



European Network for
Rural Development

LEADER LAG Survey 2017

Working Paper

Findings at Member State level

Member State: Finland

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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

- Finland (FI)
- 15 LAGs responded, representing 2.1% of total LAG responses
- 27% of FI LAGs responded to the survey

Total Number of Responses 15

Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- FI has 2 regional RDPs.
- Responses were received from both RDPs.

Total Number of Responses 15

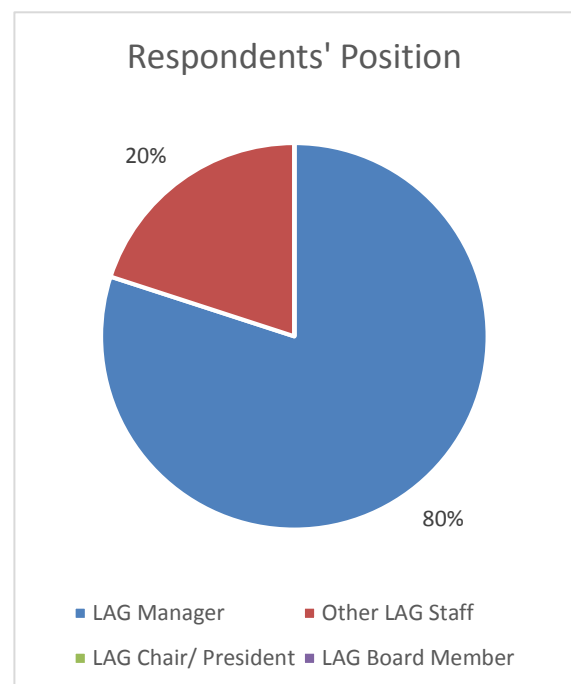
Question 4

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 15

- The survey responses from Finnish LAGs were similar to those of the EU sample, although the EU sample contained a small percentage of LAG Chair / President and other LAG Board members (7%).



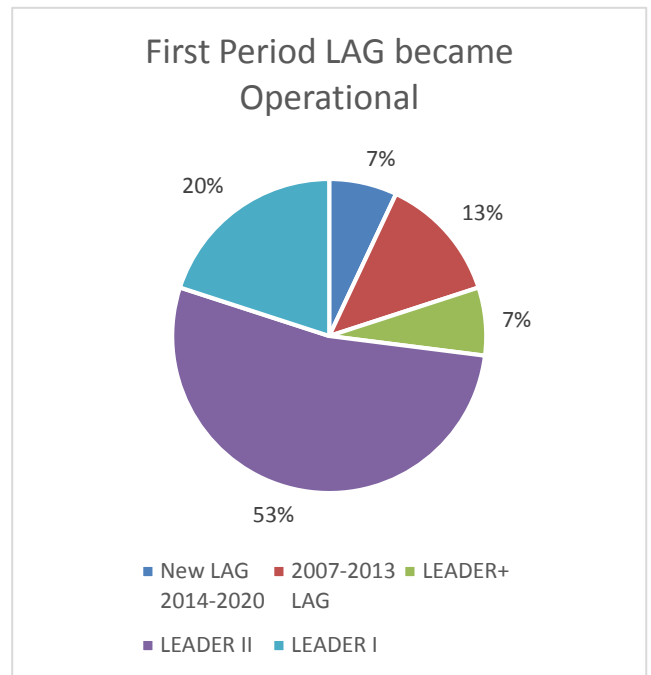
Question 7

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 15

- In the Finnish survey, more LAGs originated from the LEADER II period than was the case in the EU sample, (53% vs 17%). They also had a larger share of 'new' LAGs 2014-2020 (20% vs 8%) and a markedly smaller share of 2007 – 2013 LAGs (13% vs 34%).

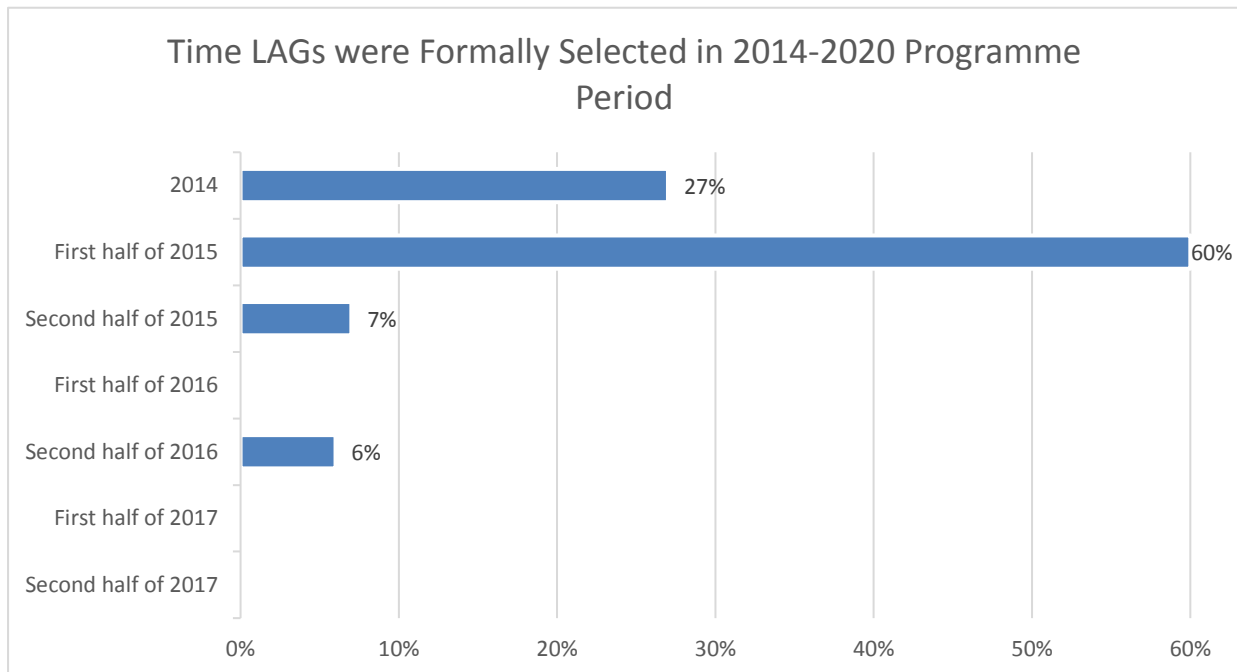


Question 8

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 15



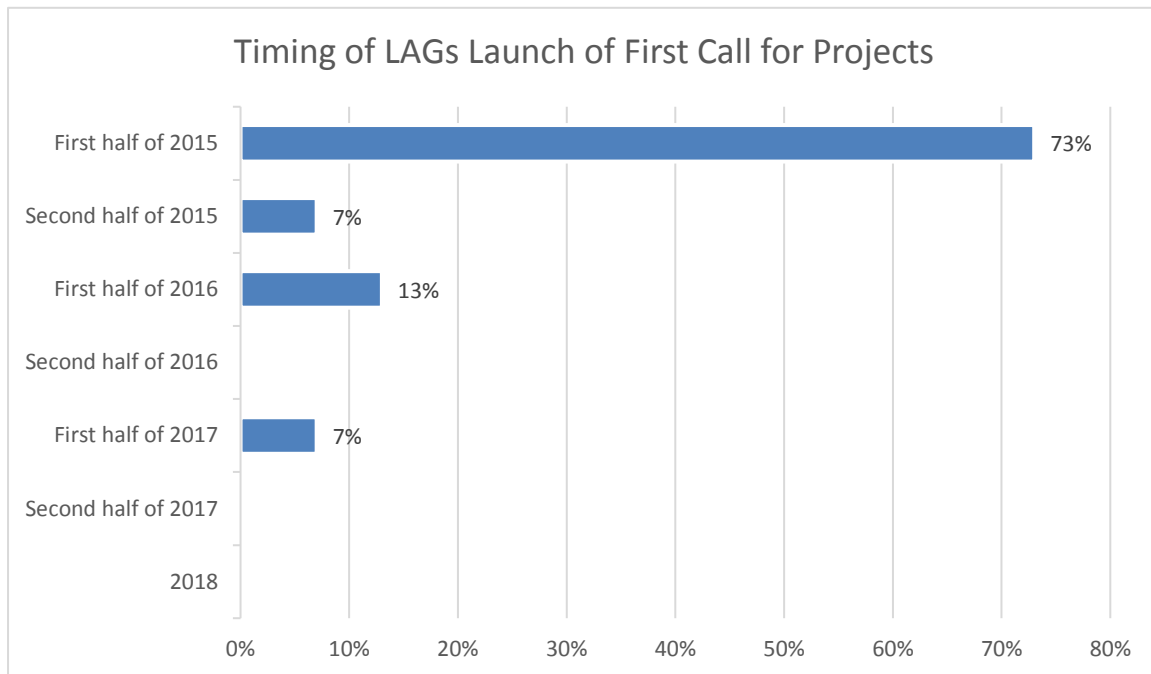
- By the end of 2015, almost all of responding LAGs (94%) from Finland were formally selected, in comparison to 59% of the EU sample.
- The remaining 6% of responding Finnish LAGs were formally selected by the end of 2016.

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 15



- The vast majority of the responding LAGs in Finland (80%) had their first call of projects in 2015 in comparison with 32% of the EU sample.

