



European Network for
Rural Development

LEADER LAG Survey 2017

Working Paper

Findings at Member State level

Member State: Estonia

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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

- Estonia (EE)
- 8 LAGs responded, representing 1.1% of total LAG responses
- 31% of EE LAGs responded to the survey

Total Number of Responses 8

Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- EE has one national programme.

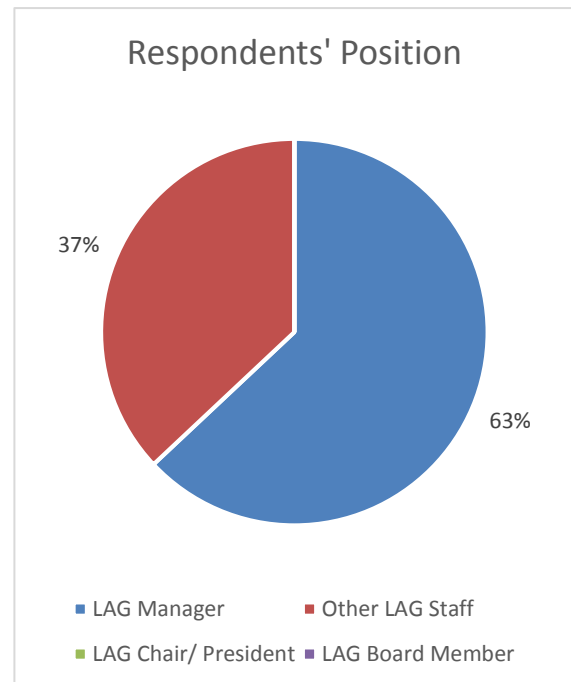
Total Number of Responses 8

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 8



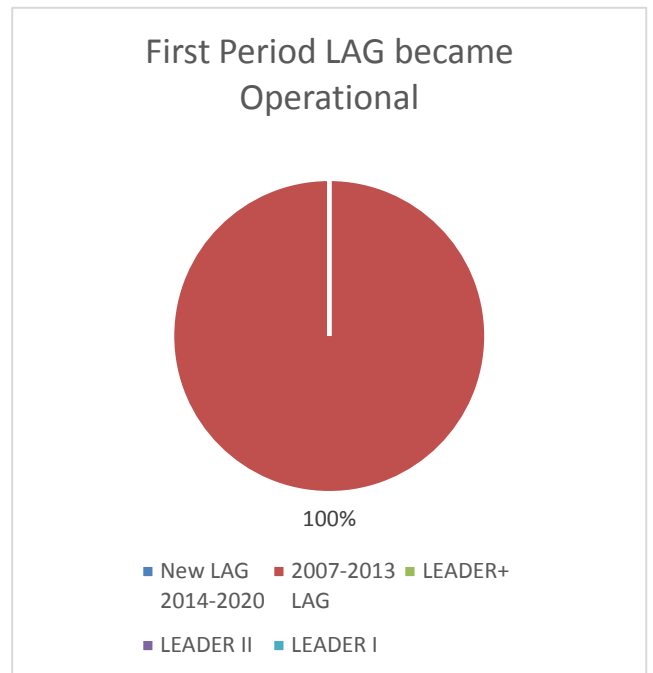
Question 7

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 8

- All responding LAGs from Estonia became operational in the programming period 2007-2013. In comparison, 34% of the EU sample originated from the same period.

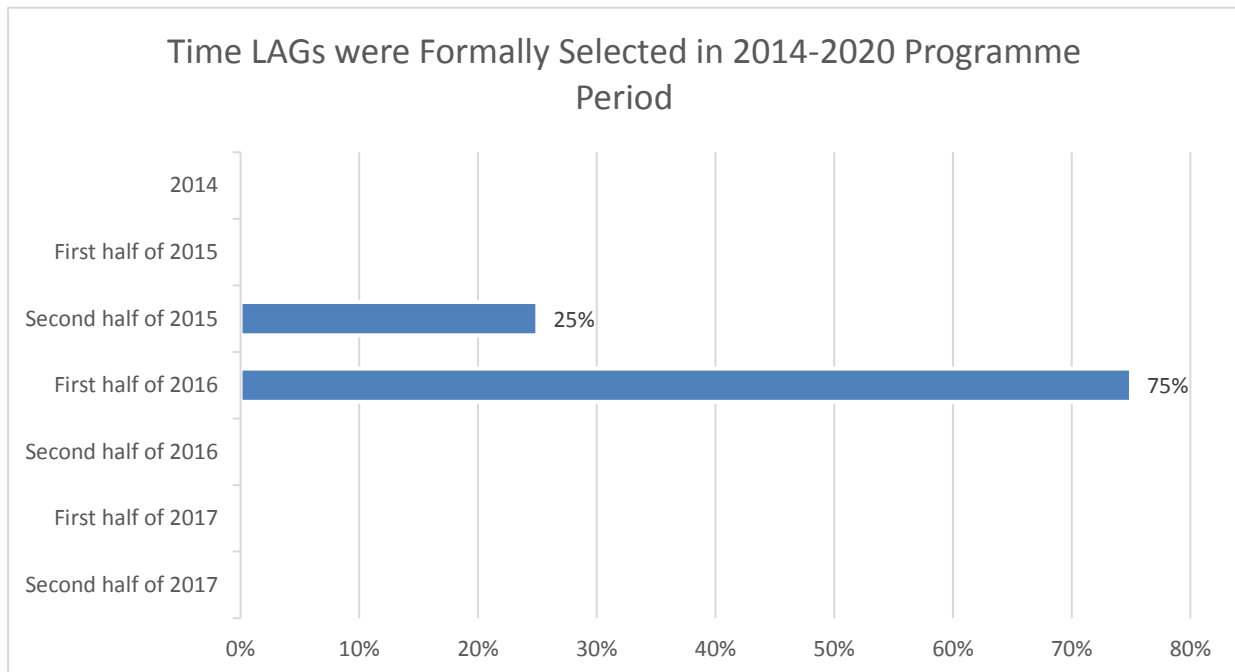


Question 8

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 8



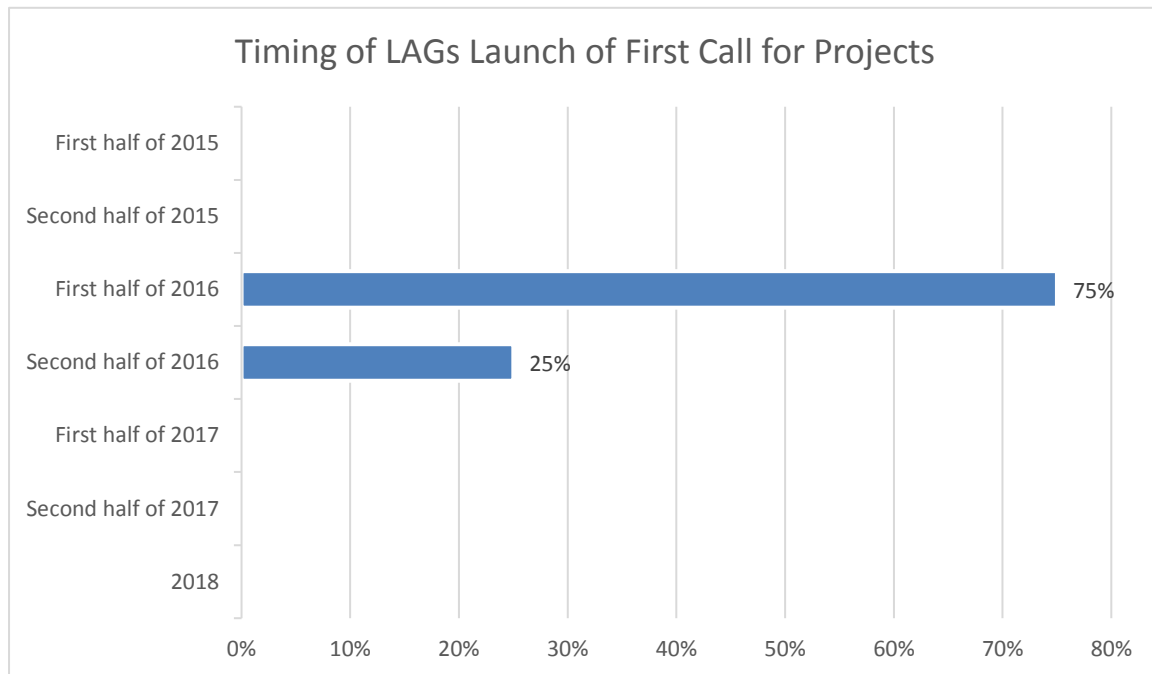
- Following the first 25% in 2015, the remaining 75% of Estonian LAGs were formally selected in the first half of 2016. By this time, 73% of the EU sample had also been formally selected.

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 8



- All Estonian LAGs (100%) had their first calls for projects launched by the end of 2016, in comparison 67% of the EU sample had accomplished this task at this time.

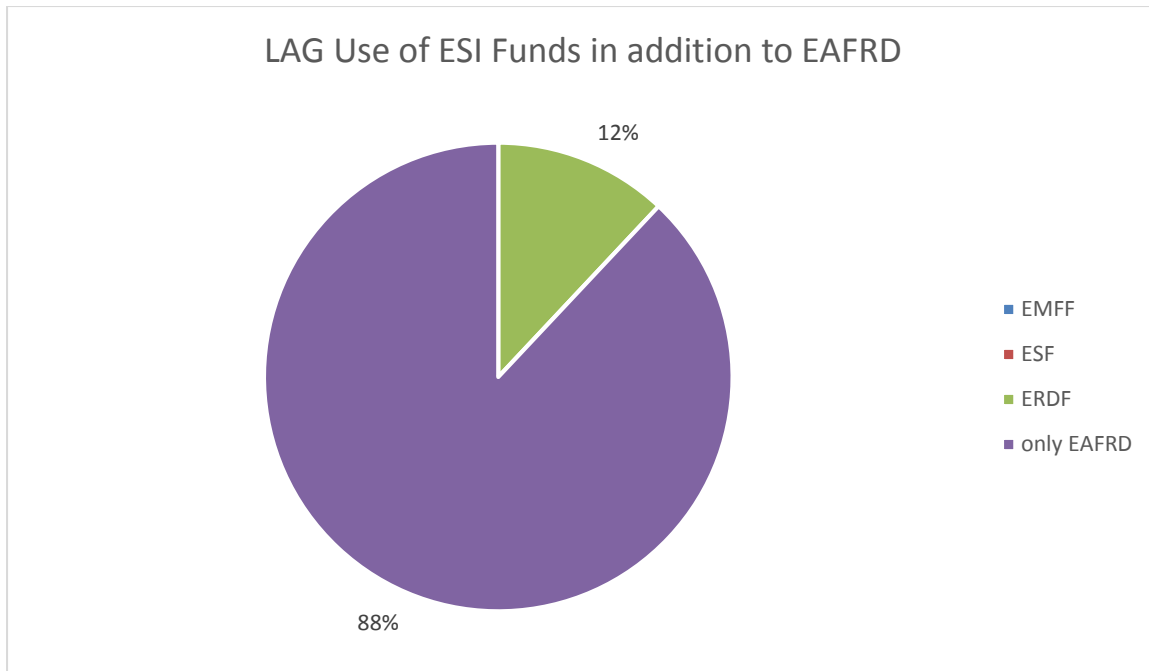
LAG Funding

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 8



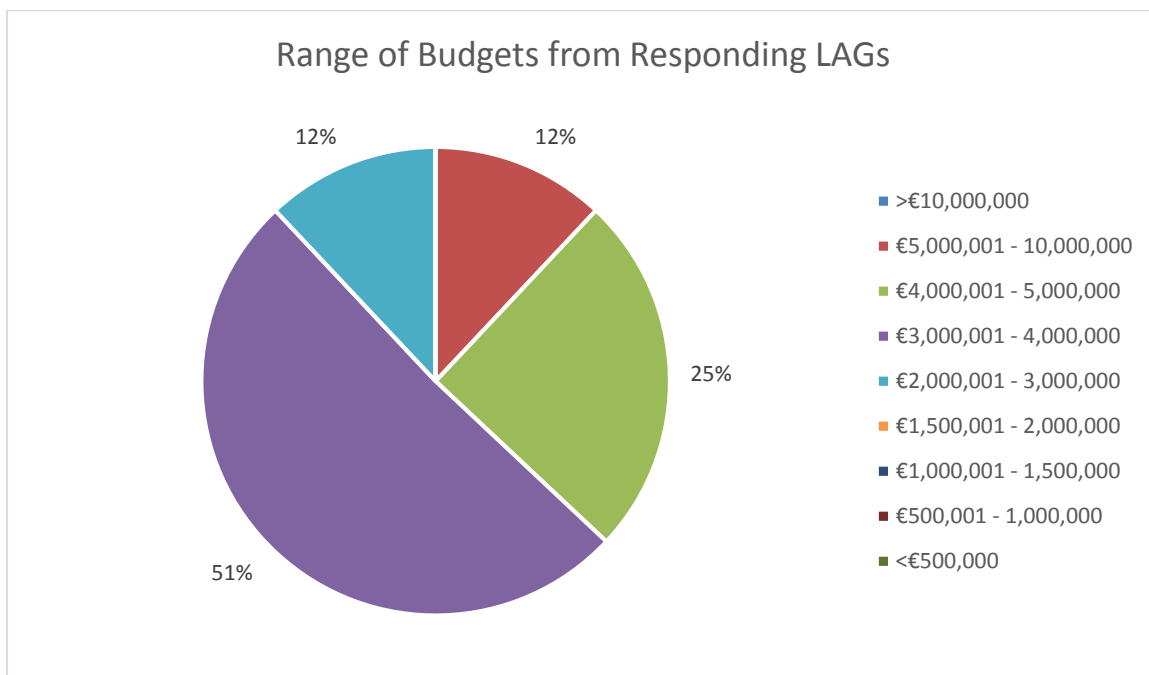
- A larger proportion of Estonian LAGs reported using only EAFRD (88%) than at EU level (67%).

