



European Network for  
Rural Development

# **LEADER LAG Survey 2017**

**Working Paper**

**Findings at Member State level**

**Member State: Italy**

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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*

- Italy (IT)
- 28 LAGs responded, representing 3.94% of total LAG responses
- 28% of IT LAGs responded to the survey

## Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- IT has 1 national and 21 regional RDP programmes.
- Responses were received from LAGs in 11 regional programmes.

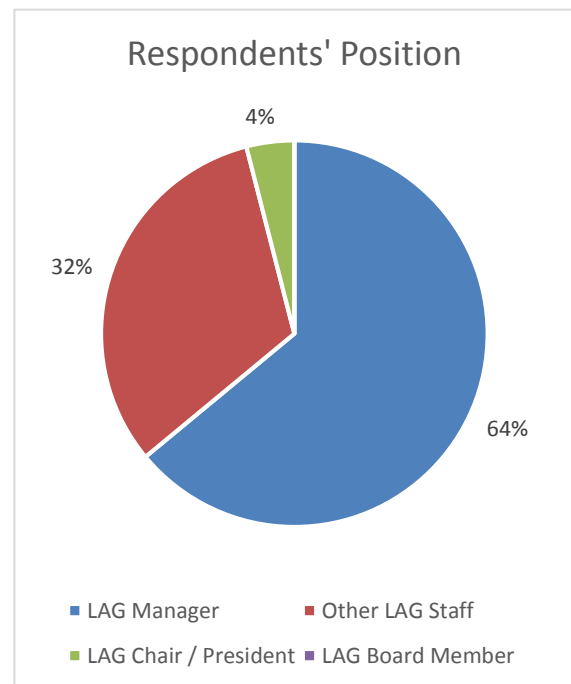
Total Number of Responses 28

## 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 28



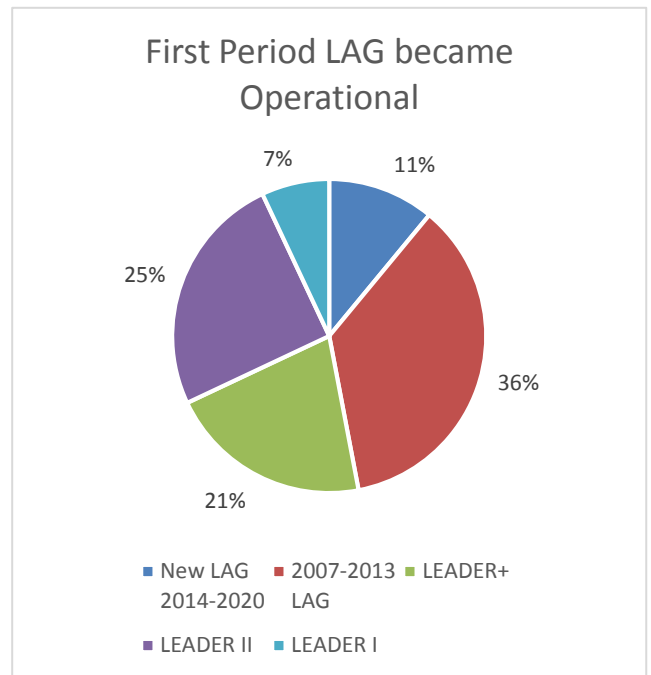
### Question 7

*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 28*

- Generally the Italian profile was similar to the EU-wide sample, although Italian responses included fewer new LAGs than the EU sample; 11% became operational in the current programme period in Italy as opposed to 22% in the EU sample.

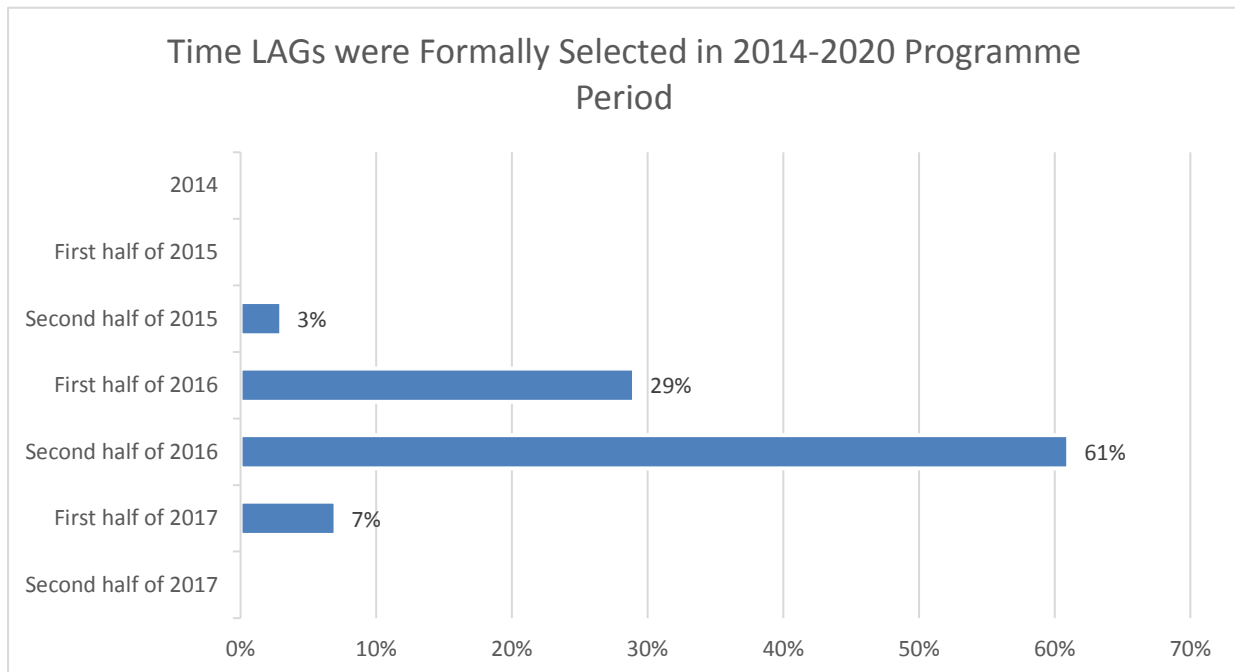


### Question 8

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 28



- At EU level 59% of LAGs were formally selected before 2016 as opposed to 3% of Italian LAGs.

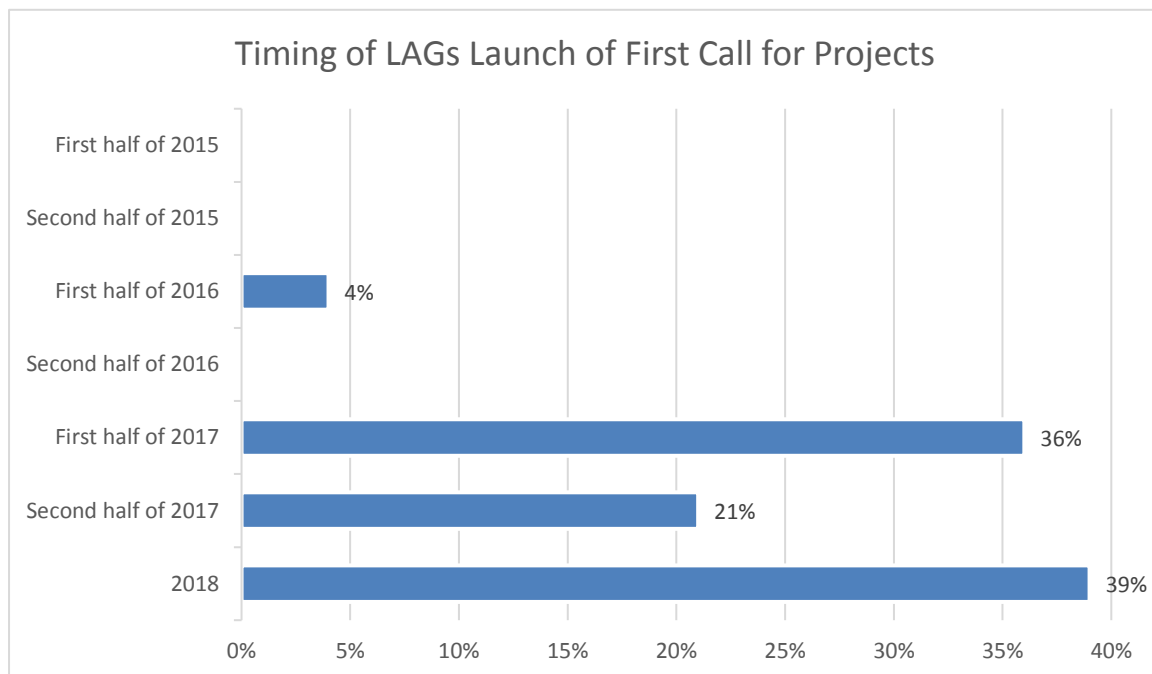


### Question 9

*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 28*



- By the first half of 2016 51% of EU LAGs who responded had launched a call compared to just 4% of Italian LAGs responding. Furthermore, 39% of Italian LAGs did not launch a first call until 2018 while across the EU only 10% of LAGs did not launch a first call until 2018.

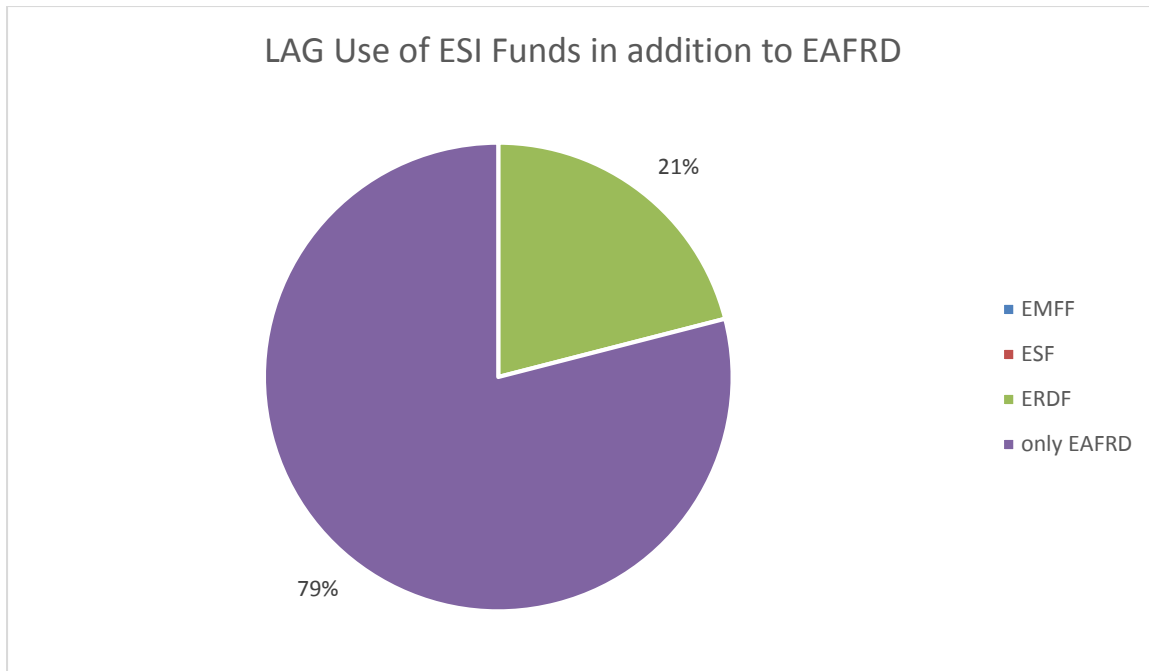
## LAG Funding

### Question 10

Please select all the European Structural and Investment Funds that your LAG uses to finance 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 28



