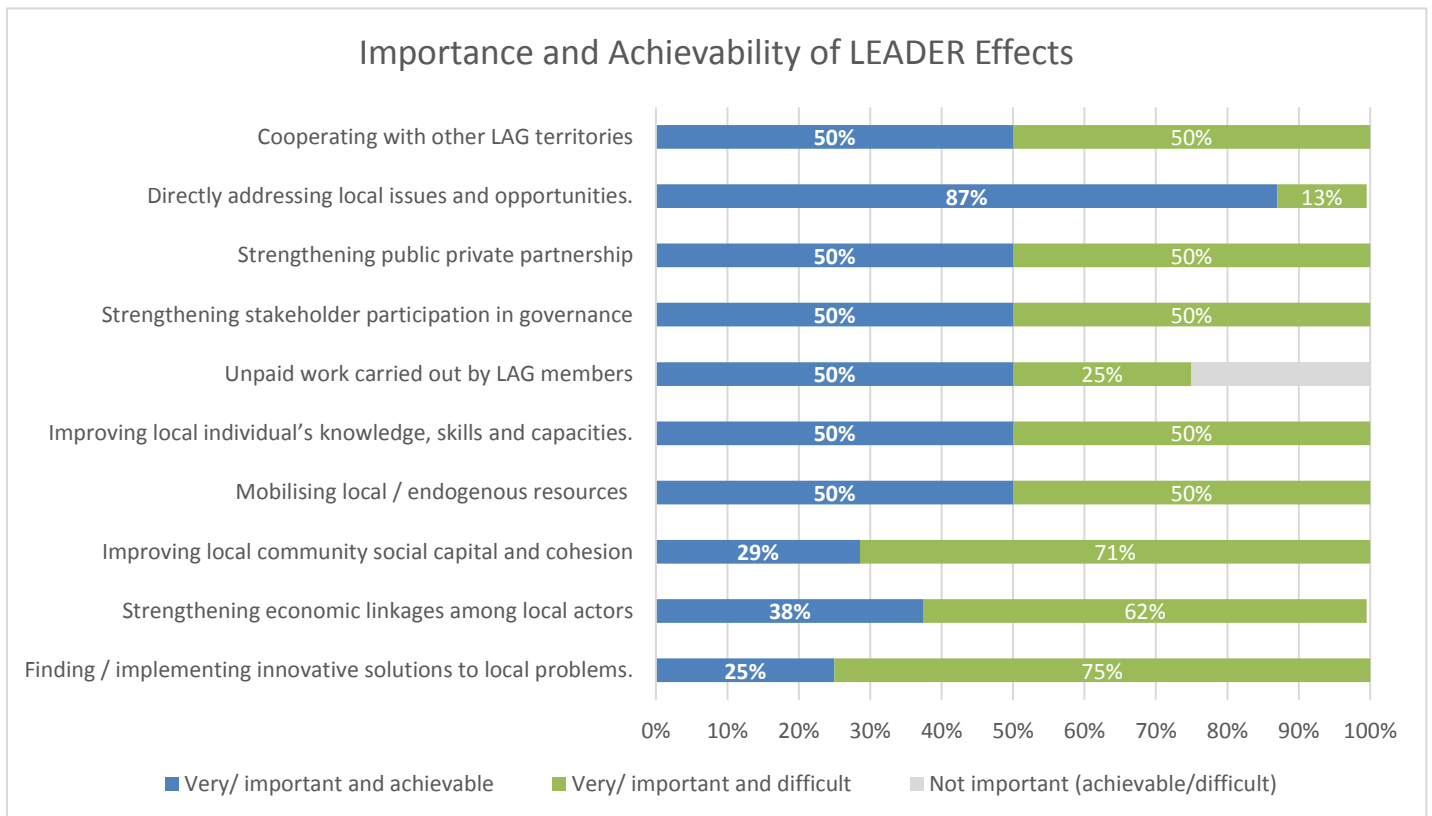
Question 16

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 8

Importance and Achievability of LEADER Effects

Effect	Very/ important and achievable	Very/ important and difficult	Not important (achievable/difficult)
Cooperating with other LAG territories	50%	50%	
Directly addressing local issues and opportunities.	87%	13%	
Strengthening public private partnership	50%	50%	
Strengthening stakeholder participation in governance	50%	50%	
Unpaid work carried out by LAG members	50%	25%	
Improving local individual's knowledge, skills and capacities.	50%	50%	
Mobilising local / endogenous resources	50%	50%	
Improving local community social capital and cohesion	29%	71%	
Strengthening economic linkages among local actors	38%	62%	
Finding / implementing innovative solutions to local problems.	25%	75%	

- In comparison to the EU sample, proportionately more Danish respondents (88%) were positive about the achievability of 'directly addressing local issues and opportunities', compared to 63% at EU level.

- Improving local community social capacity and cohesion was though important by all Danish respondents, 71% thought this was difficult vs 56% of the EU sample.

- Regarding 'finding / implementing innovative solutions to local problems' more Danish respondents felt that this task was important but difficult to achieve (75% vs 64%).

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 8

Level of Effects on LEADER Implementation

Category	Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Positive
Level of MA/PA conditions, reporting requirements	63%	25%		13%	
Time taken to approve selected projects		25%	50%	25%	
The balance between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions	38%	50%		13%	
Audit and possible sanctions	63%	0%	38%		
Reduction of funding LEADER under RDP	88%	13%			
RDP level limitations on possible LDS themes, eligibility or selected criteria		38%	50%	13%	
Effects on local decision making of projects by the MA/PA	13%	25%	38%	13%	
Limitations on staff	13%	25%	63%		
% of LAG budget available for running costs and animation		38%	63%		
Possibility of multi funding		13%	38%	13%	13%
Continuity of LAG membership			38%	38%	13%
Increase in funding for LEADER under RDP			14%	14%	14%

Legend: ■ Very Negative ■ Negative ■ Neutral ■ Positive ■ Very Positive

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

- Proportionately more LAGs in Denmark than in the EU identified 'very negative' effects in following three areas:
  - Reduction of funding (88% vs 28%)
  - Level of MA/PA conditions, reporting requirements (63% vs 38%)
  - Audit and possible sanctions (63% vs 30%)

- In a number of other areas, the responding Danish LAGs were more neutral than the EU average, including 'RDP level limitations on possible LDS themes', 'time taken to approve projects', 'Percentage of LAG budget for running costs and animation', and 'limitations on staff'.

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 8

LEADER Operation - Changes since 2007-2013

Aspect	Significantly / less than before	No change	Significantly / more than before	Not Applicable
Level of MA / PA controls, reporting requirements, etc.	13%	25%	50%	
LAG population		38%	50%	
Proportion of non-public partners in the LAG		88%		
Available budget	88%			
LAG territory		38%	50%	
Number of full-time equivalent employees	63%	25%		
LAG / staff involvement in animation	38%	38%	12%	
Direct involvement of LAG members in LDS implementation		63%	25%	
Direct involvement of the LAG in 'others'	50%	38%		
LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS design	13%	75%		
LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS implementation	13%	75%		
LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions	25%	50%		

- In comparison to the EU sample, significantly more Danish respondents had experienced reductions in a number of areas, including:
  - o 'available budgets' (88% vs 43% of EU sample),
  - o 'full time employees' (63% vs 20% of EU sample),
  - o 'staff involvement in animation' (38% vs 18% of EU sample) and
  - o 'direct involvement of the LAG in other developments' (50% vs 13% of EU sample).

- At the same time, more Danish LAGs experienced increases in 'LAG population' and 'LAG territory' than their EU peers (50% vs 34%, and 50% vs 27% respectively).

- With regard to 'LAG autonomy in design and implementation' and in terms of 'non-public partners in the LAG', considerably more Danish LAGs experienced 'no change', than the EU sample.