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



- The responding Estonian LAGs indicated that their budget fell in the higher ranges of European budgets, 100% of Estonian LAGs had budgets over €2m vs 71% of EU LAGs responding.
- 51% of Estonian LAGs had a budget between €3m-€4m in comparison to 22% of the EU sample and 25% between €4m and €5m vs 14% of EU LAGs.

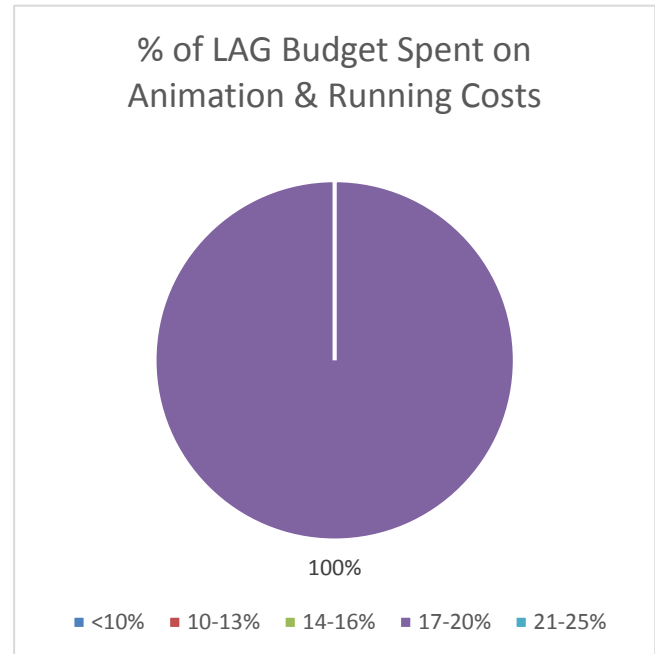
Question 12

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

- All Estonian respondents (100%) reported that their budget for animation and running costs was between 17-20%. In comparison, 30% of the EU sample reported this proportion of budget, with one third reporting smaller and one third larger budget allocations for this purpose.



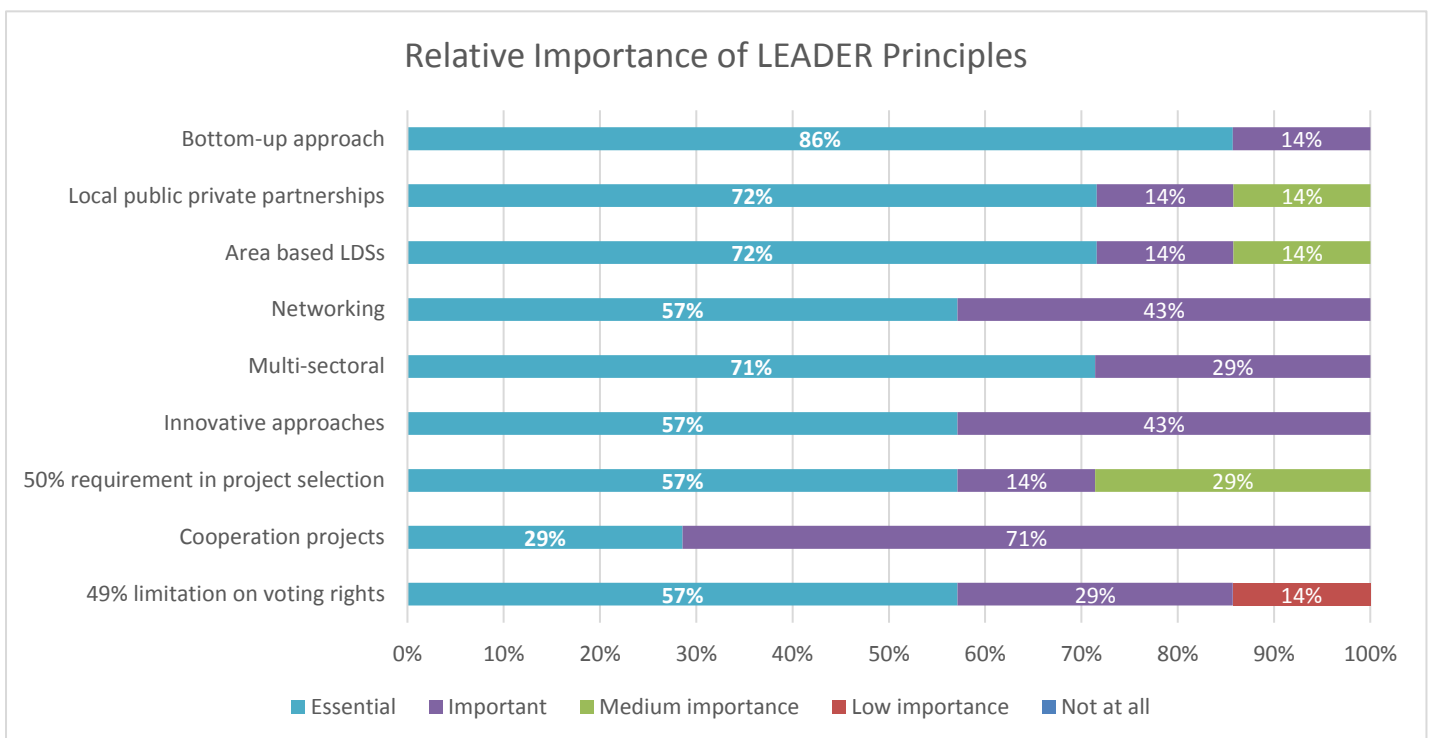
LEADER Principles

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 7



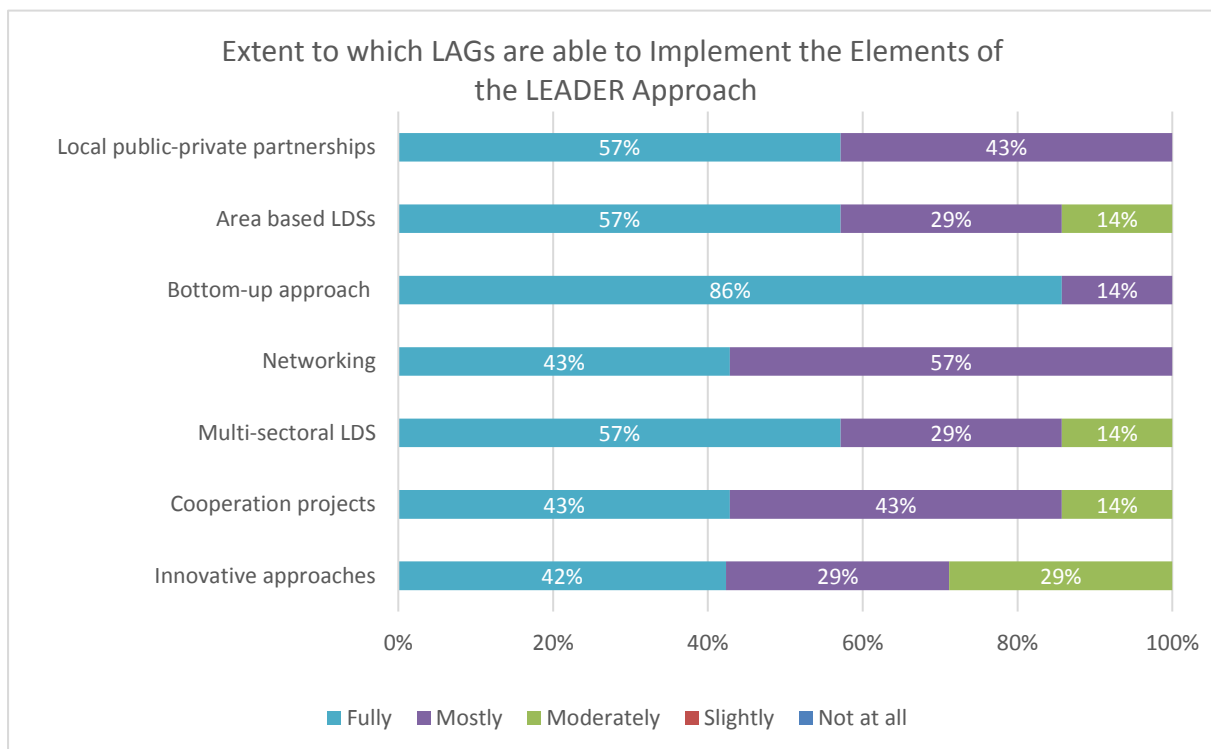
- In comparison to the EU sample, proportionately more Estonian LAGs assessed the majority of LEADER principles as 'essential', low importance and not at all rankings were negligible overall and compared to the wider sample.

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 7



- The Estonian LAGs were generally more positive in their responses compared to the EU sample. None of the Estonian respondents, for example, considered themselves to be either 'slightly' or 'not at all' able to implement any of the LEADER approaches.
- Proportionately more Estonian LAGs were able to implement the elements such as 'local public private partnerships', 'bottom up approach', and 'networking' (all being assessed as 'fully' or 'mostly' implementable) than in the EU sample.