LAG Funding

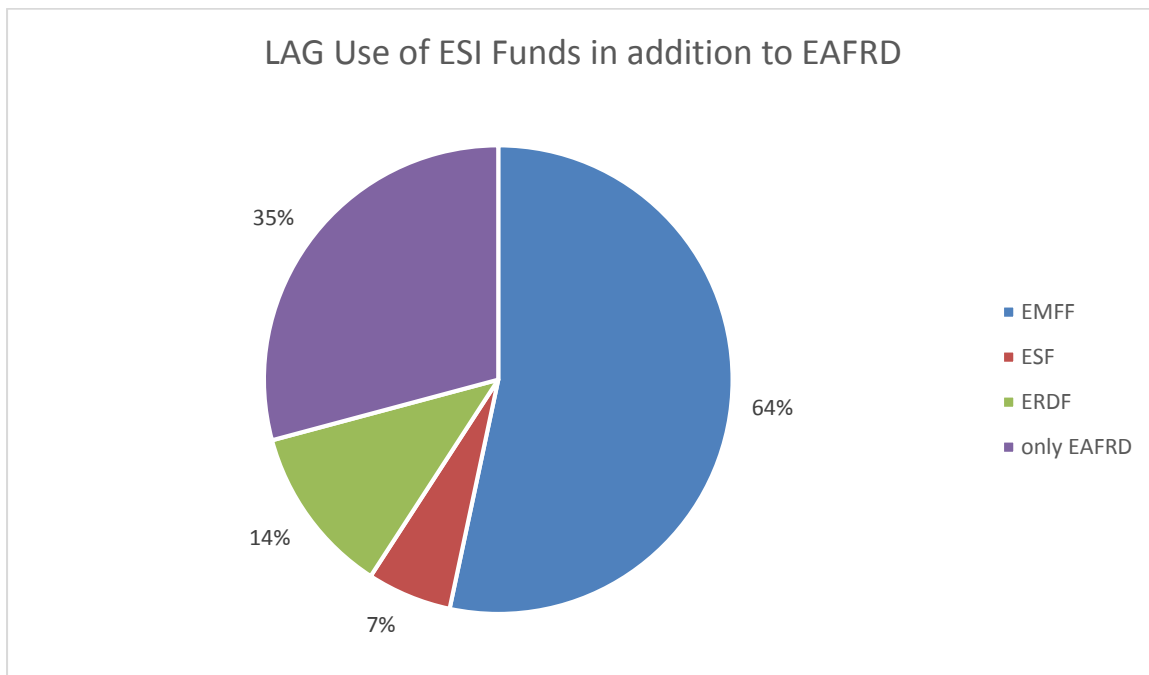
Question 10

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

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

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

Total Number of Responses 14



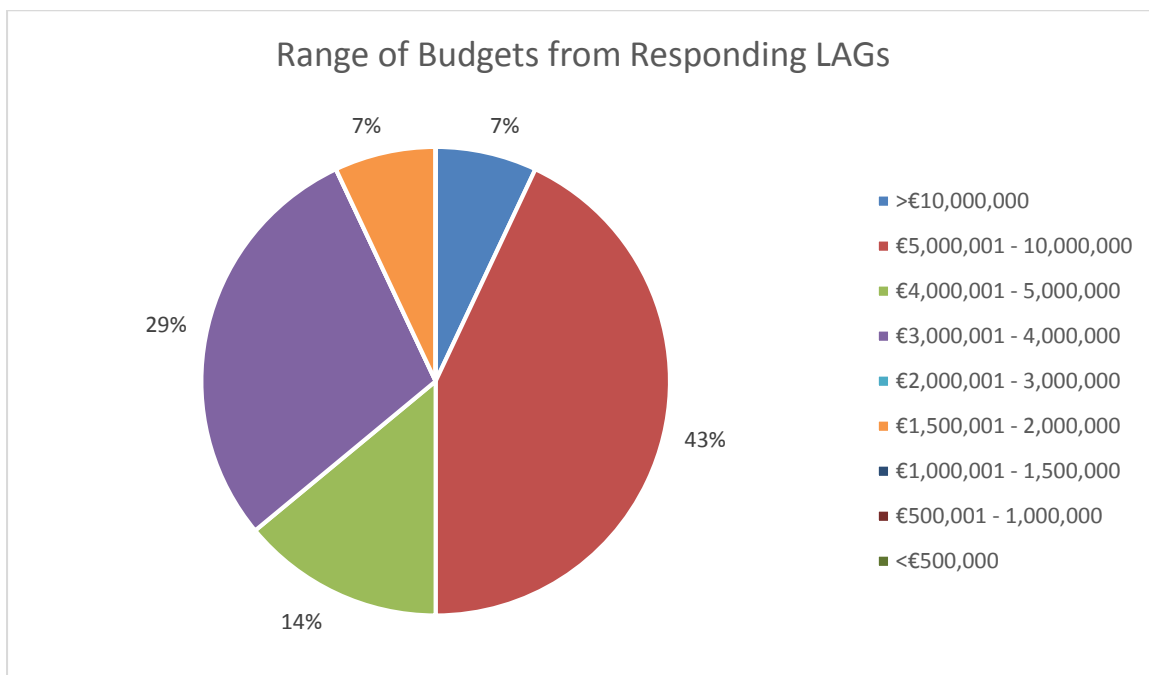
- The responses from LAGs in Finland showed a greater use of multiple funds than the EU sample, only 35% use EAFRD only vs 67% in the EU sample and 64% of LAGs utilise EMFF as opposed to 9% in the EU sample. Multi fund LAGs use of ERDF and ESF was lower in both cases than the EU average for multi fund LAGs.

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 14



- The budgets from responding Finnish LAGs were comparatively larger than those of the EU sample. 50% of the responding LAGs in Finland had budgets over €5m, in comparison to 15% of LAGs from elsewhere.

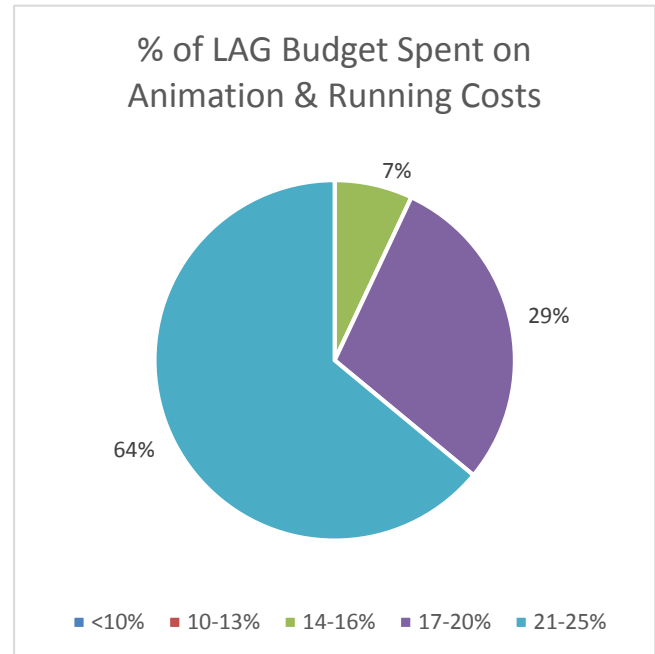
Question 12

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 14

- Considerably more Finnish LAGs reported their budgets allocated for animation and running costs to be in the highest percentage range than in the EU sample (64% vs 31%).
- None of the responding LAGs in Finland reported animation budgets of below 13%, in contrast to 21% of the EU sample.



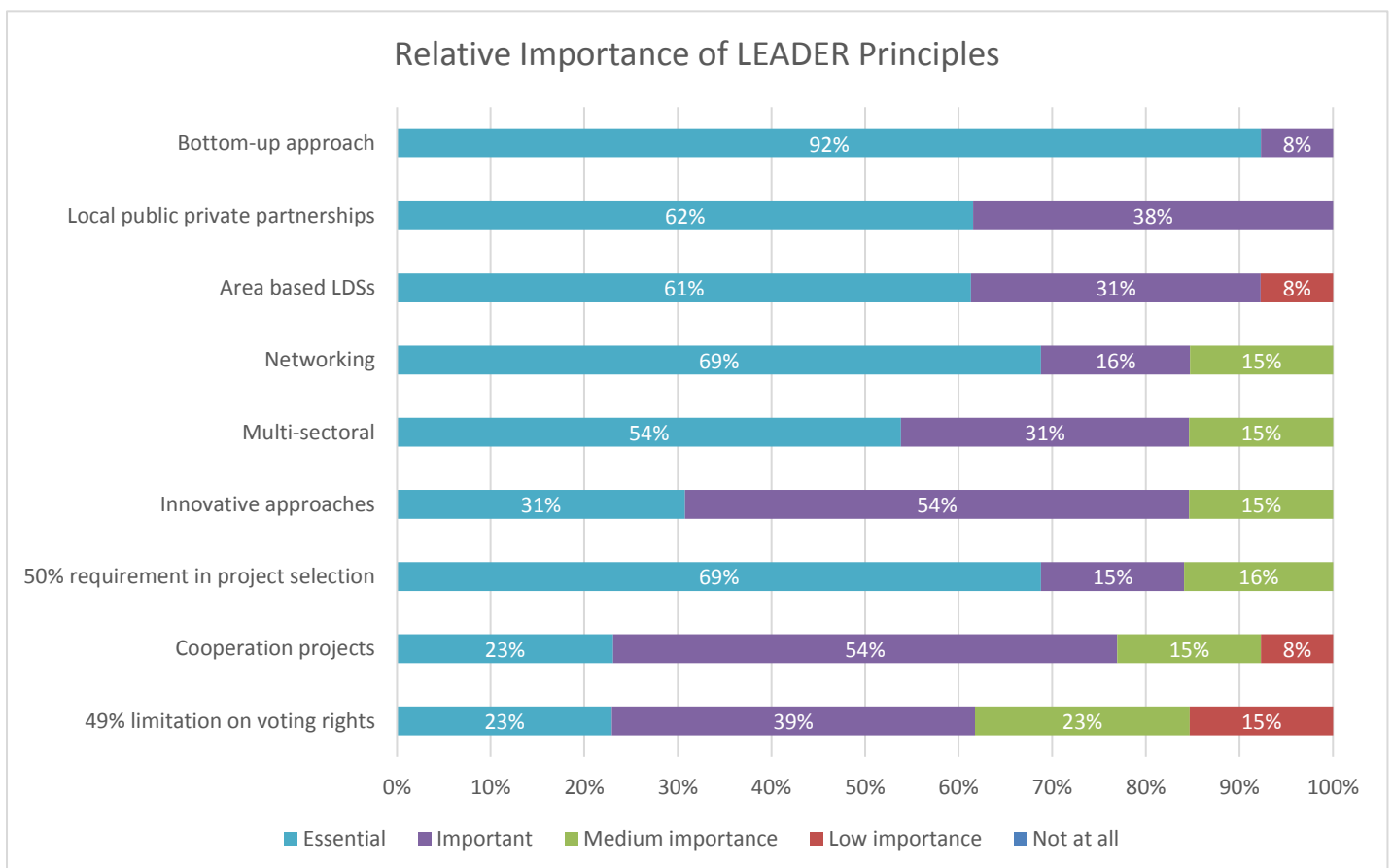
LEADER Principles

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 13



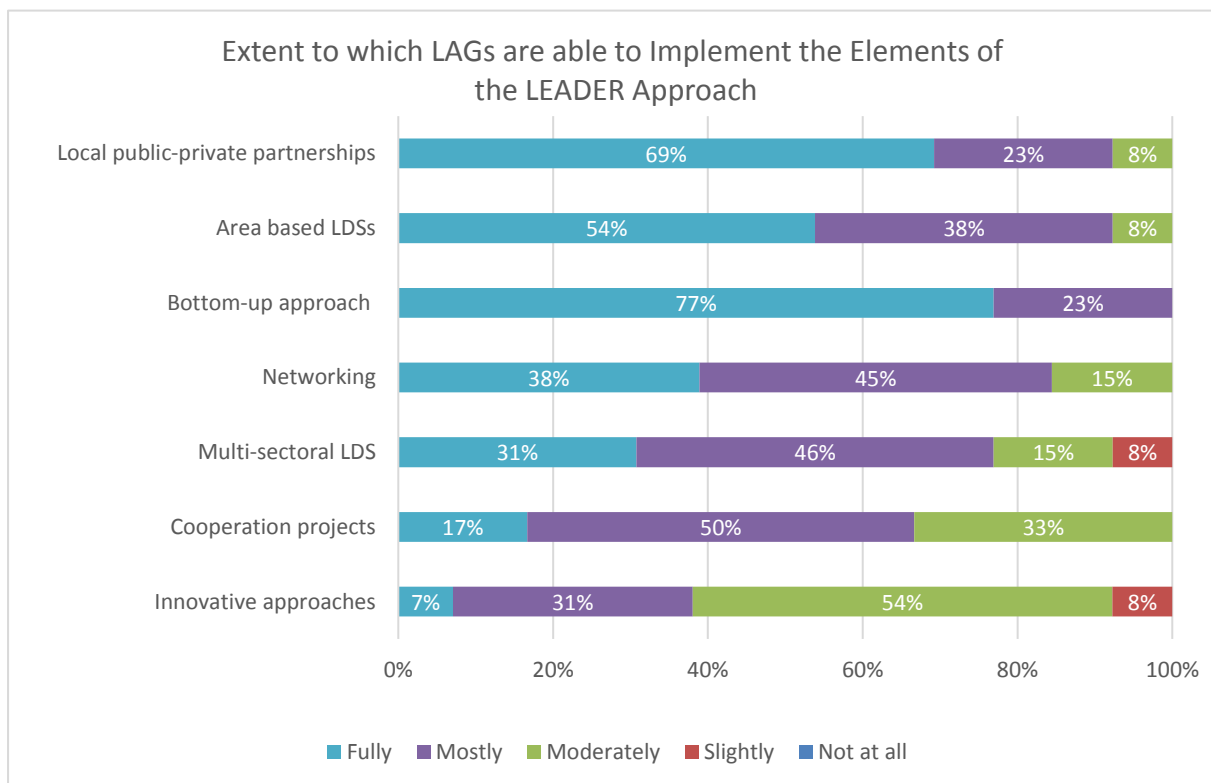
- In most cases, LAGs in Finland assessed the importance of LEADER approaches in a similar manner as other LAGs in Europe. However, a greater proportion of respondents considered a number of principles to be 'essential' than did their European counterparts, these included the 'bottom-up approach' (92% vs 73%), and the '50% requirement in project selection' (69% vs 34%).
- In addition, a greater proportion of Finnish LAGs felt that 'innovative approaches' were 'essential' or 'important' than did their European peers (85% vs 68%) and similarly ranked cooperation projects importance more highly (77% vs 51%).

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 13



- The relative ranking of responses of the LAGs in Finland was similar to those of the EU sample, however the Finnish respondents were overall more positive regarding the extent to which they could implement the various elements of the LEADER approach.
- This was most marked in the extent to which Finnish LAGs indicated that they were fully able to implement the 'bottom-up approach' in comparison to the EU sample (77% vs 48%).