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 8
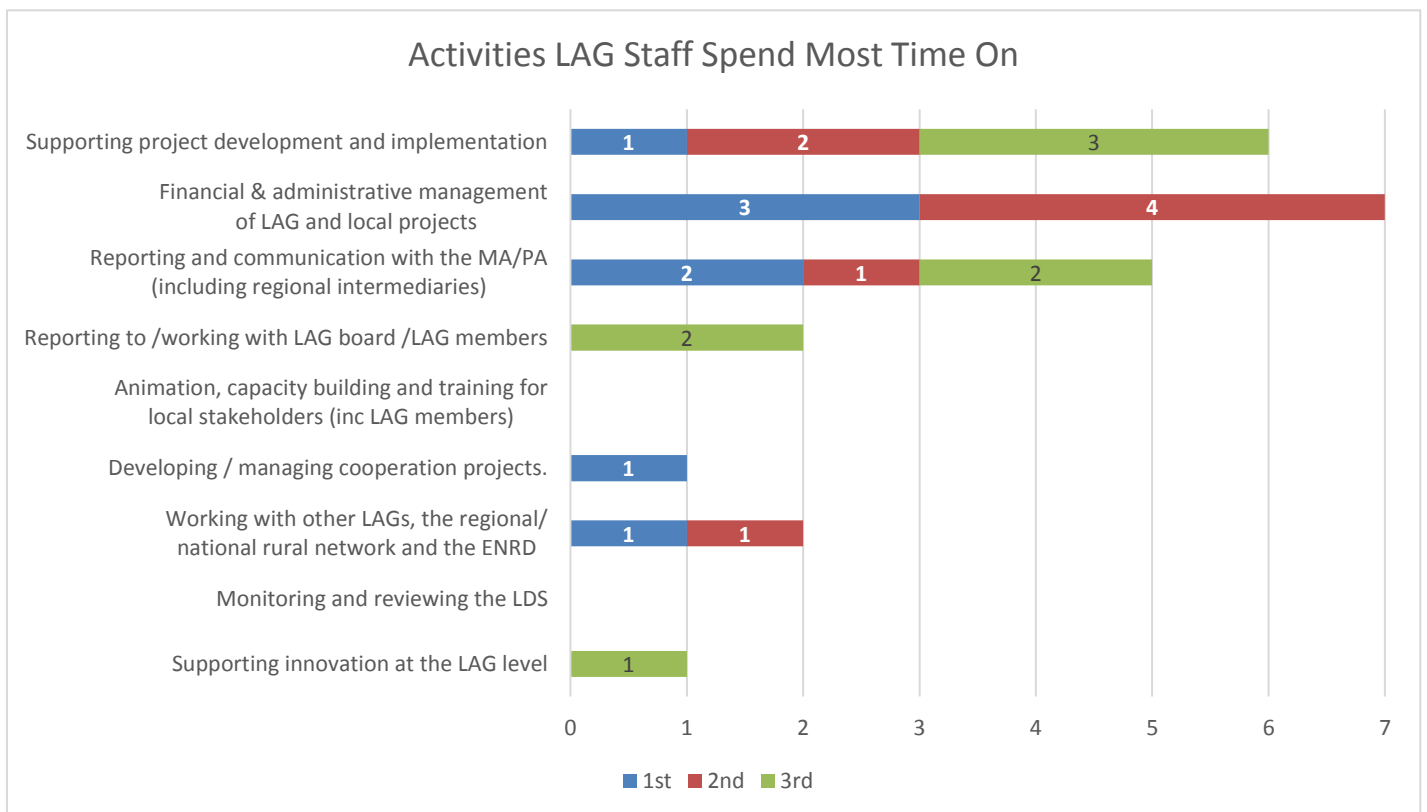
- The responses of the Danish LAGs follow the pattern of the EU sample. Slight differences relate to a higher ranking of time spent on 'financial and administrative management'.

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 8

Activities LAGs would like Staff to Devote More Time To
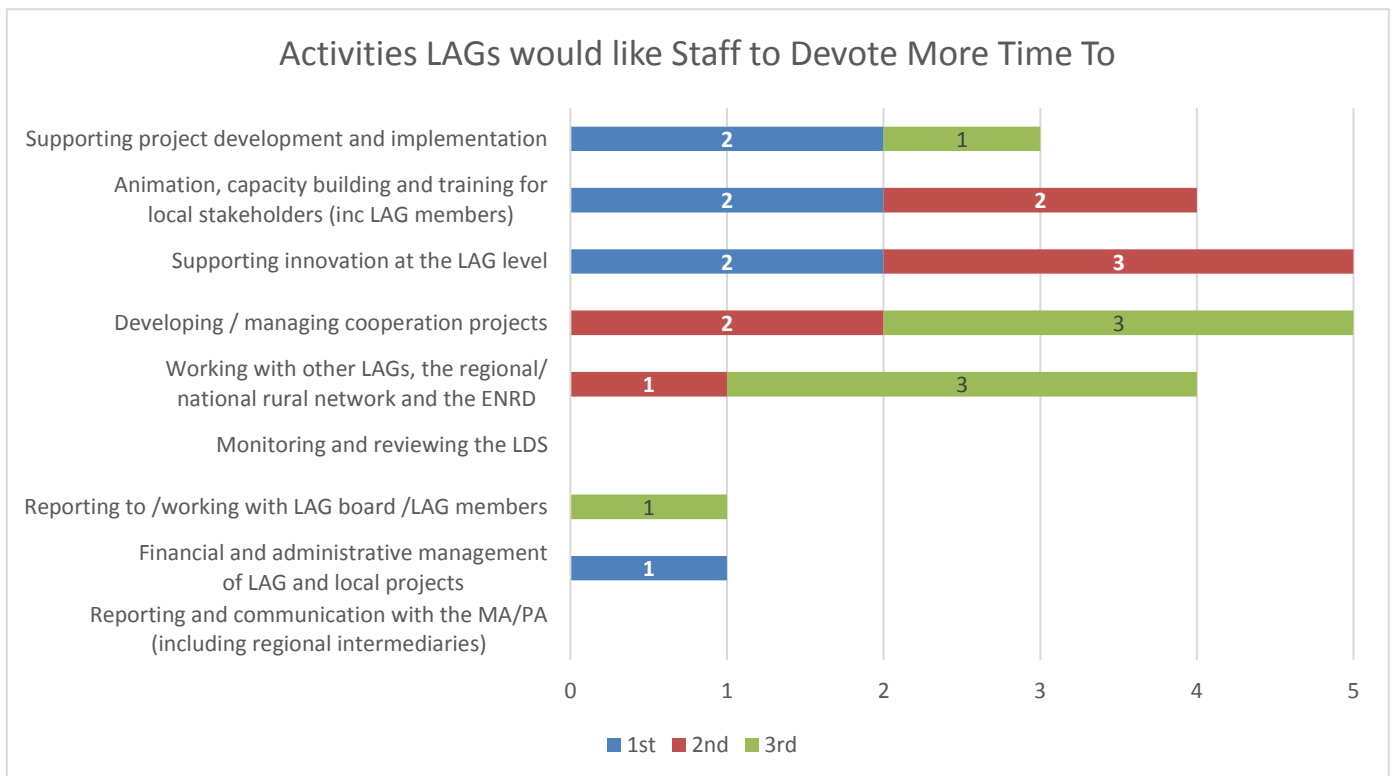
- On a small scale, there seem to be more Danish respondents than European who prefer their staff to devote more time to 'developing / managing cooperation projects' and 'working with other LAGS, NRN and the ENRD' as a second and third priority.