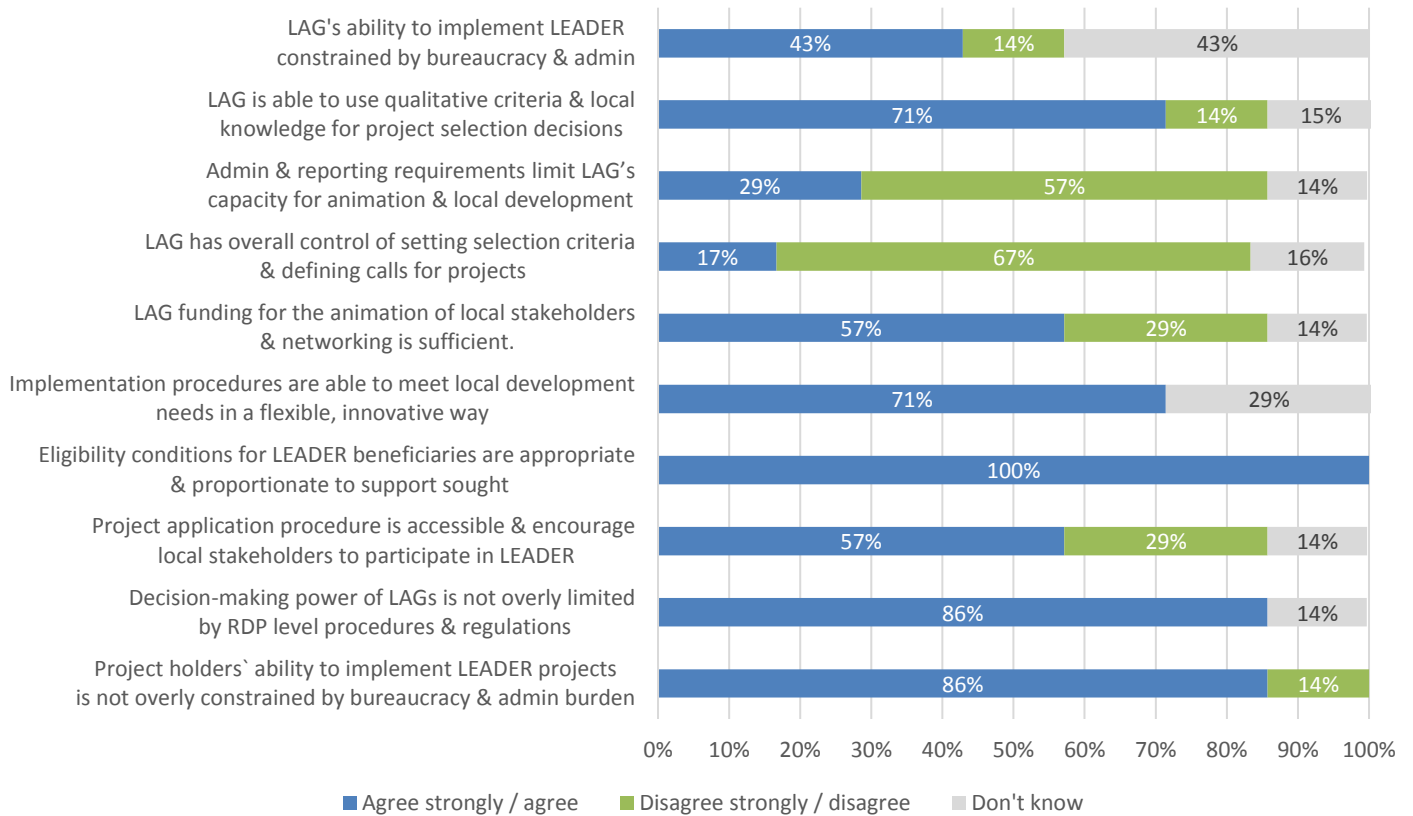
Question 15

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 7

Aspects of LEADER Implementation as seen by Local Action Groups



- The responses from the Estonian LAGs were overall much more positive than the overall sample but the areas of strongest agreement and disagreement varied. For example, considerably more Estonian than EU level respondents agreed with statements such as:
 - 'implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible and innovative way' (71% vs 51%)
 - 'decision making power of LAGs is not overly limited by RDP level procedures and regulations' (86% vs 29%)
 - 'project application procedure is accessible and encourage local stakeholders to participate' (57% vs 33%)
 - 'eligibility conditions for LEADER beneficiaries' (100% vs 39%)
- However, there was less agreement in Estonia than at EU level with regard to the 'admin and reporting requirements limiting LAG's capacity for animation and local development' (29% vs 69%) and the LAG has overall control of setting selection criteria and defining calls for projects.

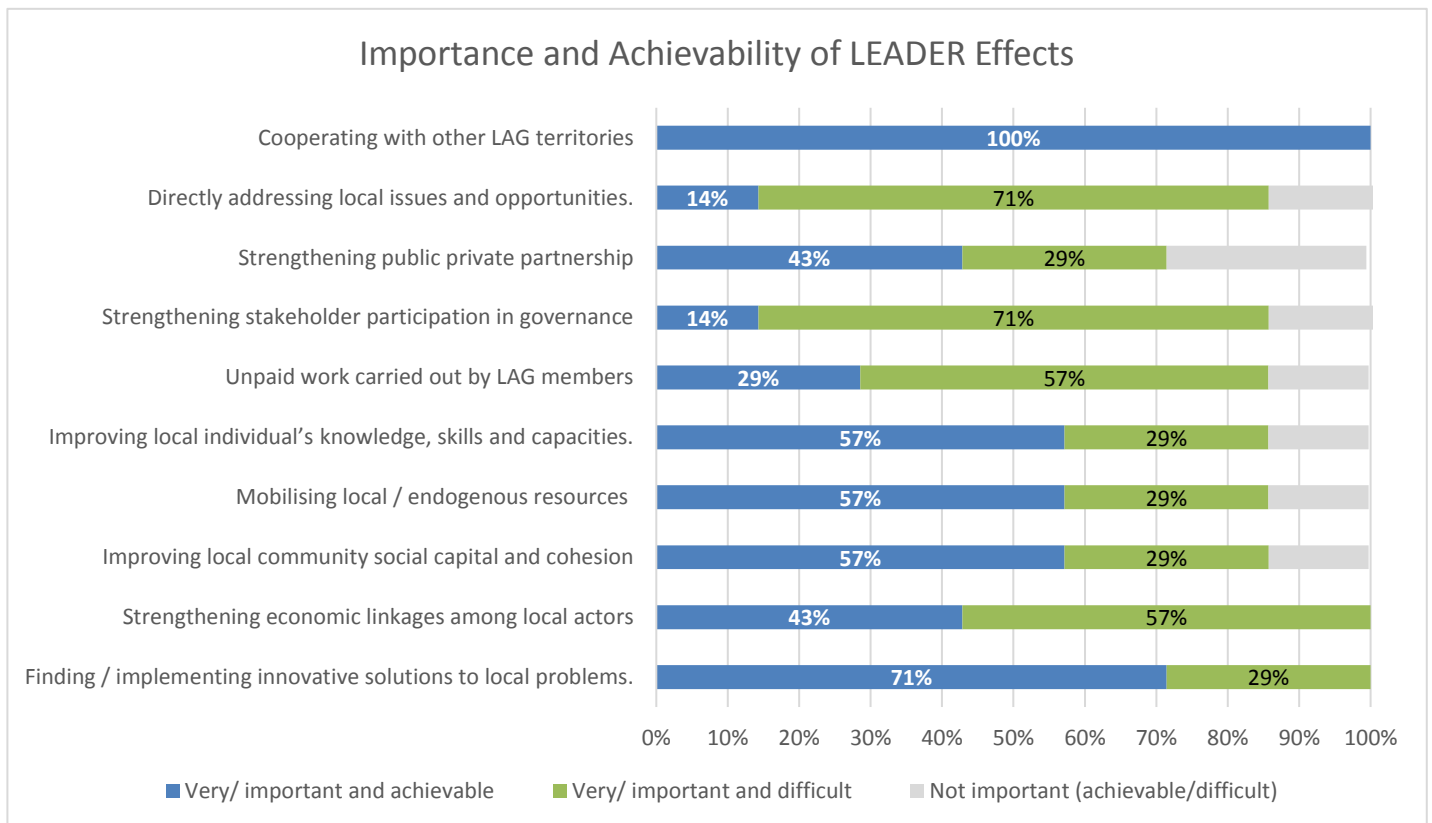
Question 16

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 7



- In comparison to the EU sample, proportionately more Estonian respondents (100%) were positive about the achievability of ‘cooperating with other LAG territories’, compared to 67% at EU level. Also with regard to ‘finding /implementing innovative solutions to local problems’, a much larger proportion (71%) of Estonian LAGs felt that this was achievable in comparison to 33% of the EU sample.
- However, regarding ‘directly addressing local issues and opportunities’ and ‘strengthening stakeholder participation in governance’ more Estonian than EU sample respondents felt that these important tasks were difficult to achieve (71% vs 36% and 71% vs 42%). Unpaid work by LAG members was also thought more difficult to achieve in Estonia than more widely (29% vs 55%).

LEADER Operation

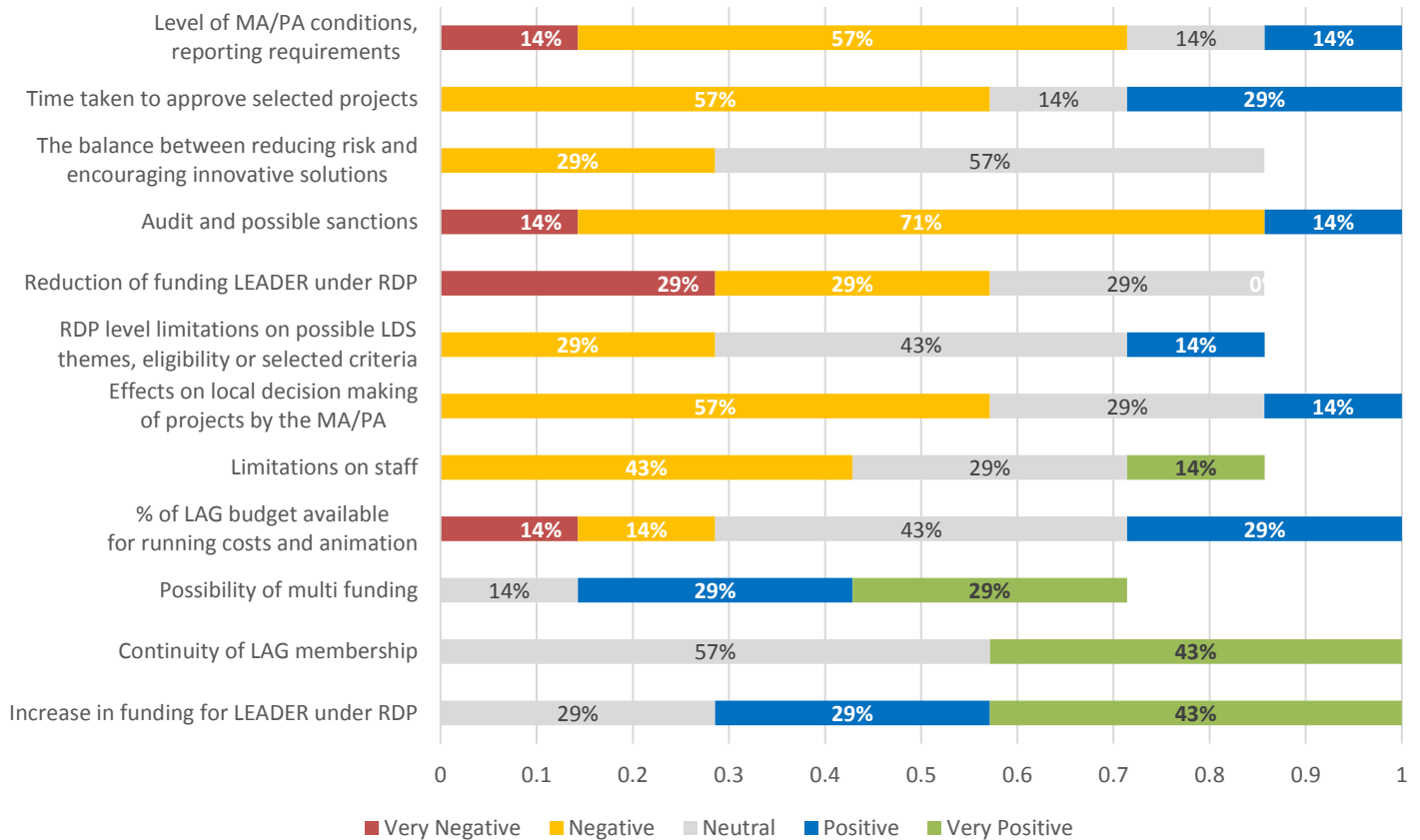
Question 17

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 7

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.

