LEADER LAG Survey 2017

Working Paper

Findings at Member State level

Member State: Poland

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Funded by the

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

- Poland (PL)
- 28 LAGs responded, representing 3.9% of total LAG responses
- 10% of PL LAGs responded to the survey

Total Number of Responses 28

Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- PL has one national RDP.

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

- The responses from Polish LAGs had a much larger percentage of LAG Chair/President respondents in comparison with the overall EU sample (32% vs 5%) and LAG Board Member (7% vs 2%).

Respondents' Position

7%

32%

46%

14%

- LAG Manager
- Other LAG Staff
- LAG Chair/ President
- LAG Board Member
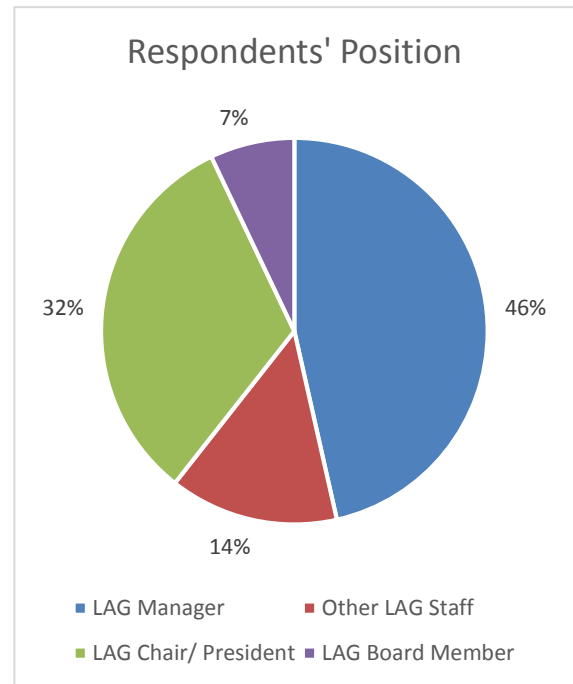
Question 7

In which period did your LAG first begin its operation? Please select the option that applies to you. (i.e. point from where there is a significant degree of continuity in membership or territory)

- Newly established LAG (2014-2020 Programming Period)
- 2007-2013 Programming Period
- LEADER+
- LEADER II
- LEADER I

Total Number of Responses 28

- In the Polish sample, more LAGs originated from the 2007-2013 Programming period than was the case in the EU sample, (50% vs 34%). They also had a smaller share who were Newly established LAGs (11% vs 22%).

- 15% of Polish respondent LAGs indicate they began operations before Poland joined the EU.

First Period LAG became Operational

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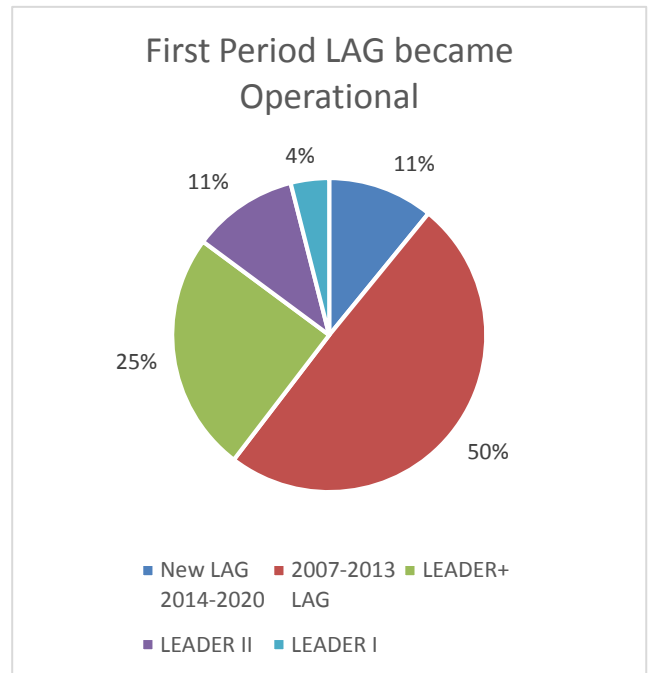
Question 8

When was your LAG formally selected in this (2014-2020) Programming Period?

- 2014
- First half of 2015 (Jan - June)
- Second half of 2015 (July – December)
- First half of 2016
- Second half of 2016
- First half of 2017
- Second half of 2017

Total Number of Responses 28

Time LAGs were Formally Selected in 2014-2020 Programme Period

Category	Percentage
2014	4%
First half of 2015	11%
Second half of 2015	3%
First half of 2016	75%
Second half of 2016	7%
First half of 2017	
Second half of 2017	
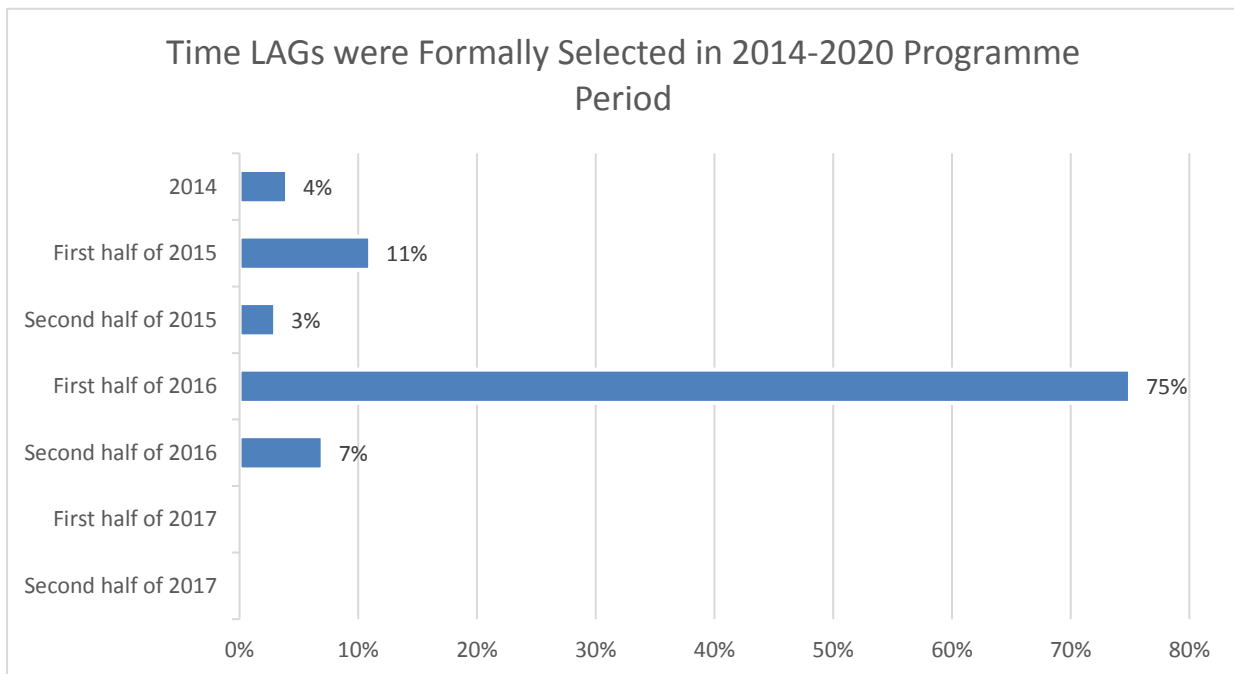
- By the end of 2015, a relatively small number of responding LAGs (18%) from Poland were formally selected, in comparison to 59% of the EU sample.

- Three quarters (75%) of Polish LAGs were formally selected in the first half of 2016 at which point the level of Polish selections exceeded the EU sample (93% vs 73%).

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

Timing of LAGs Launch of First Call for Projects

Category	Percentage
First half of 2015	3%
Second half of 2015	4%
First half of 2016	7%
Second half of 2016	68%
First half of 2017	18%
Second half of 2017	
2018	
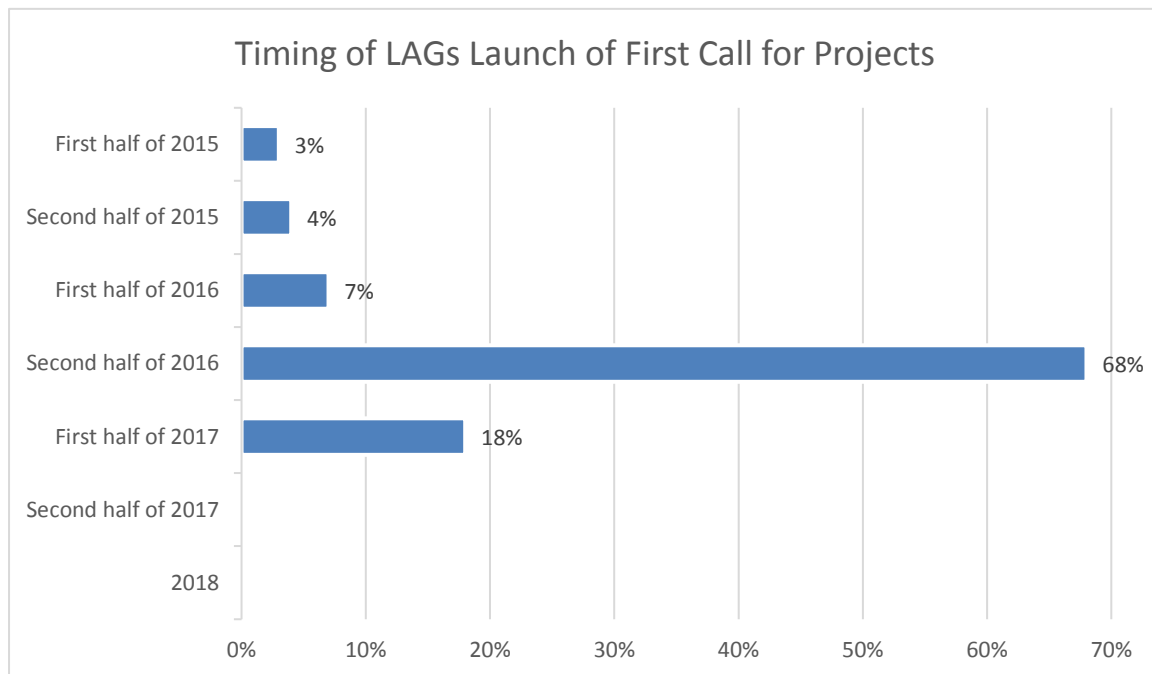
- 82% of Polish LAGs who responded had launched their first call by the end of 2016 by comparison with 67% of the overall sample.