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 8

Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs
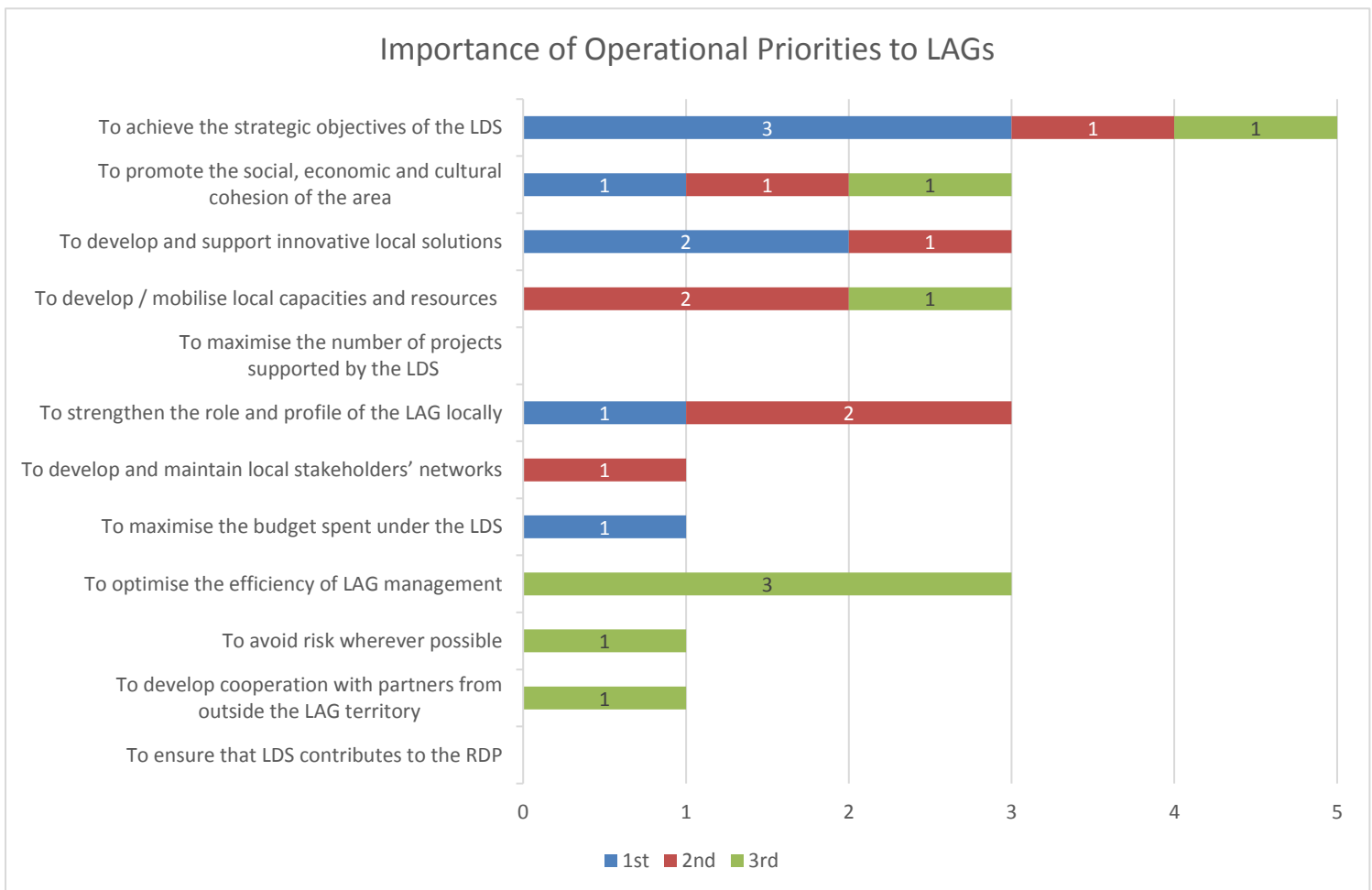
- The Danish LAGs ranked the operational priorities in a similar manner to the wider survey. Minor differences were apparent, such as the relatively higher importance of 'strengthening the role and profile of the LAG locally' and to 'optimise the efficiency of LAG management'.

- No Danish respondents prioritised 'maximising the number of projects supported by the LDS'.
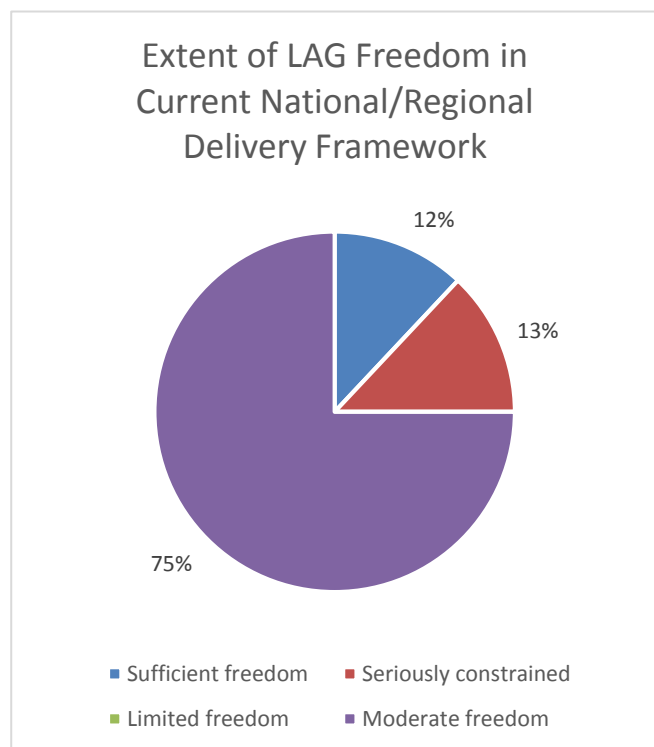
Question 22

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 8

- In comparison to the European LAGs, none of the Danish respondents felt that they had 'limited freedom' (0% vs 27%).

- A higher proportion of the Danish sample thought that they were afforded 'moderate freedom' (75%) compared to the EU sample (45%).

Extent of LAG Freedom in Current National/Regional Delivery Framework

12%

13%

75%

- Sufficient freedom
- Seriously constrained
- Limited freedom
- Moderate freedom

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 8
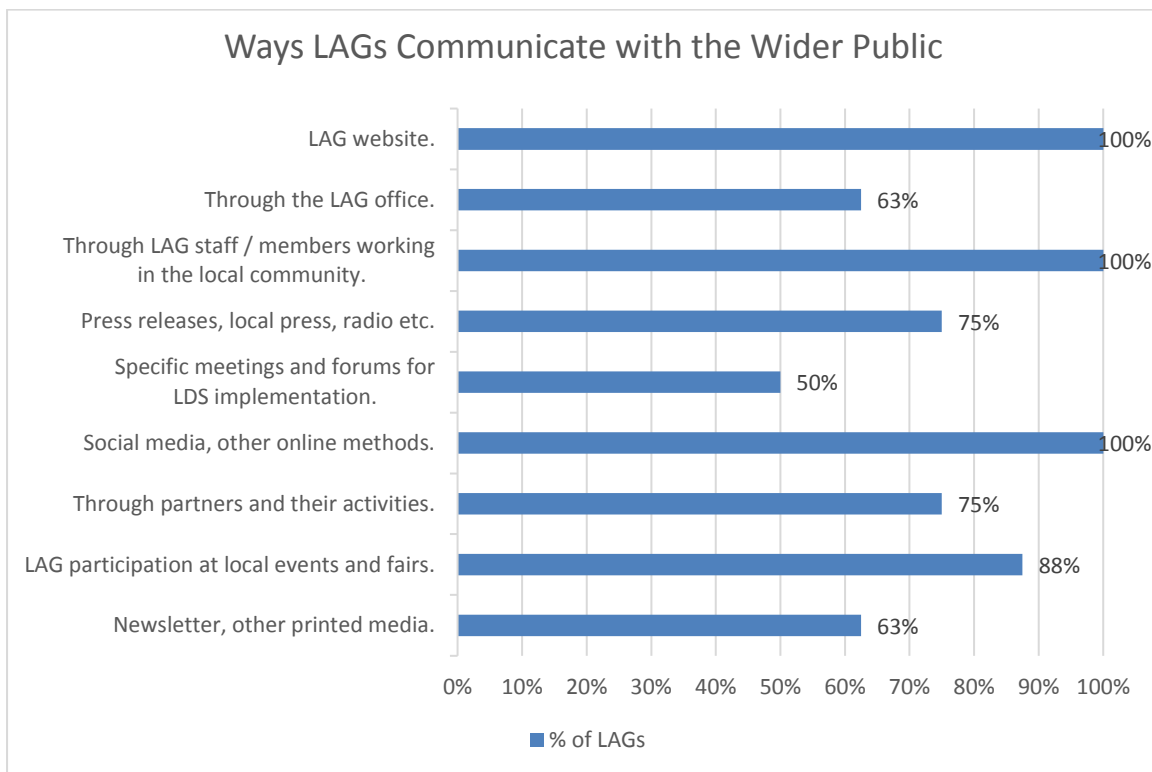
- In comparison to the EU sample, Danish LAGs report that they communicate much more 'through LAG staff / members' (100% vs 66%) and by 'social media' (110% vs 61%).

- Larger proportions of Danish LAGs report that they communicate through LAG participation at local events and fairs (88% vs 52%) and through partners and their activities (75% vs 54%).