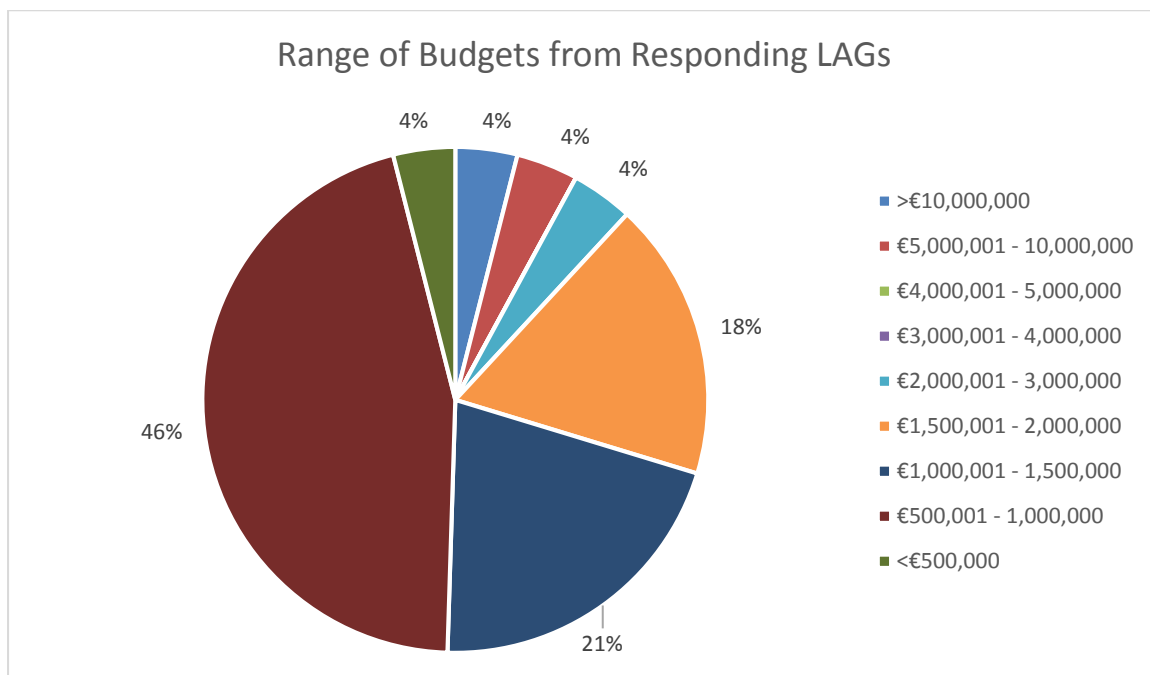
- A higher proportion of the Italian LAGs reporting use EAFRD only compared to the EU-wide sample (79% vs 67%). The proportion of LAGs using ERDF in Italy is similar to the EU-wide sample (21% vs 25%).

### Question 11

What is your LAG budget (total public expenditure Euro, i.e. EAFRD plus all other EU and domestic public funds) for the 2014-2020 Programming Period? Please provide your best estimate if data are not available.

- < €500,000
- €500,001 – 1,000,000
- €1,000,001 – 1,500,000
- €1,500,001 – 2,000,000
- €2,000,001 – 3,000,000
- €3,000,001 – 4,000,000
- €4,000,001- 5,000,000
- €5,000,001 – 10,000,000
- >€10,000,000

Total Number of Responses 28



- Most Italian LAGs who responded have relatively large budgets; 51% of EU LAGs have a budget over €3m whereas in Italy the figure is 88%.
- A much higher proportion of Italian LAGs (46%) than the EU-wide sample average (3%) report a budget between €5,000,001 and €10,000,000

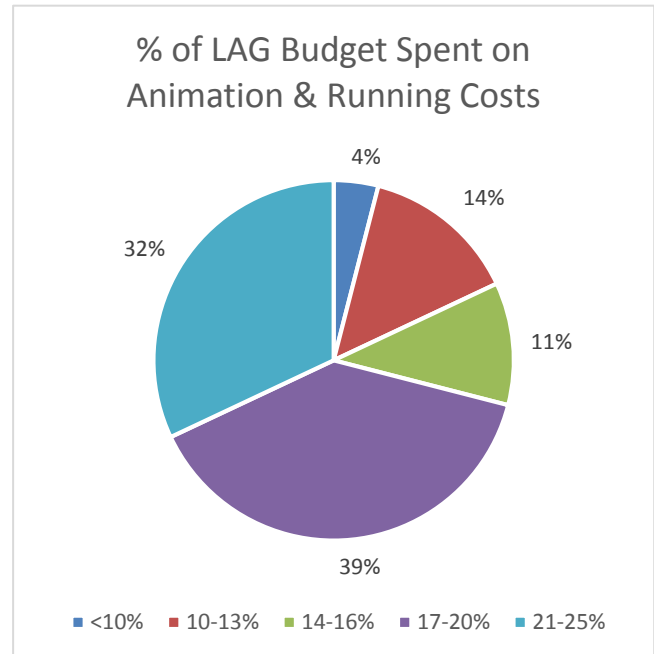
### Question 12

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 28

- Italian LAGs responses mirror the EU-wide sample very closely. The most significant difference being that only 4% of Italian LAGs allocated under 10% of their budget on running costs and animation, whereas across the EU 11% of LAGs do so.



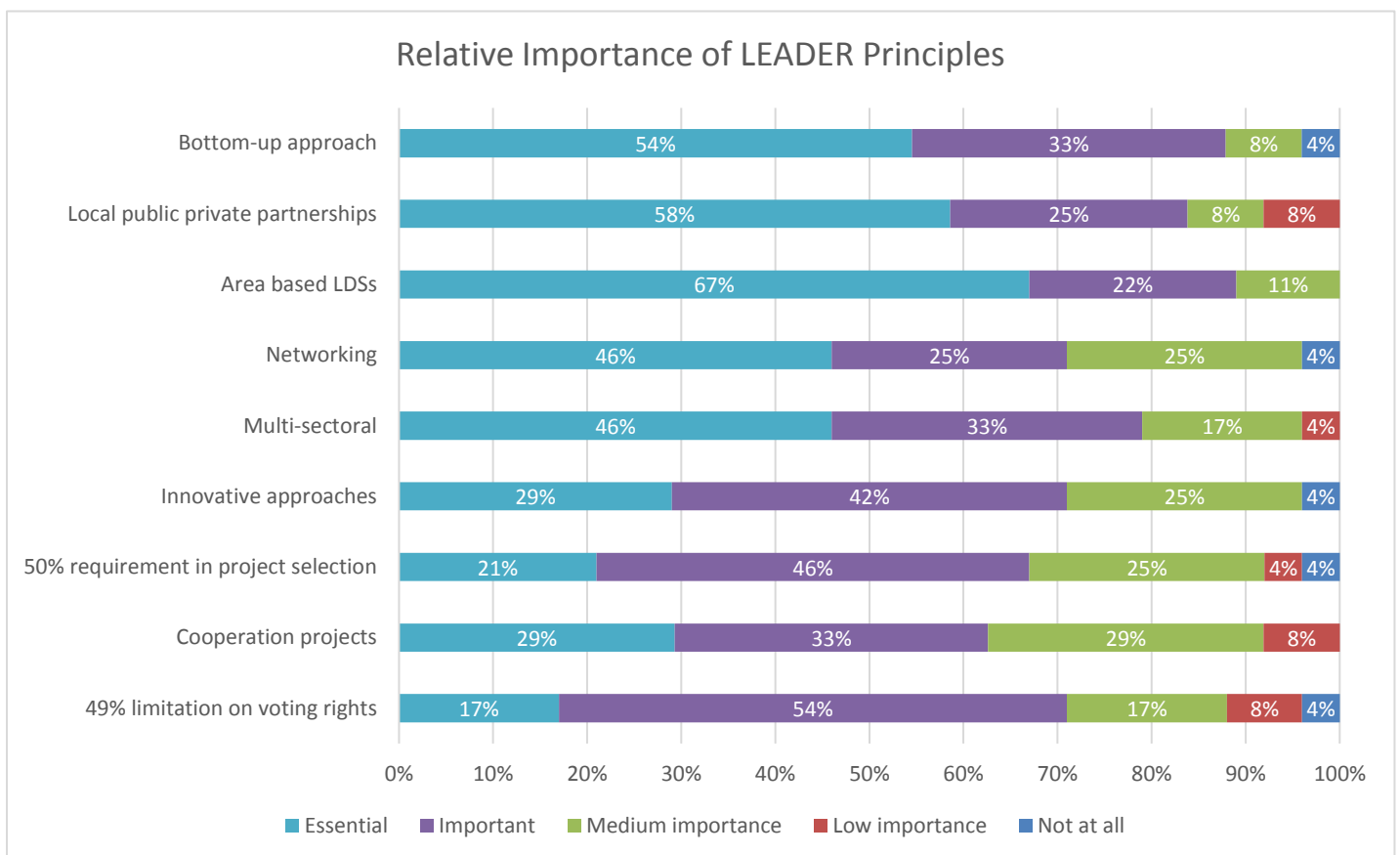
## LEADER Principles

### 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 24



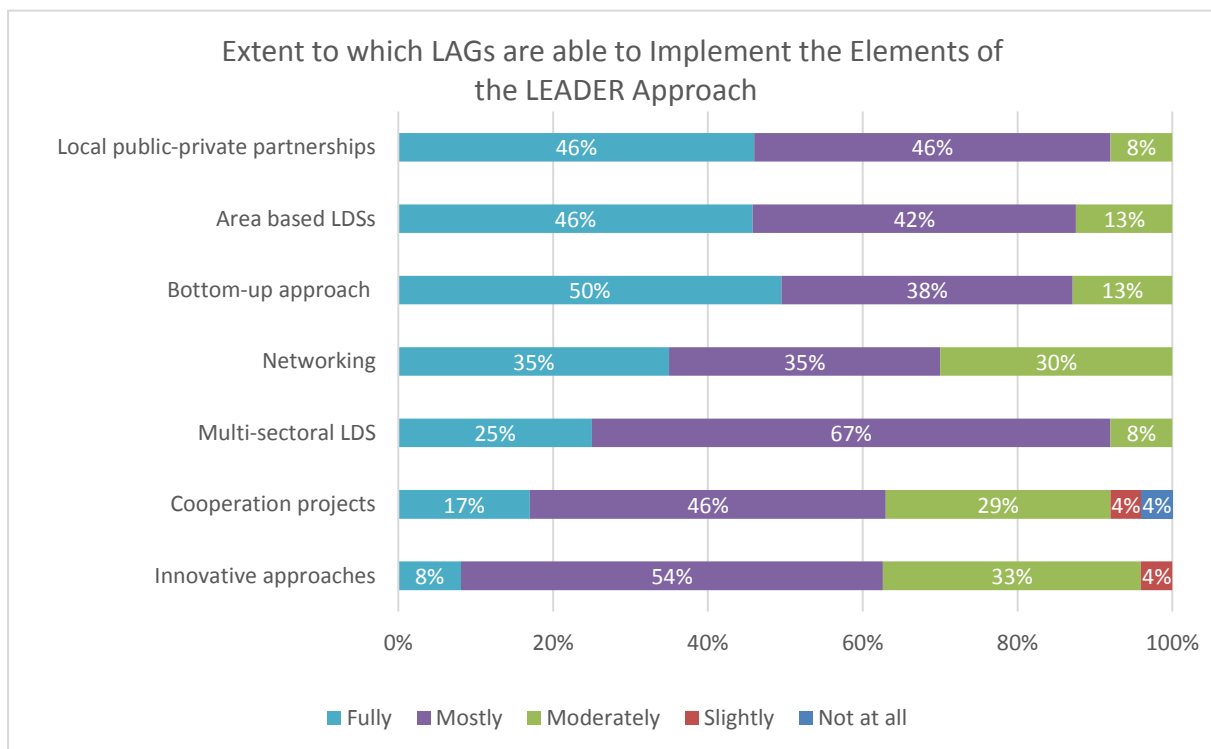
- The importance placed on LEADER principles by Italian LAGs was very similar to the values given across the EU-wide sample.
- The three LEADER principles regarded as essential most often amongst the Italian LAGs who responded were also most often regarded as essential amongst the EU LAGs although there was some minor variation in their relative importance.
- There was some variation; 71% of Italian LAGs viewed the 49% limitation on voting rights as important or essential, whereas across the EU only 53% did so.

### 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 24



- The extent to which Italian LAGs are able to implement elements of the LEADER approach is similar to the EU-wide picture. One notable difference is that 92% of Italian LAGs feel that a multi-sectoral LDS is able to be implemented mostly or fully compared to the EU wide figure of 69%.
- The levels of 'Slightly' or 'Not at all' responses was lower than the EU sample for all elements.