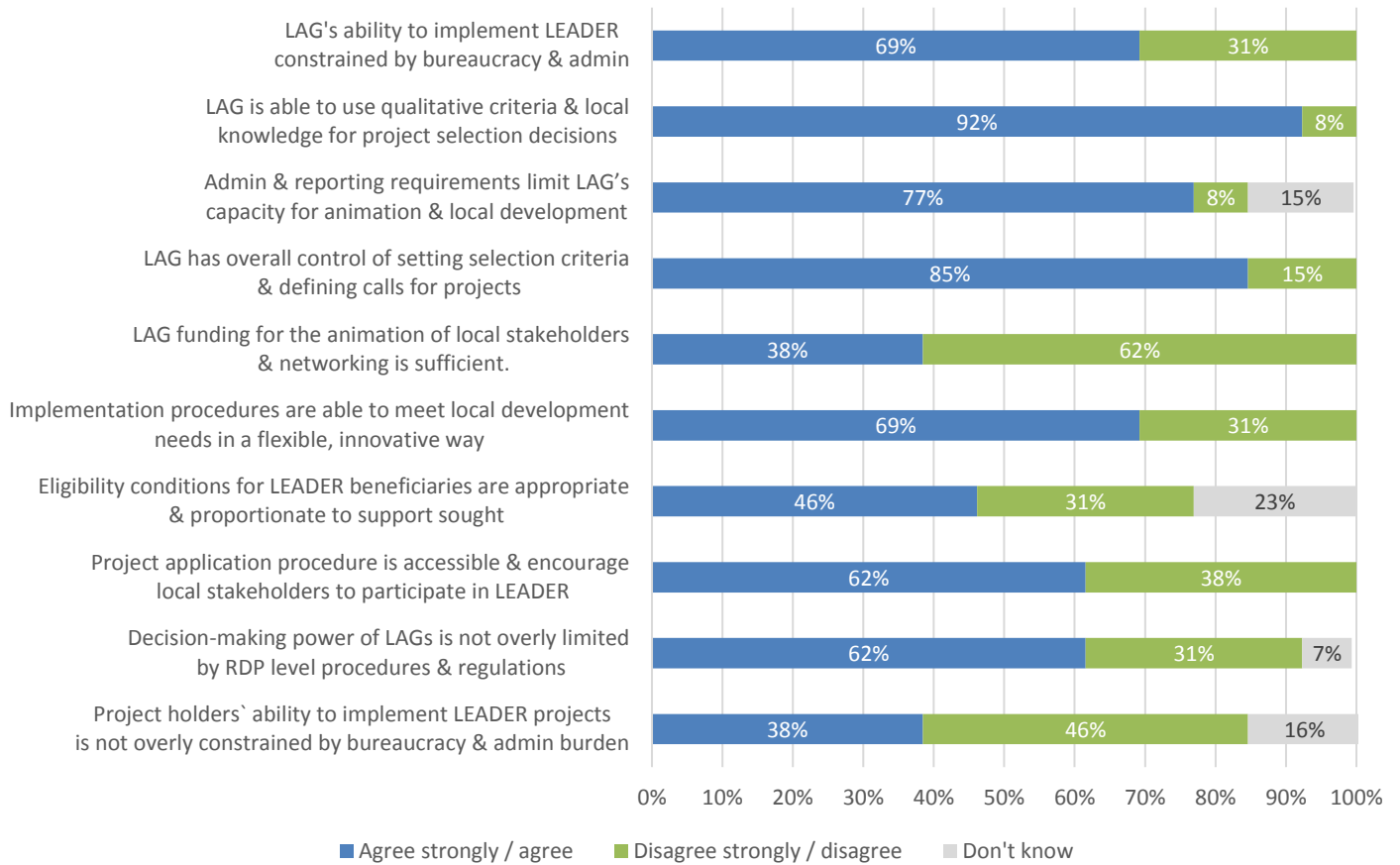
Question 15

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 13

Aspects of LEADER Implementation as seen by Local Action Groups



- The responses from the Finnish LAGs indicated a more positive perspective on many aspects of implementation than the EU sample did.
- Finnish LAGs agreed to a larger extent that the project application procedures were accessible than their European peers (62% vs 33%), that 'implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible, innovative way' (69% vs 51%), that the LAG has overall control of setting project selection criteria and defining calls for projects (85% vs 66%) and that the decision making power of the LAGs is not overly limited by RDP level procedures and regulations (62% vs 29%). They also were more in agreement that 'project holders' ability to implement LEADER projects is not overly constrained by bureaucracy and admin burden' (38% vs 15%).
- Respondents from Finland disagreed more strongly with the following aspects than in the EU sample: that
 - 'LAG's ability to implement LEADER is constrained by bureaucracy and admin' (31% vs 12%)
 - 'LAG funding for animation and networking is sufficient' (62% vs 39%).

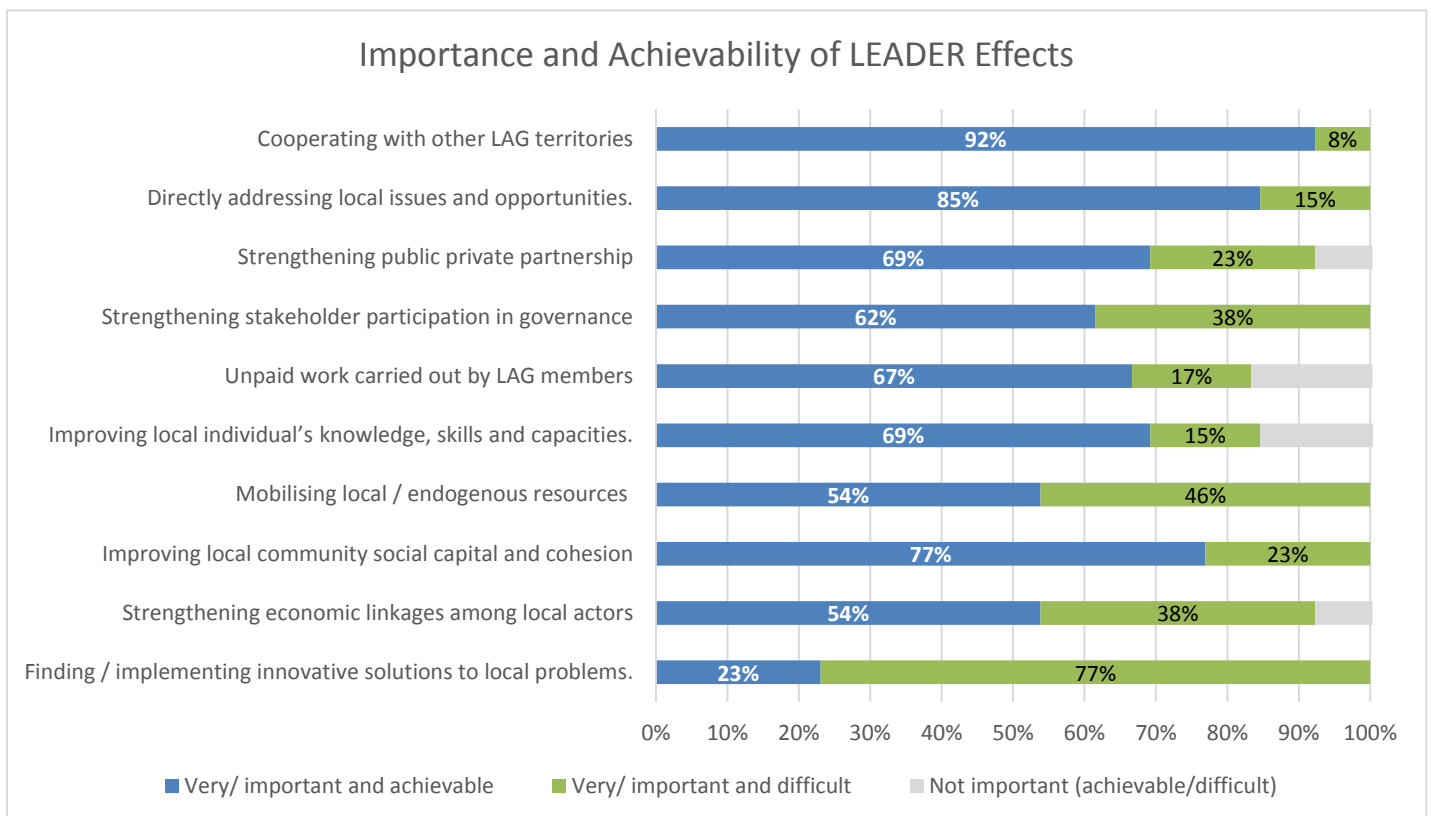
Question 16

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 13



- In comparison to the EU sample, a considerably greater proportion of Finnish respondents considered the LEADER effects as 'very/important and achievable'. The only exception was 'finding / implementing innovative solutions to local problems', which Finnish LAGs found to be less achievable than their EU peers (23% vs 33%).

LEADER Operation

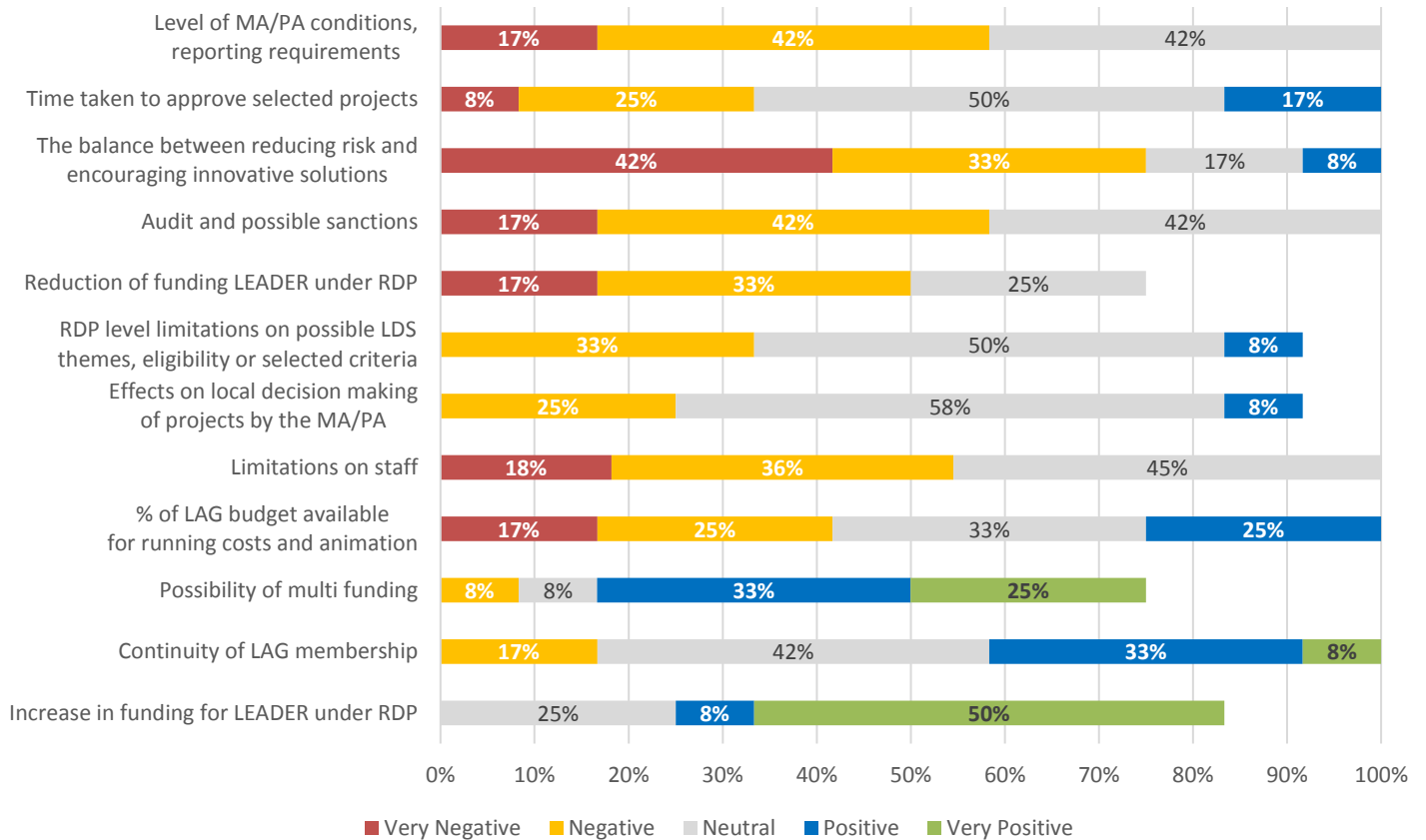
Question 17

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 12

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.