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 28

LAG Use of ESI Funds in addition to EAFRD

7%

14%

86%

- EMFF
- ESF
- ERDF
- only EAFRD
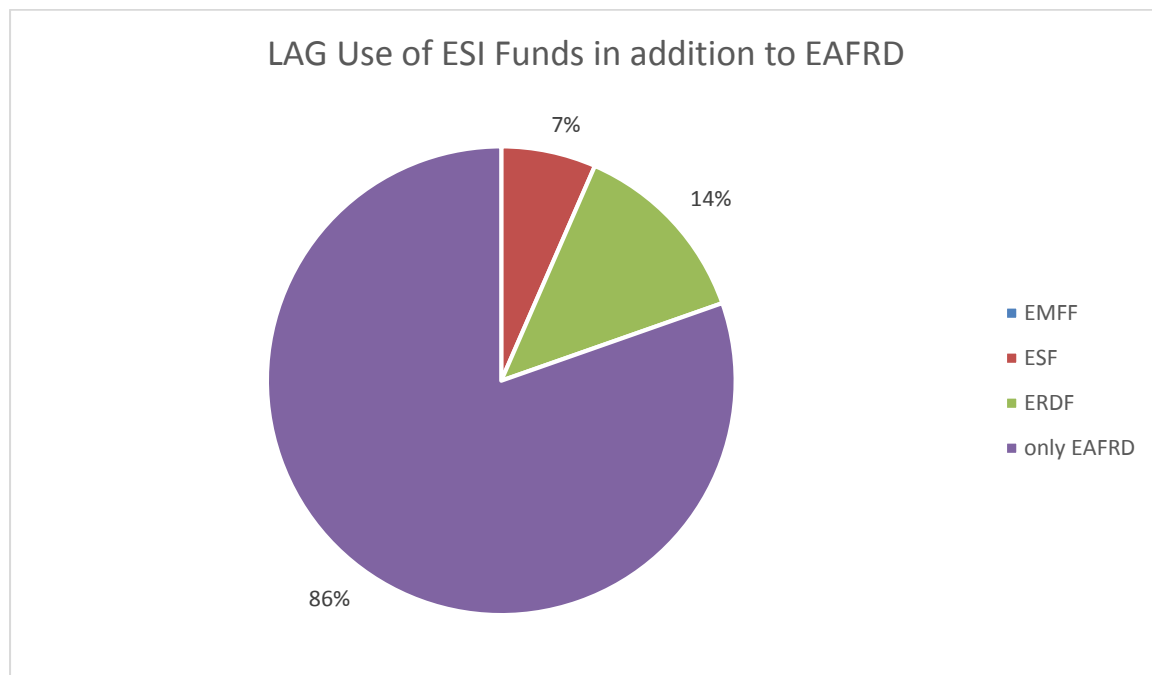
- A considerably higher proportion of Polish LAGs who responded reported using 'only EAFRD' (86% vs 67%), in comparison to other European LAGs who used multiple funds more often.

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

Range of Budgets from Responding LAGs

Legend:
- >€10,000,000
- €5,000,001 - 10,000,000
- €4,000,001 - 5,000,000
- €3,000,001 - 4,000,000
- €2,000,001 - 3,000,000
- €1,500,001 - 2,000,000
- €1,000,001 - 1,500,000
- €500,001 - 1,000,000
- <€500,000
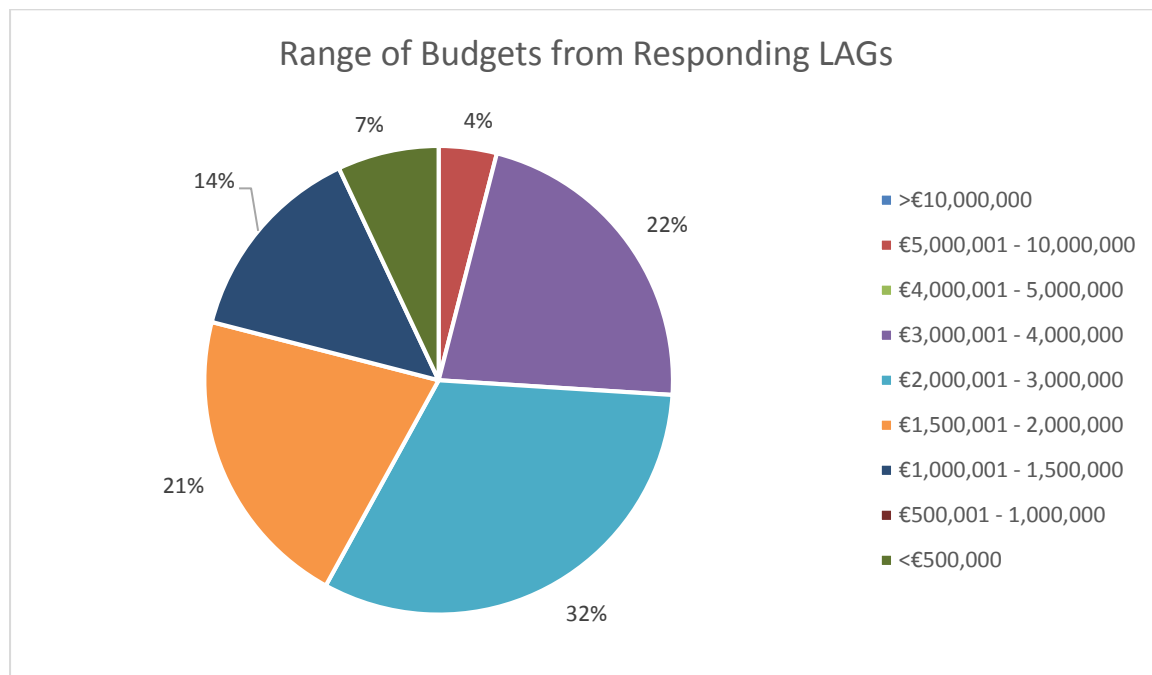
- The budgets of responding Polish LAGs were smaller than those of the EU sample, only 4% of respondents in Poland had budgets over €5m in comparison to 15% of LAGs from elsewhere. No Polish LAGs responding had budgets in excess of €10m.

- 74% of Polish LAG reported budgets of under €3m vs 51% in the EU sample.

- The budget range of €2m- €3m was the most dominant among respondents from Poland (32% vs 22% in the EU sample).

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

- Polish LAGs responses were broadly in line with the EU sample.

- A larger proportion of Polish LAGs allocated 17-20% of their budget to animation and running costs than in the EU sample (46% vs 33%) and a smaller proportion used under 10% (25% vs 31%).

% of LAG Budget Spent on Animation & Running Costs

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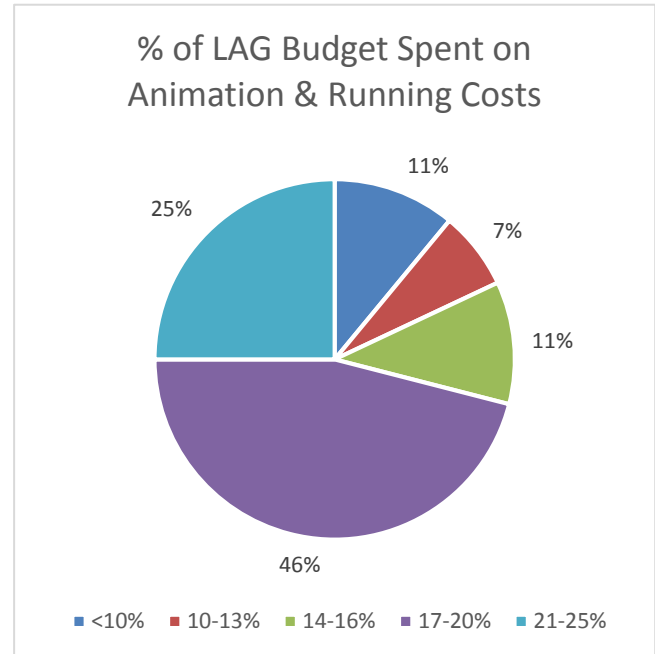
LEADER Principles

Question 13

How important are each of the following LEADER principles for your LAG in delivering real benefits on the ground? (Please rate each option from 1= not at all to 5 = essential).

- Area-based local development strategies intended for well-identified sub-regional rural territories.
- Local public-private partnerships (local action groups).
- Bottom-up approach with decision-making power for local action groups concerning the elaboration and implementation of local development strategies.
- The 49% limitation on voting rights of any single interest group.
- The 50% requirement for non-public sector votes in project selection.
- Multi-sectoral design and implementation of the strategy based on interaction between actors and projects of different sectors of the local economy.
- Implementation of innovative approaches.
- Implementation of cooperation projects.
- Networking of local partnerships.