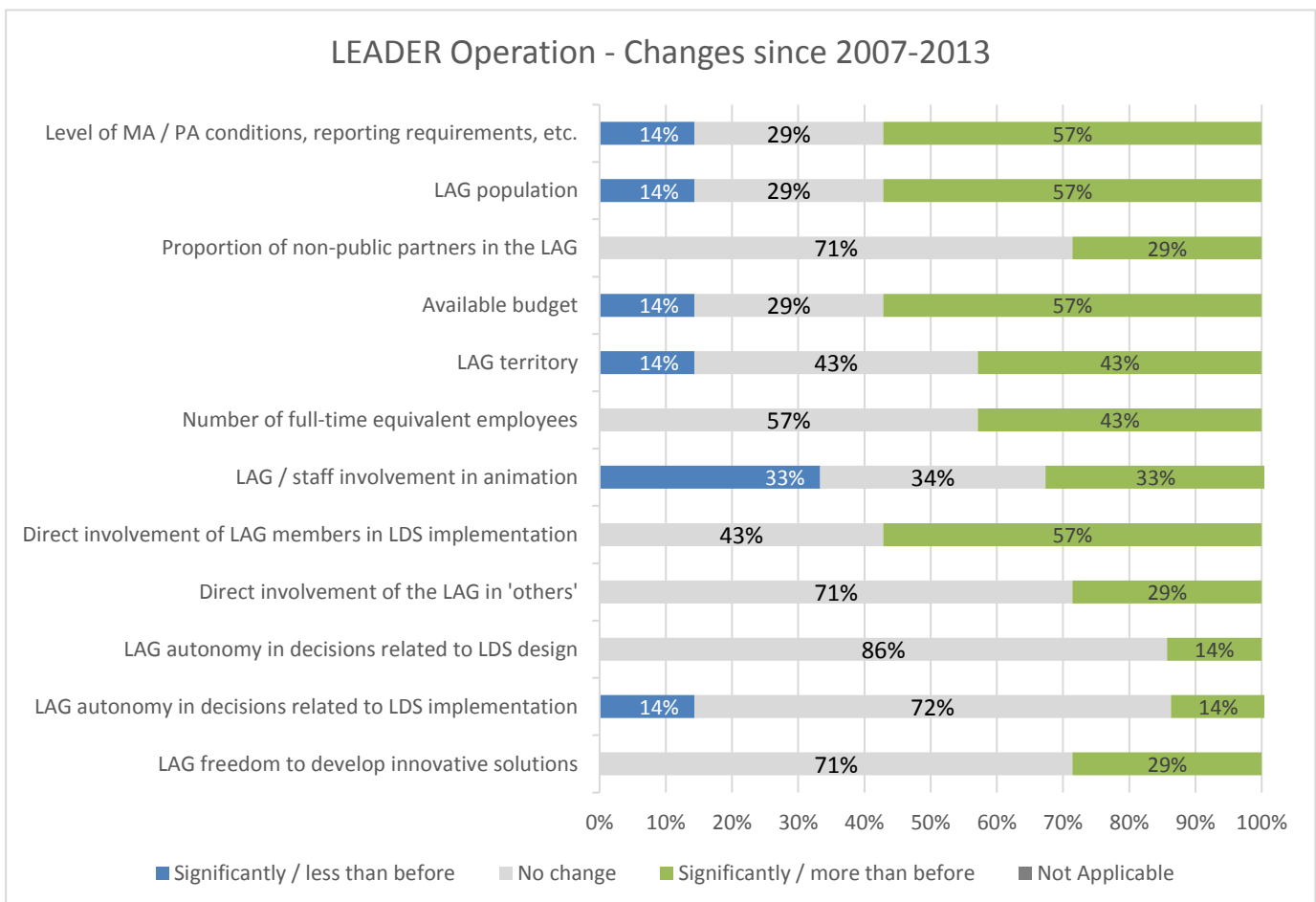
- A much smaller proportion of LAGs in Estonia than in the EU identified 'very negative' effects on LEADER implementation, 'negative' and 'very negative' effects combined scores were also generally lower. However, there was one topic where they felt markedly more 'negative' than their European peers: 'audit and possible sanctions' (85% vs 56% - considering both 'very negative' and 'negative' scores).
- Areas in which the Estonian respondents were more positive ('positive' and 'very positive') than their European counterparts included the following three areas:
 - 'Increase in funding for LEADER under RDP' (72% vs 46%); and
 - 'Possibility of multi-funding' (58% vs 37%).
- In a number of other areas, the responding Estonian LAGs were more neutral than the EU average, including 'RDP level limitations on possible LDS themes', 'time taken to approve projects' and 'Percentage of LAG budget for running costs and animation'.

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 7



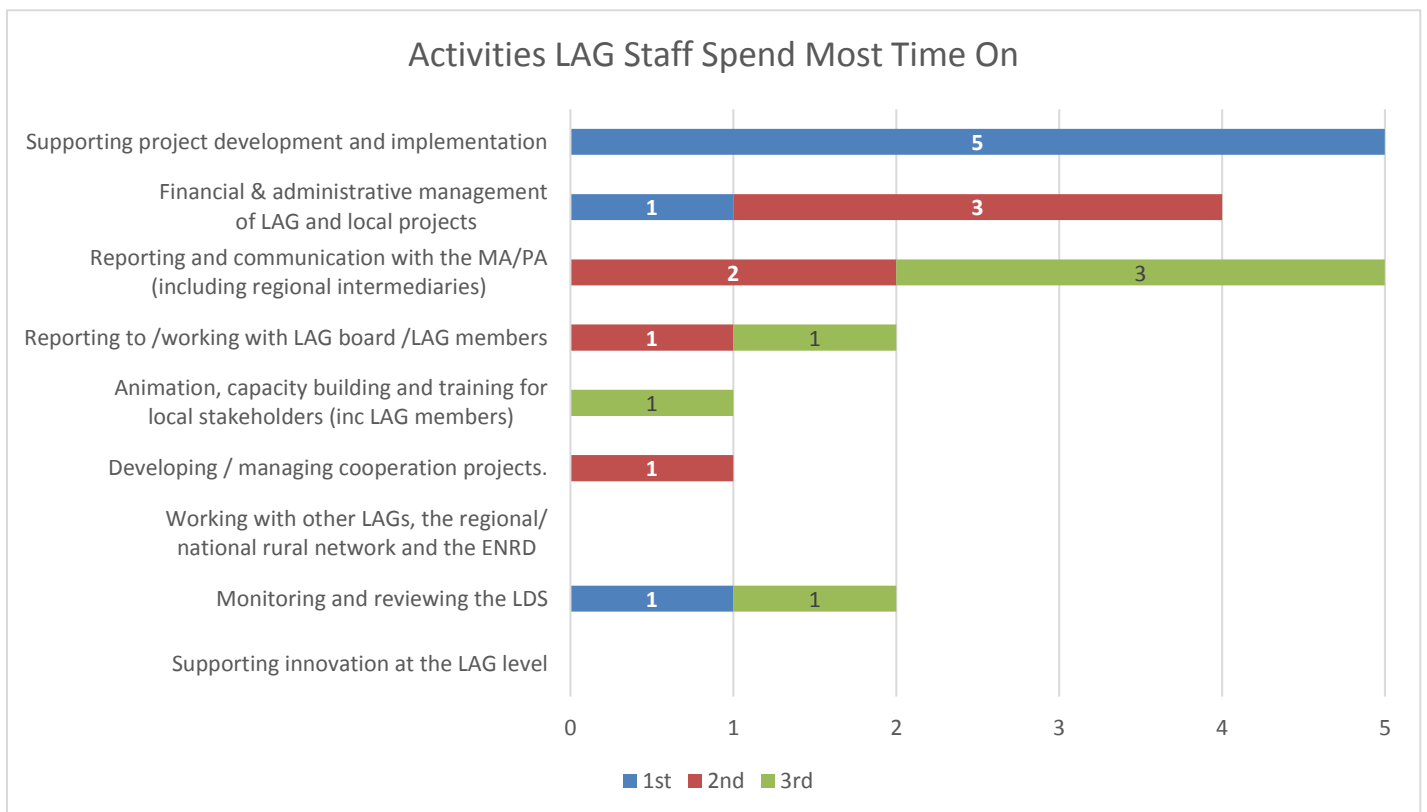
- In comparison to the EU sample, a significantly greater proportion of Estonian respondents experienced 'no change' in a majority of these areas of operation, including:
 - LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions (71% vs 34% of EU sample);
 - LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS implementation (72% vs 36% of EU sample);
 - LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS design (86% vs 44% of EU sample);
 - Direct LAG members involvement in LDS implementation (57% vs 26%); and
 - Direct involvement of the LAG in other developments (71% vs 45% of EU sample).
- At the same time, proportionately more Estonian LAGs experienced increases in LAG population (57% vs 34%), LAG territory (43% vs 27%) and available budget (57% vs 30%) than their EU peers. For 29% there had been an increase in freedom to develop innovative solutions vs 14% of the EU sample.
- Significantly less/less 'LAG / staff involvement in animation' was experienced more by Estonian than other European LAGs (33% vs 18%).

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 7



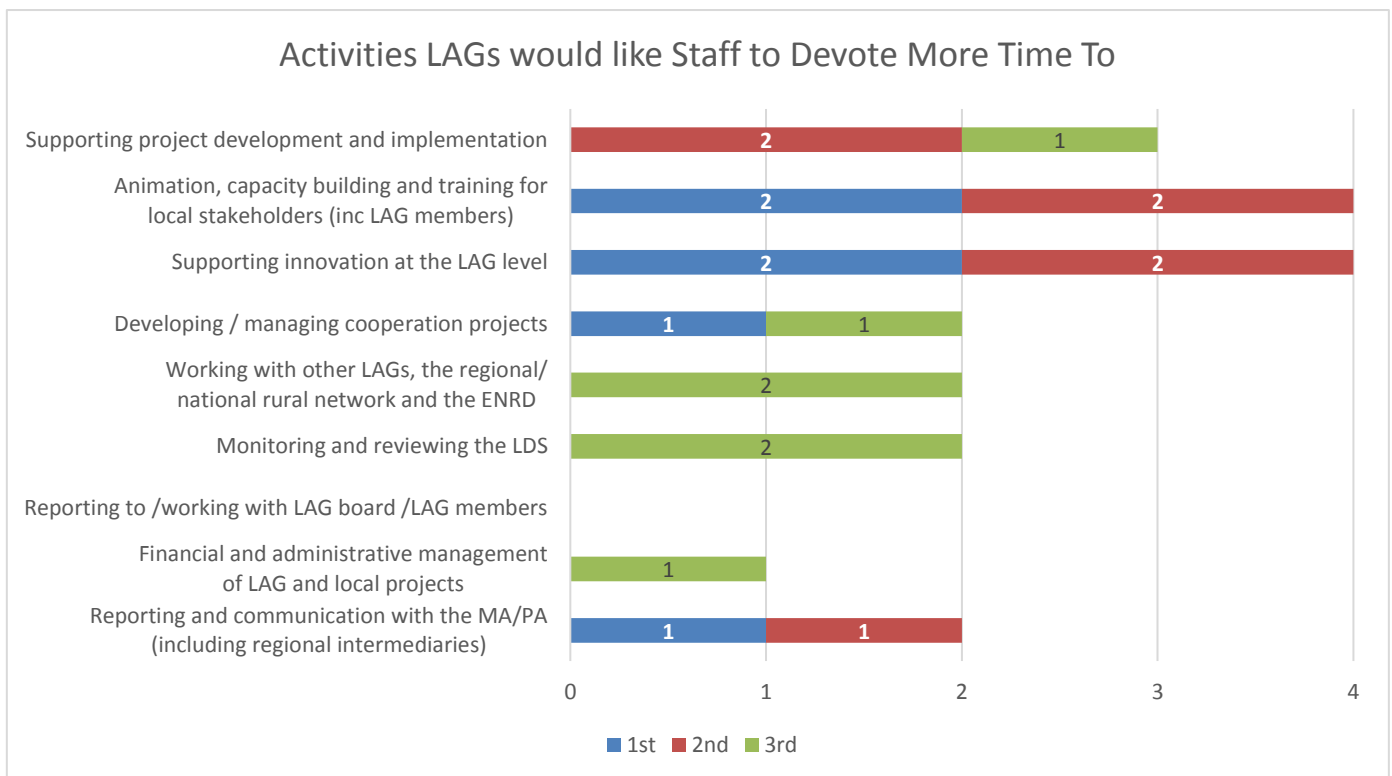
- The responses of the Estonian LAGs follow the pattern of the EU sample. Slight differences relate to a higher ranking of time spent on 'supporting project development and implementation', which received highest ranking by most respondents.

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 7



- There were no major differences between the responses of the Estonian LAGs and the wider EU sample. On a small scale, more Estonian respondents than European preferred their staff to devote more time to 'reporting and communication with the MA/PA' and slightly less priority was given to 'supporting project development and implementation'.