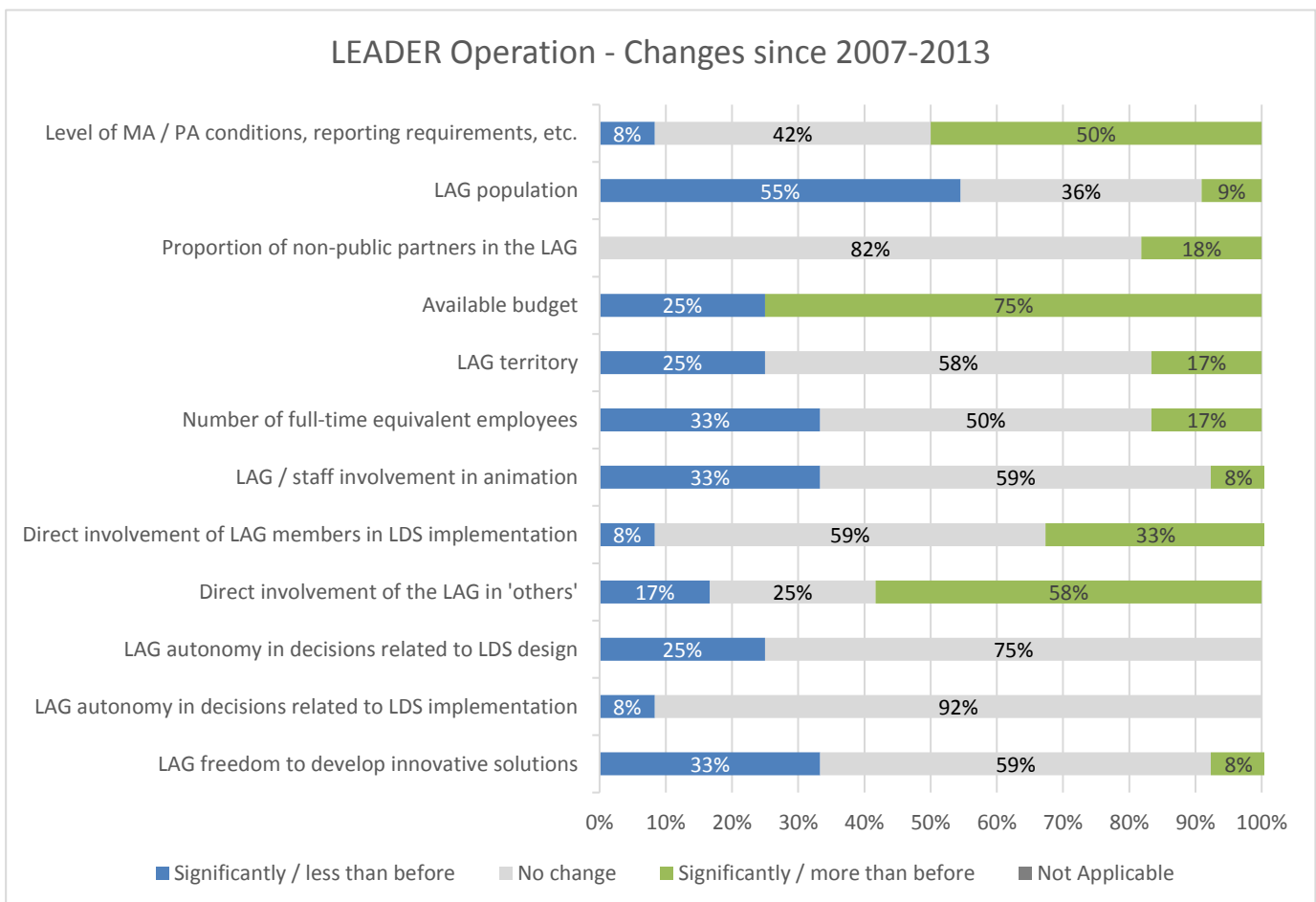
- Overall Finnish respondents were less likely to identify very negative effects than the EU sample. The only area where they had a more negative view was on the balance between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions (75% negative or very negative vs 63%)
- Proportionately fewer LAGs in Finland than in the EU sample identified 'very negative' and 'negative' effects regarding 'RDP level limitations on possible LDS themes', 'time taken to approve selected projects' and 'effects on local decision making of projects by MA/PA'.
- In the case of 'possibility of multi funding' more Finnish respondents felt positive about these effects ('positive' and 'very positive') in comparison to their European counterparts (58% vs 37%).

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 12



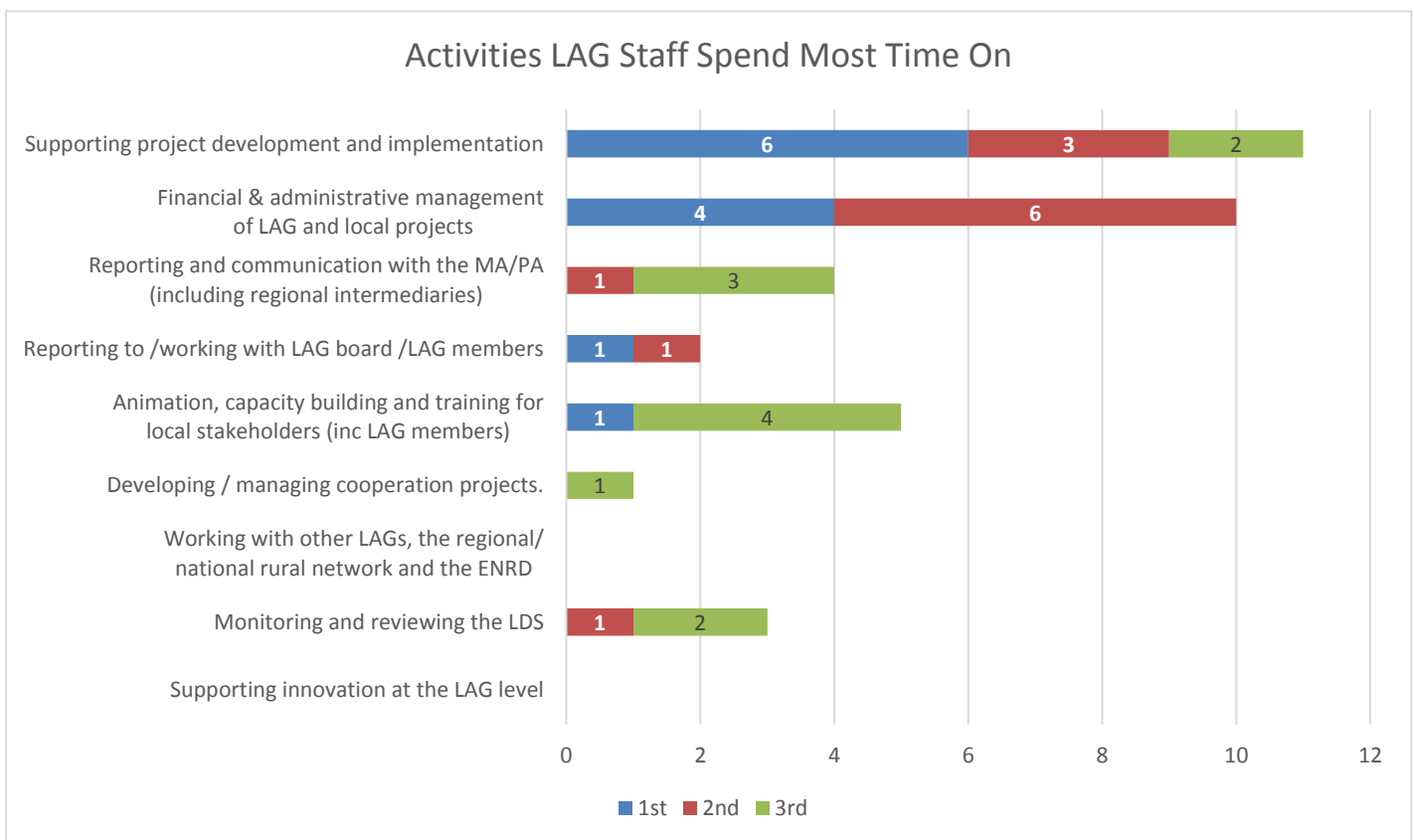
- The Finnish respondents answered many of the question categories in a similar way as the EU sample, however, in a small number of categories a much larger proportion of them stated that they experienced 'no change'. This included 'proportion of non-public partners in the LAG', 'autonomy in decisions related to LDS implementation' and 'decisions relating to LDS design'.
- Areas where more Finnish LAGs have experienced reductions than their European peers, included 'LAG population' (55% vs 23%), 'number of full time equivalent employees' (33% vs 20%), and 'LAG territory' (25% vs 10%).
- A much higher proportion of Finnish LAGs (75%) reported an increase in available budget than the EU average (30%).
- With regard to 'direct involvement of the LAG in other regional and territorial development actions or structures', a higher percentage of Finnish LAGs report levels as significantly more/more than before (58%), in comparison to 26% of 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 12



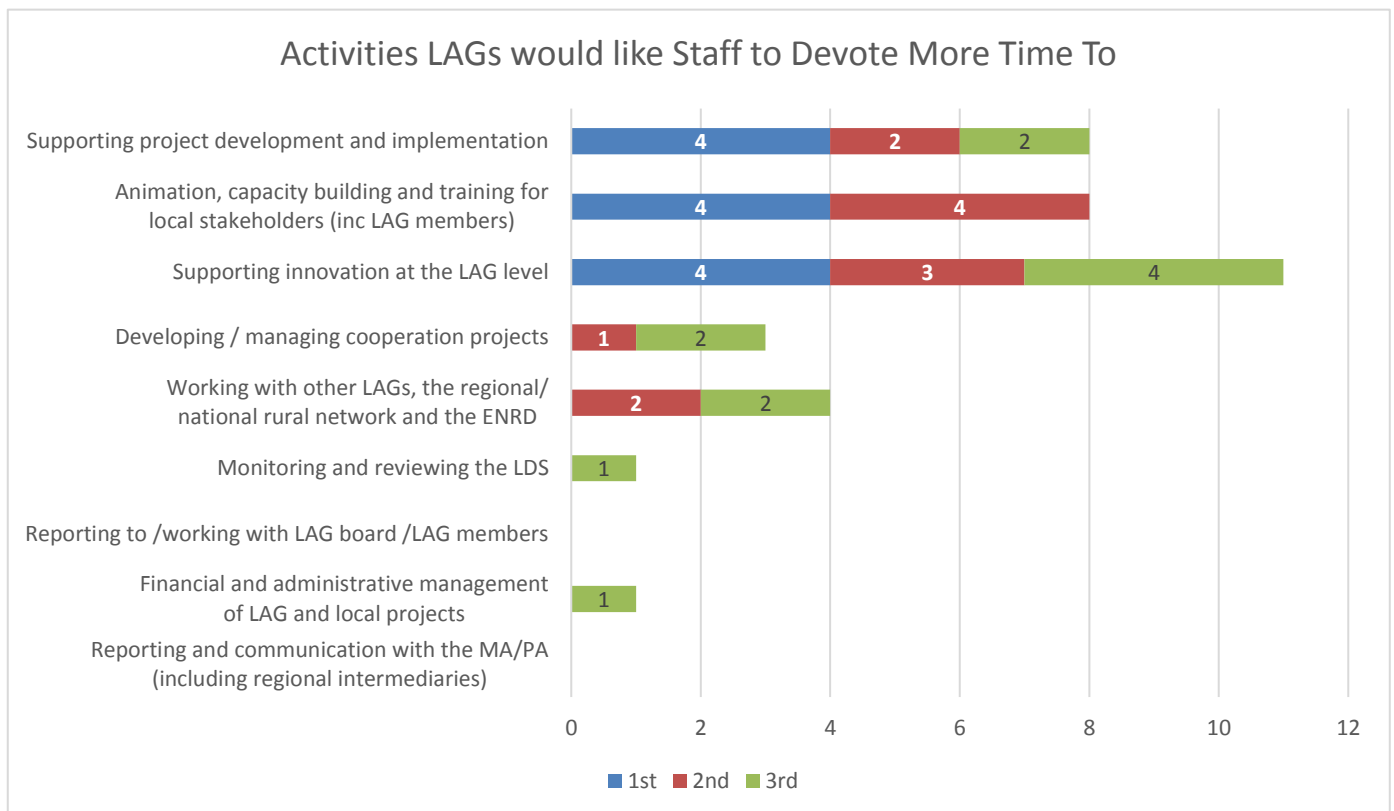
- The responses of the Finnish LAGs follow largely the pattern of the EU sample. Slight differences related to a higher ranking of time spent on 'animation, capacity building and training for local stakeholders' than in the EU sample and a lower ranking of reporting and communication with the MA/PA.

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 12



- The responses of the Finnish LAGs were largely in line with those of the wider EU sample.
- However, proportionately more Finnish respondents indicated that their staff 'would like to devote more time on supporting innovation at the LAG level' than at EU level.