Total Number of Responses 26

Relative Importance of LEADER Principles
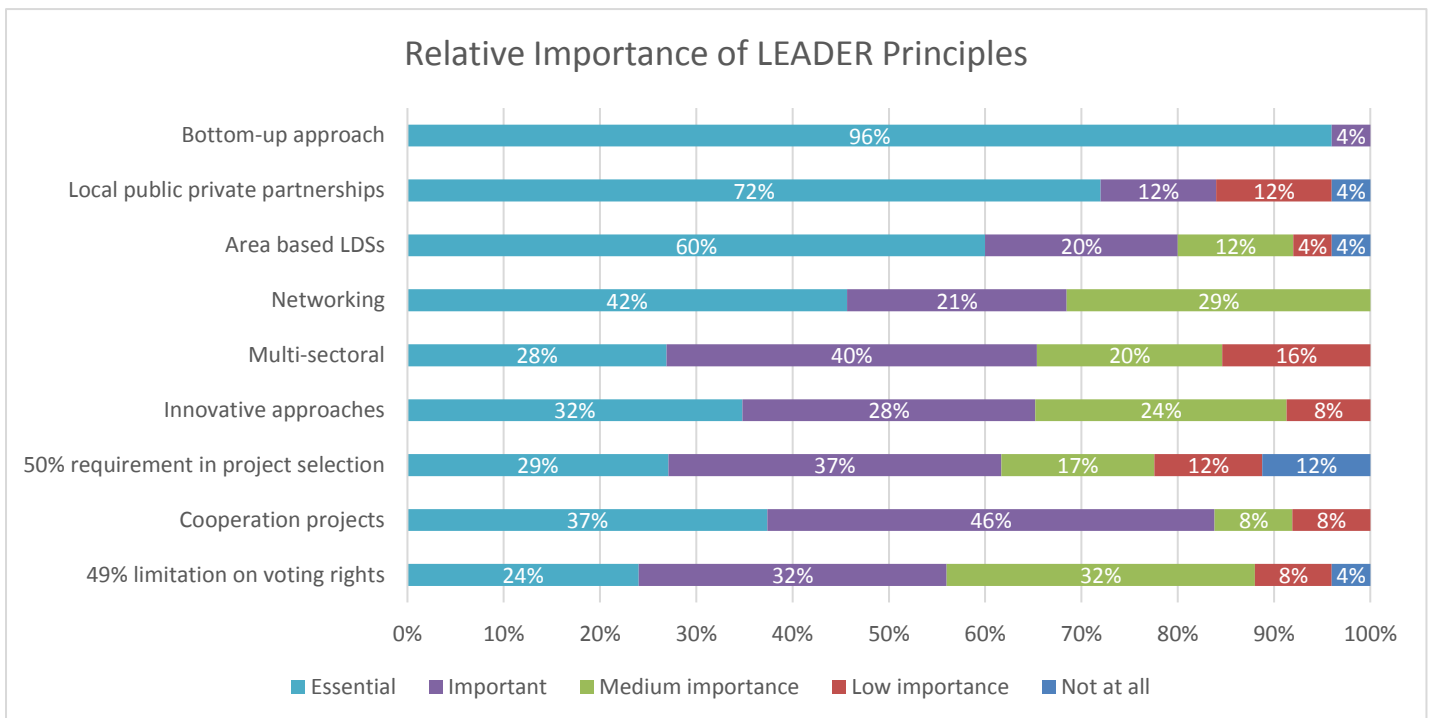
- The overall pattern of Polish responses is very similar to those of the EU sample. The bottom-up approach was ranked as essential or important by 100% of LAGs in Poland, compared to 90% in the EU sample. Cooperation projects were seen to be essential or important by 84% of LAGs in Poland in comparison to the EU sample level of 61%.

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
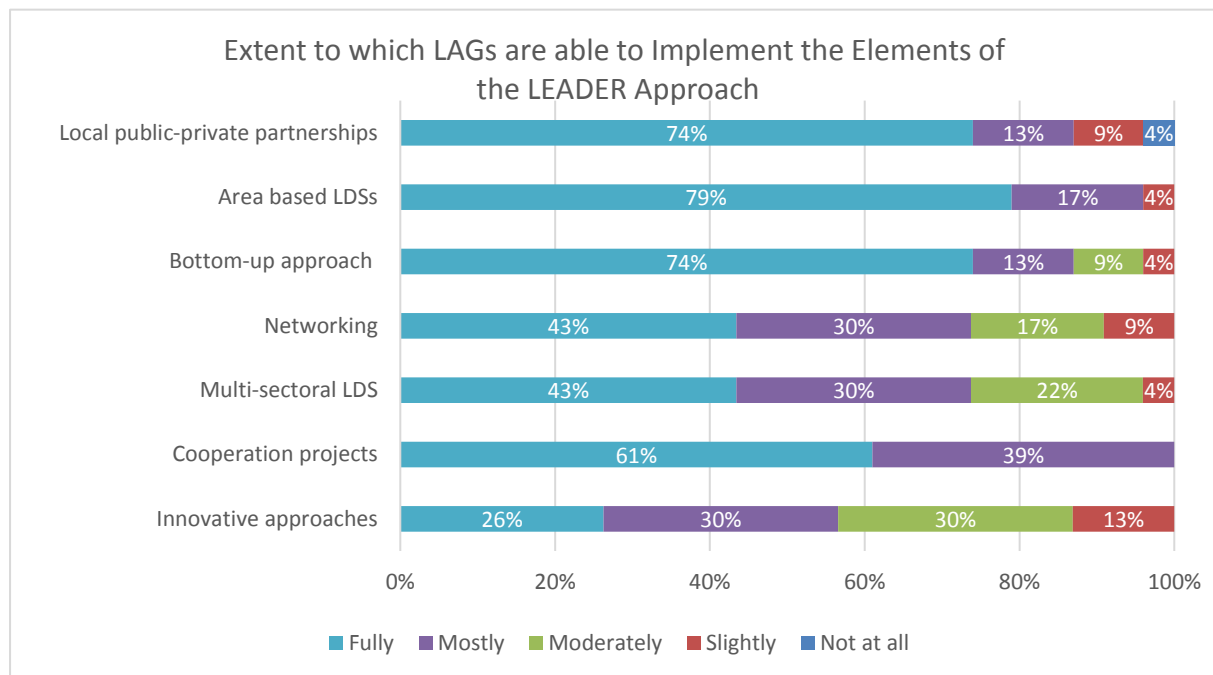
- Polish LAGs reported that they found a number of LEADER approach elements easier to implement (i.e. fully or mostly) than did other European LAGs. This included particularly:
    - Cooperation projects (100% vs 58%)
    - Area based LDSs (96% vs 83%)

- 74% of Polish LAGs report that they can implement Local public-private partnerships fully vs 60% of the EU sample however a higher proportion of Polish LAGs also found it more difficult to implement (i.e. slightly or not at all) than the EU sample (13% vs 4%).

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 25

Aspects of LEADER Implementation as seen by Local Action Groups

Statement	Agree strongly / agree	Disagree strongly / disagree	Don't know
LAG's ability to implement LEADER constrained by bureaucracy & admin	92%	4%	4%
LAG is able to use qualitative criteria & local knowledge for project selection decisions	54%	33%	13%
Admin & reporting requirements limit LAG's capacity for animation & local development	83%	13%	4%
LAG has overall control of setting selection criteria & defining calls for projects	92%	8%	
LAG funding for the animation of local stakeholders & networking is sufficient.	44%	52%	4%
Implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible, innovative way	25%	62%	13%
Eligibility conditions for LEADER beneficiaries are appropriate & proportionate to support sought	44%	30%	26%
Project application procedure is accessible & encourage local stakeholders to participate in LEADER	8%	84%	8%
Decision-making power of LAGs is not overly limited by RDP level procedures & regulations	28%	68%	4%
Project holders` ability to implement LEADER projects is not overly constrained by bureaucracy & admin burden	9%	78%	13%

■ Agree strongly / agree   ■ Disagree strongly / disagree   ■ Don't know

- The pattern of Polish LAG responses is broadly similar to that of the EU.

- Polish respondents disagreed more strongly with the following statements re aspects of LEADER implementation than did the EU sample:
  - Project application is accessible (84% vs 61%)
  - LAG is able to use qualitative criteria and local knowledge for project selection decisions' (33% vs 15%)

- 92% of responding LAGs from Poland agreed or strongly agreed that their LAG's ability to implement LEADER is constrained by bureaucracy & admin compared to 84% of overall responses.

- A greater proportion of Polish LAGs agreed that their LAG has overall control of selection criteria (92% vs 66%).
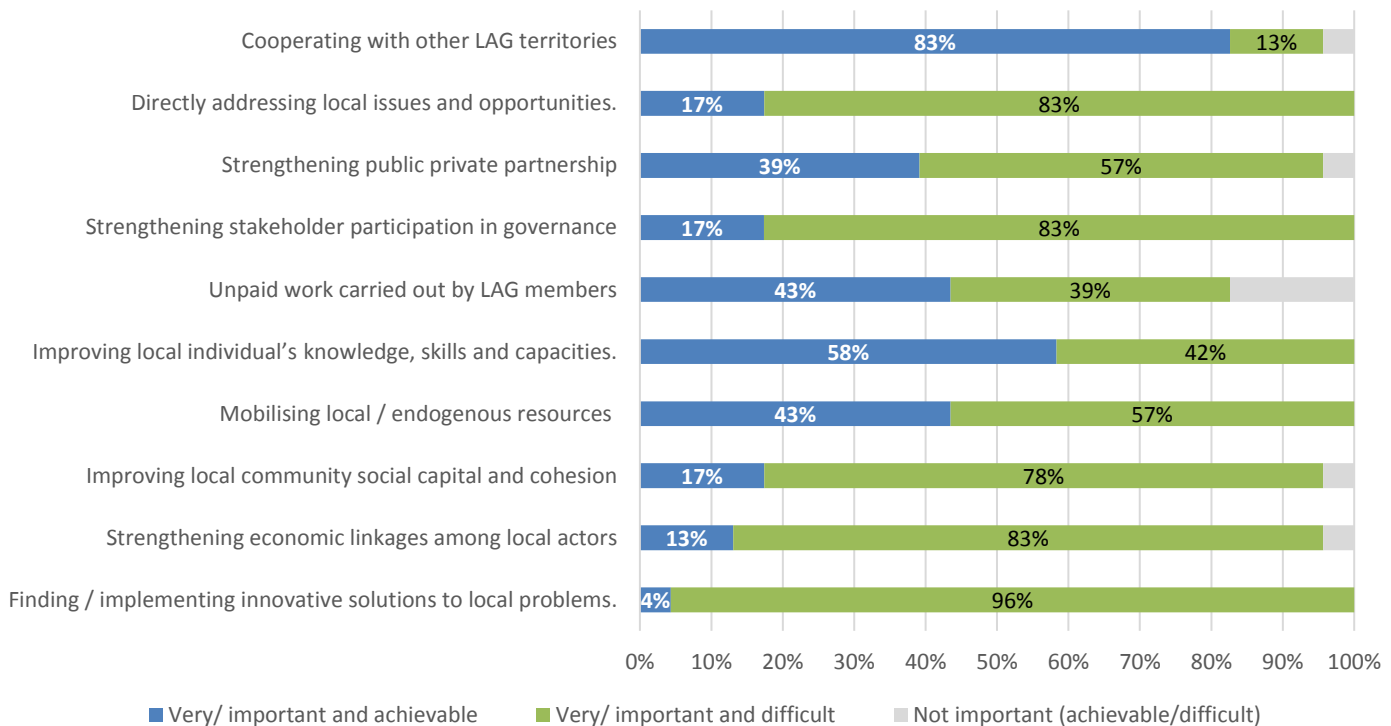
Question 16