### Question 15

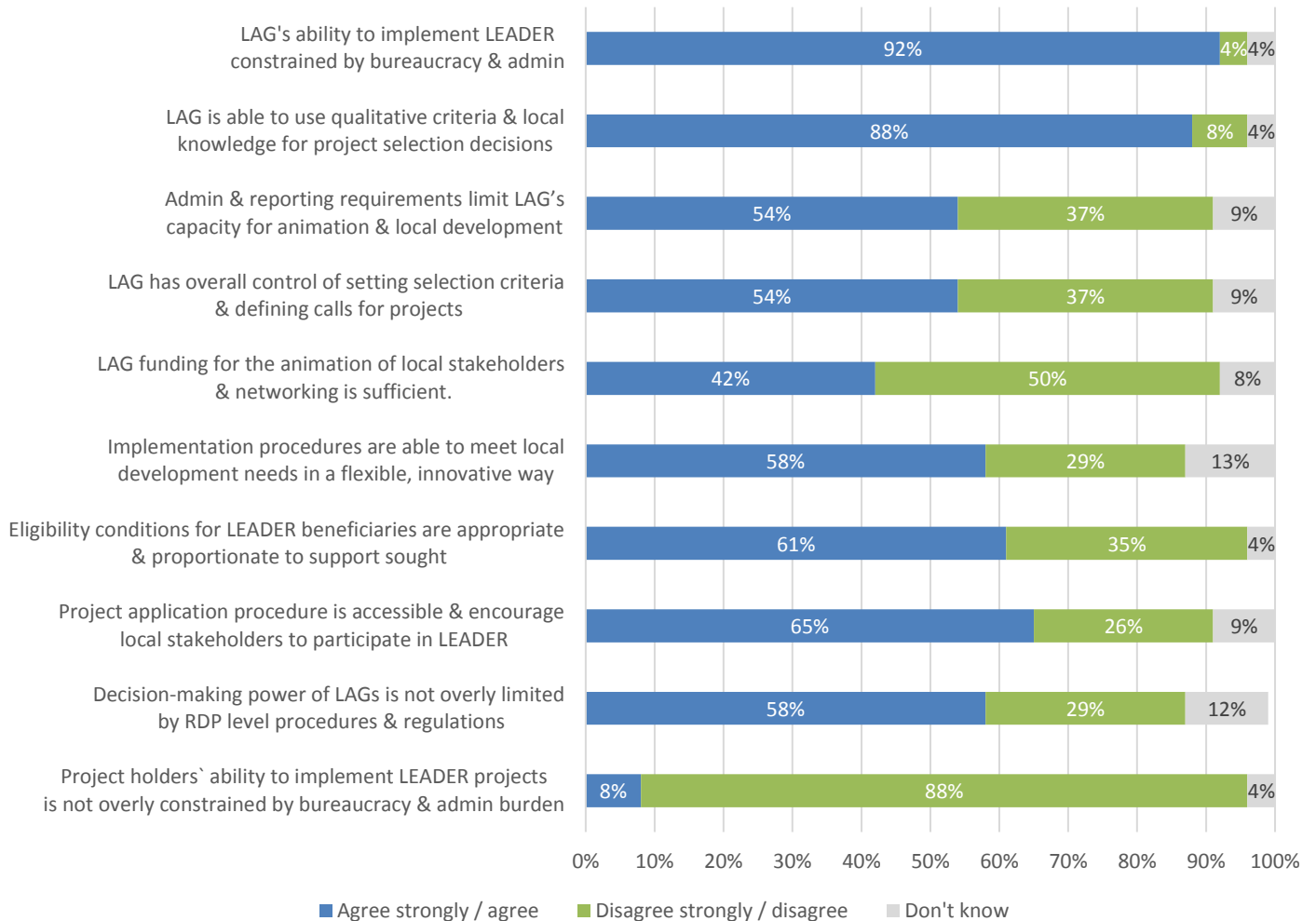
*Please consider the statements below and for each statement select the option that best reflects your practical experience from this scale: 1 = disagree strongly, 2 = disagree, 3 = don't know, 4 = agree, 5 = agree strongly.*

- 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 24*



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



- Compared to the EU average more Italian LAGs who responded felt that the 'Project application procedure is accessible and encourages local stakeholders to participate in LEADER', with 65% agreeing or strongly agreeing compared to an EU-wide average of 33%.
- A higher proportion of Italian than EU LAGs agreed that the decision-making power of LAGs is not overly limited by RDP level procedures and regulations (58% vs 29%) and that eligibility conditions for LEADER beneficiaries are appropriate and proportionate (61% vs 39%).
- Fewer Italian LAGs than the EU-wide sample agreed that admin and reporting requirements limit LAGs capacity for animation and local development (54% vs 69%). The proportion reporting that the LAG has overall control of setting selection criteria and defining calls for projects was also lower than in the EU (54% vs 66%).

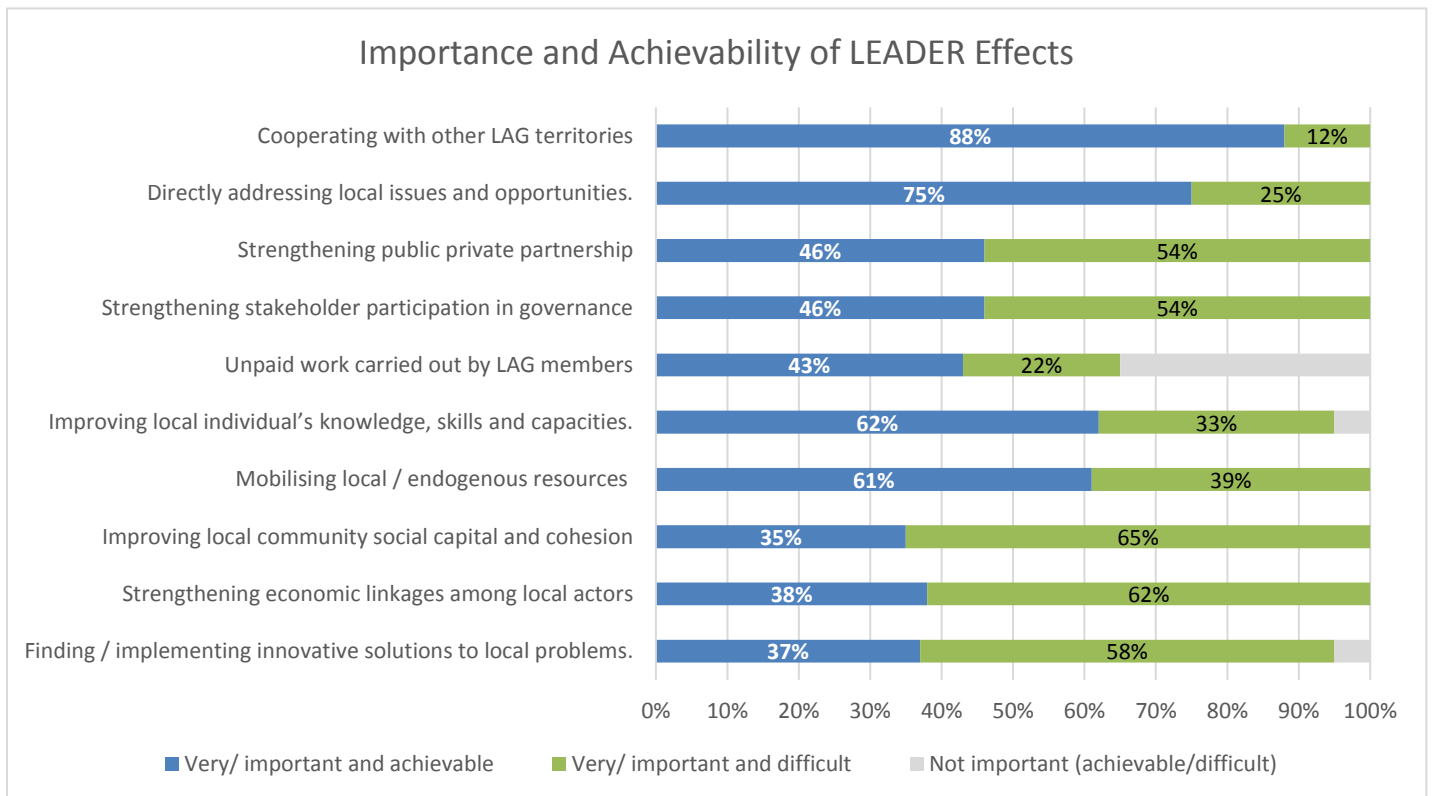
### Question 16

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 24



- Italian LAGs judged the following LEADER effects to be important and achievable more frequently than the EU average; cooperation with other LAG territories (88% vs 67%), mobilising local / endogenous resources (61% vs 42%), improving local knowledge, skills and capacities (62% vs 48%) and directly addressing local issues and opportunities (75% vs 63%).
- A higher proportion of Italian LAGs felt that strengthening public private partnership was important but difficult in cases than the EU average (54% vs 38%) and strengthening stakeholder participation in governance was also felt to be important but difficult in a higher proportion of cases (54% vs 42%).