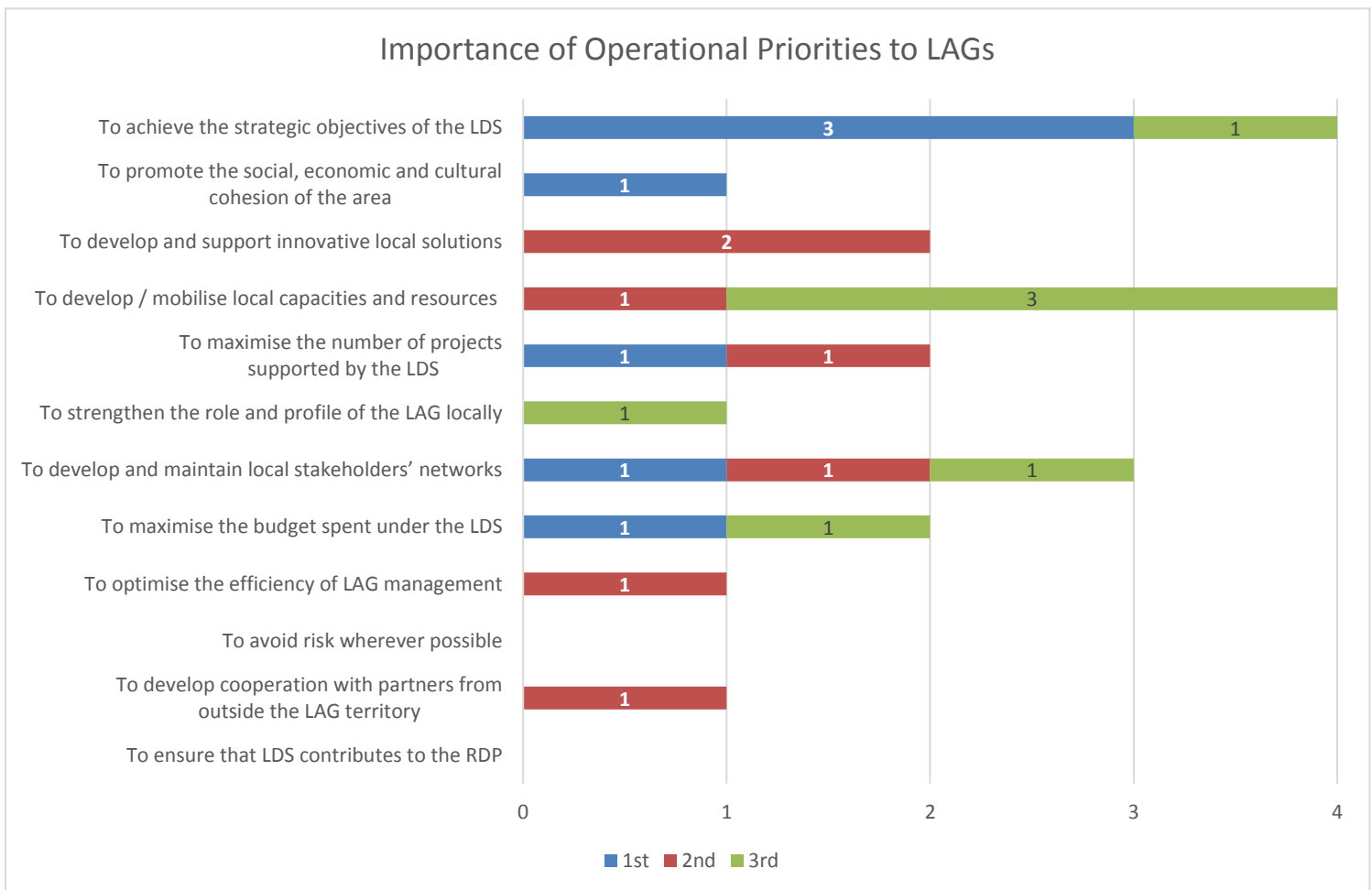
Question 21

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 7

Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs



- The responding LAGs from Estonia ranked the operational priorities in a similar manner to the LAGs of the EU sample. Minor differences include the relatively higher importance of ‘developing and maintaining local stakeholders’ networks’ and ‘developing / mobilising local capacities and resources’.
- A further minor difference exists in relation to ‘promoting the social, economic and cultural cohesion of the area’ where Estonian respondents did not apply as high levels of priority as their EU counterparts.
- None of the Estonian LAGs prioritised avoiding risk or ensuring that the LDS contributes to the RDP.

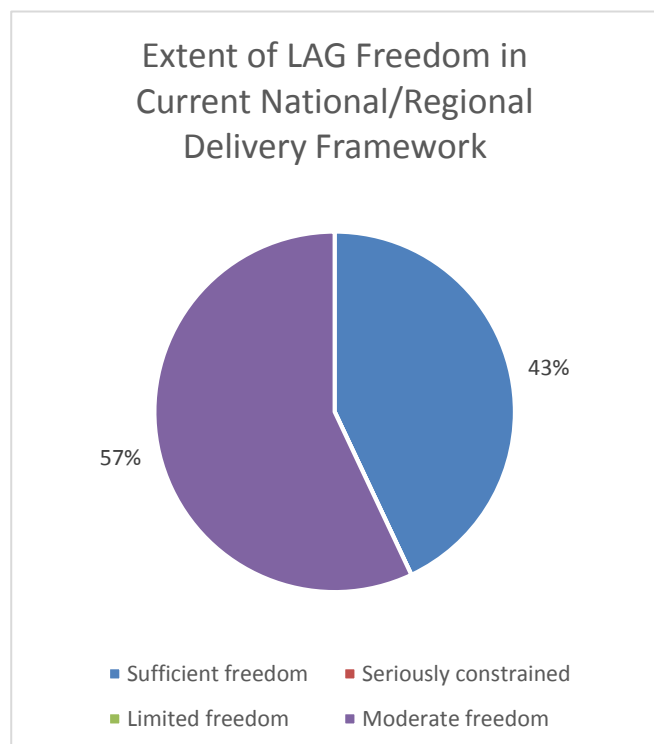
Question 22

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 7

- In comparison to the European LAGs, none of the Estonian respondents felt that they had limited freedom or felt seriously constrained (0% vs 38%).
- In contrast, a higher proportion of the Estonian sample thought that they were enjoying a 'moderate freedom' (57%) and 'sufficient freedom' (43%) compared to the EU sample (45% and 17% respectively).

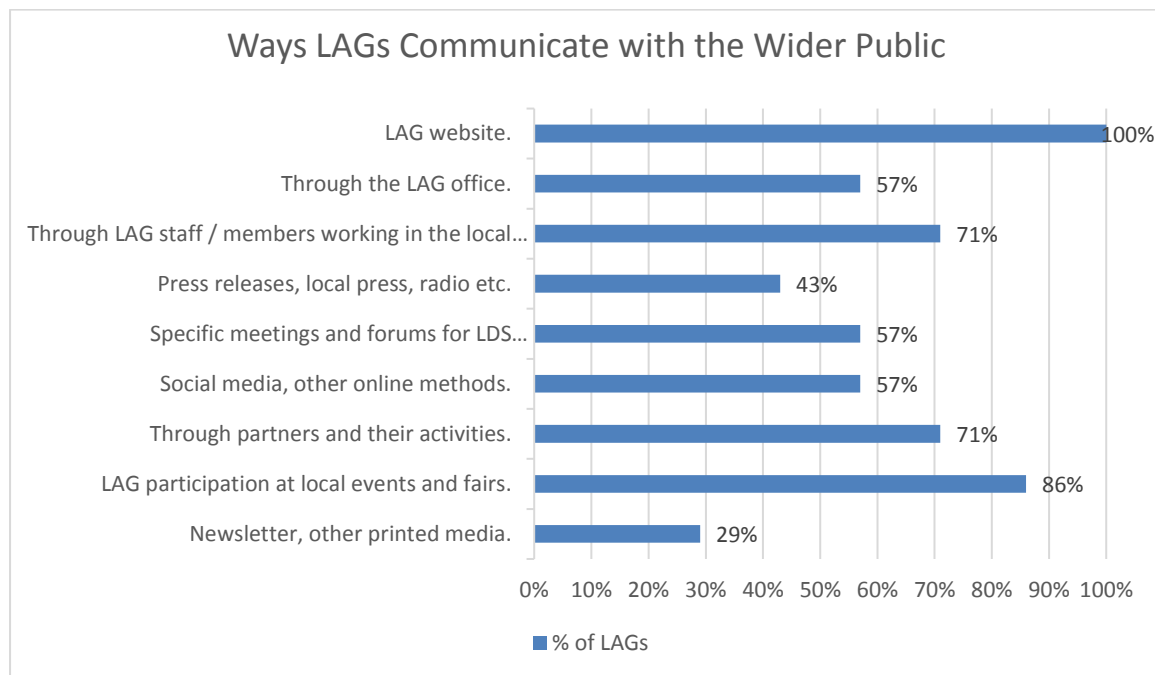


Question 23

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 7



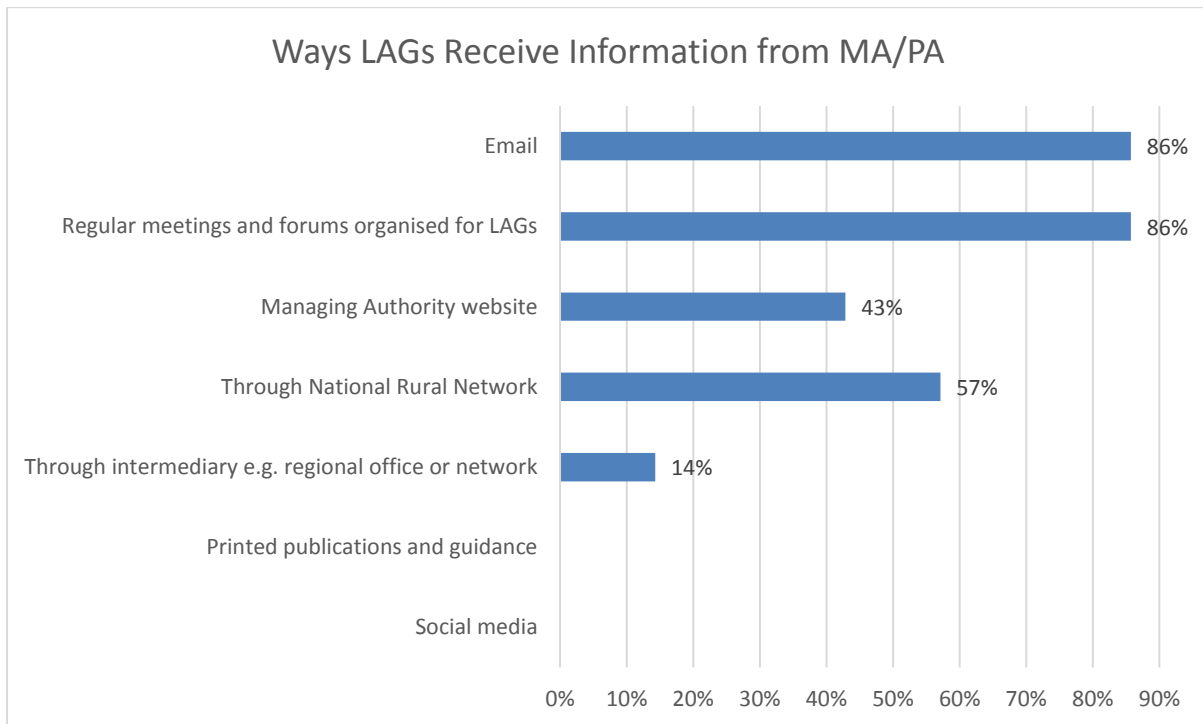
- In comparison to the EU sample, the responding LAGs in Estonia communicate much more through 'LAG participation at local events and fairs' (86% vs 52%) and 'through partners and their activities' (71% vs 54%).
- Estonian LAGs seem to communicate much less through 'press releases, local press, radio etc.' than their European peers (44% vs 65%).