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 8

Ways LAGs Receive Information from MA/PA

| Category	Value
Email	100%
Regular meetings and forums organised for LAGs	75%
Managing Authority website	75%
Through National Rural Network	25%
Through intermediary e.g. regional office or network	
Printed publications and guidance	25%
Social media	13%
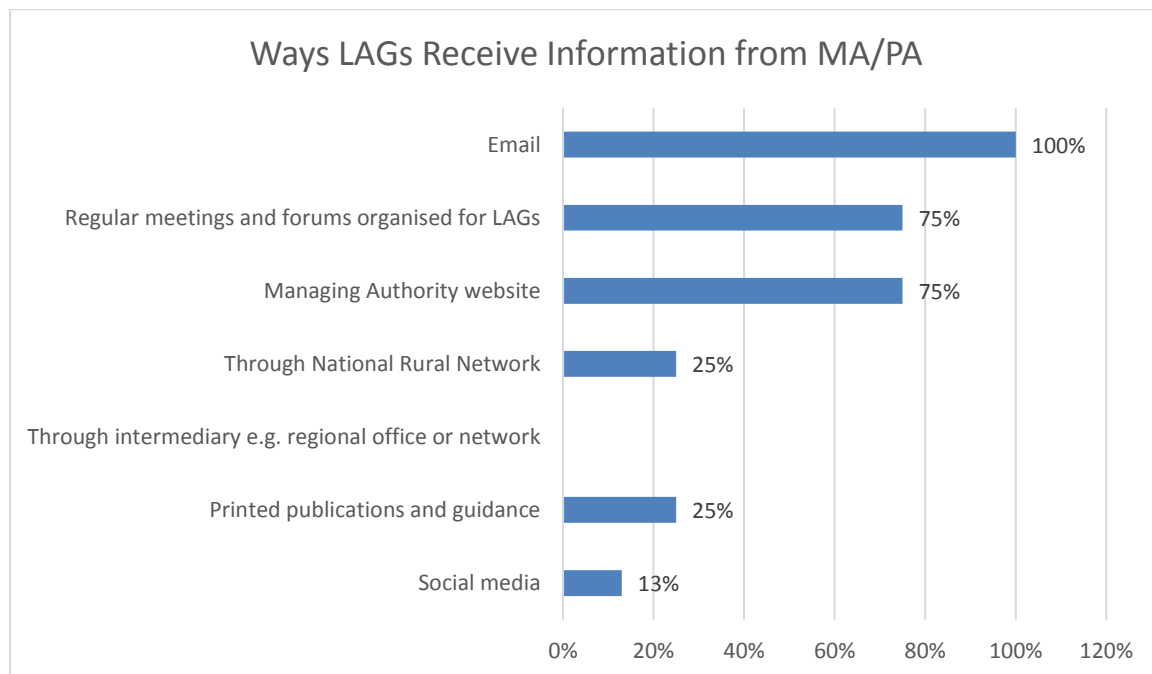
- Danish responses indicate greater use of the Managing Authority website than in the EU sample (75% vs 34%) the EU sample, Danish LAGs indicate that they do not receive information 'through intermediaries', 22% of the EU sample do so.

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 8
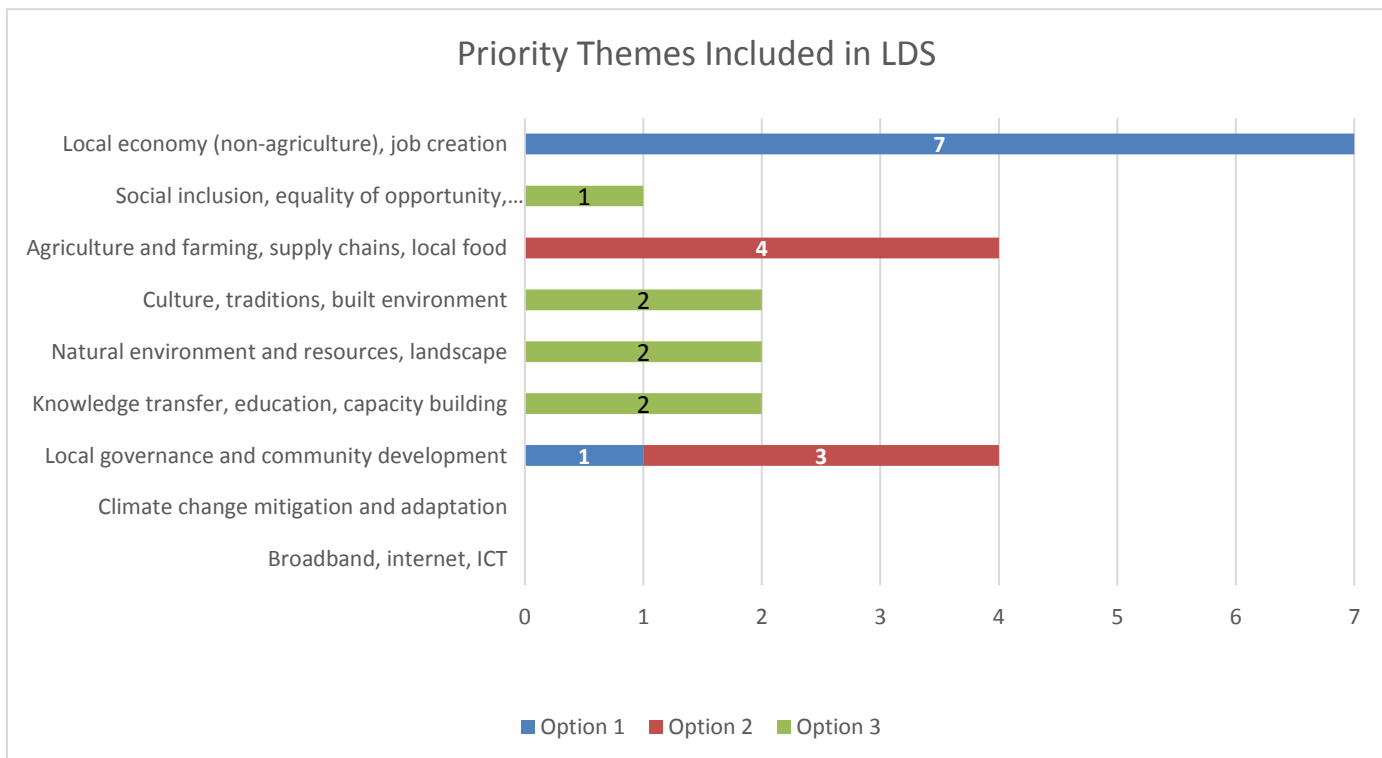
- The Danish responses indicated a proportionately stronger inclusion of with the priority themes 'local economy' and 'local governance and community development' in Danish LDS than in the EU sample.

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 8

- A significantly larger percentage of Danish LAGs (88%) reported that they 'select projects only', in comparison to 48% at EU level. A further 12% undertook 'project selection and formal approval' (12%) vs 31% of respondent LAGs across Europe.

- No Danish LAGs were responsible for the 'payment of claims' vs 21% at EU level.

Tasks Performed by LAGs

12%

88%

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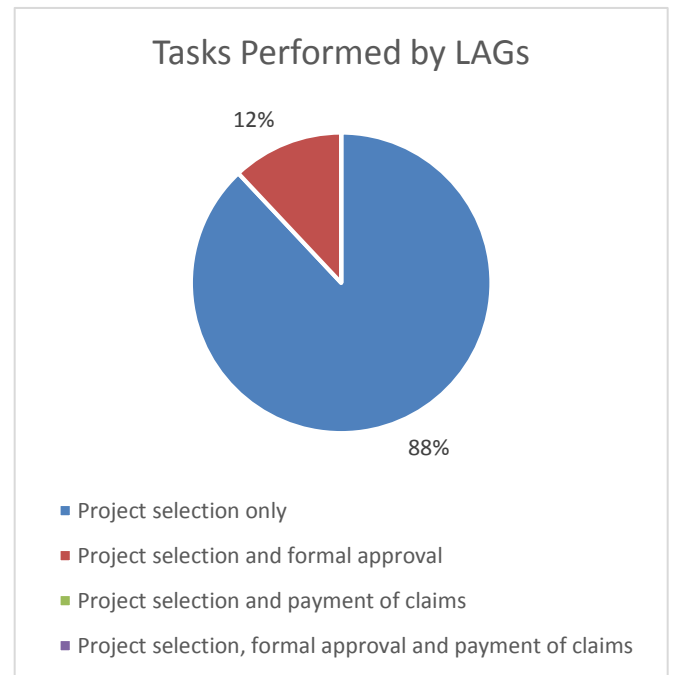
LEADER Improvements

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)