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

Importance and Achievability of LEADER Effects

Effect	Very/ important and achievable	Very/ important and difficult
Cooperating with other LAG territories	83%	13%
Directly addressing local issues and opportunities.	17%	83%
Strengthening public private partnership	39%	57%
Strengthening stakeholder participation in governance	17%	83%
Unpaid work carried out by LAG members	43%	39%
Improving local individual's knowledge, skills and capacities.	58%	42%
Mobilising local / endogenous resources	43%	57%
Improving local community social capital and cohesion	17%	78%
Strengthening economic linkages among local actors	13%	83%
Finding / implementing innovative solutions to local problems.	4%	96%

■ Very/ important and achievable ■ Very/ important and difficult ■ Not important (achievable/difficult)

- In comparison to the EU sample, generally a larger share of Polish respondents considered the LEADER effects to be very/important and difficult, therefore less achievable, e.g. 96% of responding Polish LAGs said that finding innovative solutions to local problems was very / important and difficult as opposed to 64% of the overall sample.

- The two exceptions where Polish respondents said that effects were very/important and achievable were for:
    o Cooperating with other LAG territories - 83% of Polish LAGs compared to 67% the EU sample.
    o Improving individual's knowledge, skills and capacities - 58% of Polish LAGs compared to 48% in the EU sample.
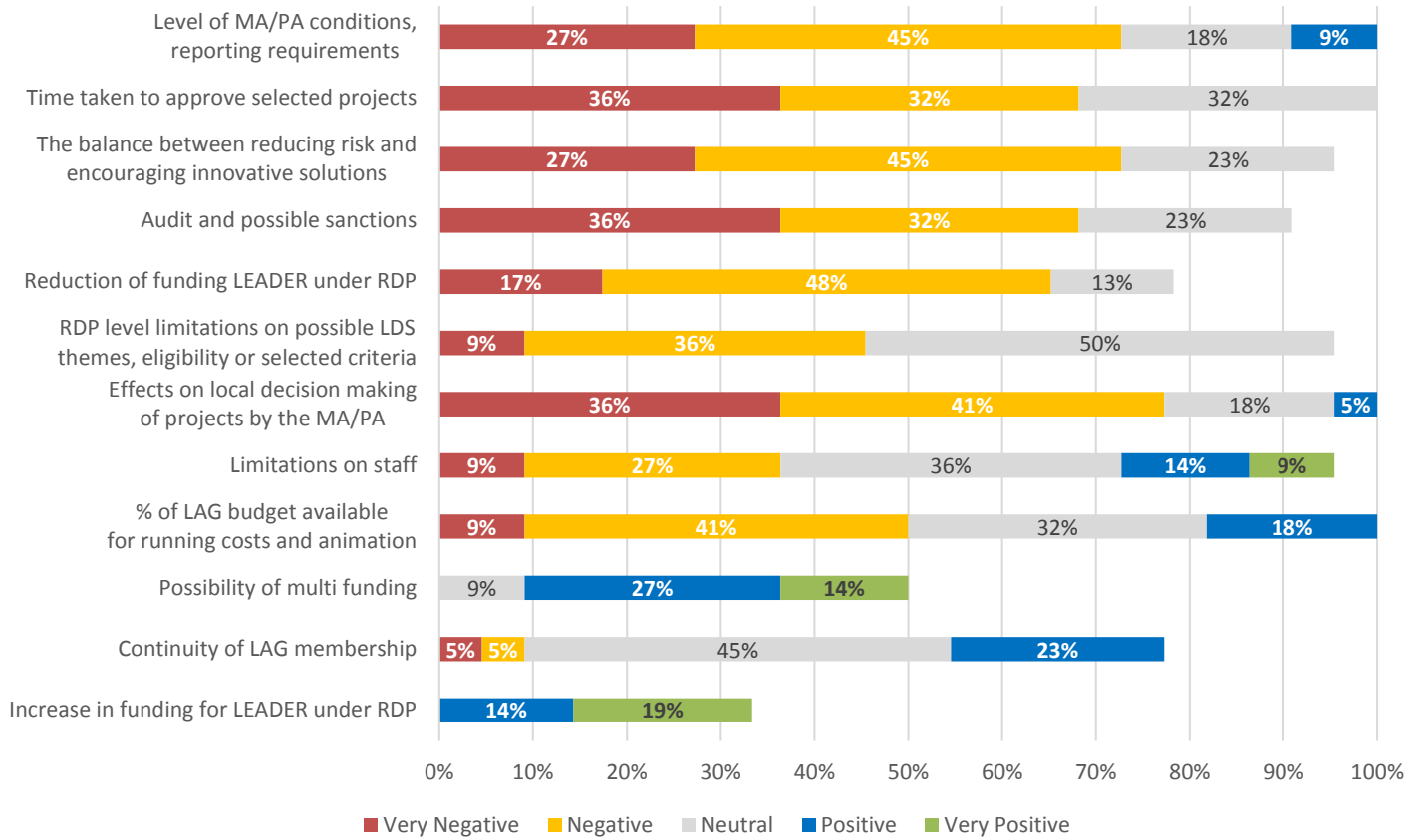
LEADER Operation

Question 17

What level of effect have the following factors had on the implementation of LEADER in your LAG territory? (for each option enter either 0 = not applicable, 1 = very negative, 2 = negative, 3 = neutral, 4 = positive, 5 = very positive)

- Reduction of funding for LEADER under the RDP.
- Increase in funding for LEADER under the RDP.
- RDP level limitations on possible Local Development Strategy themes, eligibility or selection criteria.
- Level of Managing Authority/Paying Agency conditions, reporting requirements.
- Time taken to approve selected projects.
- Audit and possible sanctions.
- The balance in implementation procedures effects between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions.
- Effects on local decision-making of final approval of projects by the managing authority or paying agency.
- Percentage of LAG budget available for running costs and animation.
- Limitations on staff (continuity, skills, number).
- Continuity of LAG membership.
- Possibility of multi funding.

Total Number of Responses 23

Level of Effects on LEADER Implementation

Aspect	Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Positive
Level of MA/PA conditions, reporting requirements	27%	45%	18%	9%	
Time taken to approve selected projects	36%	32%	32%		
The balance between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions	27%	45%	23%		
Audit and possible sanctions	36%	32%	23%		
Reduction of funding LEADER under RDP	17%	48%	13%		
RDP level limitations on possible LDS themes, eligibility or selected criteria	9%	36%	50%		
Effects on local decision making of projects by the MA/PA	36%	41%	18%	5%	
Limitations on staff	9%	27%	36%	14%	9%
% of LAG budget available for running costs and animation	9%	41%	32%	18%	
Possibility of multi funding			9%	27%	14%
Continuity of LAG membership	5%	5%	45%	23%	
Increase in funding for LEADER under RDP				14%	19%