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 7



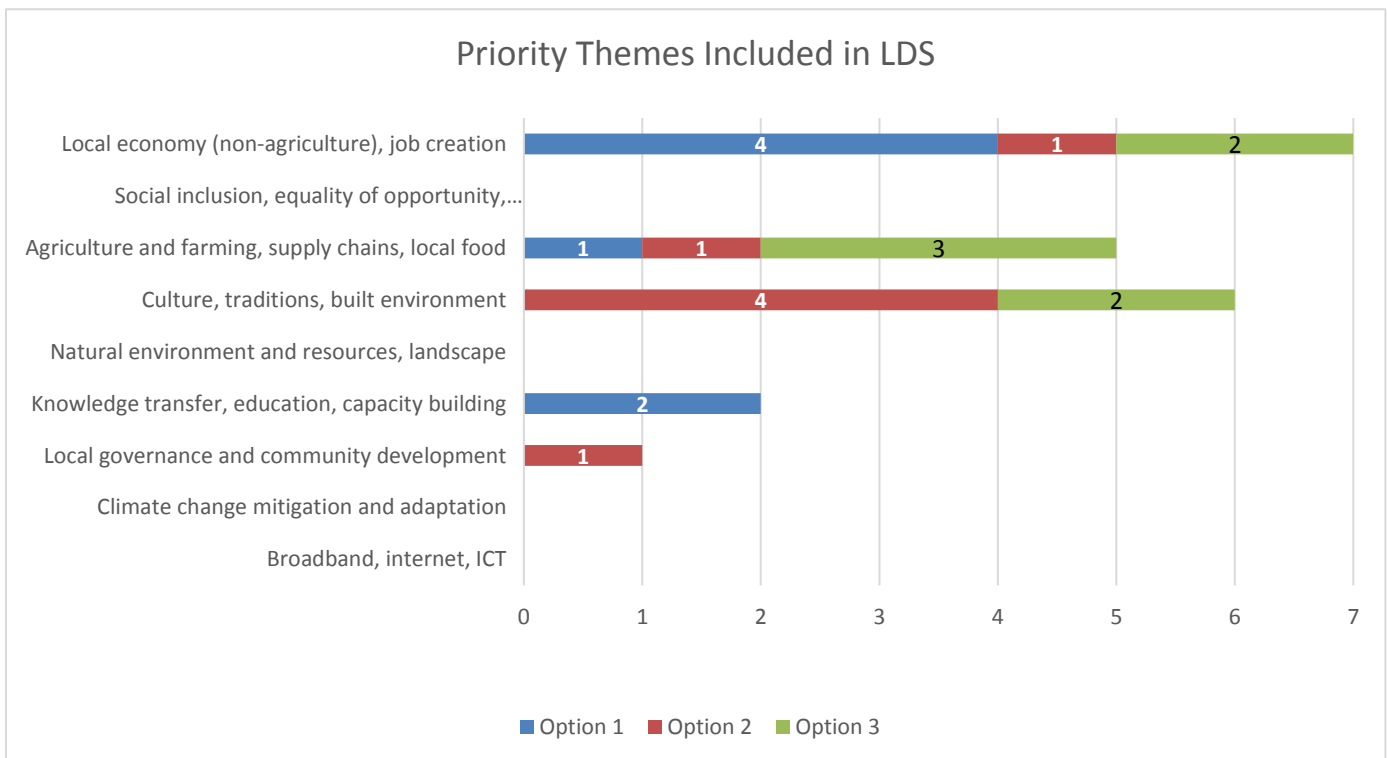
- The Estonian responses were largely similar to those of the EU sample, however, none of the responding LAGs indicated to receive information 'through printed publications and guidance', while 22% of the EU sample stated receiving information in this form.
- A significantly larger proportion of Estonian respondents received information 'through the National Rural Network' than in the EU sample (57% vs 31%).

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 7



- The Estonian responses differed noticeably in some areas from those of the European respondents. For example, 'social inclusion, equality of opportunity' was the second most frequently included priority theme in LDS across the wider sample but did not feature in Estonian LDS'. Equally, the theme 'natural environment and resources, landscape' was not identified by Estonian respondents, yet was identified as the fifth most included priority theme in the EU sample.

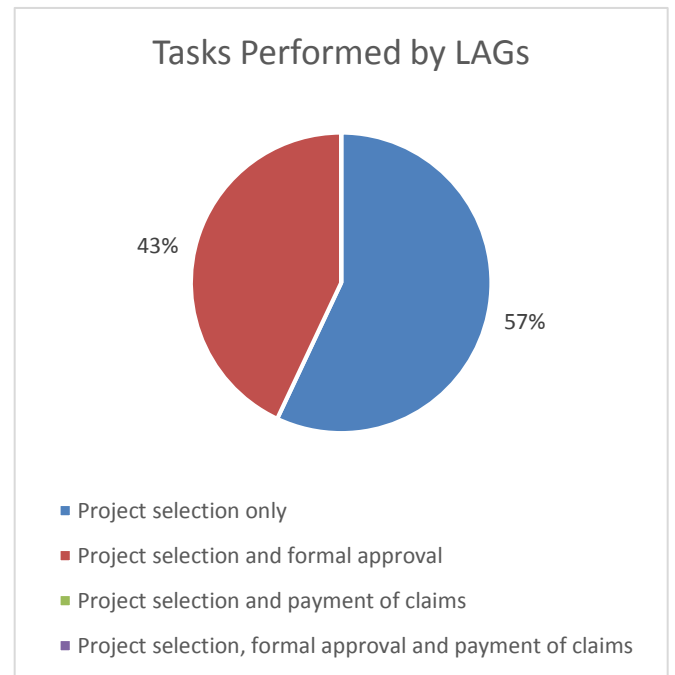
Question 26

*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 7

- A larger proportion of Estonian respondents report that their LAG was responsible for project selection and formal approval (43%) in comparison to 31% LAGs across Europe.
- The proportion of Estonian LAGs carrying out project selection only is also higher than in the EU sample (57% vs 48%).
- None of the Estonian LAGs indicated any responsibility for the payment of claims, whereas at EU level 21% of LAGs reported this responsibility.



LEADER Improvements

Question 27

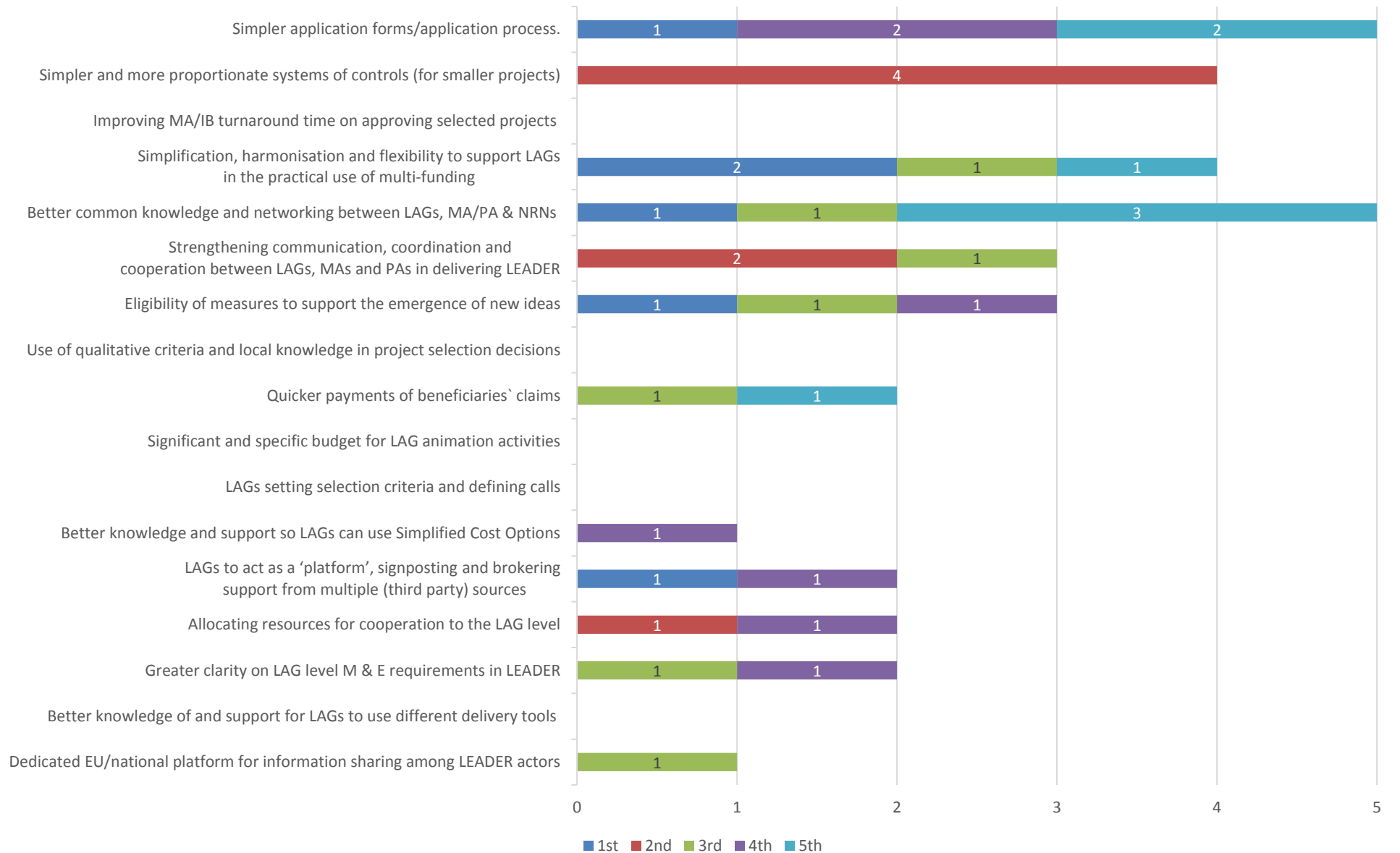
What is most important to address in helping LAGs to be effective in implementing LEADER now? Please select and rank your top five priorities from the following items in order of their importance in (where 1= highest importance and 5 = 5th most important)

- 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 7

- The responses of the Estonian LAGs showed a number of small differences to the EU sample.
- No priority was given by the Estonian respondents to any improvements concerning 'MA/IB turnaround time on approving selected projects' although this was the second most rated area of requested changes in the EU sample. This was also the case for the 'use of qualitative criteria and local knowledge in project selection decisions', 'budget for LAG animation activities', 'LAG setting selection criteria and defining calls' and 'support for LAGs use of different delivery tools'..

Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now

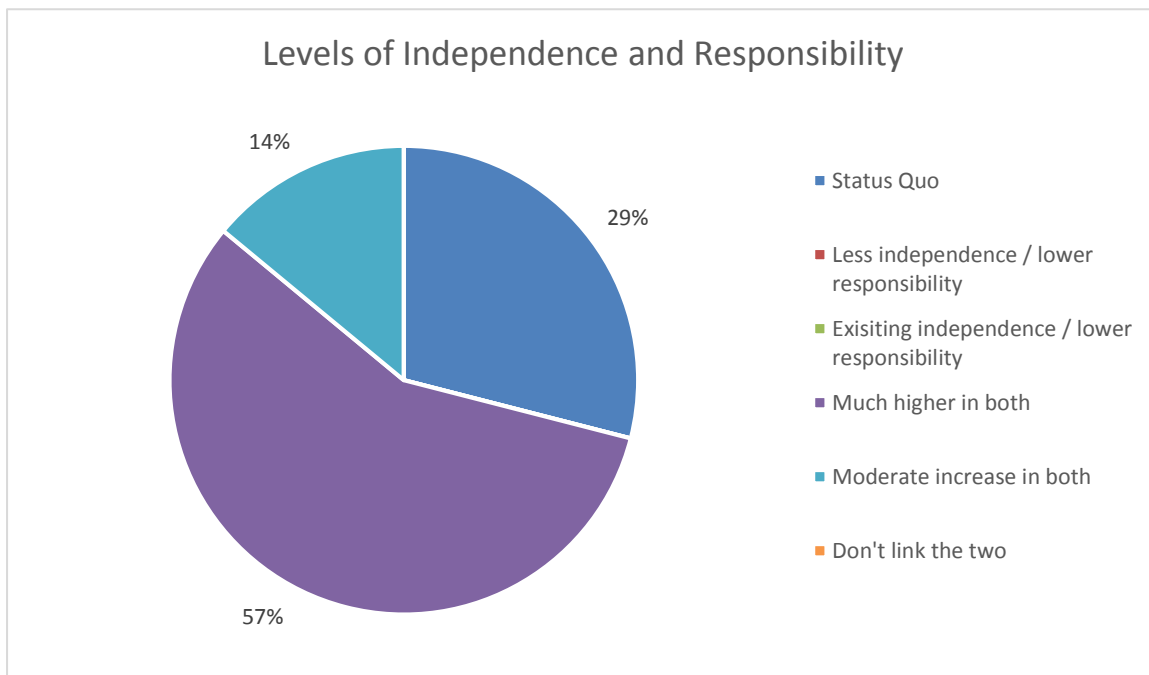


Question 28:

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 – 7



- There was a higher percentage of Estonian LAGs that desired 'much higher independence and responsibility' than in the EU sample (57% vs 19%). A lower proportion of Estonian respondents suggested a 'moderate increase in both' than in the EU sample (14% vs 28%).
- None of the responding LAGs in Estonia (0%) were in favour of reducing independence or lowering responsibility in contrast to 9% of the EU sample.