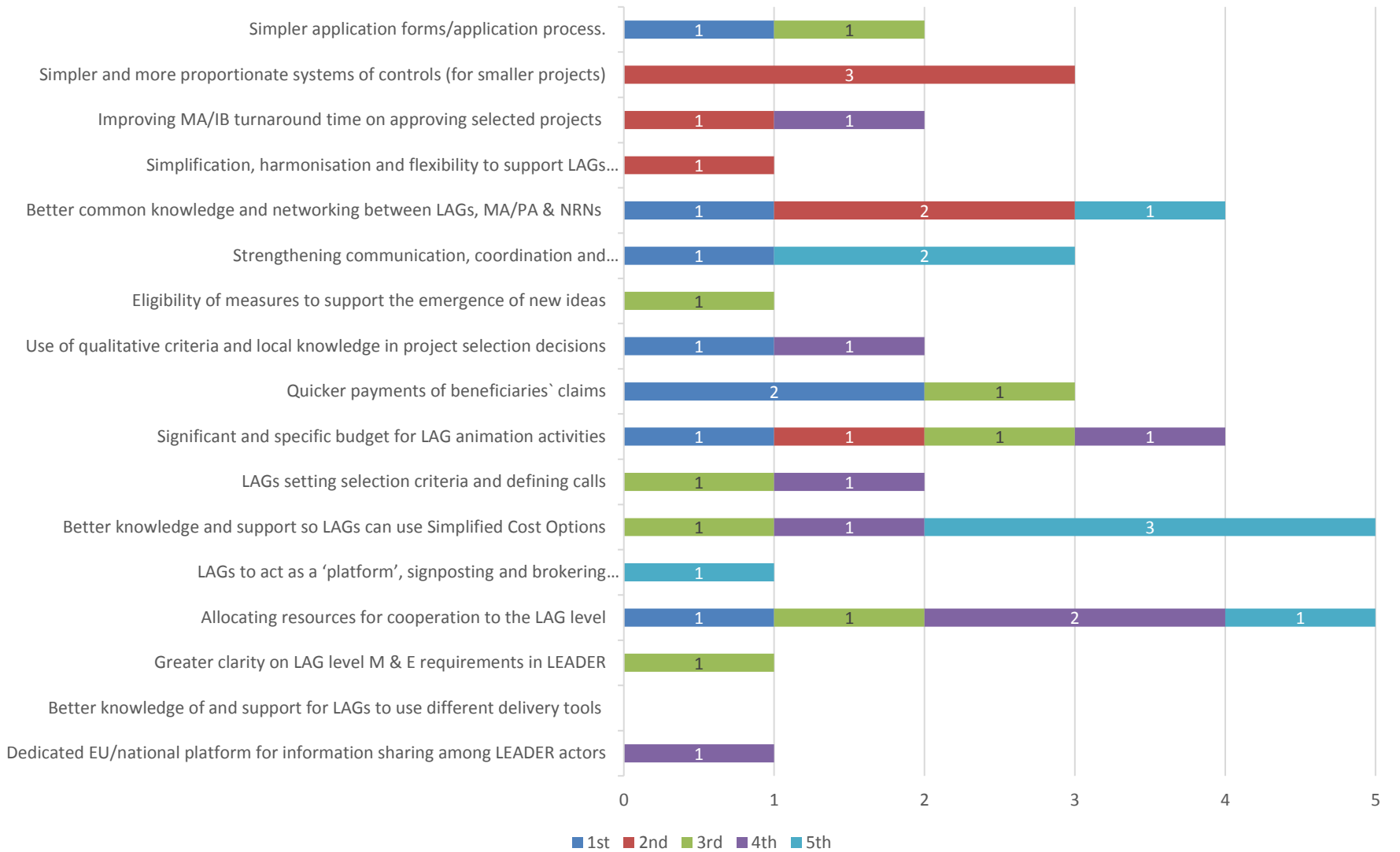- Better common knowledge and support through networking of LAGs, Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies and National Rural Networks and exchanges on transferable experience and practices
- The eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas, e.g. the use of feasibility studies, LAG led 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 8

- Danish LAGs responses differed from the EU sample in a number of areas. Comparatively less priority was given by Danish respondents to any required improvements concerning 'simpler application forms / application processes' and the 'eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas'.

- However, Danish respondents applied higher ratings to desired changes such as 'better common knowledge and networking between LAGs, MA/PA and NRN', 'simplified cost options' and 'allocating resources for cooperation to the LAG level'.

Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now

| Change	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Simpler application forms/application process.	1		1		
Simpler and more proportionate systems of controls (for smaller projects)		3			
Improving MA/IB turnaround time on approving selected projects		1		1	
Simplification, harmonisation and flexibility to support LAGs…		1			
Better common knowledge and networking between LAGs, MA/PA & NRNs	1	2			1
Strengthening communication, coordination and…	1				2
Eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas			1		
Use of qualitative criteria and local knowledge in project selection decisions	1			1	
Quicker payments of beneficiaries` claims	2		1		
Significant and specific budget for LAG animation activities	1	1	1	1	
LAGs setting selection criteria and defining calls			1	1	
Better knowledge and support so LAGs can use Simplified Cost Options			1	1	3
LAGs to act as a 'platform', signposting and brokering…					1
Allocating resources for cooperation to the LAG level	1		1	2	1
Greater clarity on LAG level M & E requirements in LEADER			1		
Better knowledge of and support for LAGs to use different delivery tools					
Dedicated EU/national platform for information sharing among LEADER actors				1	

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 – 8
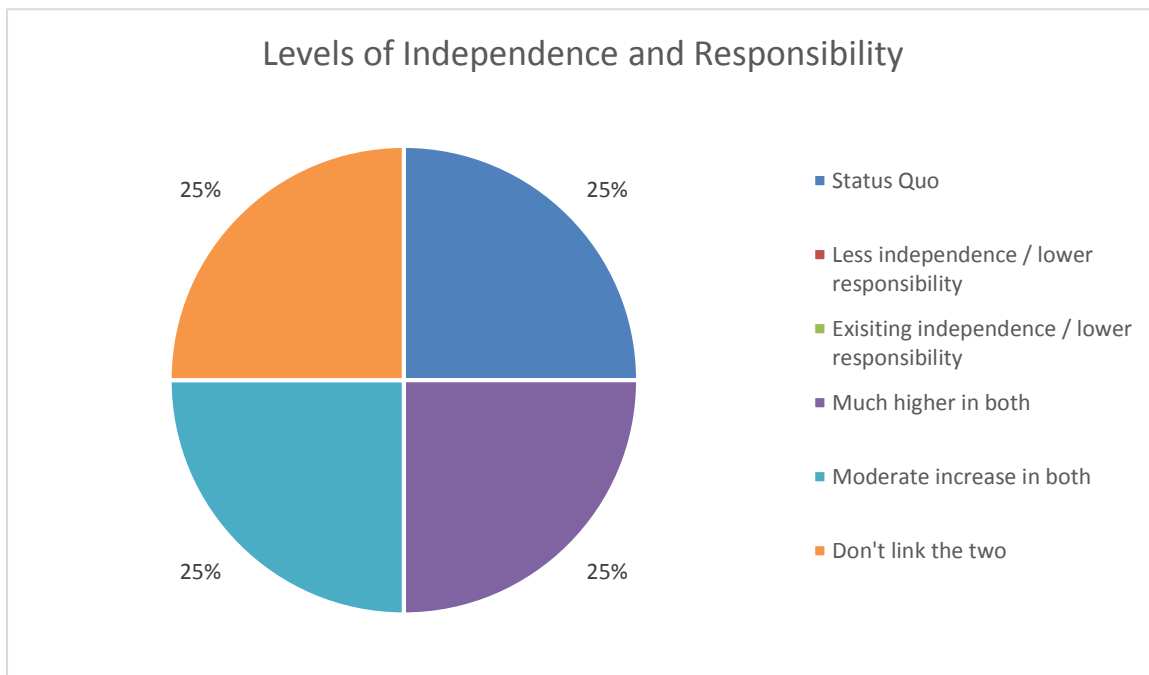
- None of the Danish LAGs were in favour of 'less independence/ lower responsibility' in contrast to 9% of the EU sample.

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 8

- There was no significant difference here.

Would Greater Independence Improve Achievement?