■ Very Negative ■ Negative ■ Neutral ■ Positive ■ Very Positive

For the purposes of improving the clarity of the analysis the 'not applicable' responses have been removed from the chart.
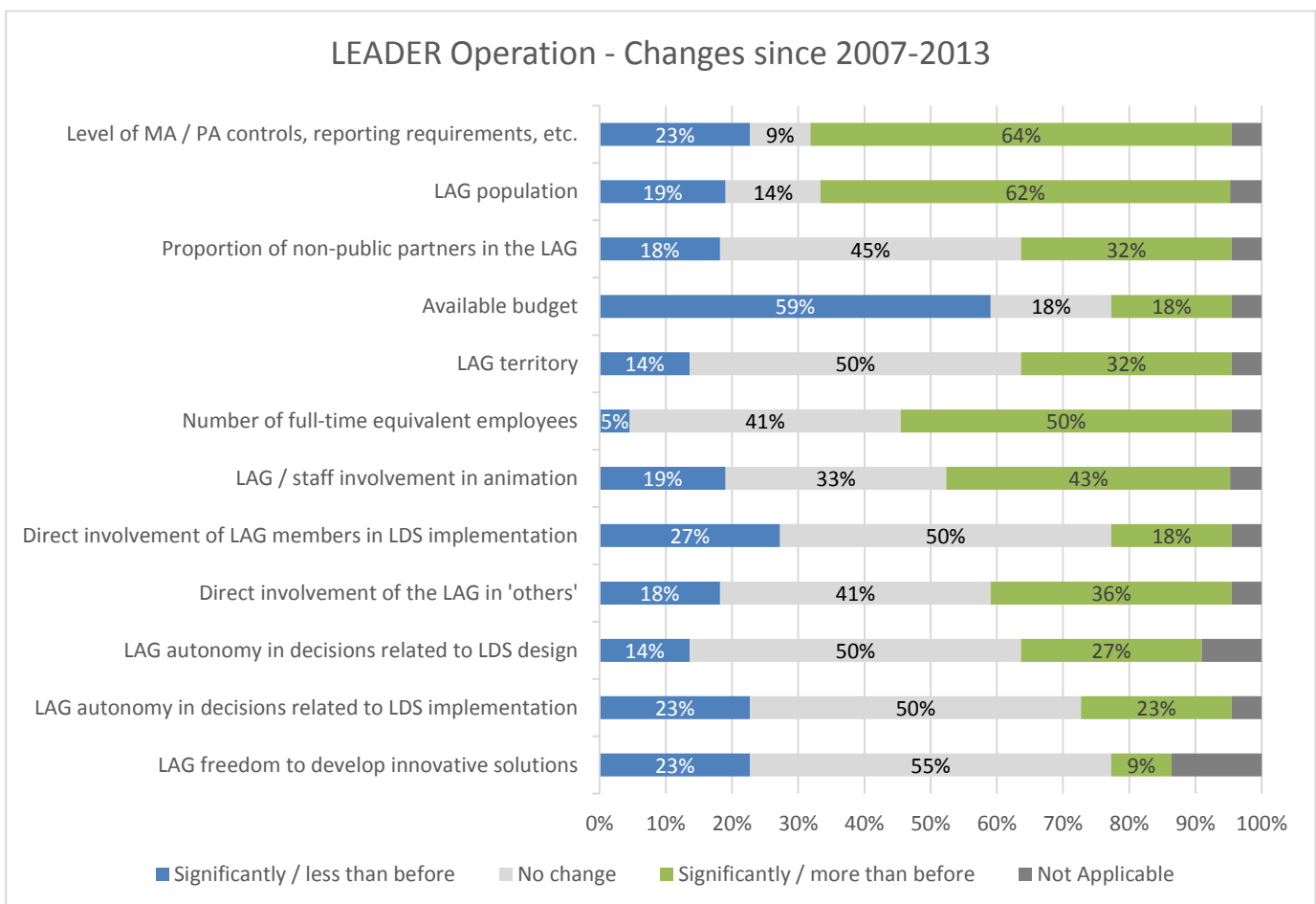
- Proportionately more LAGs in Poland than in the EU sample reported negative or very negative effects across the majority of these aspects of LEADER implementation.

- The largest differences between the Polish LAG's responses and the EU sample were in Effects on local decision making of projects by the MA/PA where 77% of Polish LAGs reported negative or very negative effects vs 45% at EU level and for The % of LAG budget available for running costs and animation (50% negative / very negative vs 30%).

- No Polish LAGs saw the possibility of multi funding as being in any way negative.

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 22

LEADER Operation - Changes since 2007-2013

Aspect	Significantly / less than before	No change	Significantly / more than before
Level of MA / PA controls, reporting requirements, etc.	23%	9%	64%
LAG population	19%	14%	62%
Proportion of non-public partners in the LAG	18%	45%	32%
Available budget	59%	18%	18%
LAG territory	14%	50%	32%
Number of full-time equivalent employees	5%	41%	50%
LAG / staff involvement in animation	19%	33%	43%
Direct involvement of LAG members in LDS implementation	27%	50%	18%
Direct involvement of the LAG in 'others'	18%	41%	36%
LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS design	14%	50%	27%
LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS implementation	23%	50%	23%
LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions	23%	55%	9%

■ Significantly / less than before   ■ No change   ■ Significantly / more than before   ■ Not Applicable

- A larger share of Polish LAGs responding reported that LAG budgets were significantly/less than before than did the EU sample (59% vs 43%).

- 50% of Polish LAGs reported that there were significantly/more full time equivalent employees than before, compared to 27% in the EU sample.

- 43% of Polish LAGs reported that they had significantly/more LAG/Staff involvement in animation than before, compared to 26% in the EU sample.

- A smaller proportion of Polish LAGs (23%) reported significantly/less LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions, compared to 37% in 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 23


Activities LAG Staff Spend Most Time On
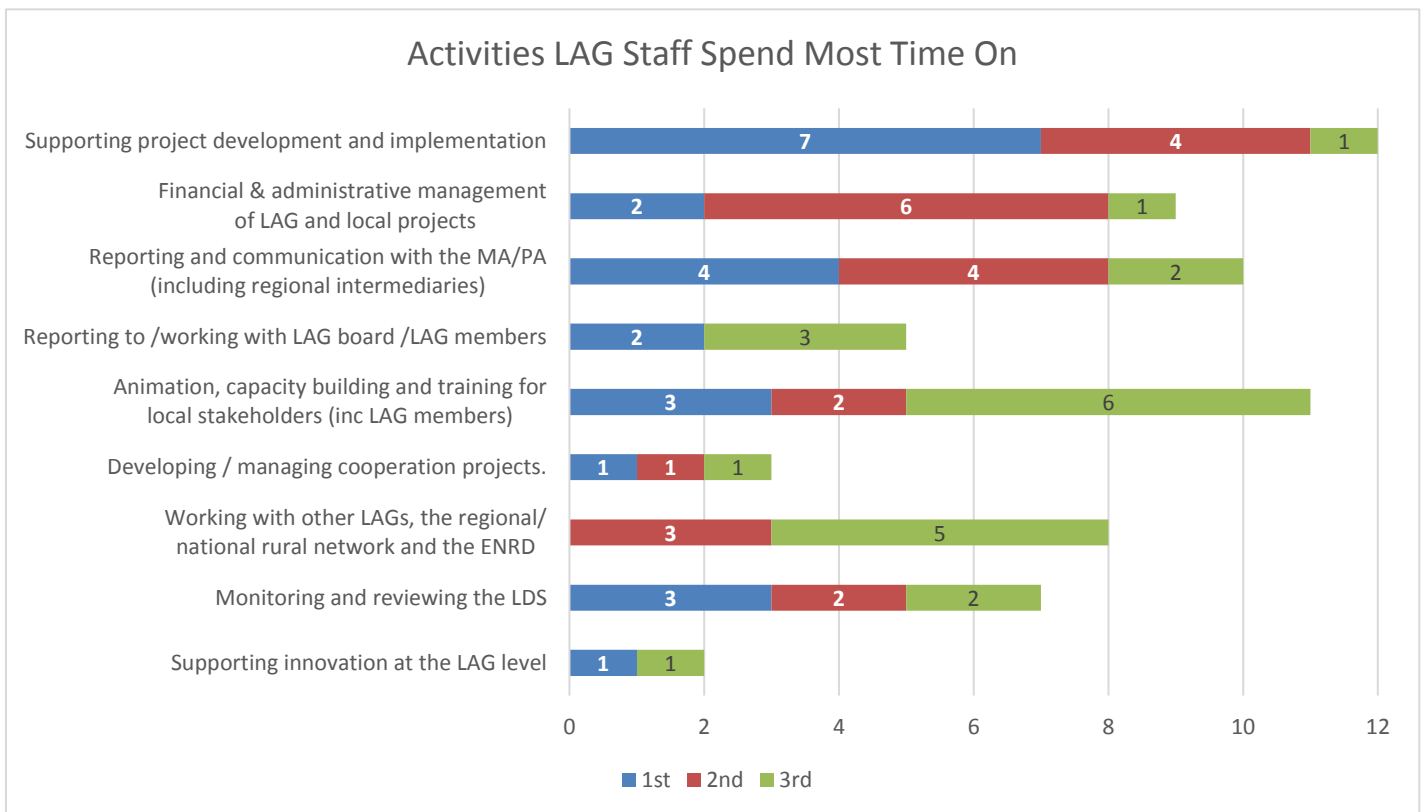
- Responding Polish LAGs reported proportionately more time was spent working on animation and capacity building for local stakeholders; working with other LAGs, networks and ENRD; and monitoring and reviewing the LDS than in the EU sample.

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 22
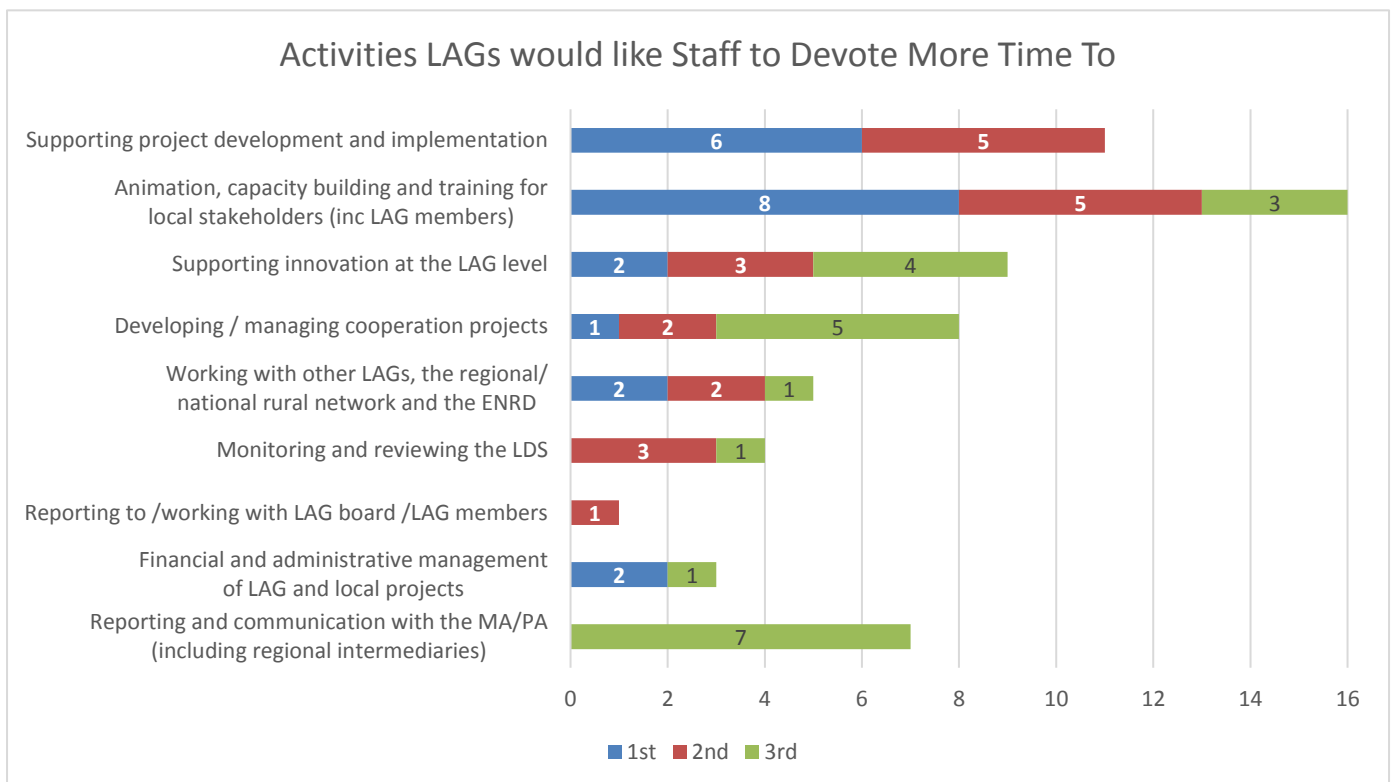
- Polish respondents placed proportionately greater priority on devoting more staff time to animation, capacity building and training for local stakeholders and reporting with the MA/PA than the EU sample.