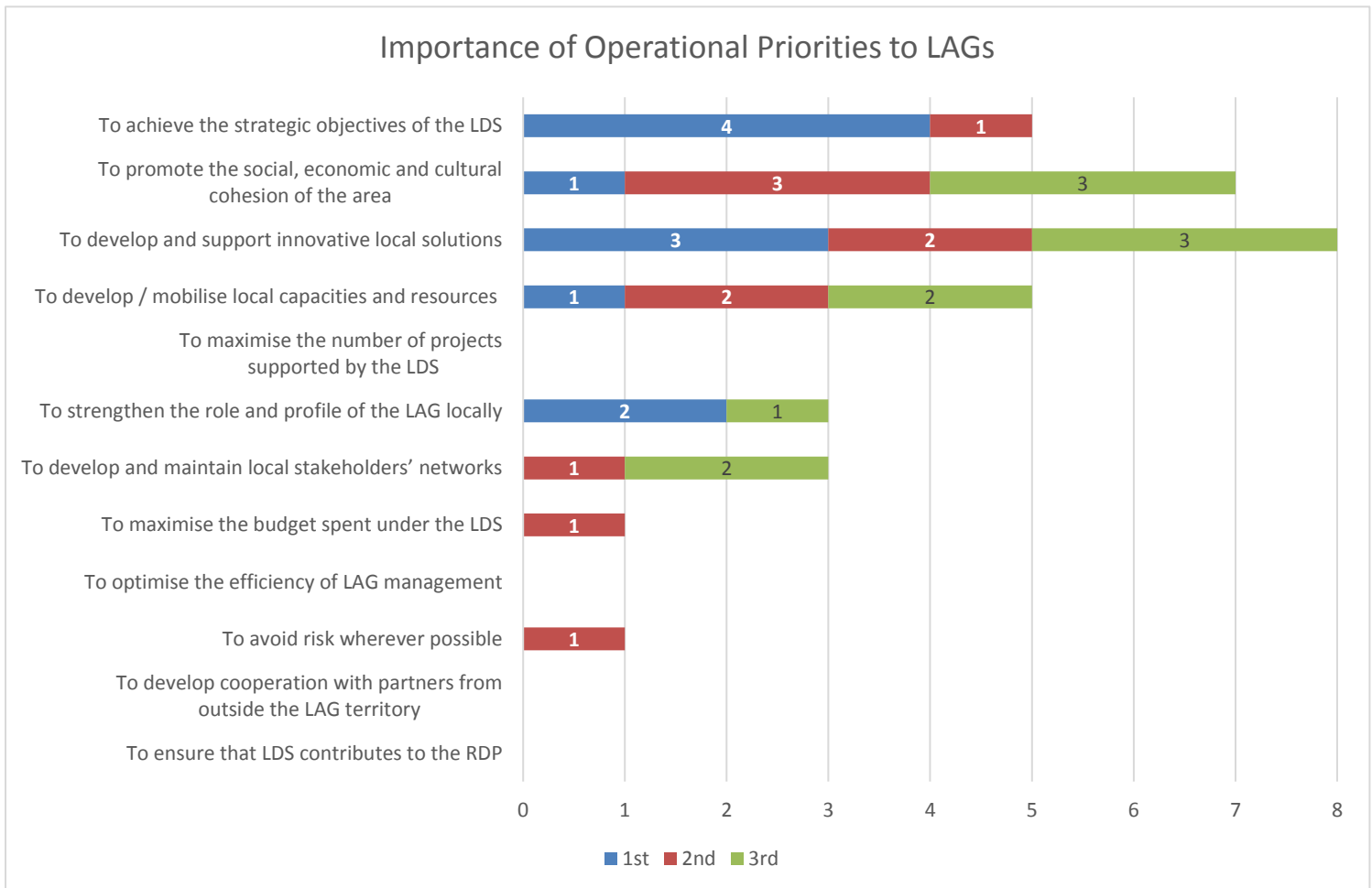
Question 21

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 11

Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs



- The Finnish LAGs ranked the operational priorities largely in a similar manner to the LAGs of the EU survey. However, differences include the higher importance given to ‘developing and supporting innovative local solutions’ given highest importance in Finland whilst third highest level in the EU sample.
- The operational priority of ‘maximising the number of projects supported by the LDS’ was not ranked as a priority at all by the Finnish LAGs, while it was rated more highly in the EU sample.

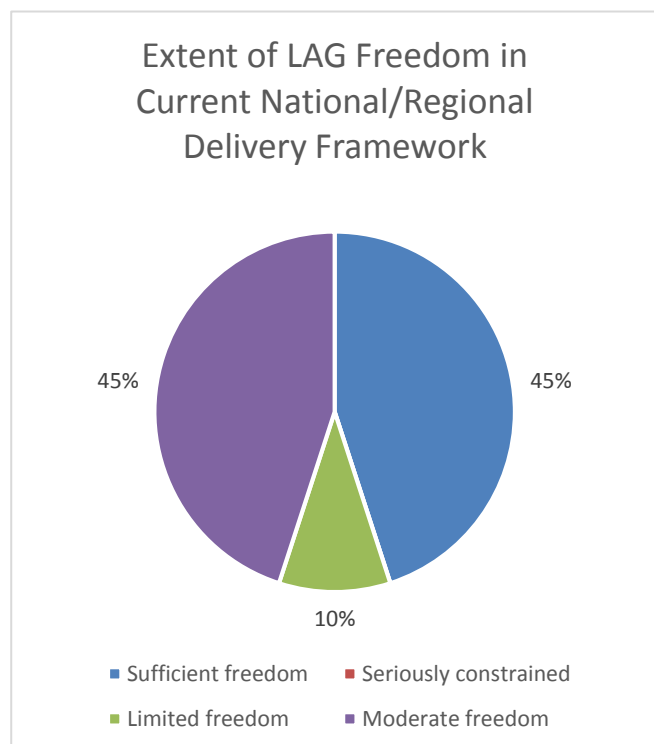
Question 22

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 11

- Some 45% of the responding LAGs in Finland felt that they had 'sufficient freedom', only 17% of European LAGs stated this.
- A lower proportion (10%) of the Finnish sample thought that they had 'limited freedom' compared to the EU sample (27%).
- None of the respondents in Finland felt that they were 'seriously constrained' in their freedom, whereas 11% of the EU sample stated this.

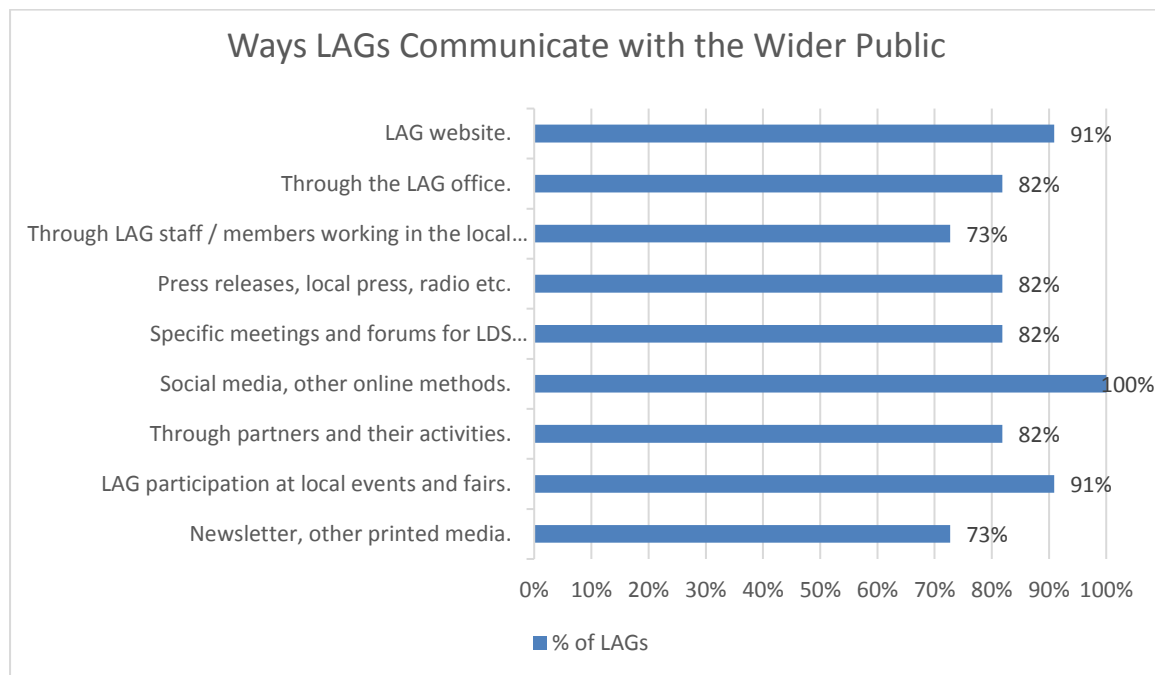


Question 23

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 11



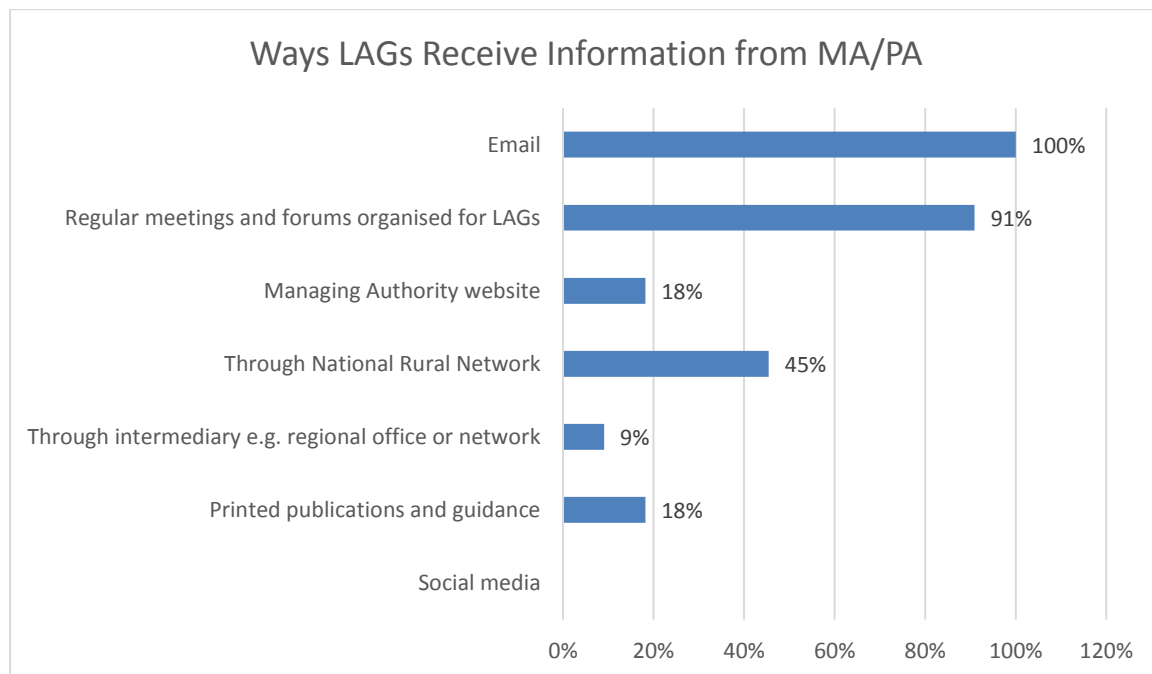
- Considerably larger proportions of Finnish LAGs report utilising the full range of communication tools listed than did the EU sample. This included higher proportions of LAGs using 'newsletters, other printed media than in the EU sample (73% vs 45%).
- Communication via social media, was utilised by all Finnish LAGs (100%), markedly more compared to other European LAGs (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 11