12%

50%

38%

■ Not at all ■ A little ■ Significantly ■ Very significantly
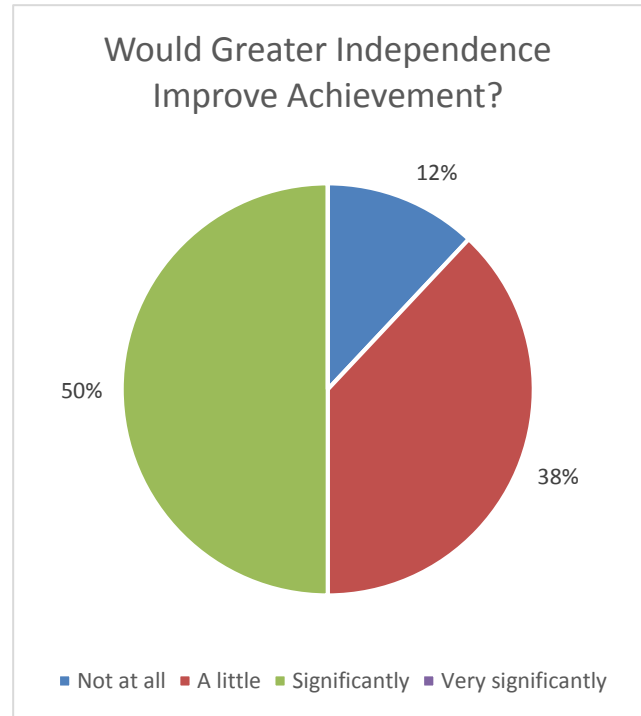
Question 30

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 8

- Half of the Danish respondents thought that a centralised support service would improve the achievements of the LAG 'a little'. This is a considerably larger proportion than at EU level (50% vs 27%).

- The proportion predicting 'significant' improvements was smaller than that of the EU sample (13% vs 28%).
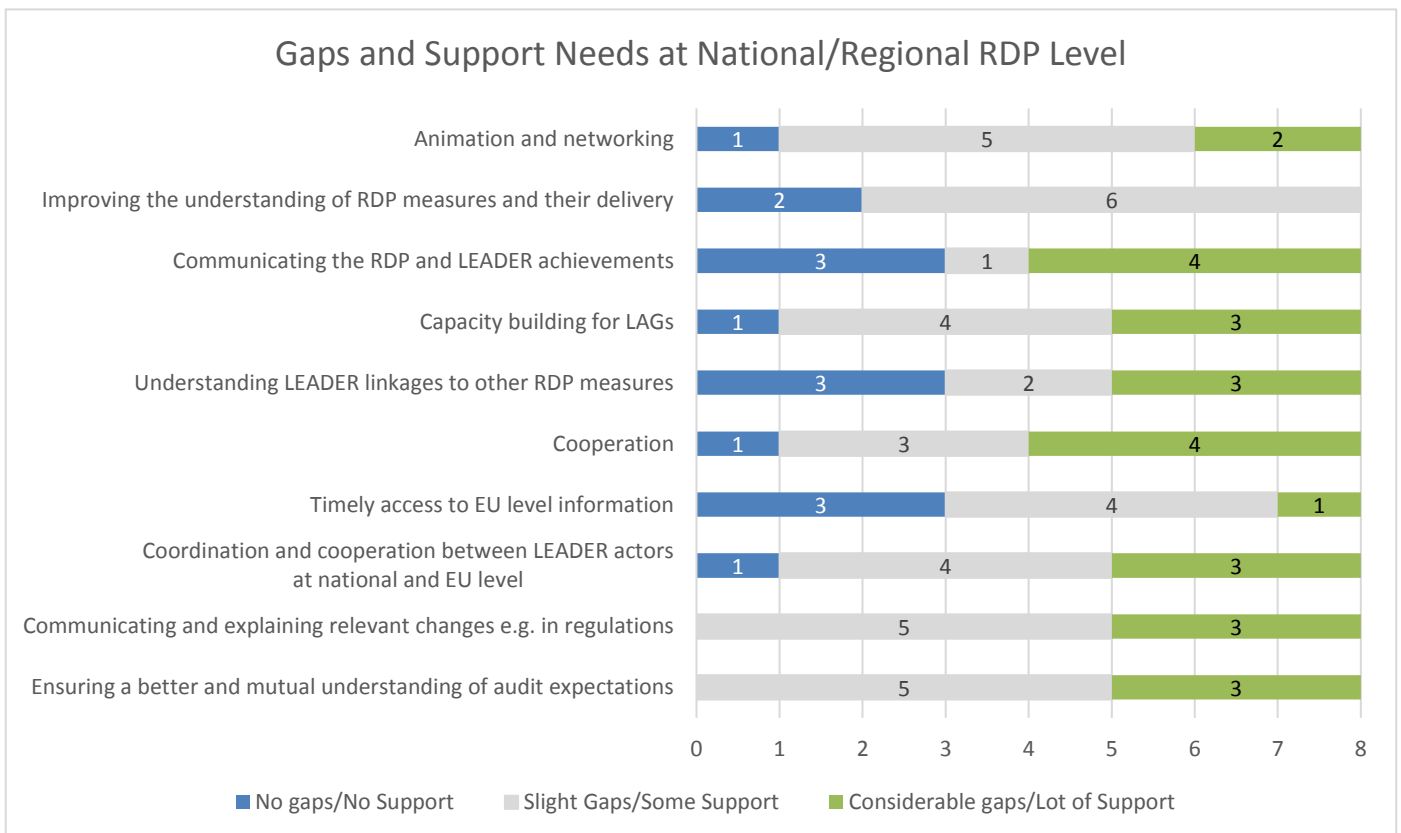
Would a Centralised Support Service Improve LAGs' Level of Achievement?

12%   25%

13%

50%

■ Not at all   ■ A little   ■ Significantly   ■ Very significantly
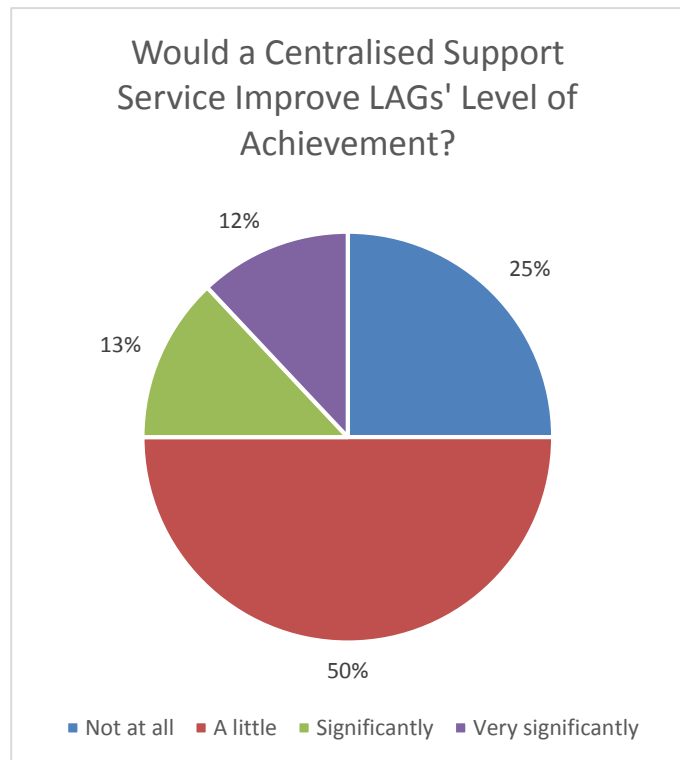
Question 31

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 8

Gaps and Support Needs at National/Regional RDP Level

Category	No gaps/No Support	Slight Gaps/Some Support	Considerable gaps/Lot of Support
Animation and networking	1	5	2
Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery	2	6	
Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements	3	1	4
Capacity building for LAGs	1	4	3
Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures	3	2	3
Cooperation	1	3	4
Timely access to EU level information	3	4	1
Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level	1	4	3
Communicating and explaining relevant changes e.g. in regulations		5	3
Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations		5	3

■ No gaps/No Support ■ Slight Gaps/Some Support ■ Considerable gaps/Lot of Support

- Proportionately more Danish respondents identified 'considerable gaps and support needs' regarding 'communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements' and in 'cooperation'.