- Responding Polish LAGs placed proportionately less priority on devoting more staff time to supporting project development and implementation than the EU sample.
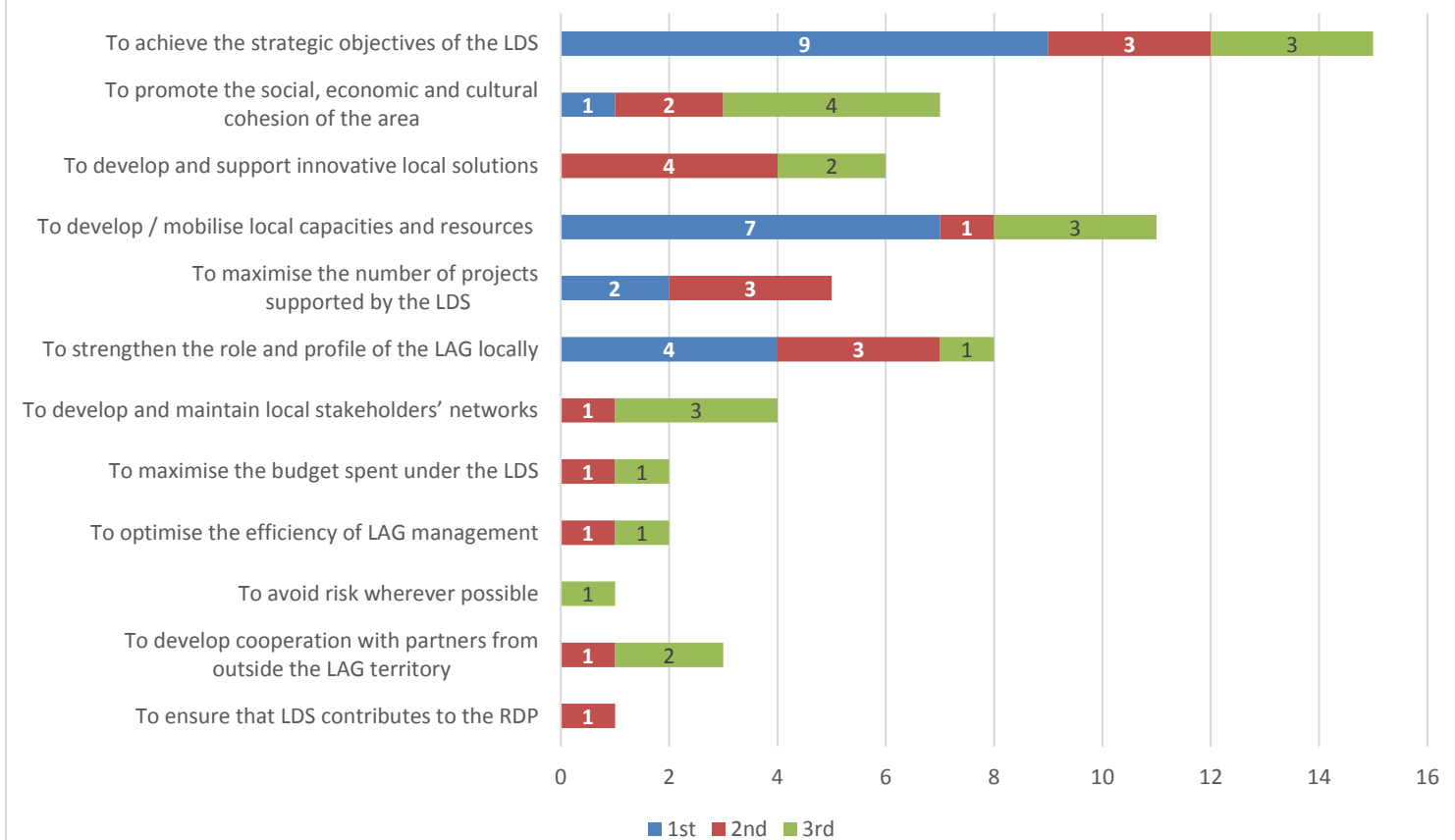
Question 21

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 23

Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs

Priority	1st	2nd	3rd
To achieve the strategic objectives of the LDS	9	3	3
To promote the social, economic and cultural cohesion of the area	1	2	4
To develop and support innovative local solutions		4	2
To develop / mobilise local capacities and resources	7	1	3
To maximise the number of projects supported by the LDS	2	3	
To strengthen the role and profile of the LAG locally	4	3	1
To develop and maintain local stakeholders' networks		1	3
To maximise the budget spent under the LDS		1	1
To optimise the efficiency of LAG management		1	1
To avoid risk wherever possible			1
To develop cooperation with partners from outside the LAG territory		1	2
To ensure that LDS contributes to the RDP		1	

■ 1st ■ 2nd ■ 3rd

- Overall responding Polish LAGs had broadly similar operational priorities to the EU sample.

- Polish LAGs placed notably more emphasis on developing/mobilising local capacities and resources and strengthening the role and profiles of the LAG locally and developing cooperation outside the LAG territory than the EU sample.
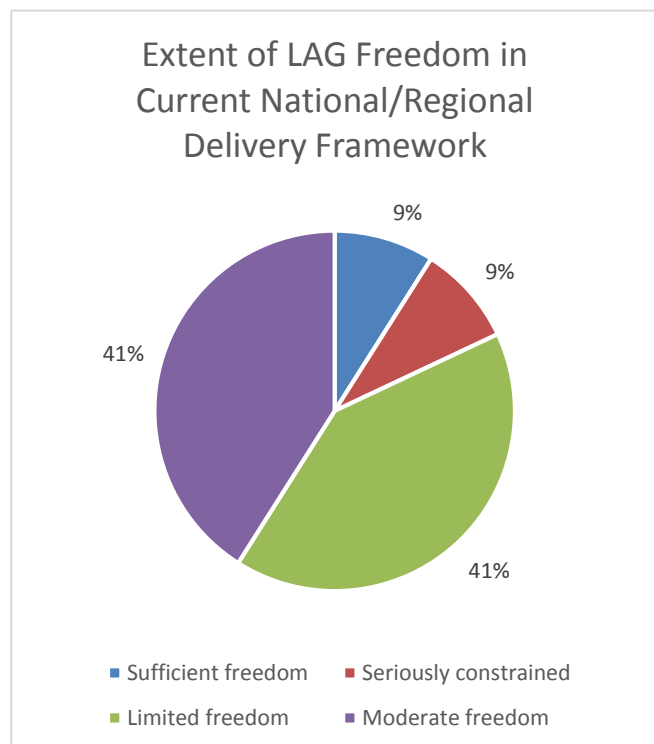
Question 22

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 22

- 50% of responding Polish LAGs felt in some way limited in their freedom, compared to 38% in the EU sample.

- 41% of Polish LAGs felt they had limited freedom, compared to 27% of the EU sample.
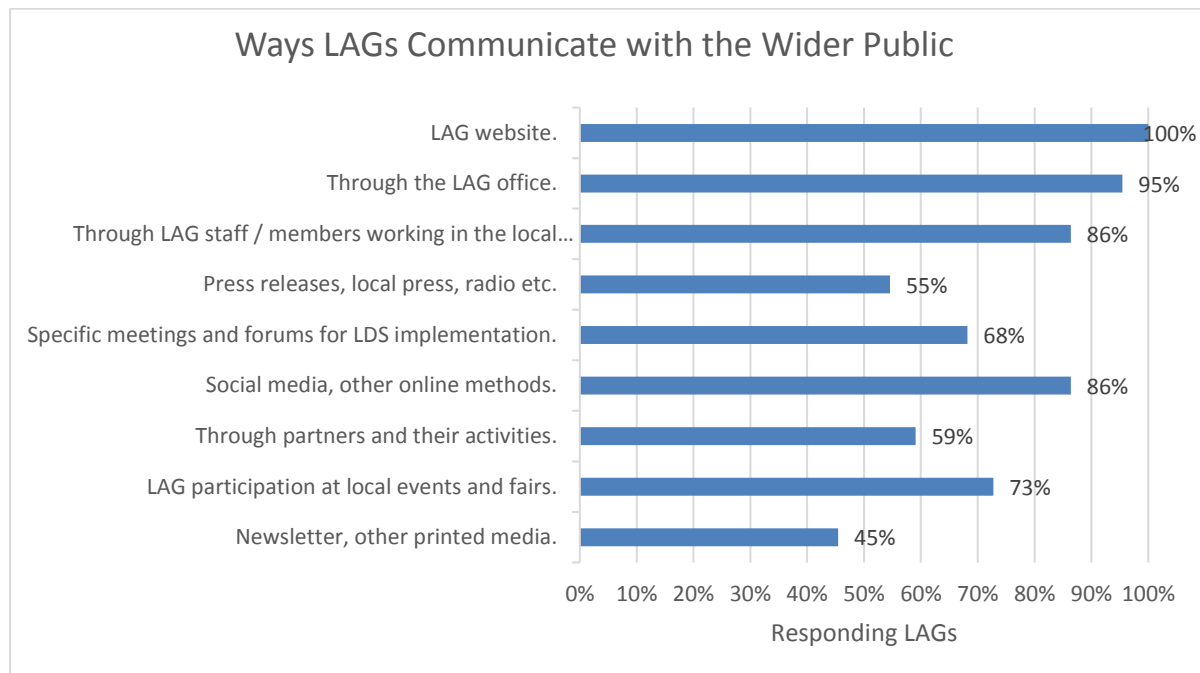
Extent of LAG Freedom in Current National/Regional Delivery Framework

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

Question 23

What is the main way your LAG communicates with the wider public in your LAG Territory (including potential beneficiaries)? Please select those methods which your LAG uses.