## LEADER Operation

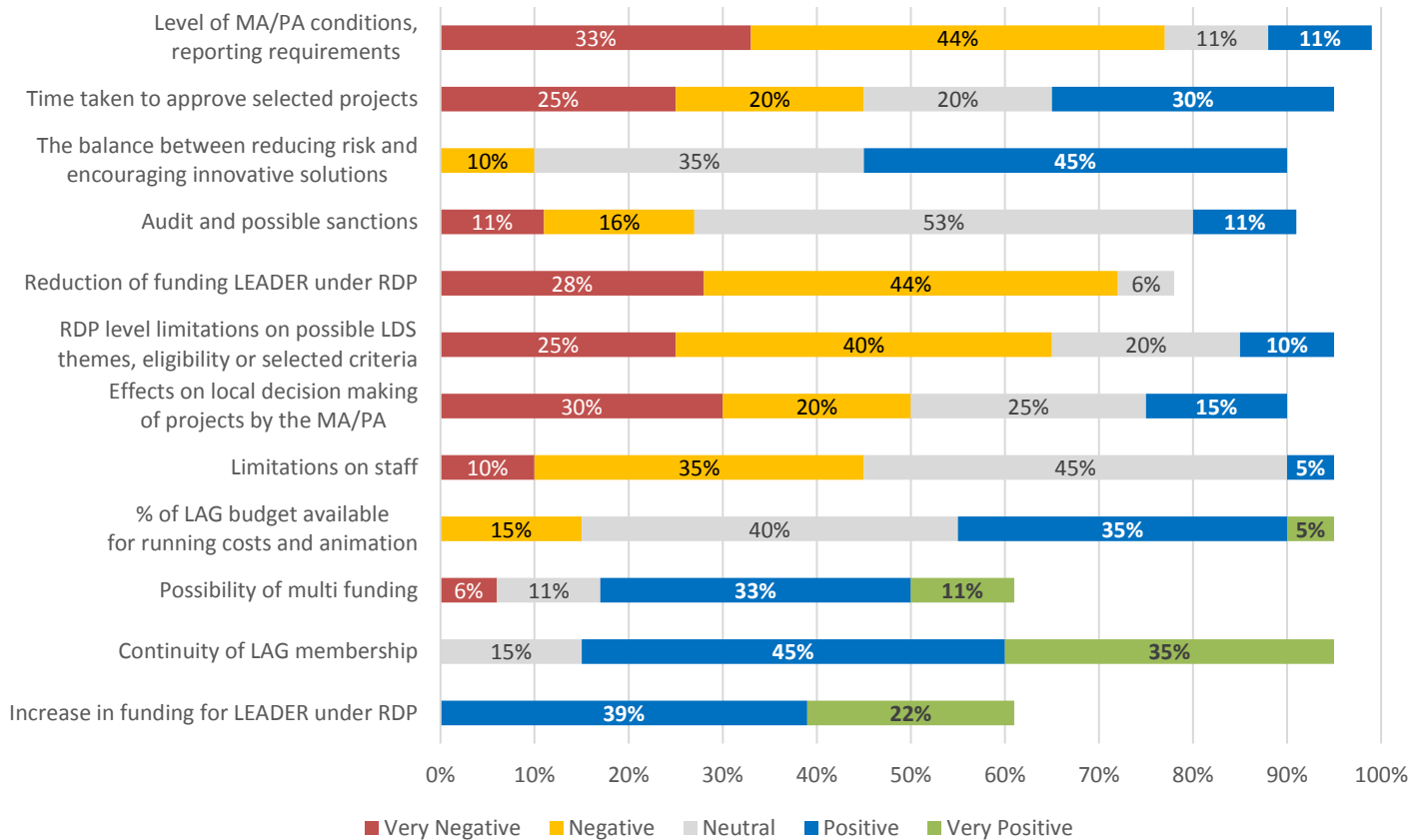
### Question 17

*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 20*

## 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.

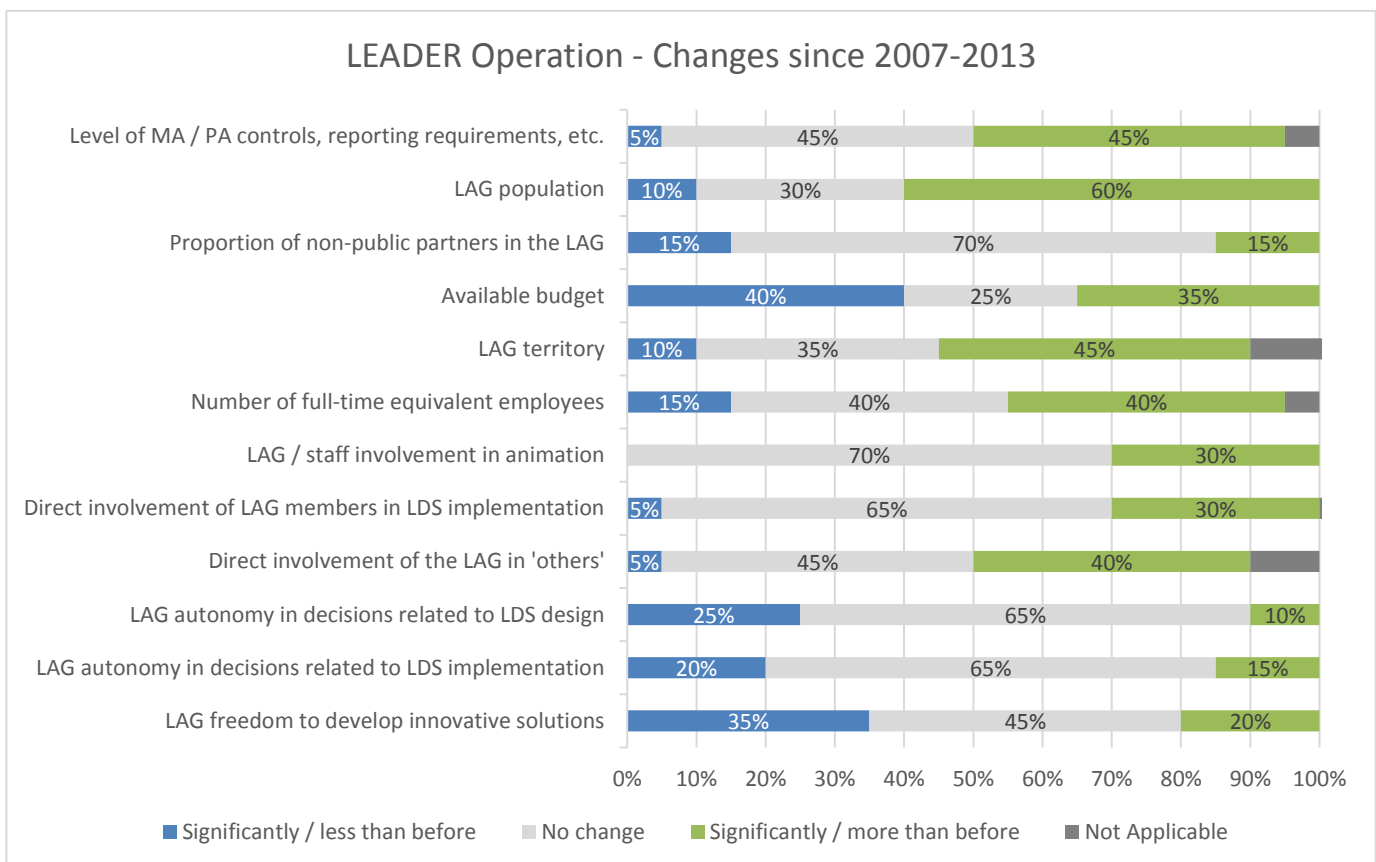
- Italian LAGs responding tended to be more positive overall regarding the vast majority of these effects.
- The effect of the balance between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions in Italy was much more positively regarded than in the wider sample (45% vs 9%), negative perspectives were also much lower.
- LAGs in Italy were more positive about the effect of continuity of LAG membership, (80% positive or very vs 38%) and also regarding the time taken to approve selected projects (30% vs 9%).
- Audit and possible sanctions was only regarded as negative by 27% of LAGs compared to 56% across the EU.

### 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 20



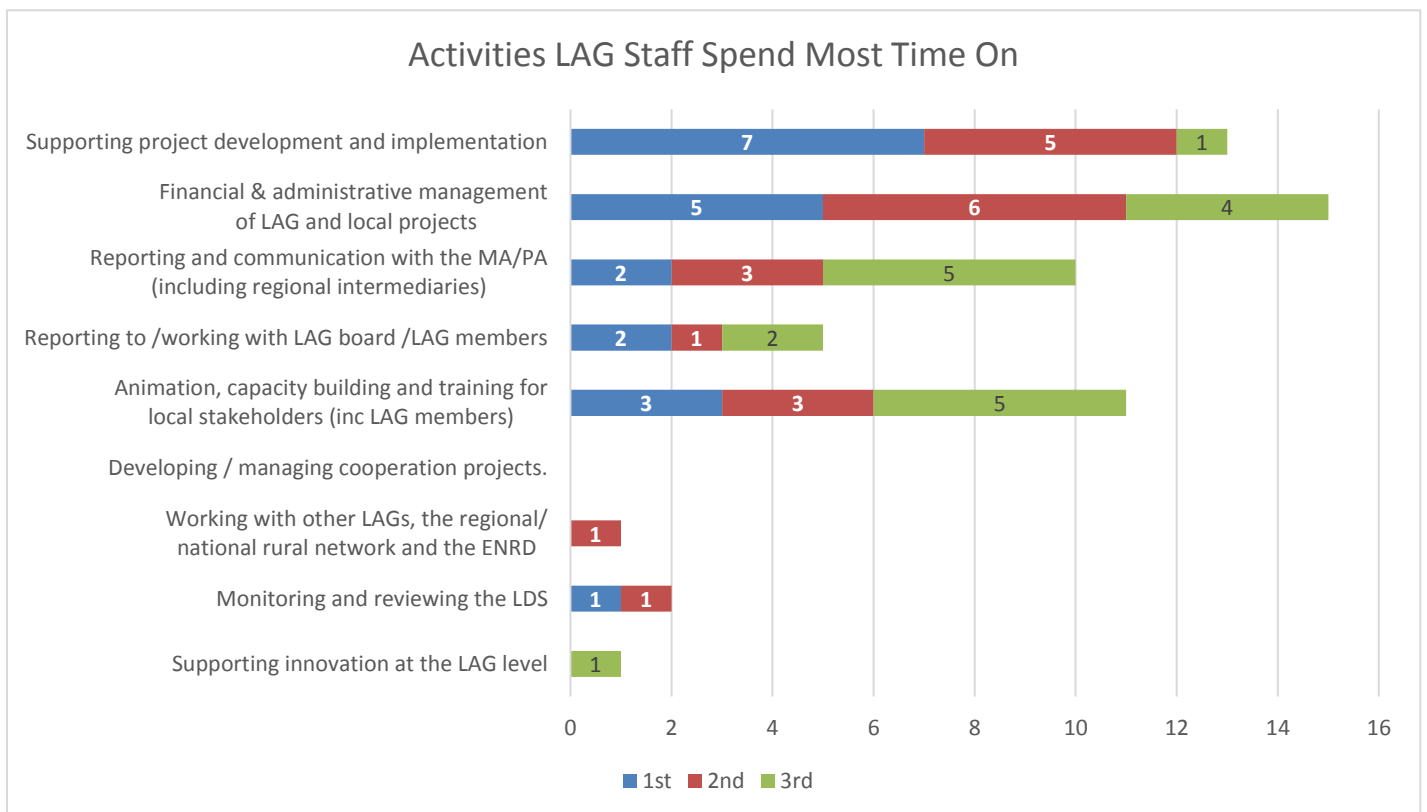
- It is noticeable that LAG population is more frequently reported to have increased in Italy (60%) than across the EU (34%) as had the LAG territory (45% vs 27%).
- The number of full-time equivalent employees, LAG / staff involvement in animation and the direct involvement of LAG in other regional and territorial development actions or structures were all noticeably more frequently judged to have increased by Italian LAGs compared to the EU average.

### 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 20



- Animation, capacity building and training for local stakeholders was much more frequently ranked as a top 3 activity amongst the Italian LAGs than across the EU-wide sample, when taken as a proportion of respondents in each sample.
- For most other activities the relative amount of time spent on each activity by LAG staff was not dissimilar to the European average.

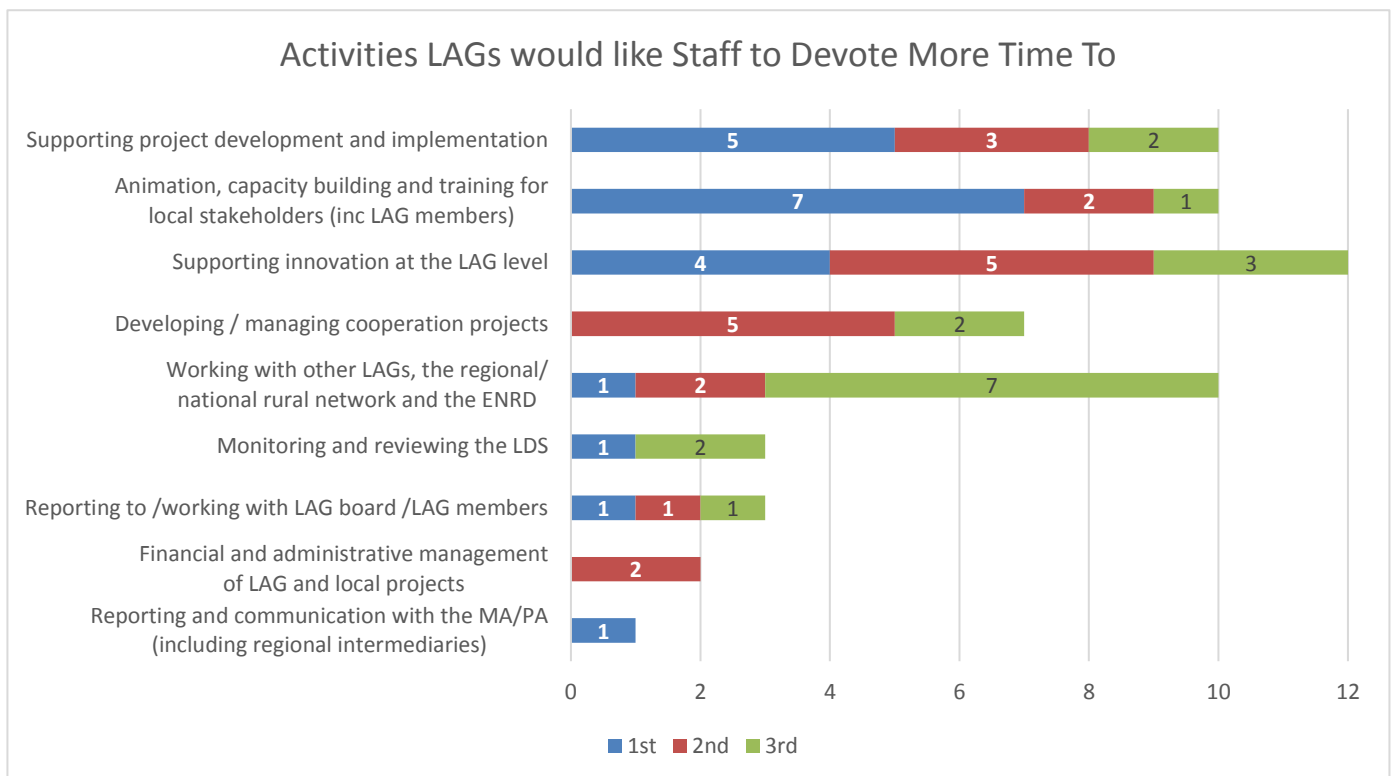


## Question 20

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 20



- Supporting innovation and working with other LAG etc were more regularly stated as activities that LAGs would like staff to devote more time to in Italy, but overall the relative importance of each activity was remarkably similar to the EU-wide sample.