- Support for animation and networking appears to be lower in the Danish sample than the EU.
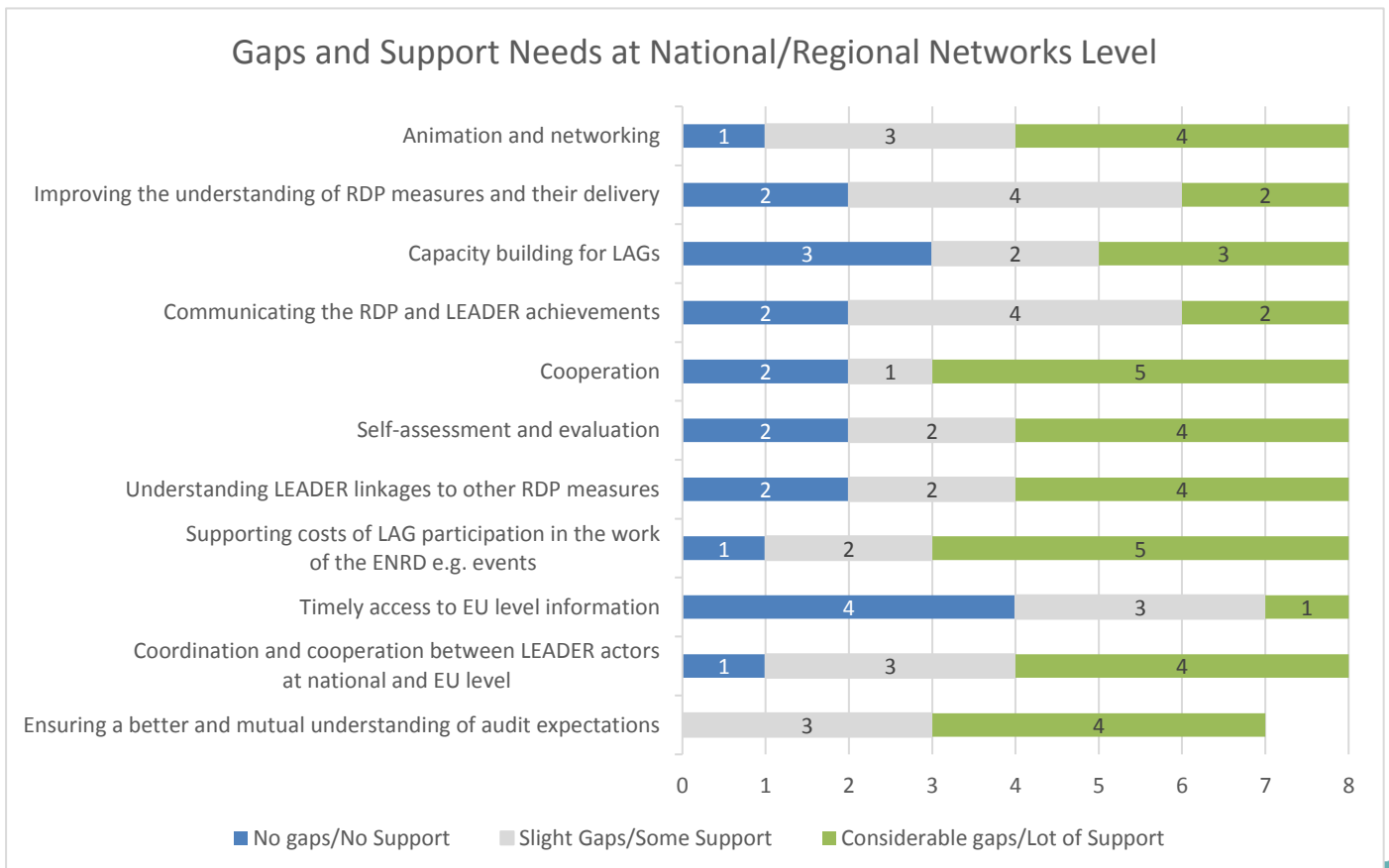
Question 32

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 8

Gaps and Support Needs at National/Regional Networks Level

	No gaps/No Support	Slight Gaps/Some Support	Considerable gaps/Lot of Support
Animation and networking	1	3	4
Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery	2	4	2
Capacity building for LAGs	3	2	3
Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements	2	4	2
Cooperation	2	1	5
Self-assessment and evaluation	2	2	4
Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures	2	2	4
Supporting costs of LAG participation in the work of the ENRD e.g. events	1	2	5
Timely access to EU level information	4	3	1
Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level	1	3	4
Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations		3	4

- Proportionately more Danish LAGs believed that there were 'no gaps and no support need' regarding the 'timely access to EU level information' than the EU sample.

- However, Danish respondents identified 'considerable gaps and lot of support need' than their European peers in areas such as 'supporting costs of LAG participation in the work of the ENRD', 'cooperation', and 'animation and networking'.
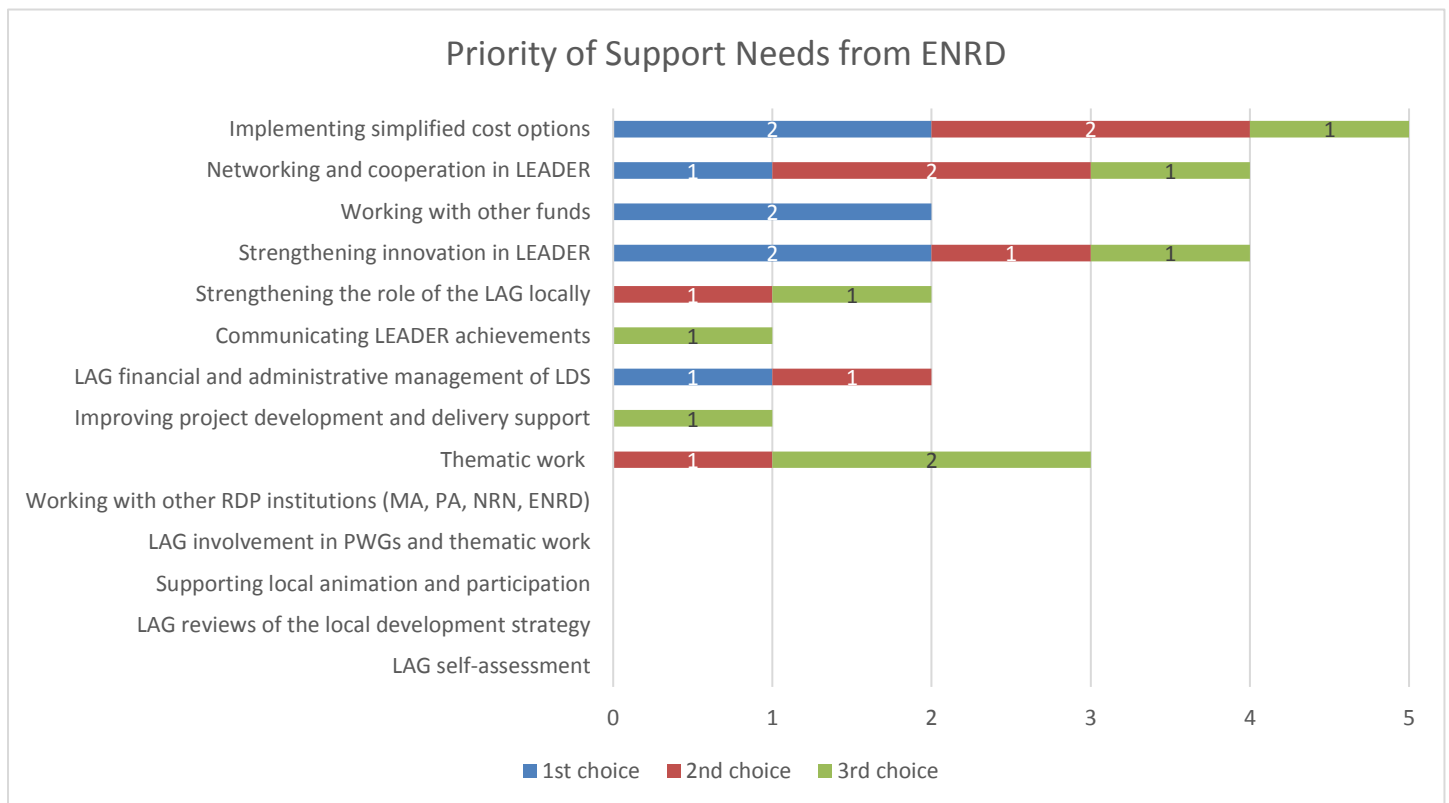
Question 33

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 8


Priority of Support Needs from ENRD

- The Danish responses largely followed the pattern of priorities identified by the EU sample.

- However, proportionately more Danish LAGs prioritised the support need from ENRD in 'thematic work'.