- LAG website.
- Specific meetings and forums for LDS implementation.
- Through the LAG office.
- Through LAG staff / members working in the local community.
- LAG participation at local events and fairs.
- Press releases, local press, radio etc.
- Newsletter, other printed media.
- Social media, other online methods.
- Through partners and their activities.

Total Number of Responses 22

Ways LAGs Communicate with the Wider Public

| Method	%
LAG website.	100%
Through the LAG office.	95%
Through LAG staff / members working in the local…	86%
Press releases, local press, radio etc.	55%
Specific meetings and forums for LDS implementation.	68%
Social media, other online methods.	86%
Through partners and their activities.	59%
LAG participation at local events and fairs.	73%
Newsletter, other printed media.	45%

Responding LAGs

- Proportionately more Polish LAGs stated that they used each of the various communication channels than the EU sample.

- Communication via social media, is employed considerably more by Polish LAGs than by the EU sample (86% vs 61%).

- Polish LAGs are also more likely than the EU sample to communicate by participating on local events and fairs (73% vs 52%).

- In Poland less use is made of press releases, local press, radio etc (55%) than in Europe (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 23

Ways LAGs Receive Information from MA/PA

Category	Percentage
Email	96%
Regular meetings and forums organised for LAGs	52%
Managing Authority website	52%
Through National Rural Network	22%
Through intermediary e.g. regional office or network	9%
Printed publications and guidance	43%
Social media	
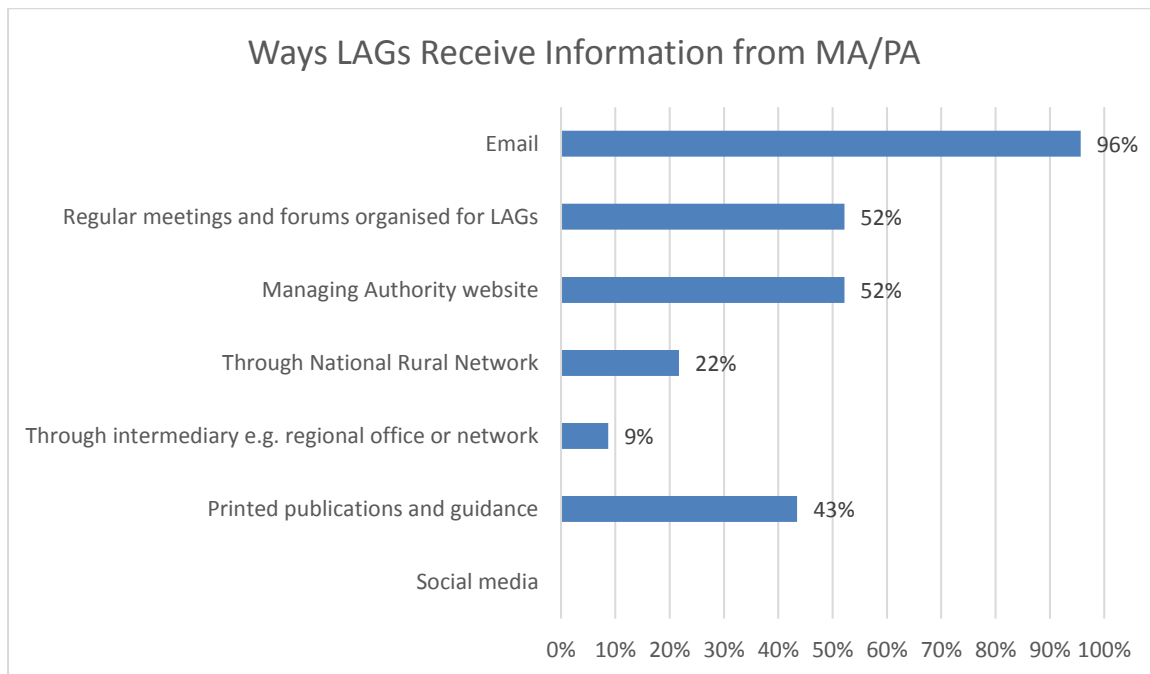
- In Poland LAGs reported less use of regular meeting and forums organised for LAGs (52%) compared to the EU sample (68%).

- In Poland LAGs report greater use is made of the MA website (52% vs 34%) and printed publications and guidance (43% vs 22%) than in the EU sample.

- In Poland, no LAGs reported receiving information from the MA/PA through social media, compared to 5% in the EU sample.

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 23
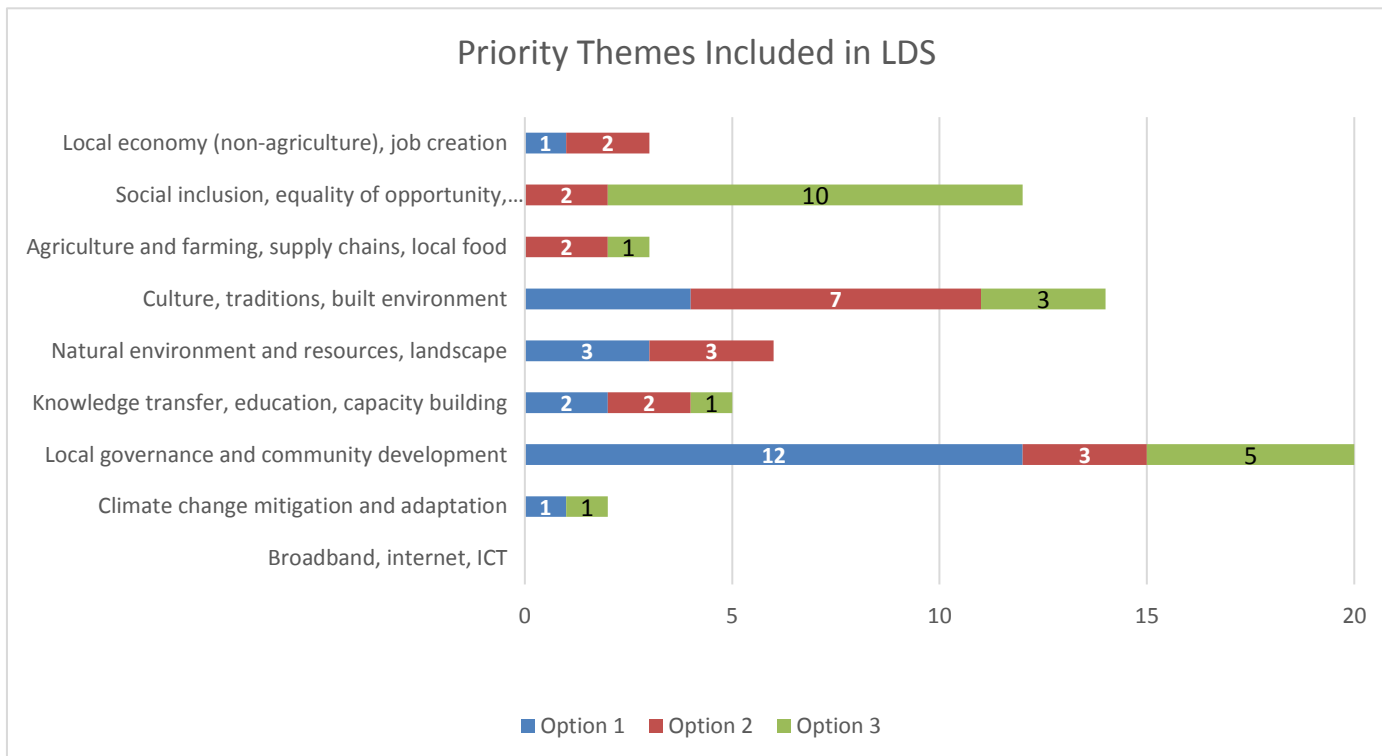
- The Polish responses are quite different from the EU sample.

- There is much more emphasis placed on local governance and community development in Poland, which is ranked first vs third lowest in the EU sample.