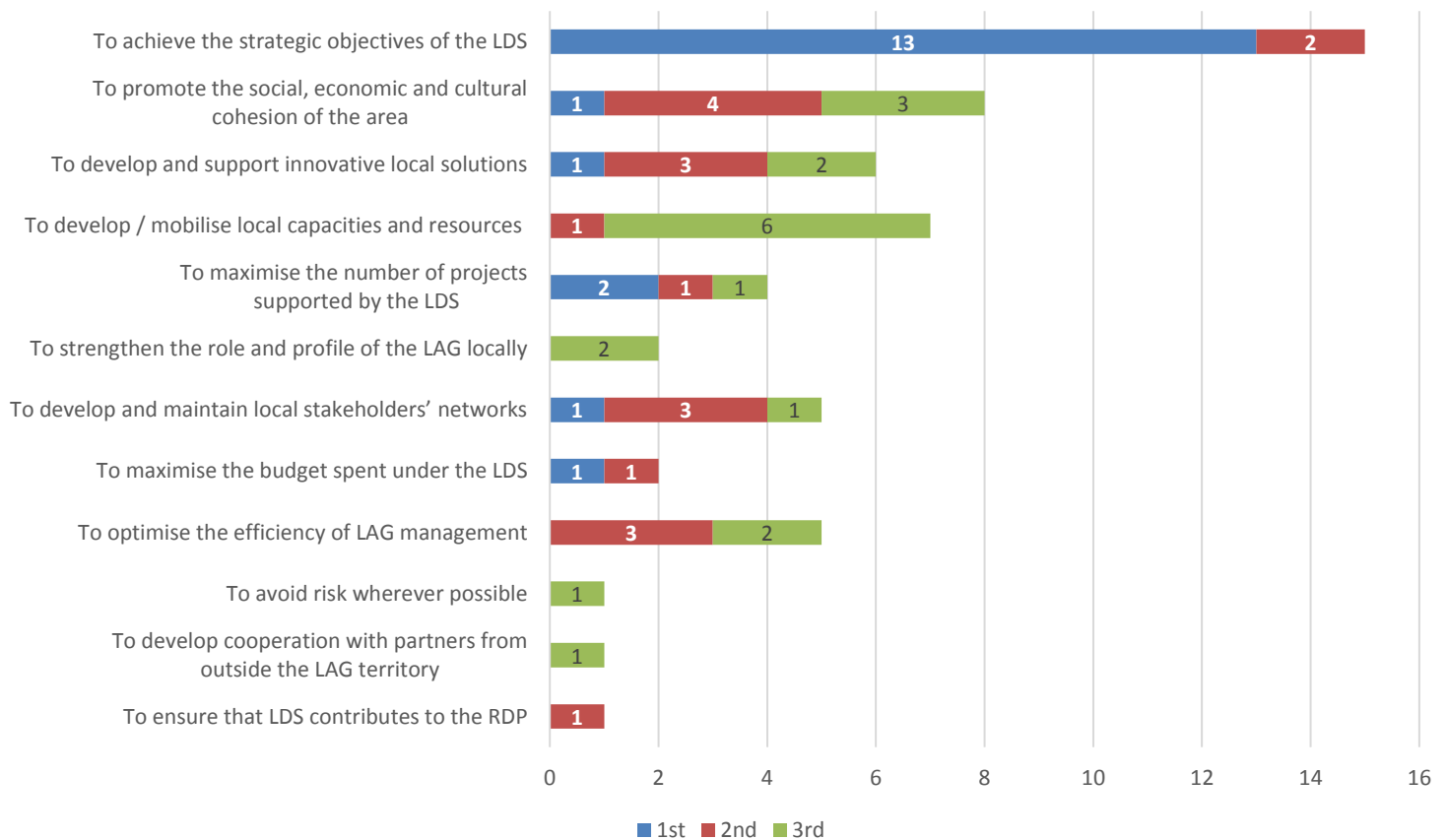
### Question 21

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 20

### Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs



- The importance ranking given to LAG operational priorities by Italian respondents was quite similar to the EU wide sample, the top four priorities were the same across both samples.

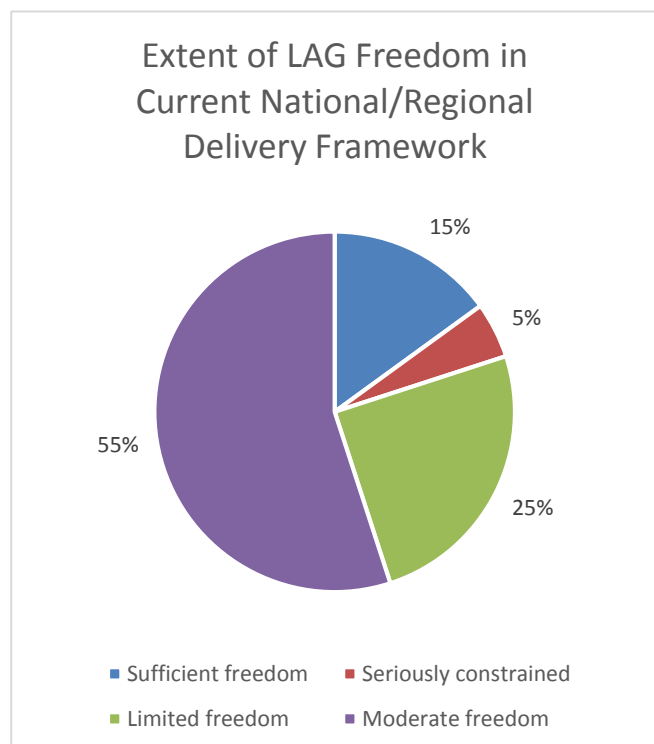
## Question 22

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 20

- A greater proportion of Italian respondents felt that their freedom in current national / regional delivery frameworks was moderate than the EU wide sample (55% vs 45%).
- A smaller proportion thought it was seriously constrained less frequently (5% vs 11%).
- Freedom was held to be both sufficient and limited to a similar extent across both samples.

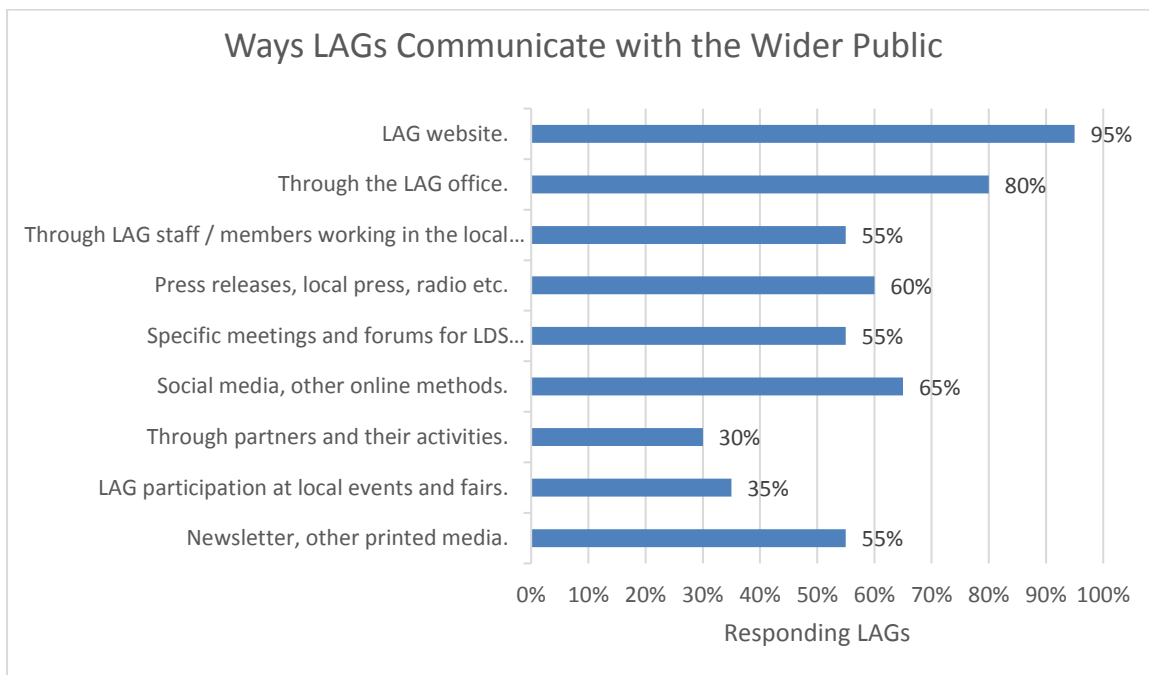


### Question 23

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 20



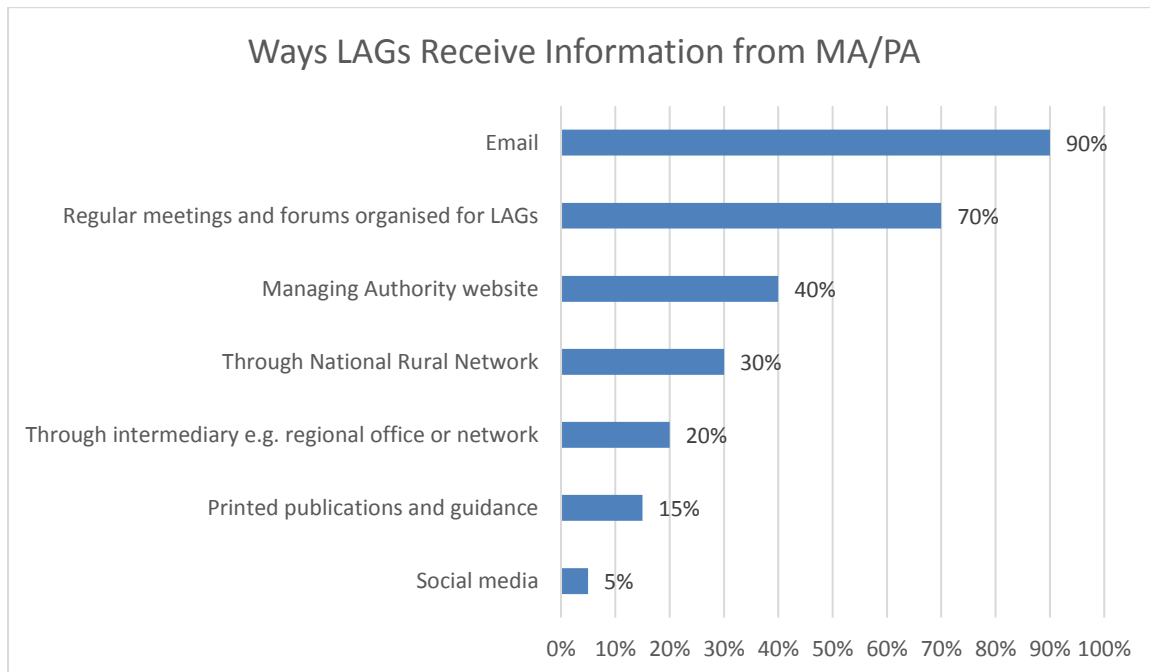
- The ways in which Italian LAGs communicate with the wider public was broadly similar to the methods used across the EU.
- Compared to the EU average Italian LAGs communicate somewhat less frequently through LAG staff / members working in the local community (55% vs 66%), partners and their activities (30% vs 54%) and through LAG participation at local events and fairs (35% vs 52%).