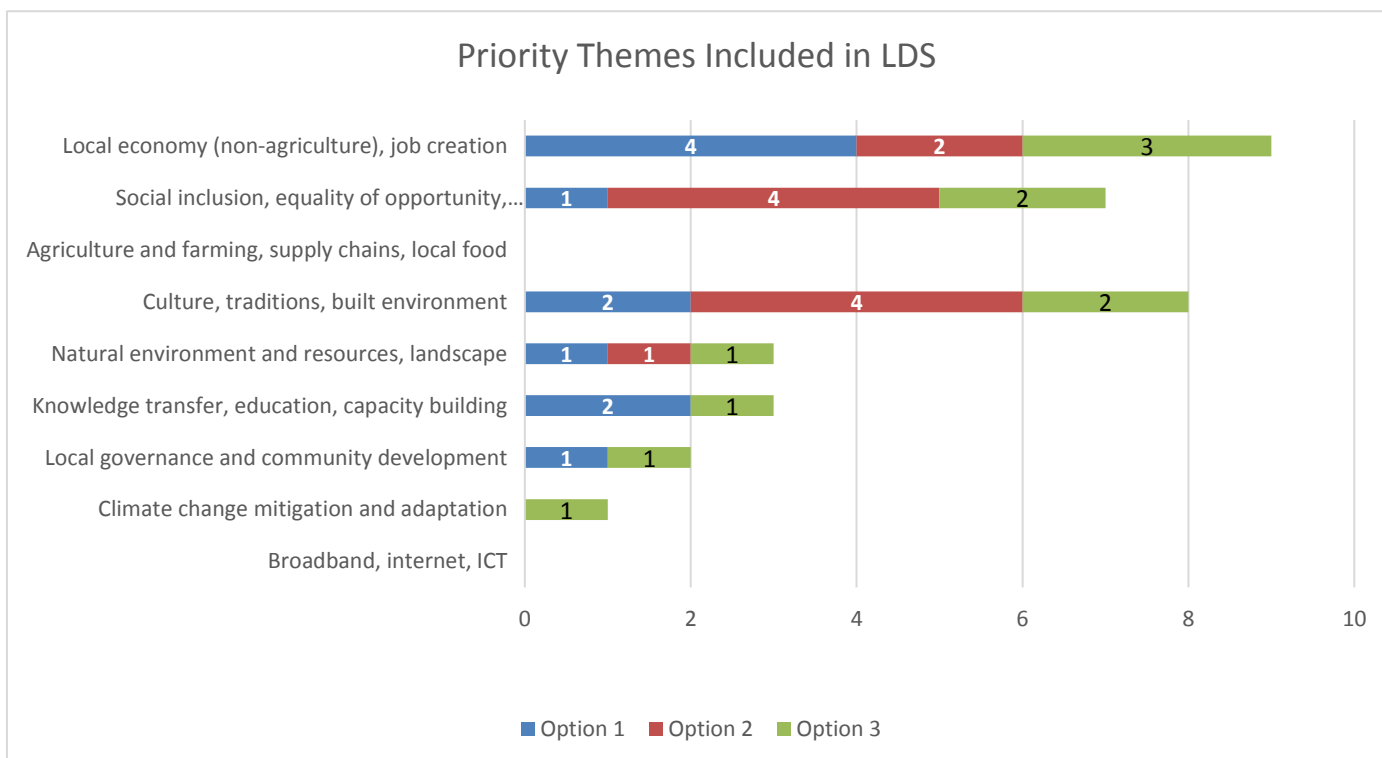
- Comparatively fewer Finnish LAGs indicated they received information via 'the MA website' (18% vs 34%), and 'through intermediaries' (9% vs 22%).
- In Finland, more information access was via 'regular meetings and forums organised for LAGs' than in the EU sample (91% vs 68%) and 'through the National Rural Network (45% 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 11



- The Finnish responses are largely in line with those provided by the EU sample other than there being no inclusion of the priority theme 'agriculture and farming, supply chains, local food' in LDS in Finland, this was the third most mentioned theme in the EU sample.
- A slightly stronger link regarding the theme 'culture, traditions, built environment' was indicated by the Finnish LAGs in comparison to the EU sample.

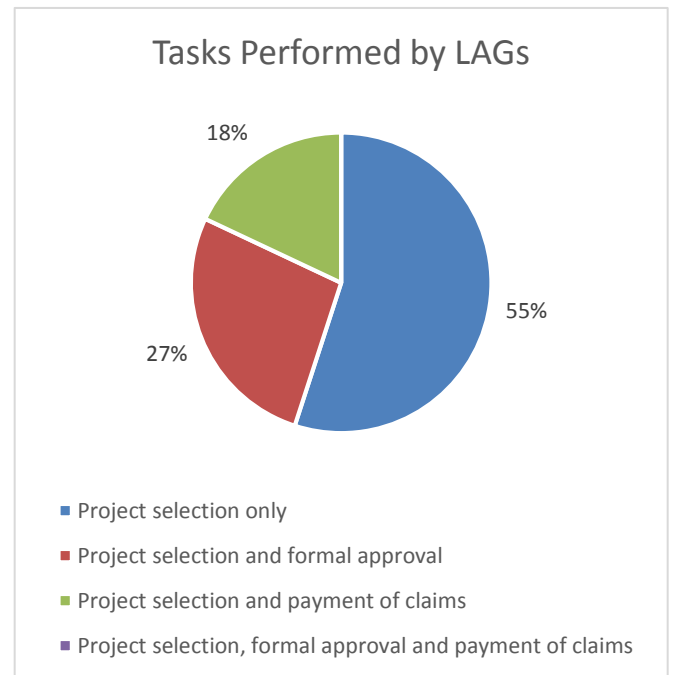
Question 26

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 – 55%
- Project selection and formal approval – 27%
- Project selection and payment of claims – 18%
- Project selection, formal approval and payment of claims – 0%

Total Number of Responses 11

- A larger percentage of Finnish LAGs (18%) reported that they are responsible for ‘project selection and payment of claims’. At EU level only 3% of LAGs perform these two tasks.
- No Finnish respondents report that their LAGs were responsible for ‘project selection, formal approval and payment of claims’ in comparison to 19% of LAGs across Europe.



LEADER Improvements

Question 27

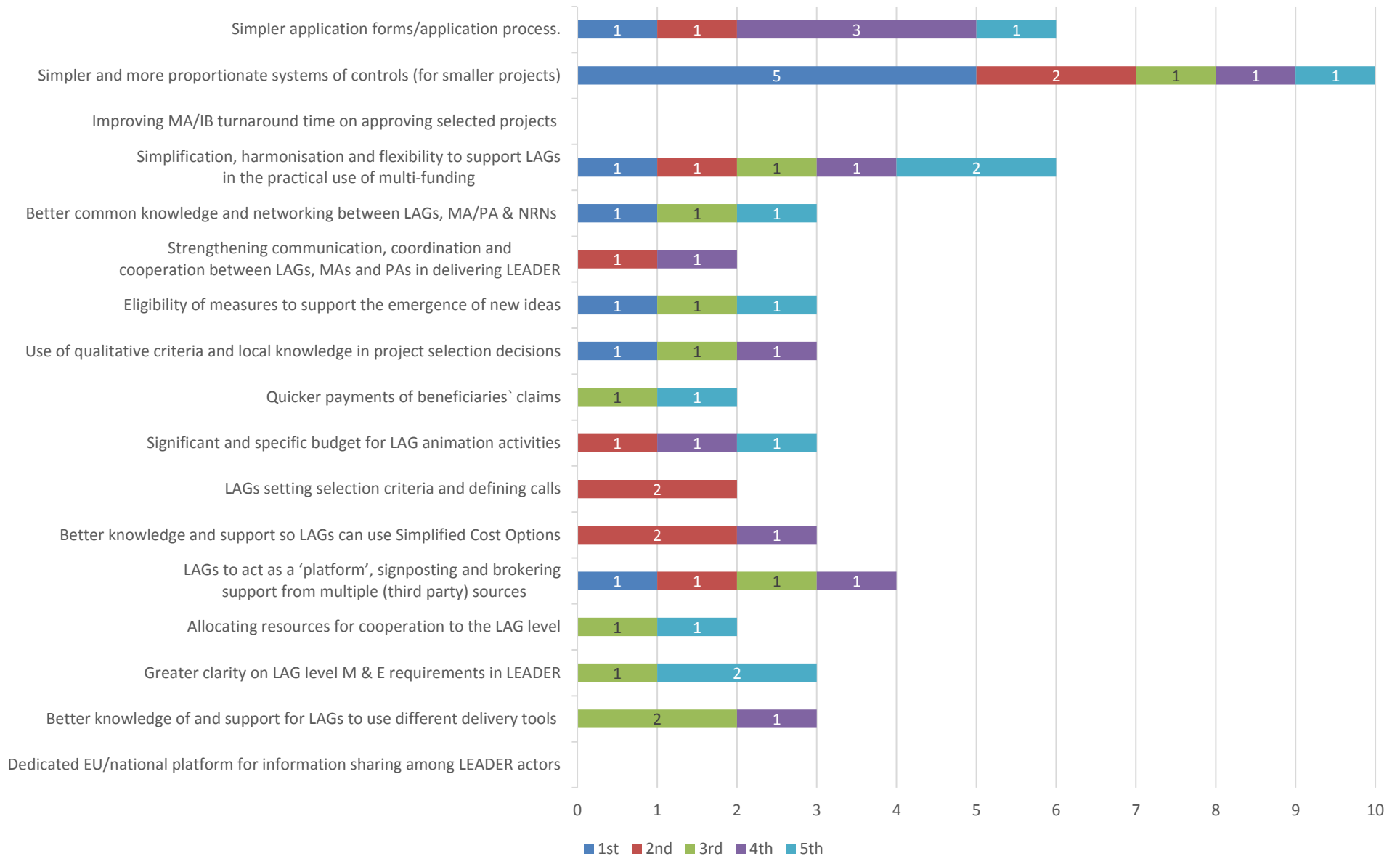
What is most important to address in helping LAGs to be effective in implementing LEADER now? Please select and rank your top five priorities from the following items in order of their importance in (where 1= highest importance and 5 = 5th most important)

- 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 11

- Finnish respondents provided slightly different responses from the EU sample, for example 'simpler and more proportionate systems of controls' was given highest priority to improve implementation now. While this also rated highly at EU level, in Finland this change stands out above the other changes.
- Finnish respondents placed no emphasis on 'improving the MA/ Intermediary body turnaround time on approving selected projects' which was ranked third by European LAGs across the wider sample.

Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now

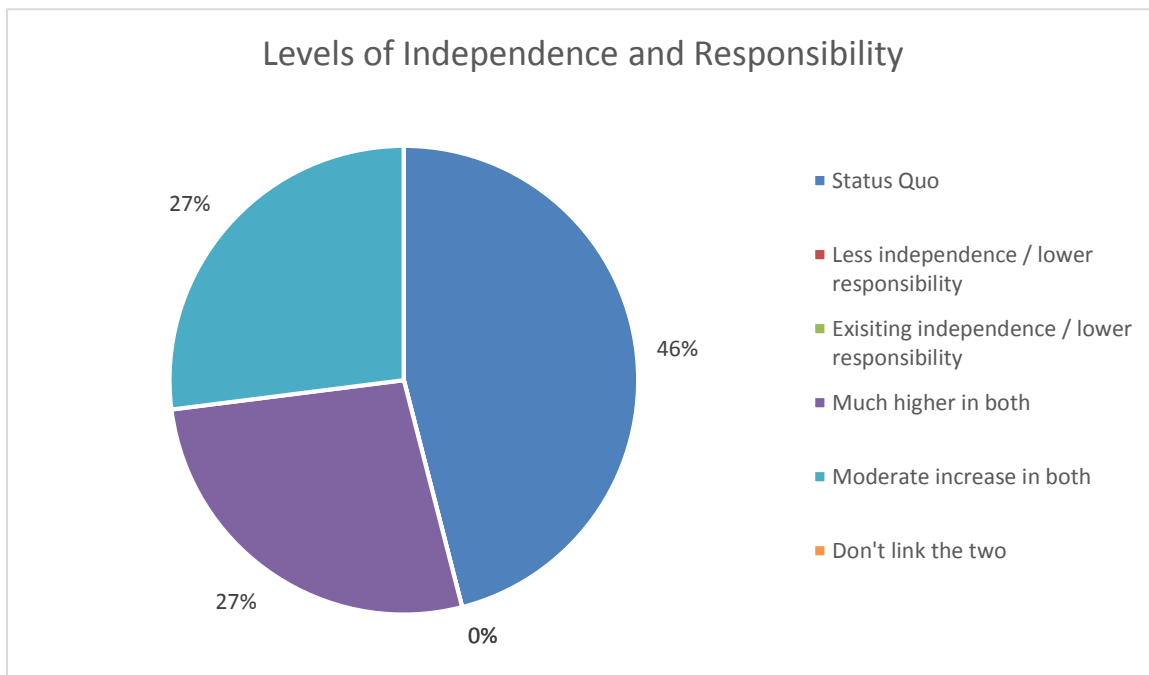


Question 28:

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 – 11



- There was a higher percentage of Finnish LAGs that were satisfied with maintaining the 'status quo' than at EU level (46% vs 20%).
- None of the Finnish respondents indicated a desire for existing or less independence with lower responsibility or for not linking the two, ranked in the EU sample at 1%, 8% and 24% respectively.