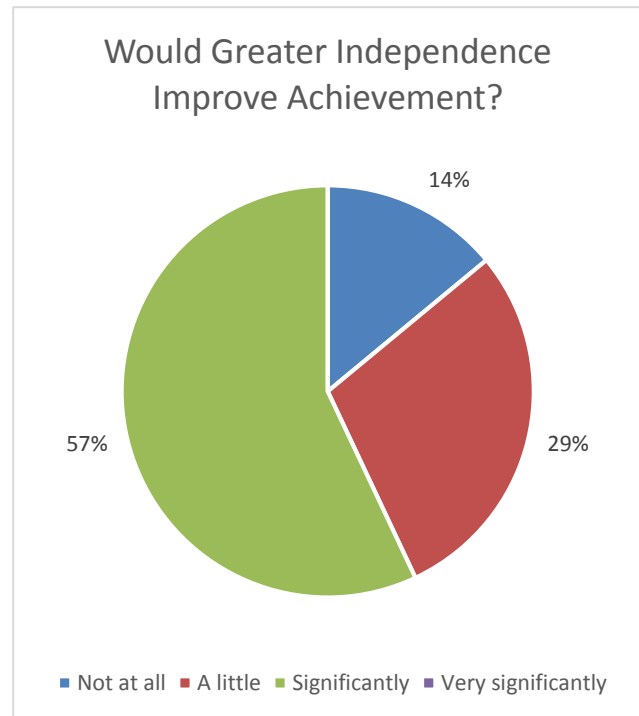
Question 29

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 7

- The Estonian responses were similar to those of the EU sample, although more LAGs in Estonia felt that greater independence would improve LAG's achievement 'significantly' (57% vs 42%). At the same time, no respondent in Estonia believed that this would lead to 'very significant' improvement compared to 12% of the wider sample.

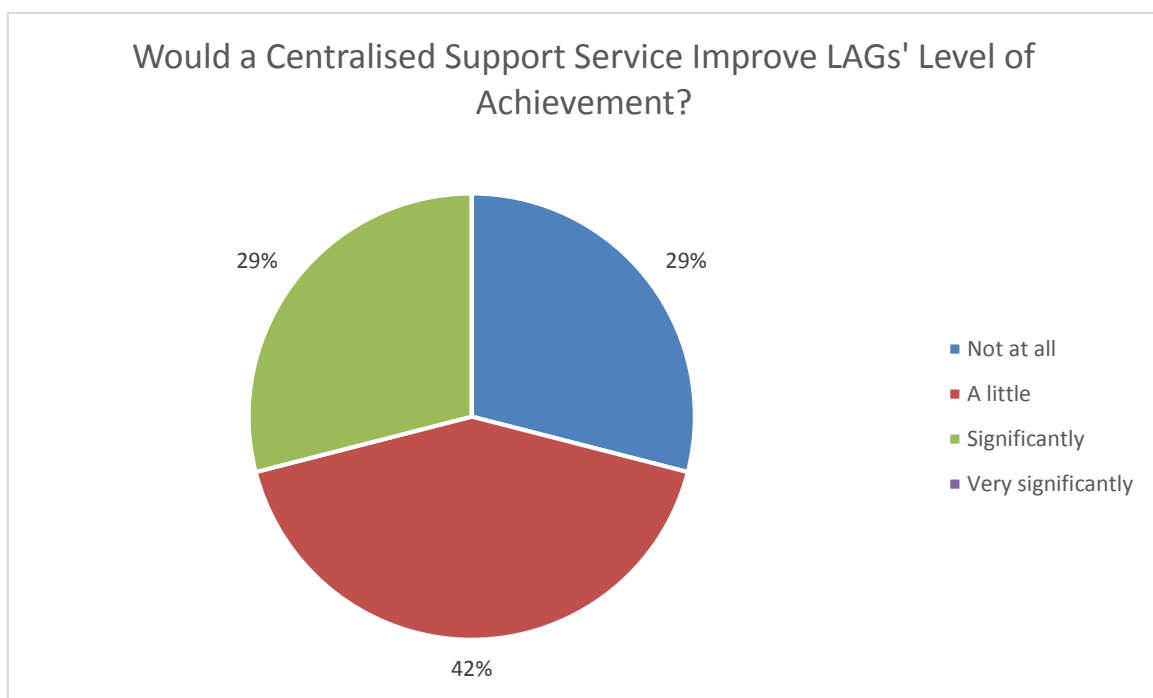


Question 30

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 7



- More Estonian respondents thought that a centralised support service would improve the achievements of the LAG 'a little' than at EU level (42% vs 27%), overall 71\5 considered there would be some improvement (EU sample 64%).
- None of the responding LAGs in Estonia thought that there would be 'very significant' change in comparison to their EU peers (0% vs 9%).

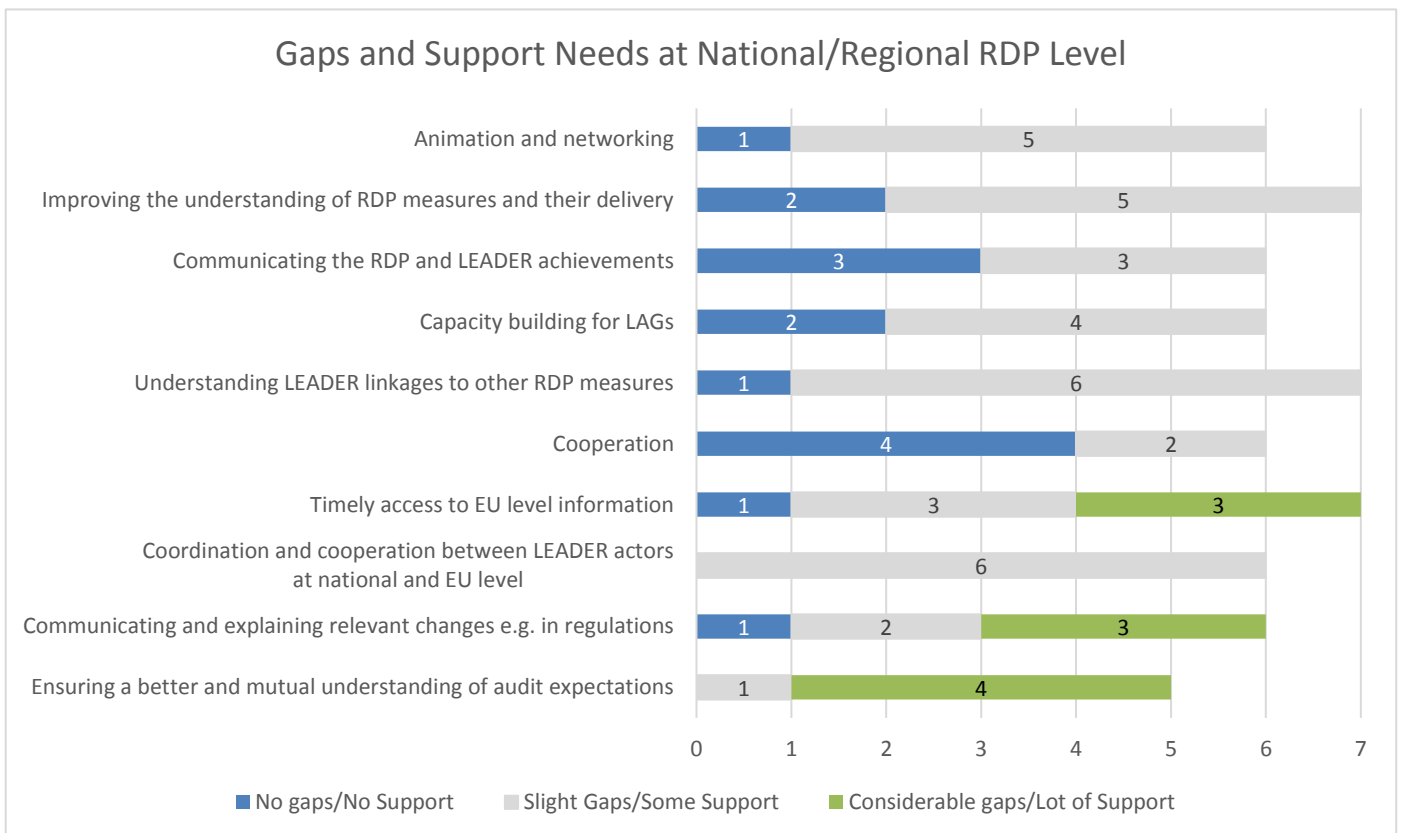
Question 31

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 7



- In comparison to their EU counterparts, the respondents from Estonia identified ‘considerable gaps/lots of support’ much less frequently across the majority of topics with the exception of ‘ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations’ where LAGs in Estonia identified their most prominent need of support.
- In most other areas, the Estonian LAGs felt that there were ‘slight gaps/some support’, in comparison to the EU sample which often identified more considerable gaps.
- Estonian LAGs perceive markedly fewer gaps and support needs in relation to cooperation than the E sample.

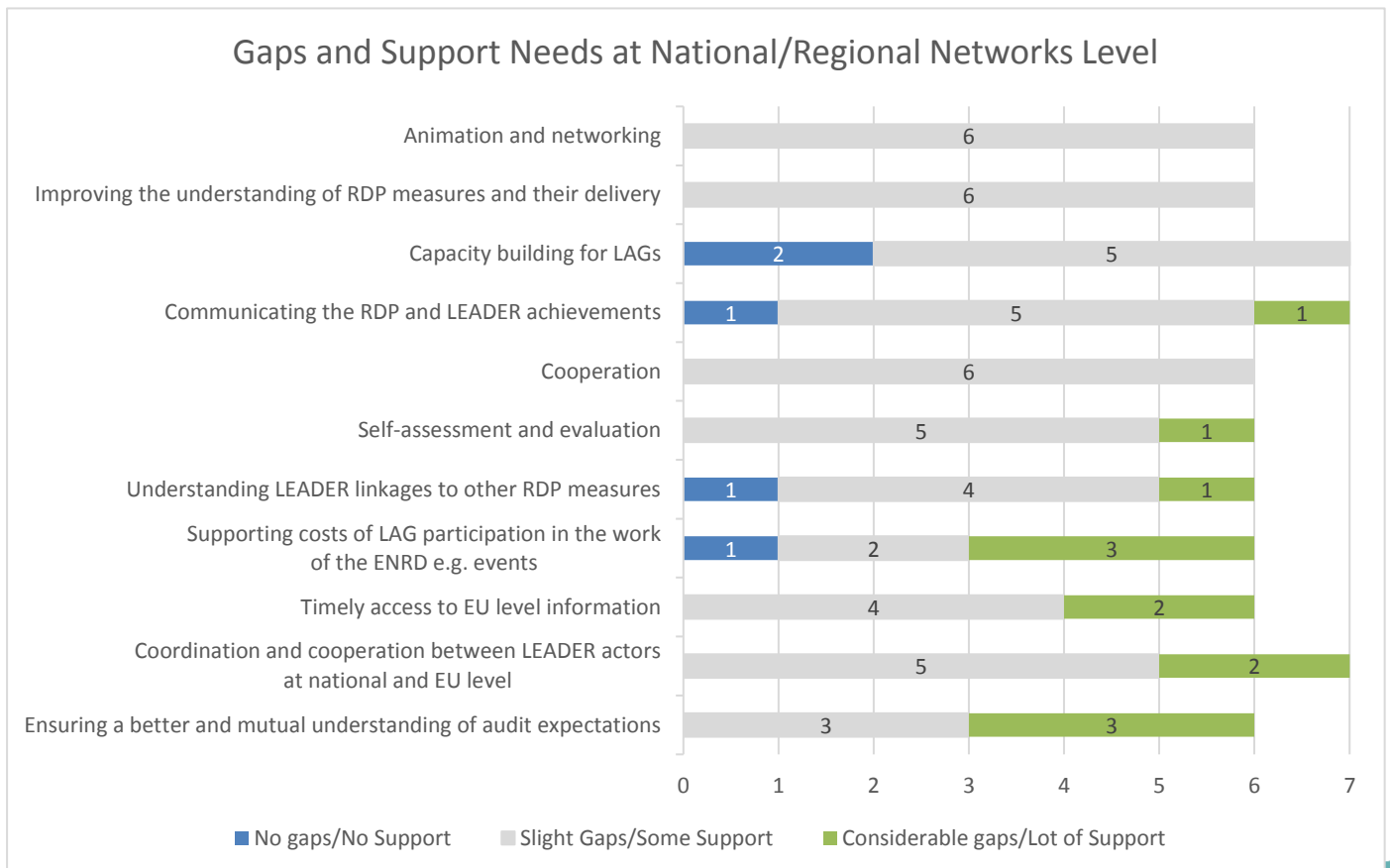
Question 32

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 7



- A much larger proportion of Estonian LAGs believed that there were 'slight gaps and some support need' across the various topics than the EU sample.
- Equally, the respondents in Estonia identified that there were 'no gaps/no support' much less often than their European peers.