### 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 20*



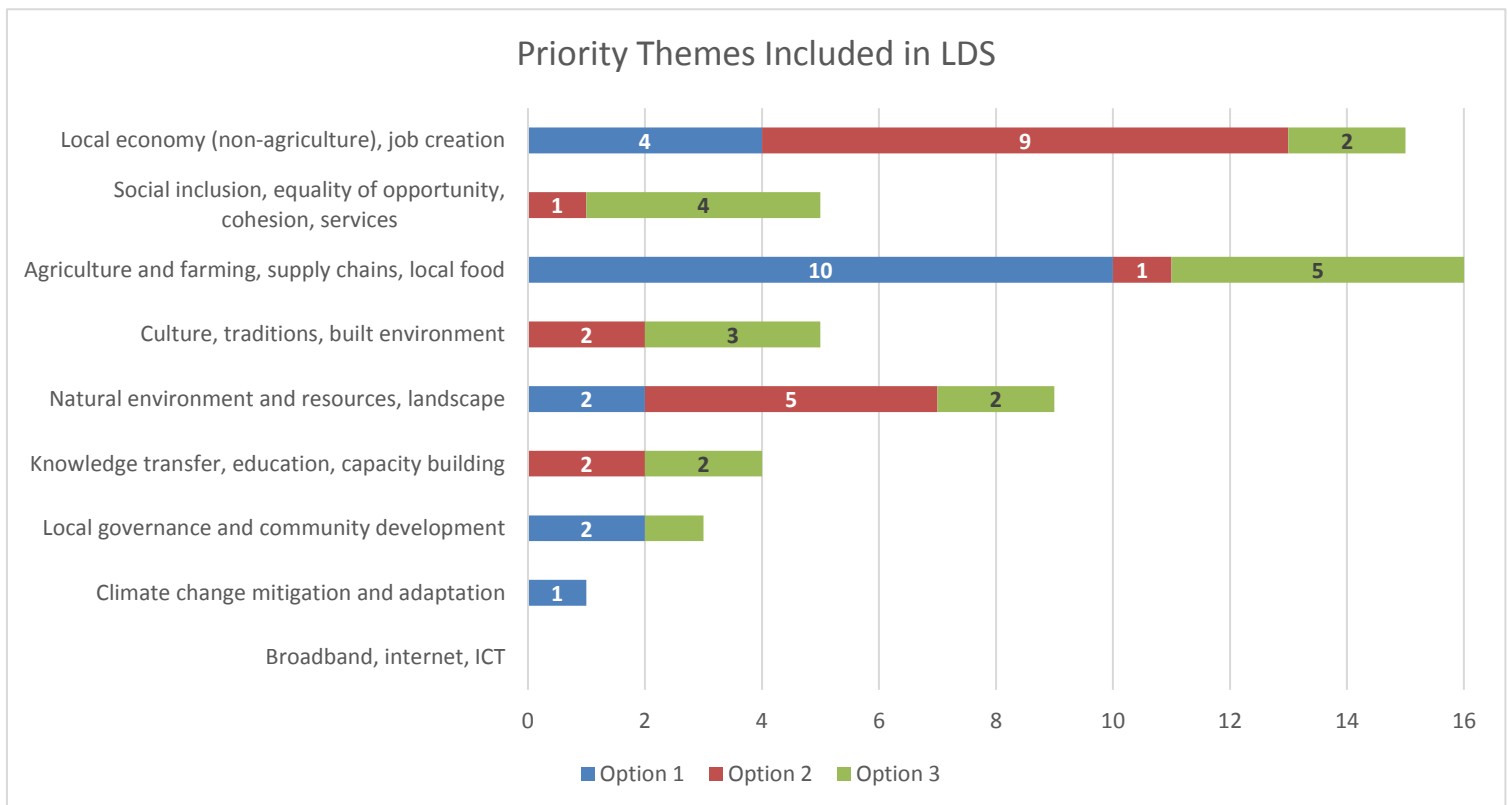
- The methods in which LAGs receive information from the MA/PA in Italy was remarkably similar to the picture across the EU.

### 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 20



- In common with the EU wide sample, local economy (non-agricultural), job creation and agriculture and farming, supply chains, local food were frequently ranked by Italian LAGs as priority themes included in the LDS.
- ‘Social inclusion, equality of opportunity, cohesion, services’ and ‘Culture, traditions and built environment’ were much less frequently identified by Italian LAGs as priority themes included in their LDS compared to the EU wide sample.

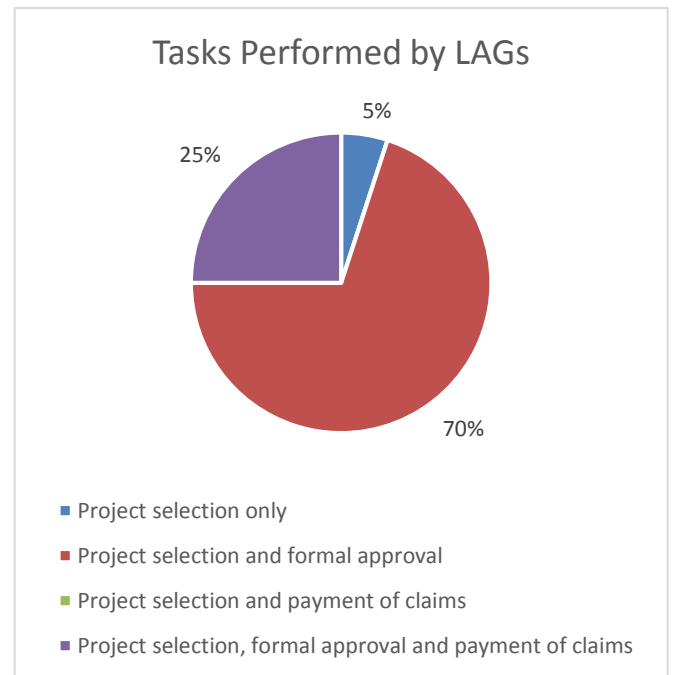
### Question 26

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 20

- The Italian LAGs are much more involved in formal approval compared to the EU wide sample (95% of cases in Italy vs 49% across the EU). Only 5% of Italian LAGs said they were involved in project selection only compared to 48% across the EU.





## LEADER Improvements

### Question 27

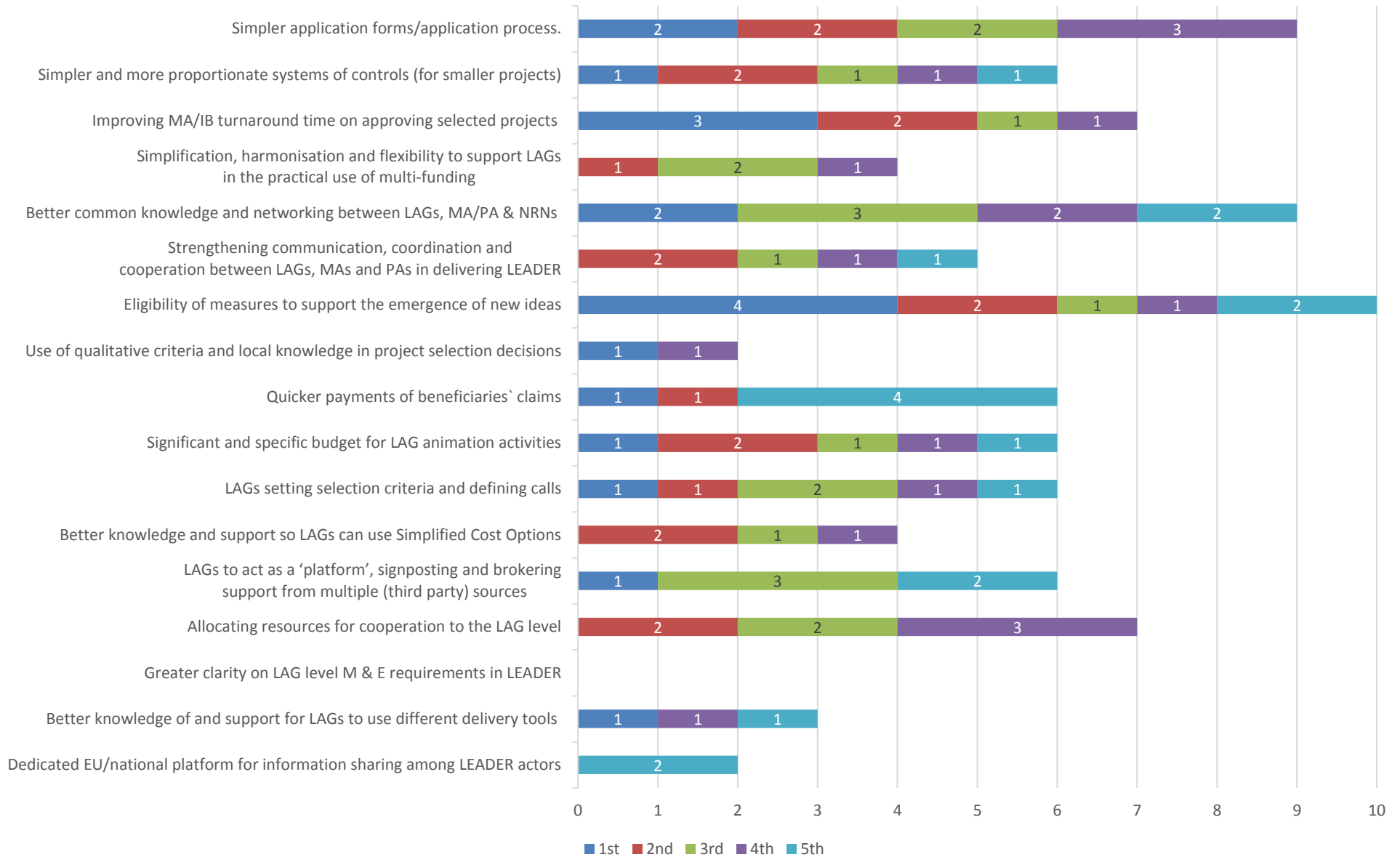
*What is most important to address in helping LAGs to be effective in implementing LEADER now? Please select and rank your top five priorities from the following items in order of their importance in (where 1= highest importance and 5 = 5th most important)*

- 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 20*

- There were several noticeable differences in the changes regarded as important by Italian respondents compared to the EU-wide sample. Eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas was the most frequently ranked important change in Italy but only the seventh across the EU.
- Simplification, harmonisation and flexibility to support LAGs in the practical use of multi-funding was ranked fourth across the EU, but joint twelfth amongst the Italian LAGs. Allocating resources for cooperation to LAG level was noticeably more important in Italy than the EU.

## Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now

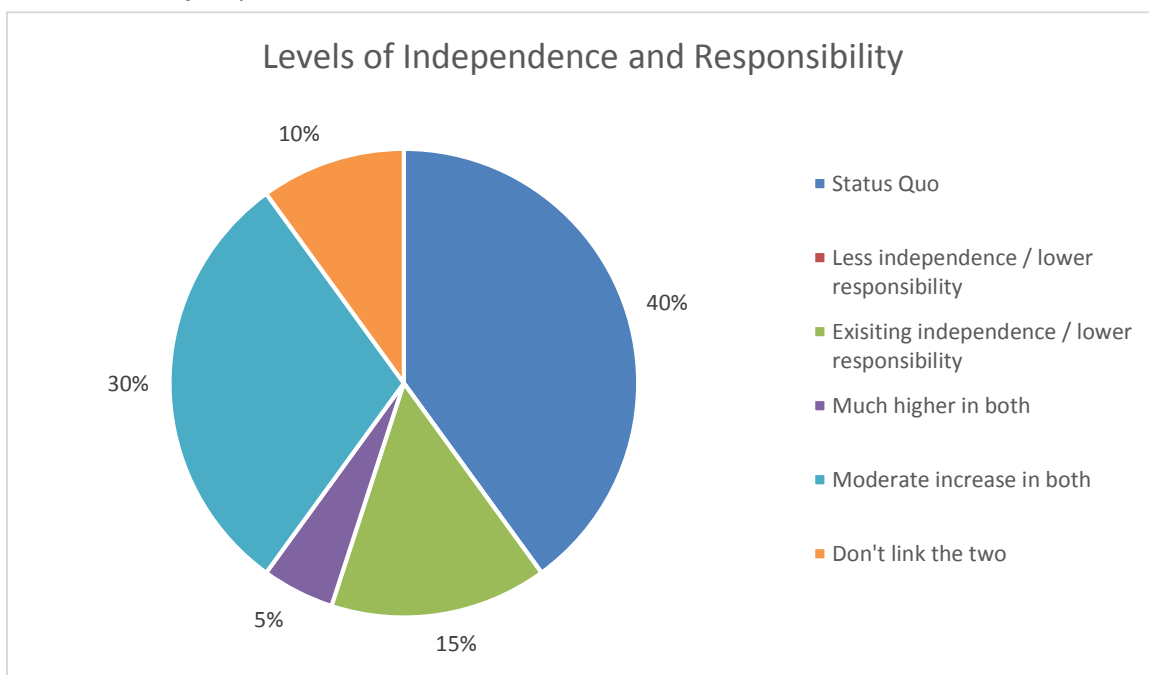


### Question 28:

*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 20



- Italian LAGs were more in favour of the status quo (40%) than is the case across the EU (20%).
- A lower proportion of LAGs are against linking independence and responsibility in Italy vs the EU-wide sample (10% vs 24%).
- Proportionately fewer Italian LAGs would prefer much higher levels of both independence and responsibility than in the wider sample (5% vs 19%).