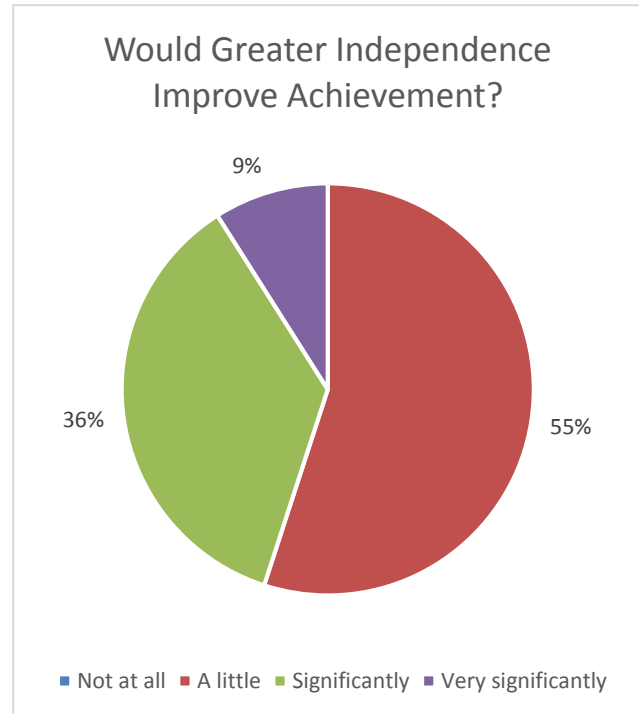
Question 29

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 11

- A larger proportion of Finnish respondents indicated that greater independence would improve the achievement of LAGs 'a little', in comparison to the EU sample (55% vs 34%).
- None of the Finnish LAGs thought that greater independence would 'not at all' improve achievement, as opposed to 12% of the EU sample.

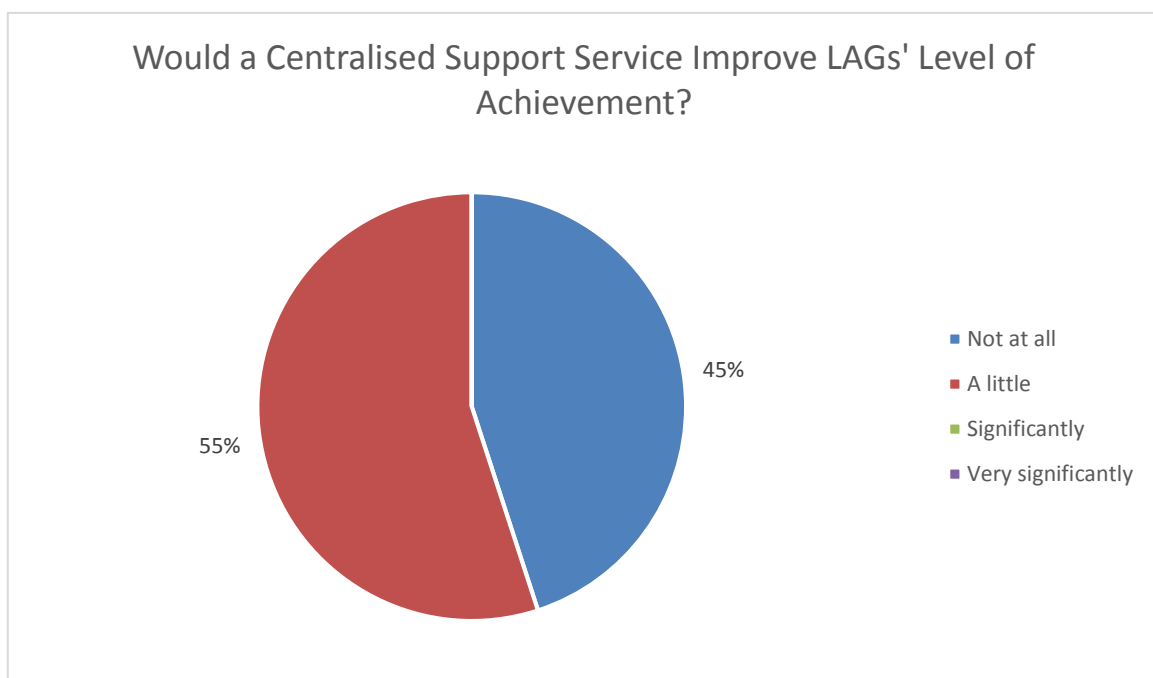


Question 30

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

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

Total Number of Responses 11



- None of the Finnish respondents thought that a centralised support service would improve the achievements of the LAG 'significantly' or 'very significantly' in contrast to the EU level where 37% stated this.
- Finnish LAGs thought predominantly that there would be 'no change at all' (45%) or 'very little' change (55%) in comparison to their EU peers (36% and 27% respectively).

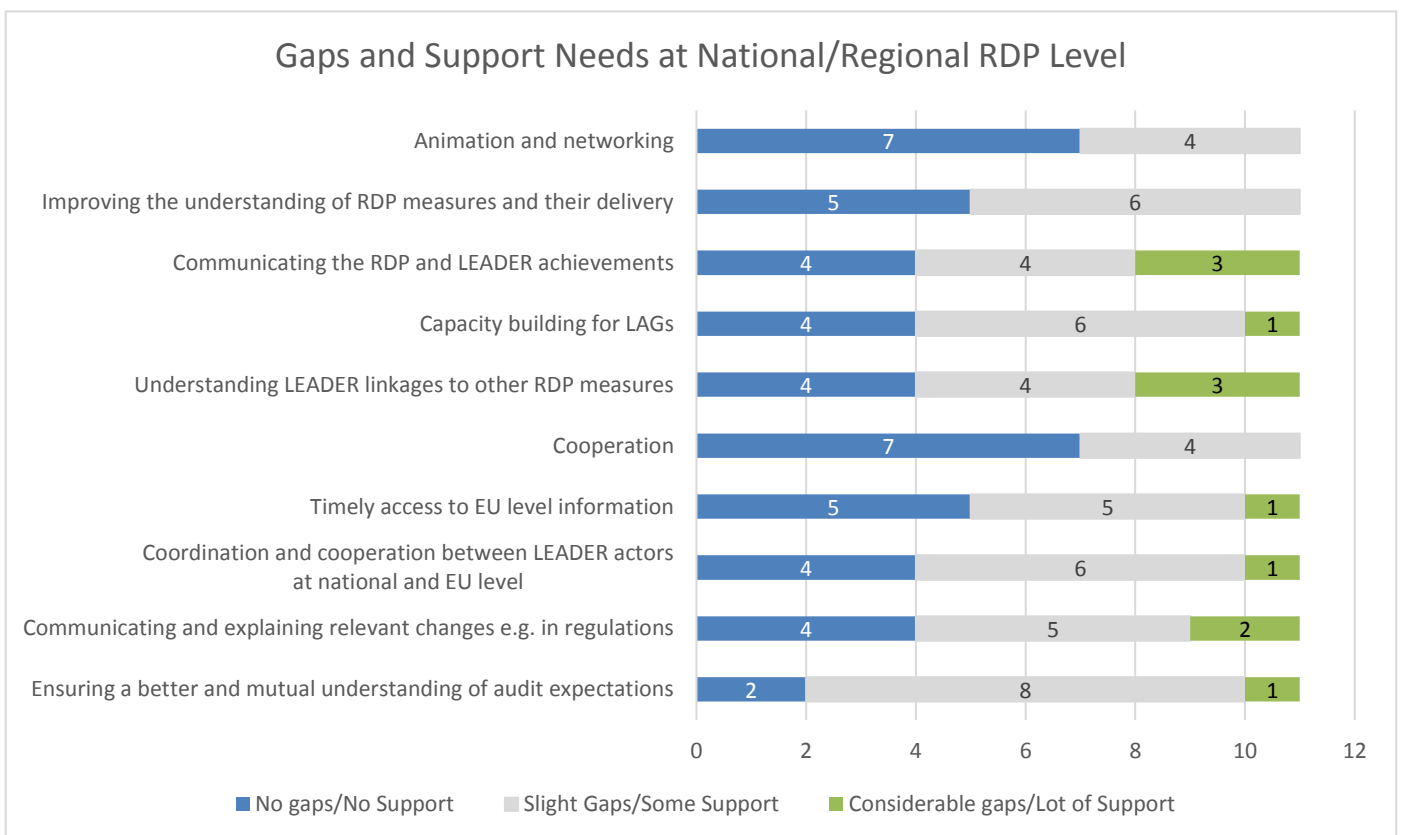
Question 31

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 11



- Finnish LAGs responded differently to those of the overall EU sample identifying a lower level of gaps across the range of support needs. In the areas of 'cooperation' and 'animation and networking' the majority of respondents in Finland identified that there were no gaps or support needs.

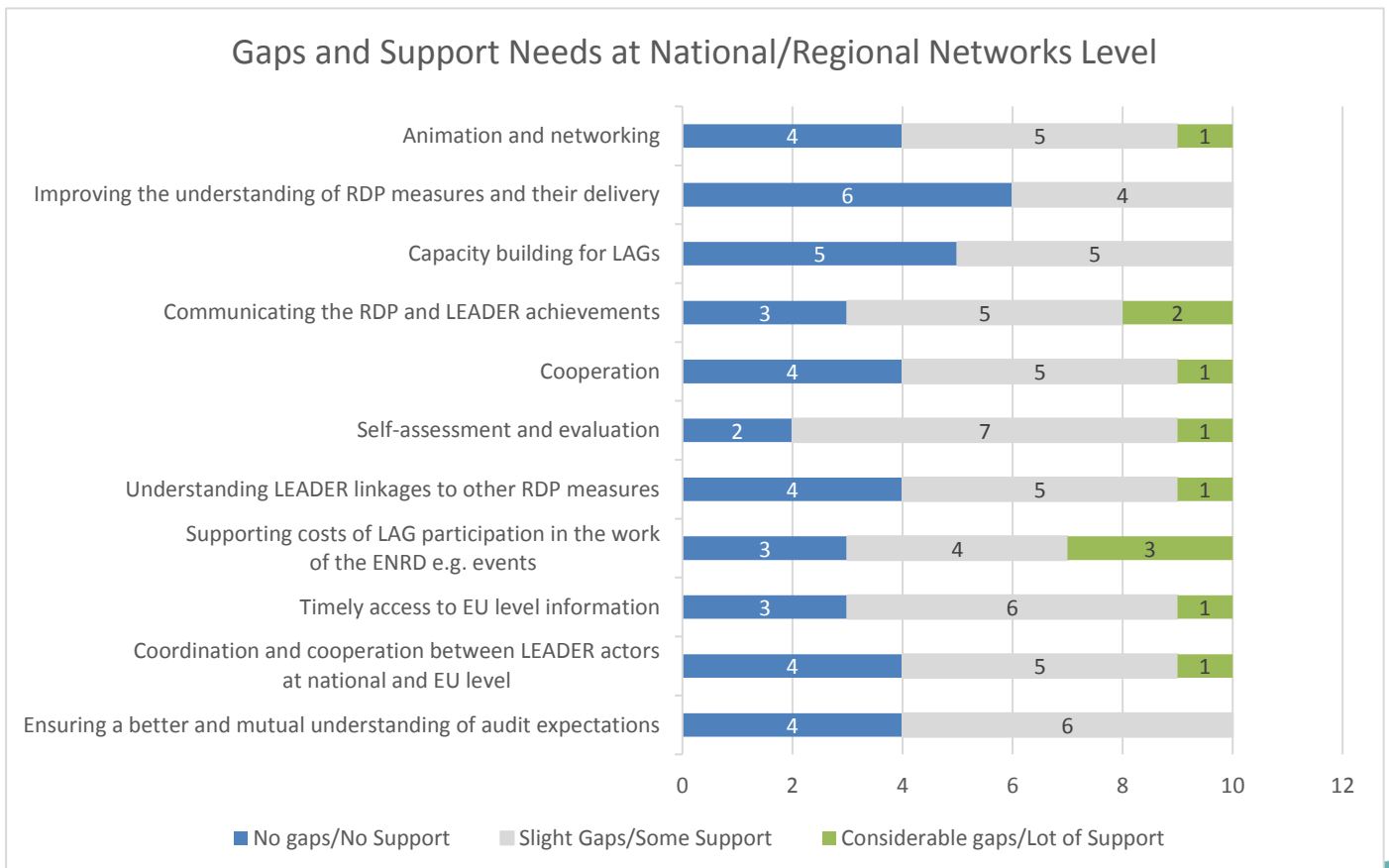
Question 32

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 10



- Proportionately fewer Finnish LAGs believed that there were ‘considerable gaps and lot of support needs’ across the various topics, particularly with regard to ‘ensuring better and mutual understanding of audit expectations’, ‘capacity building for LAGs’, and ‘improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery’ where none of the Finnish respondents identified considerable gaps.
- The greatest identified needs were in relation to self assessment and evaluation and supporting LAG costs in participating in the work of the ENRD.