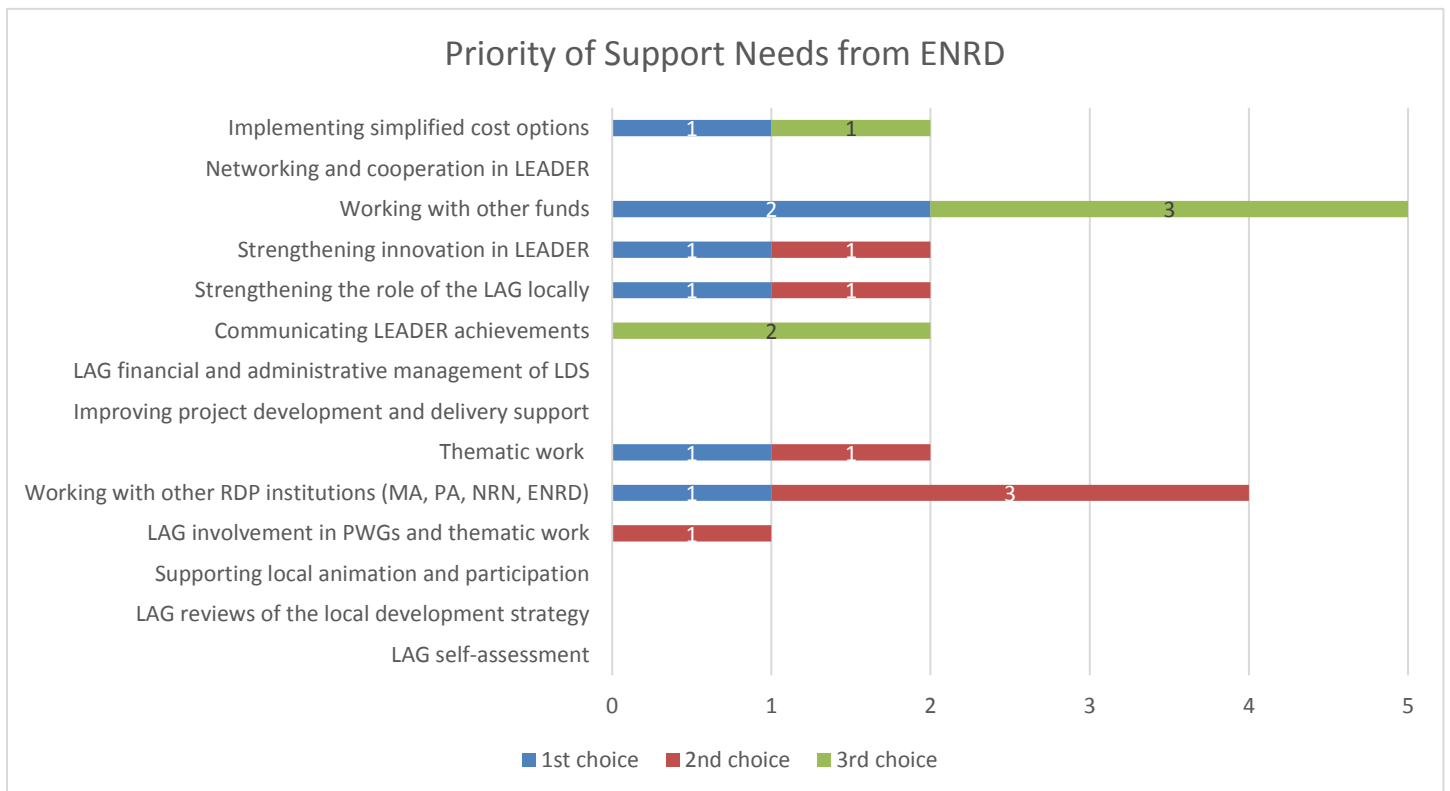
Question 33

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 7



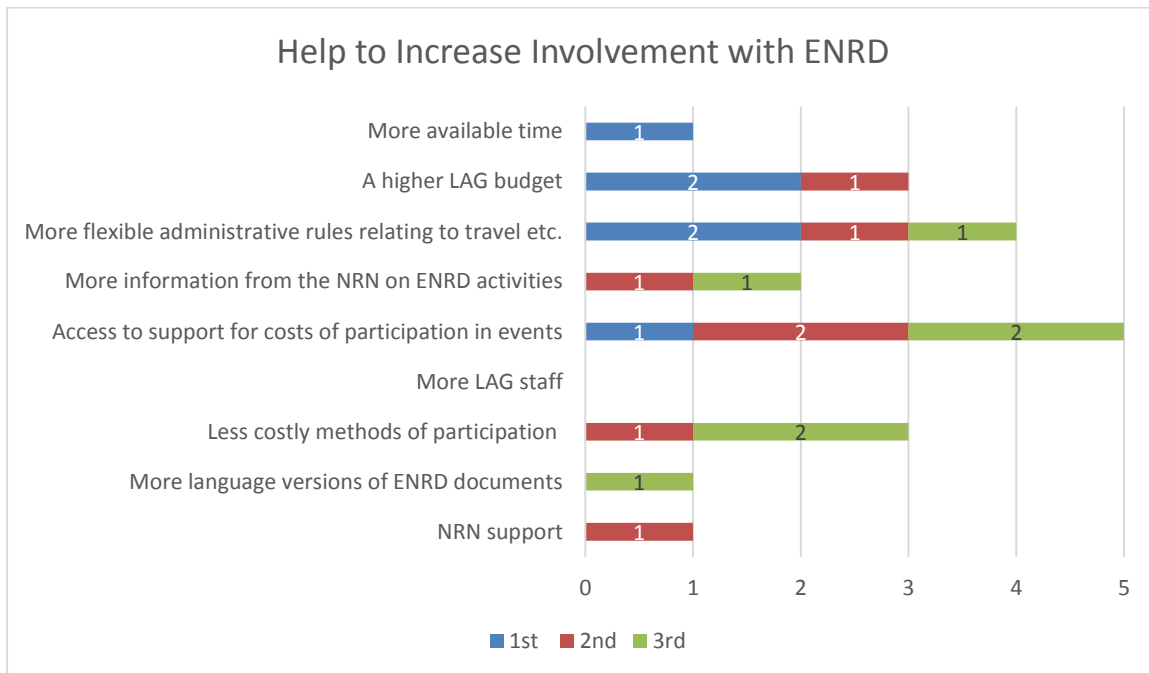
- The Estonian responses varied from those by the EU sample in some areas most strongly identifying priorities for ENRD support in ‘working with other funds’ and ‘working with other RDP institutions’.
- In comparison to other European LAGs, in Estonia no respondent identified support needs in ‘networking and cooperation in LEADER’, ‘LAG financial and administrative management of LDS’, and ‘improving project development and delivery support’. All of these featured more prominently in the support needs identified by other EU LAGs.

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



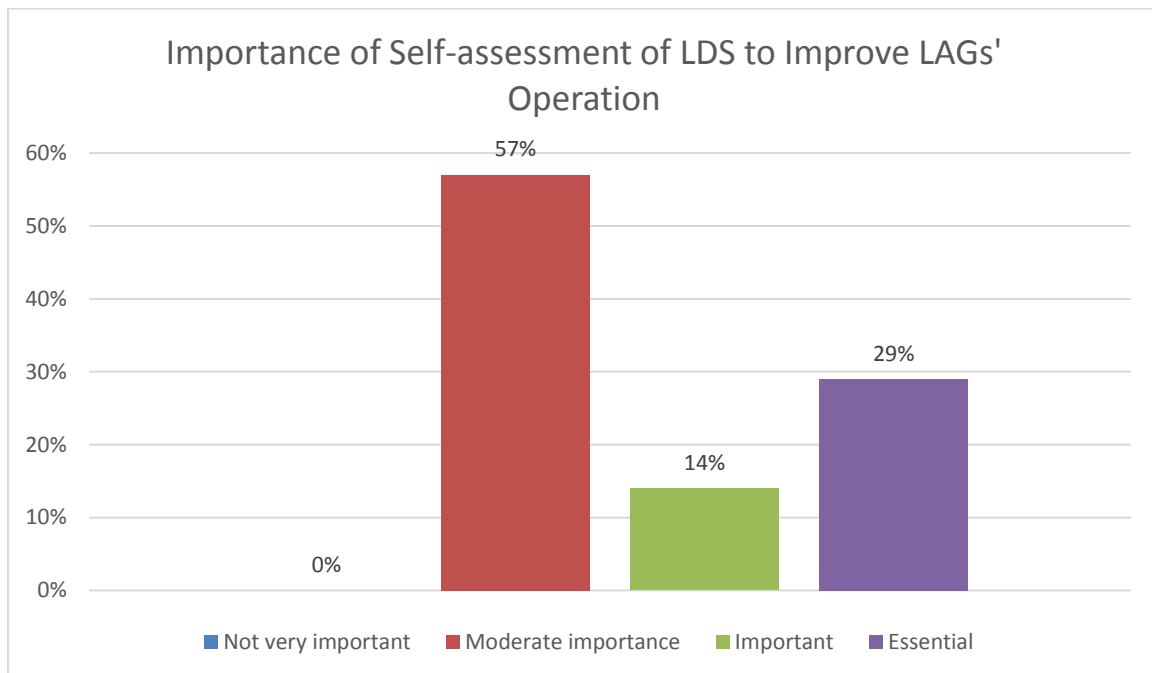
- More emphasis was given by the Estonian LAGs to enabling ‘access to support for costs of participation in events’ and ‘more flexible administrative rules relating to travel’ than in the EU sample, less priority was placed on more available time and more LAG staff.

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 7



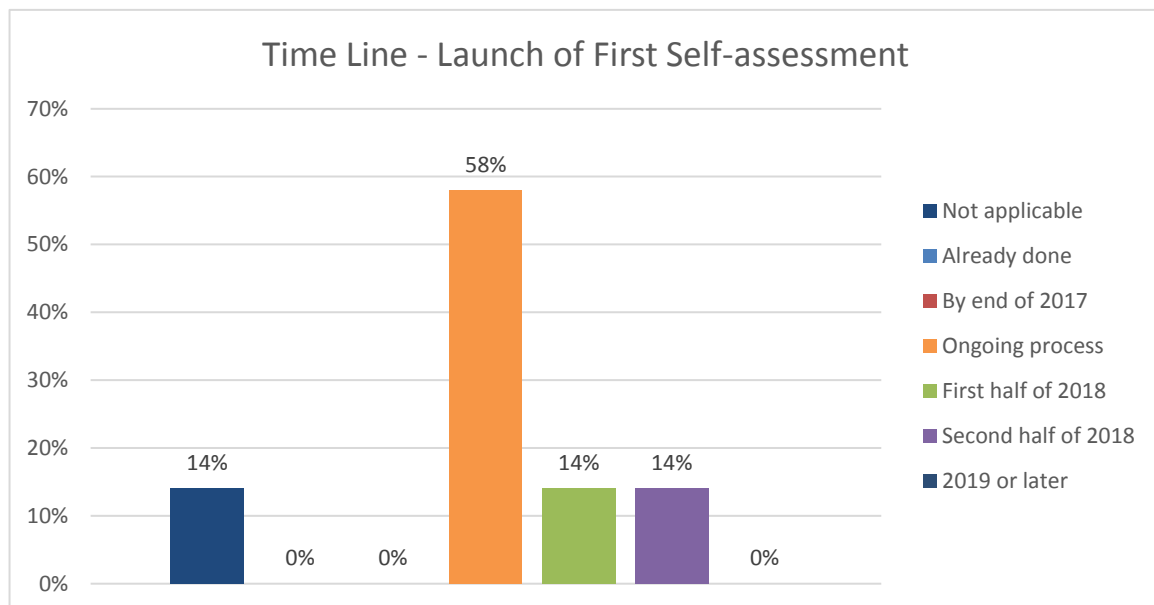
- Although none of the Estonian LAGs considered self assessment as 'not very important' (6% of the EU sample), a higher proportion of respondents in Estonia (57%) considered self-assessment to be of 'moderate importance'; some 24% of the overall sample of European LAGs indicated the same view.
- A significantly smaller proportion of Estonian LAGs considered self-assessment as 'important' than in the EU sample (14% vs 43%).

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 7



- Self-assessment is considered as an ongoing process by 58% of the responding Estonian LAGs, this is more than three times as many than across the EU (18%).
- No Estonian LAGs had undertaken any self-assessment, 20% of the wider sample had done so.

Question 37

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

- Yes – 86%
- No – 14%

Total Number of Responses 9