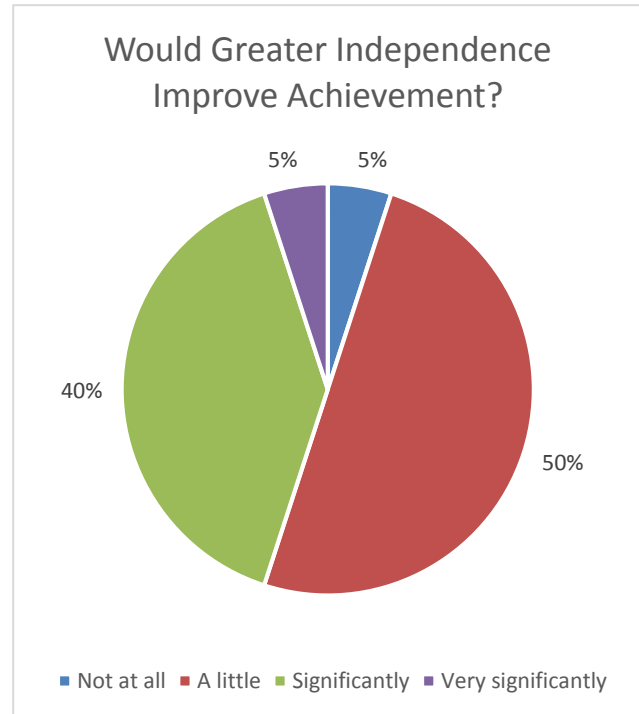
### Question 29

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 20

- Generally, the Italian LAGs thought the impact of greater independence would be marginally more moderate than the EU-wide average; fewer Italian LAGs thought the impact of greater independence would be very significant (5% vs 12%), but likewise fewer thought that it would have no impact on achievement (5% vs 12%).

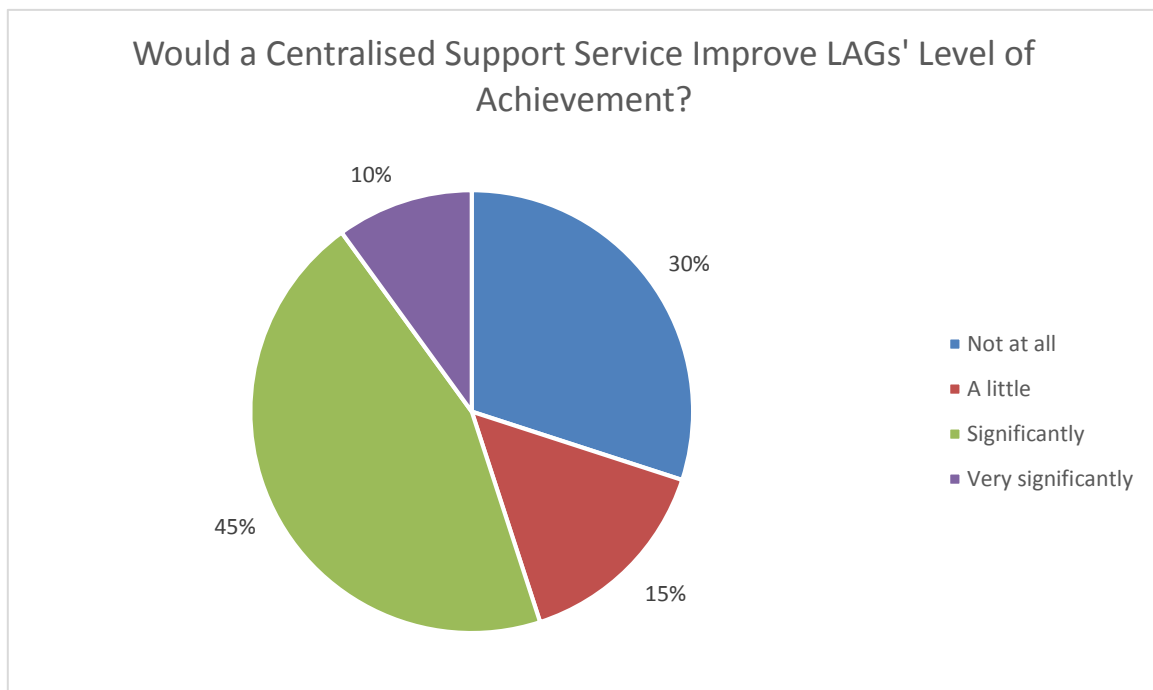


### Question 30

*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 20



- Compared to the EU-wide sample, a higher proportion of Italian LAGs thought that a centralised support service would improve LAGs' level of achievement significantly (45% vs 28%).

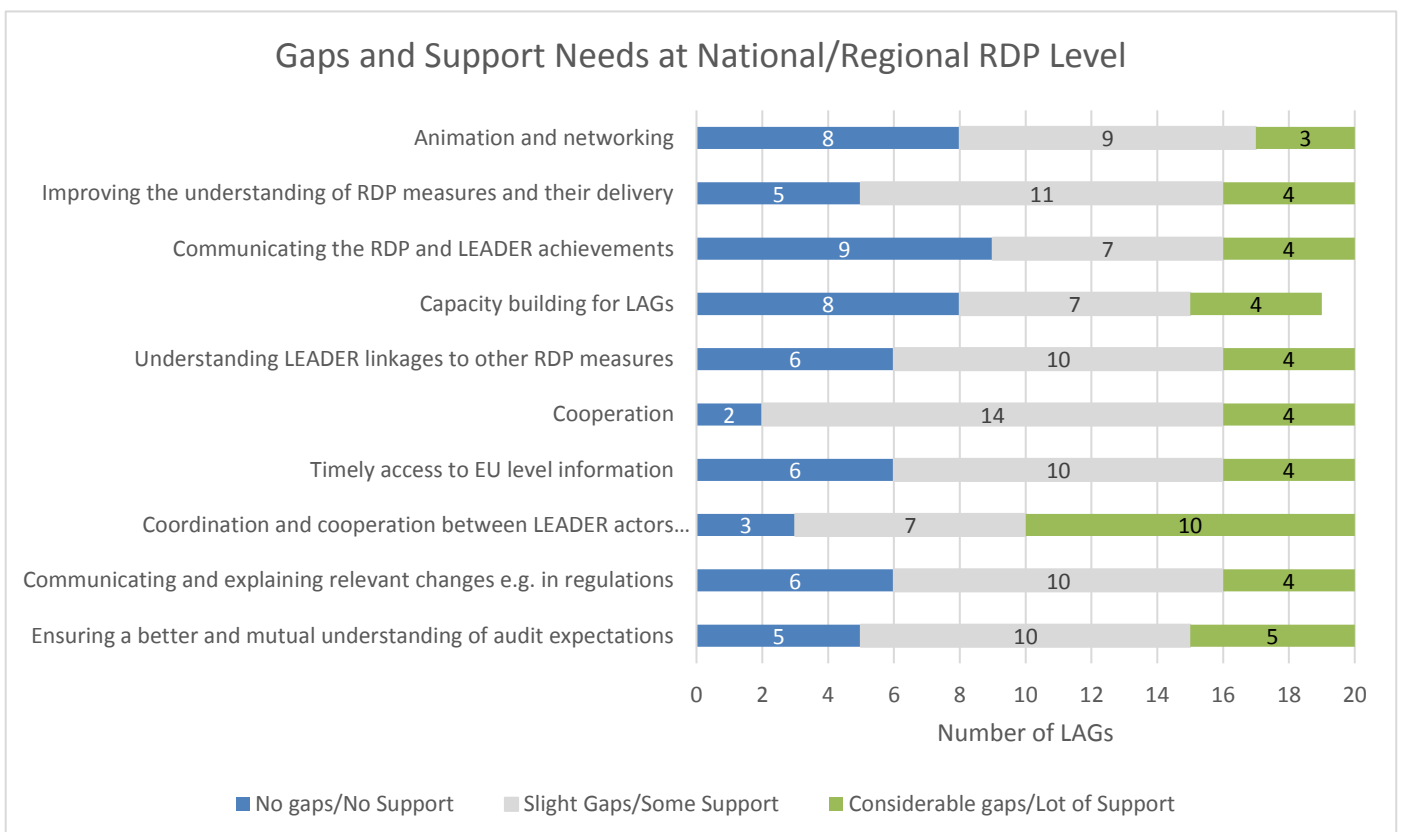
### Question 31

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 20



- Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level was thought by Italian respondents to represent a greater gap and support need than in the EU sample. Otherwise there was no particularly significant gap / support need from Italian responses.

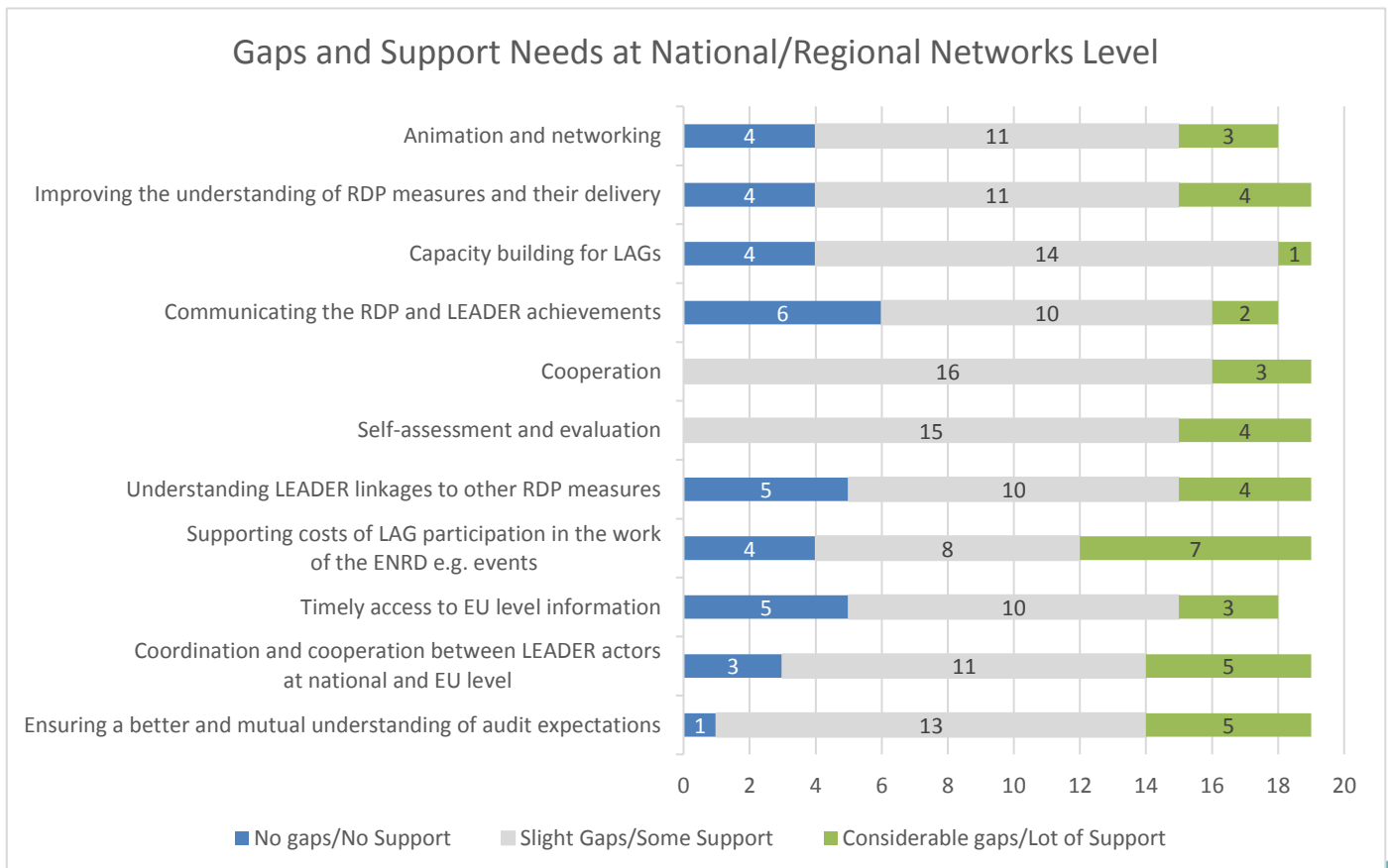
### Question 32

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 19





- The gaps and support needs from the networks identified by Italian LAGs show that there is particular need for support in self-assessment and evaluation and cooperation.
- In line with the EU-wide sample there is also a gap in support provision around understanding audit expectations and supporting costs of LAG participation in the work of the ENRD.