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 7
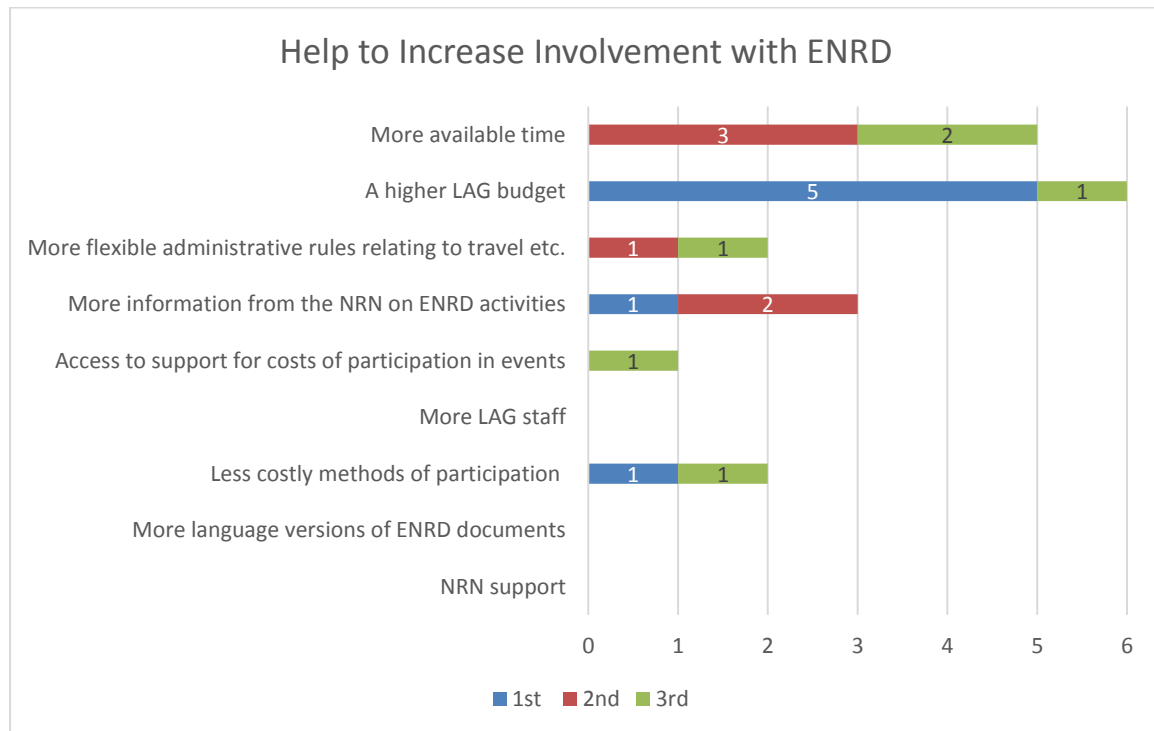
- The Danish responses were largely similar to those given by the EU sample. However, LAGs in Denmark allocated slightly more emphasis on 'a higher LAG budget' and 'more information from the NRN on ENRD activities' to increase involvement with ENRD.

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 8

Importance of Self-assessment of LDS to Improve LAGs' Operation
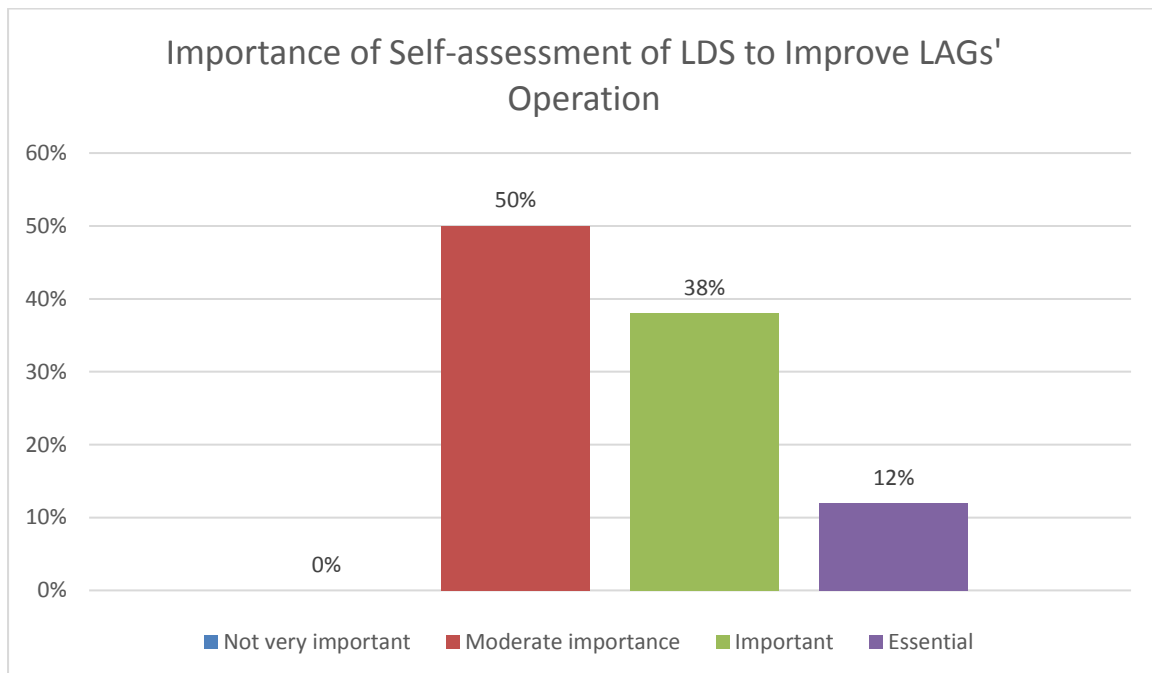
- A higher proportion of Danish respondents (50%) considered self-assessment to be of 'moderate importance' as opposed to 24% of the other European LAGs.

- Consequently, fewer Danish LAGs considered self-assessment as 'important or essential' in comparison to the majority in the EU sample (50% vs 71%).

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 8

Time Line - Launch of First Self-assessment

	50%	38%		12%	

Legend:
- Not applicable
- Already done
- By end of 2017
- It is an ongoing process
- First half of 2018
- Second half of 2018
- 2019 or later
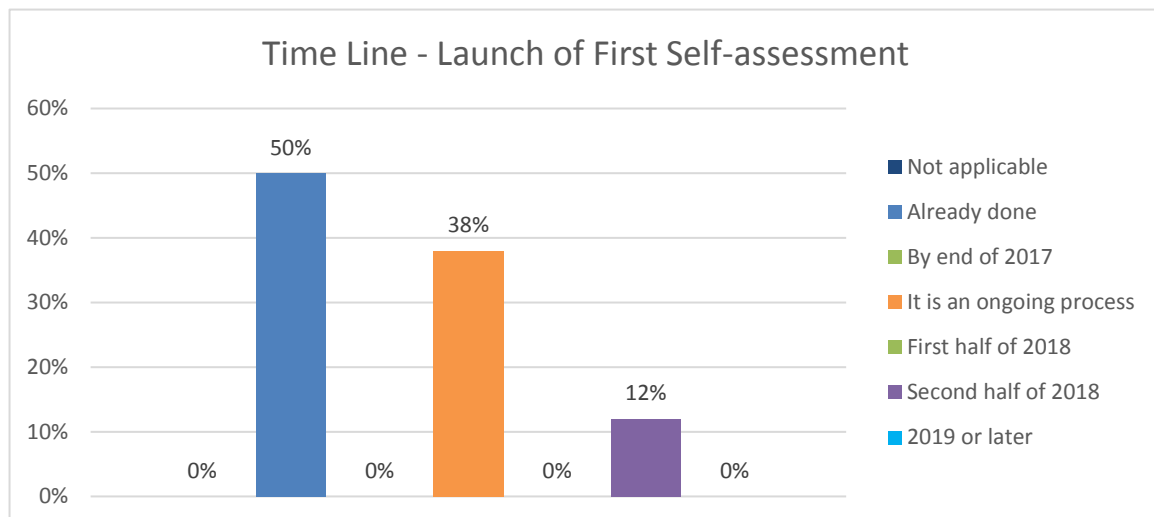
- A much larger proportion (50%) of Danish LAGs had already completed their first self-assessment, in comparison to 14% of the EU sample.

- Self-assessment was considered as an ongoing process by 38% of Danish LAGs, by comparison to 18% across the EU.

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 – 75%
- No – 25%

Total Number of Responses 8