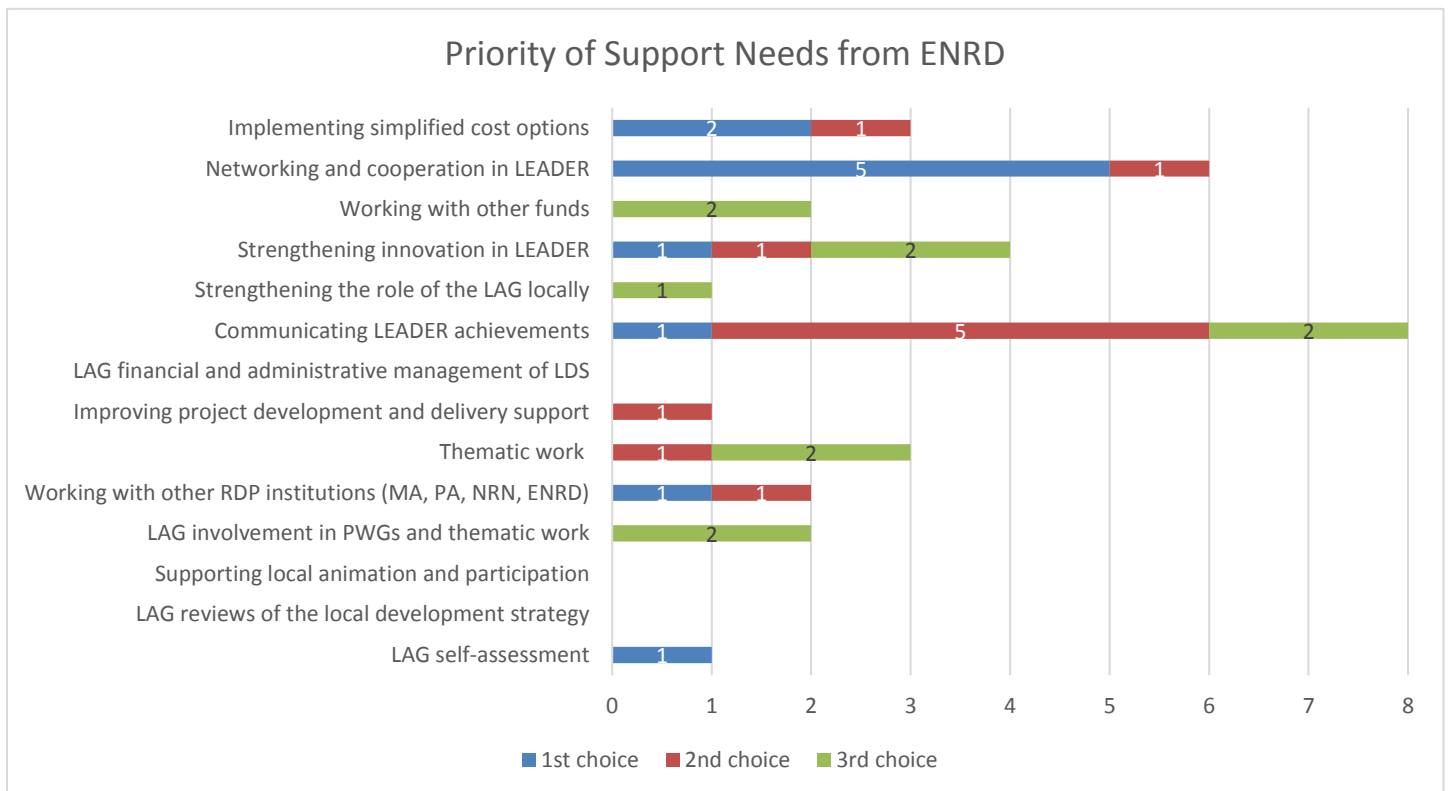
Question 33

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 11



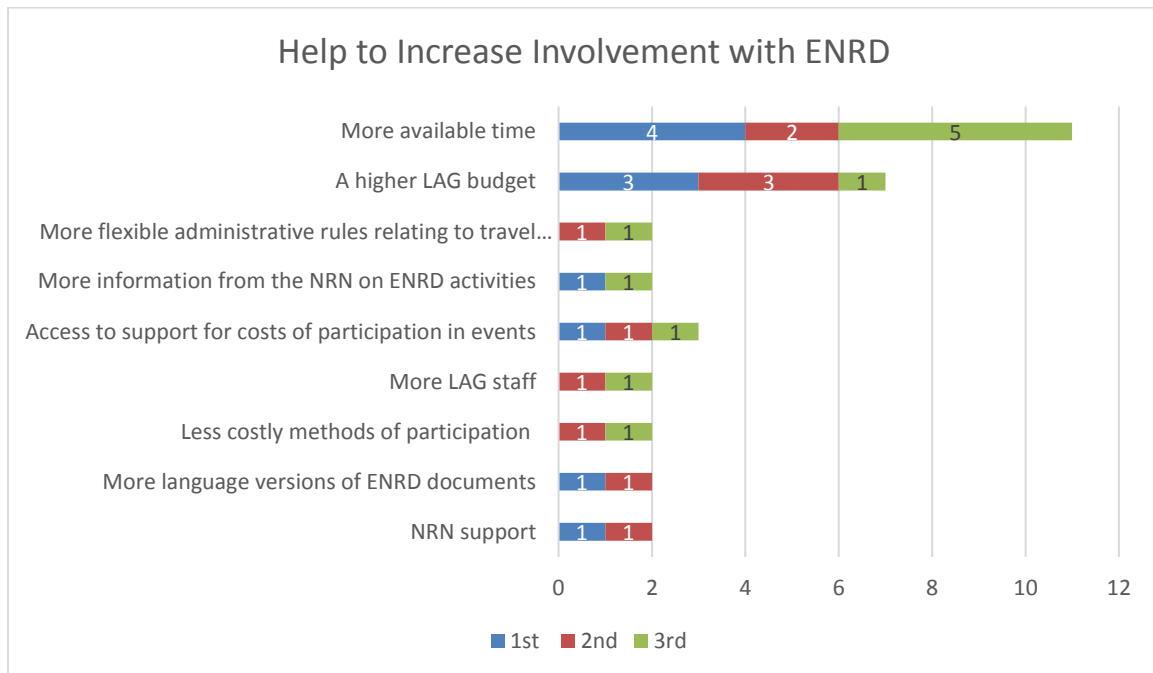
- Finnish respondents identified different priority support needs from ENRD in comparison to the EU sample. For example, the Finnish LAGs prioritised ‘communicating LEADER achievements’ as their highest rating in view of support needs (at EU level this only reached a priority around the middle of the above list).
- Proportionately more Finnish LAGs ranked ‘networking and cooperation in LEADER’ as top priority than their European counterparts.
- No LAGs in Finland prioritised the following support needs: ‘LAG financial and administrative management of LDS’, ‘Supporting local animation and participation’, and ‘LAG reviews of the LDS’ which all rated more highly in the EU sample.

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 11



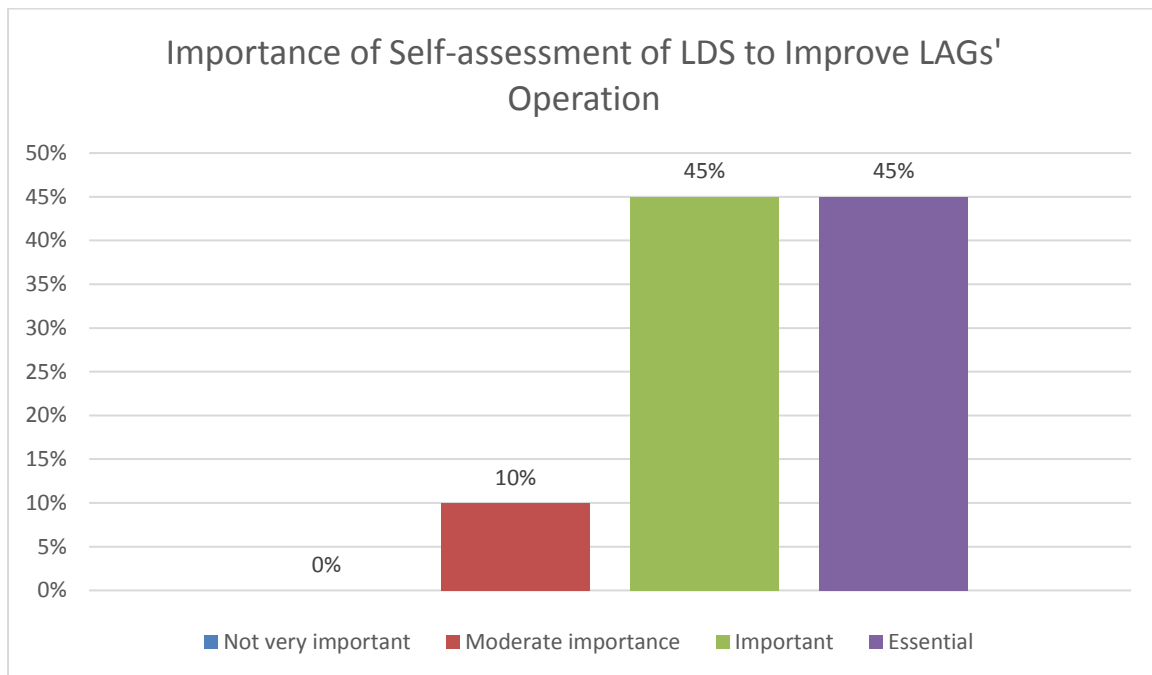
- The top two Finnish responses matched those given by the EU sample but were more strongly prioritised above the other options offered.

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 11



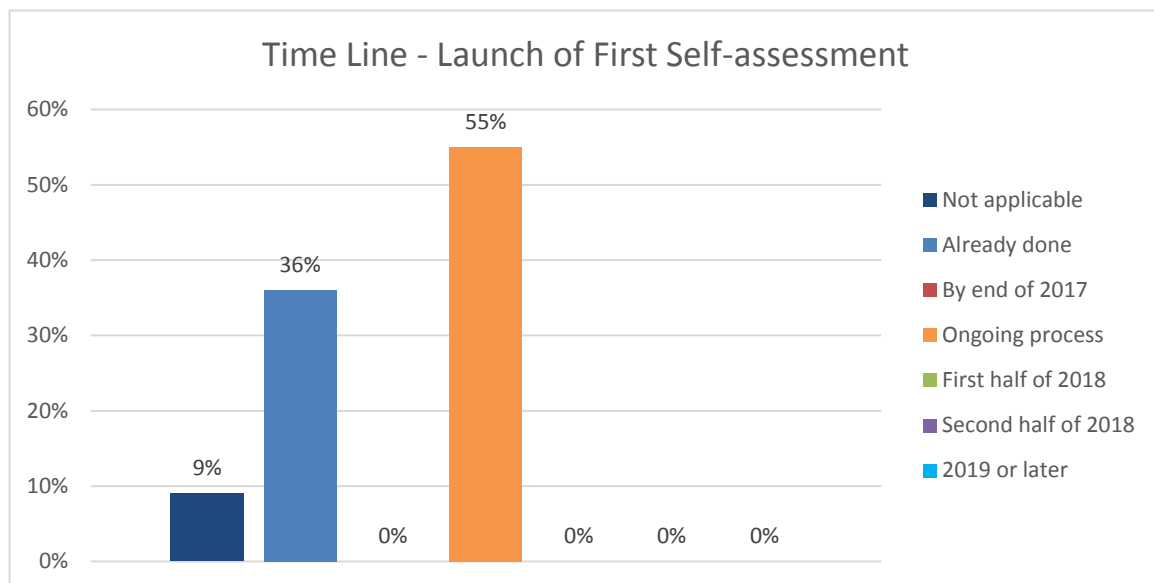
- Considerably more LAGs in Finland considered 'self-assessment' as 'essential' (45%) than in the EU sample (28%).

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 11



- For 36% of responding LAGs in Finland the first self-assessment had already been undertaken at the time of the survey, in comparison to 14% of the EU sample.
- More than half (55%) of all Finnish respondents indicated that self-assessment was an 'ongoing process'. This is a considerably higher percentage than at EU level (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 – 82%
- No – 18%

Total Number of Responses 11