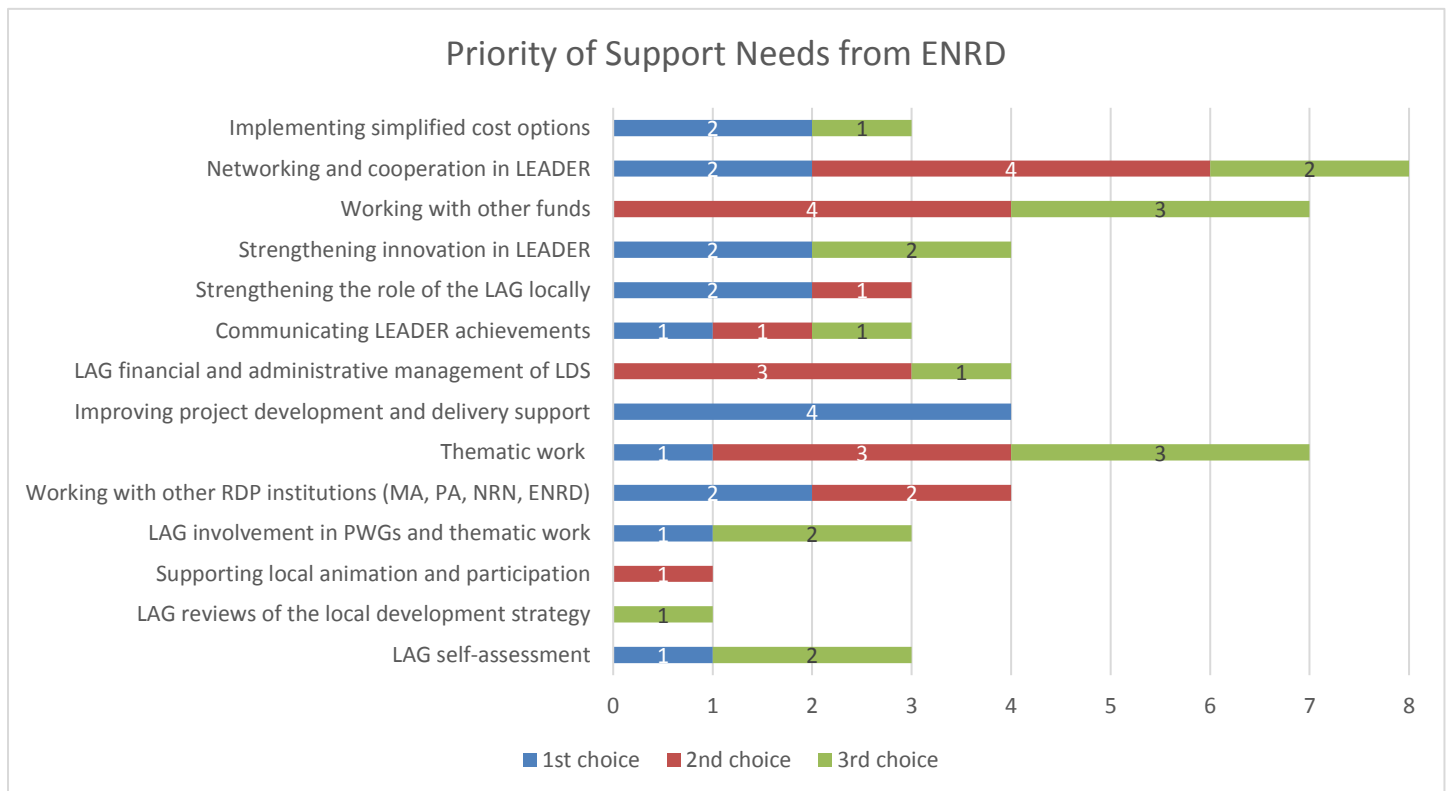
### Question 33

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 19



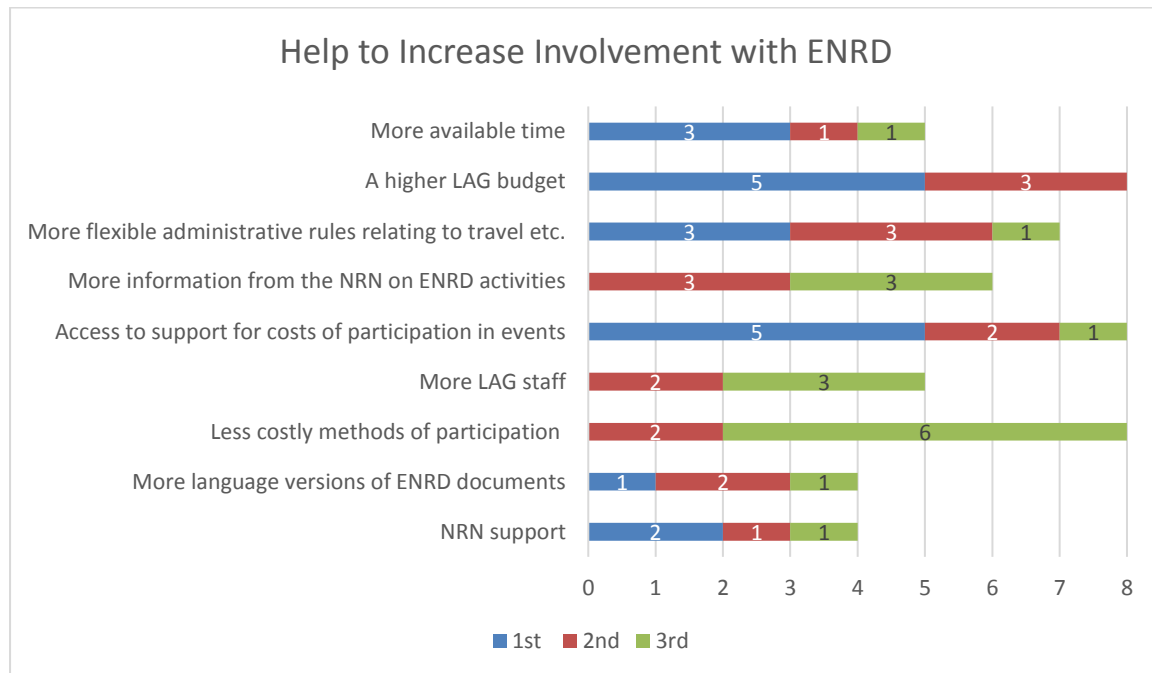
- The Italian and EU responses are broadly similar.
- Implementing simplified cost options, the most commonly ranked top 3 priority across the EU, was ranked eighth in Italy.
- Thematic work, only the ninth most frequently ranked priority across the EU sample was ranked joint second in Italy.

### 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 20



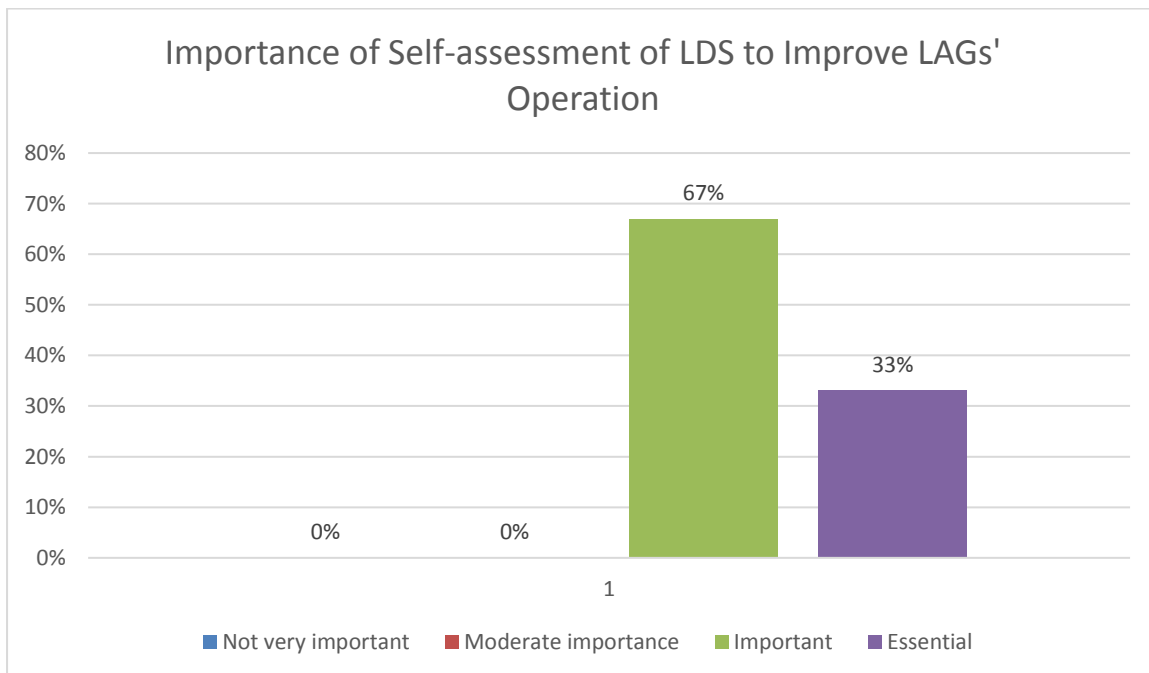
- A higher LAG budget, less costly methods of participation and access to support for costs to participate in events were the most frequently identified ways in which involvement with ENRD could be increased amongst Italian LAGs. All three of these were ranked higher in Italy than the EU sample.

### Question 35

*How important do you think self-assessment (internal review) of your own Local Development Strategy is to improving your LAG's operation?*

- Not very important
- Moderate importance
- Important
- Essential

*Total Number of Responses 20*



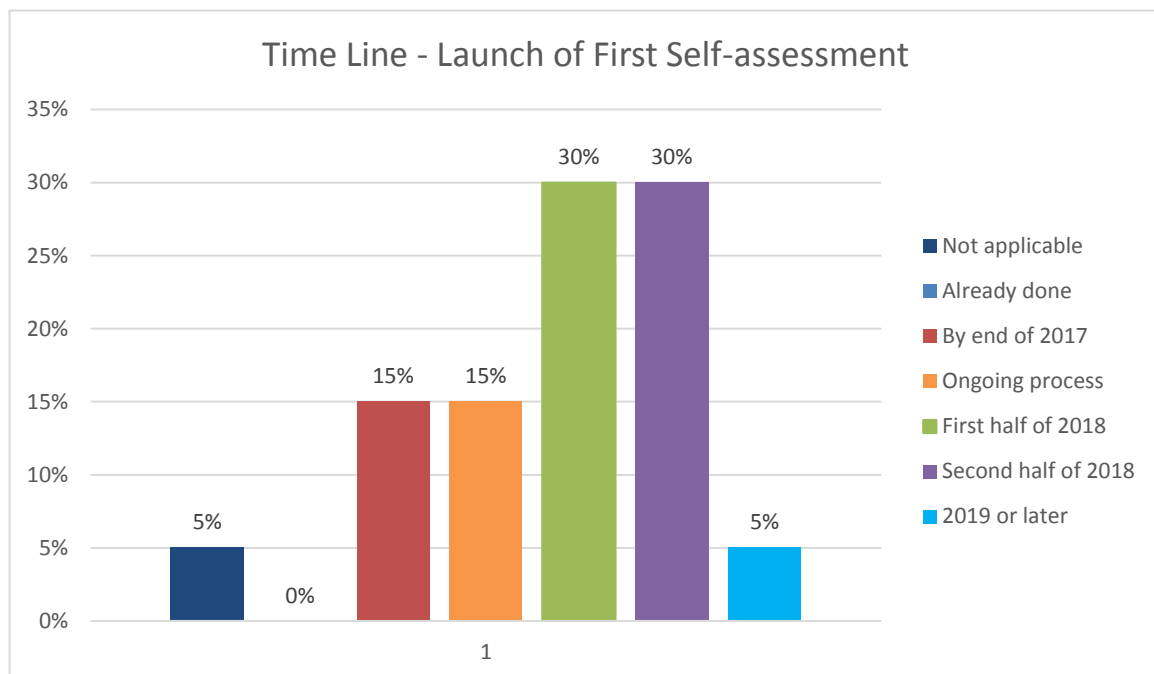
- Compared to the EU-wide sample, IT respondents placed greater importance on LDS self-assessment, with all respondents stating that it is either important or essential, compared to only 71% across the EU.

### 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 20



- There are no important differences between the Italian and EU samples.

### 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 – 95%
- No – 5%

Total Number of Responses 20