- Local economy, job creation and agriculture and farming, supply chains, local food are ranked one and three respectively in the EU sample but feature much less frequently in Polish LDS.
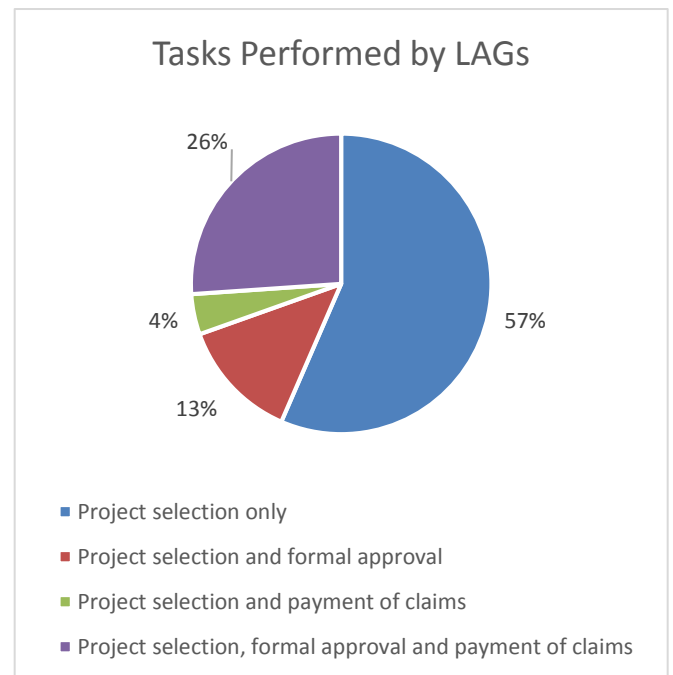
Question 26

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 23

- A larger percentage of Polish LAGs (26%) reported that they are responsible for 'project selection, formal approval and payment of claims' than at EU level where only 19% of LAGs perform these tasks.

- A larger percentage of Polish LAGs (57% vs 48%) reported that they are responsible for 'project selection only'.

- A smaller proportion of Polish respondent LAGs were responsible for 'project selection and formal approval' (13%) in comparison to 30% of LAGs across Europe.

Tasks Performed by LAGs

26%

4%

13%

57%

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

LEADER Improvements

Question 27

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

- Better common knowledge and support through networking of LAGs, Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies and National Rural Networks and exchanges on transferable experience and practices
- The eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas, e.g. the use of feasibility studies, LAG led projects, pilot projects, preparatory work etc. should be ensured from the EU level down.
- Setting aside a significant and specific budget for LAG animation activities.
- Allocating resources for cooperation to the LAG level.
- Ensuring better common knowledge of and support for LAGs to take advantage of using simplified cost options.
- LAGs setting selection criteria and defining calls
- LAGs using qualitative criteria and local knowledge to inform project selection decisions.
- Ensuring better common knowledge of and support for LAGs to take advantage of using different delivery tools e.g. 'Umbrella projects'.
- Improving MA or intermediary body turnaround time on approving selected projects.
- Improving timeliness of payments of beneficiaries` claims.
- Simpler and more proportionate systems of controls (for smaller projects?).
- Simplification, harmonisation and flexibility to support LAGs in the practical use of multi-funding.
- Greater clarity on LAG level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements in LEADER.
- Strengthening communication, coordination and cooperation between LAGs, Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies in delivering LEADER.
- A dedicated EU/national platform for information sharing among LEADER actors.
- Simpler application forms/application process.
- Allowing LAGs to act as a 'platform', signposting and brokering support from multiple (third party) sources to further LDS objectives.

Total Number of Responses 22

- The largest difference between Polish LAGs responding and the EU sample was the greater importance the Polish LAGs placed on improving MA/IB turnaround time on approving selected projects.

- There was also a proportionately higher importance placed on getting greater clarity on LAG level M&E requirements in LEADER, than in the EU sample.

- Polish LAGs placed less importance on getting simple and more proportionate systems of controls (for smaller projects) than the EU sample.

Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now
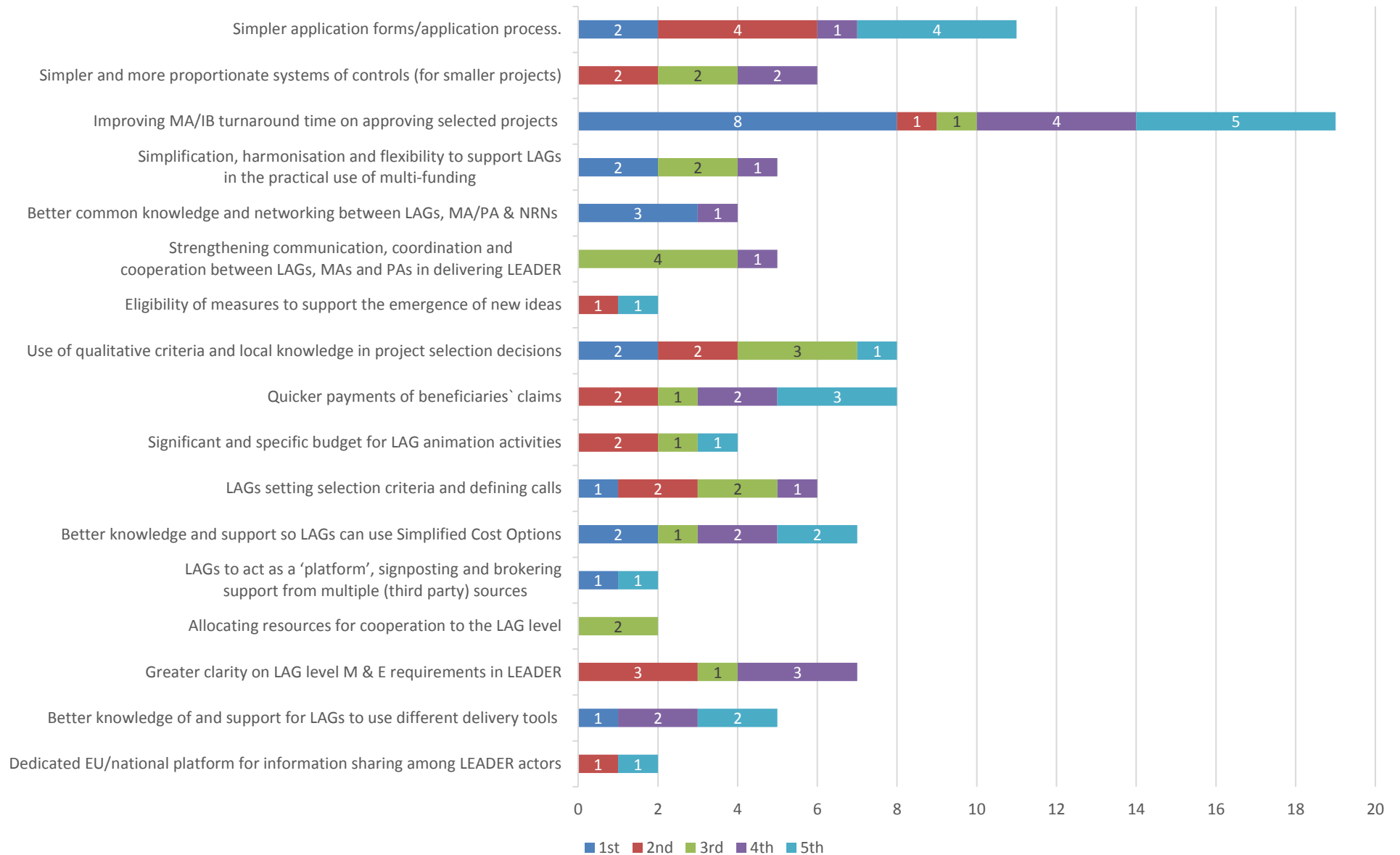
Question 28:

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 – 22
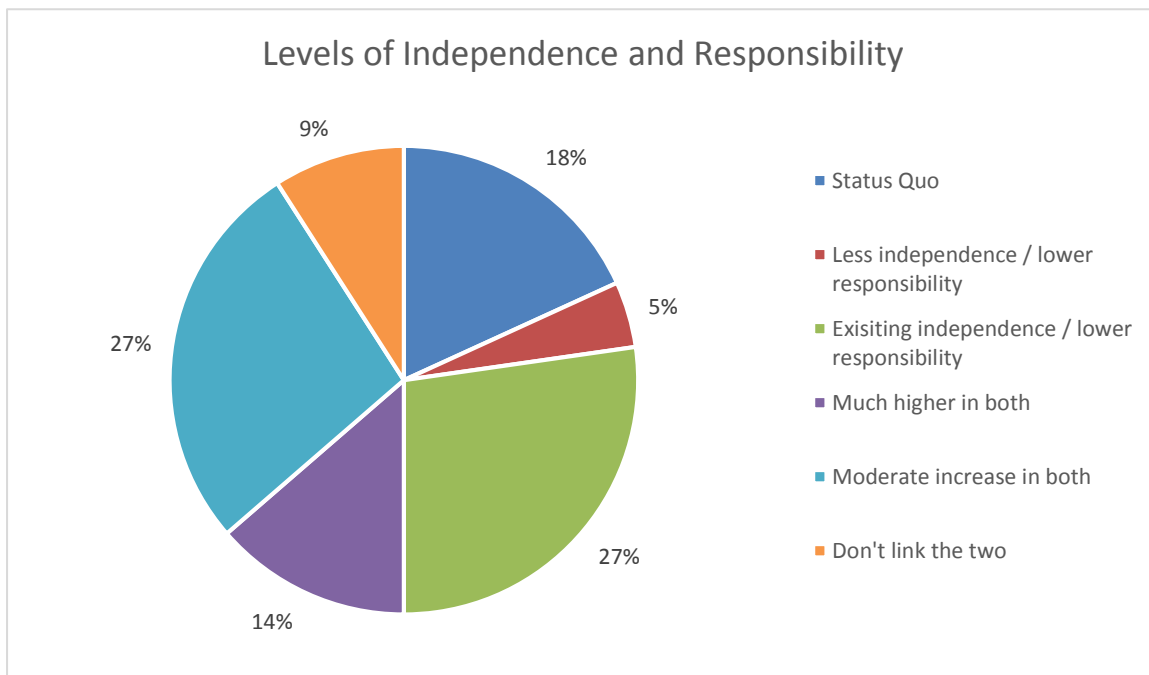
- A higher percentage of Polish LAGs responding wanted existing independence/ lower responsibility than in the EU sample (27% vs 8%).

- Only 9% of Polish LAGs don't want independence and responsibility to be linked in comparison with 24% of the EU sample.
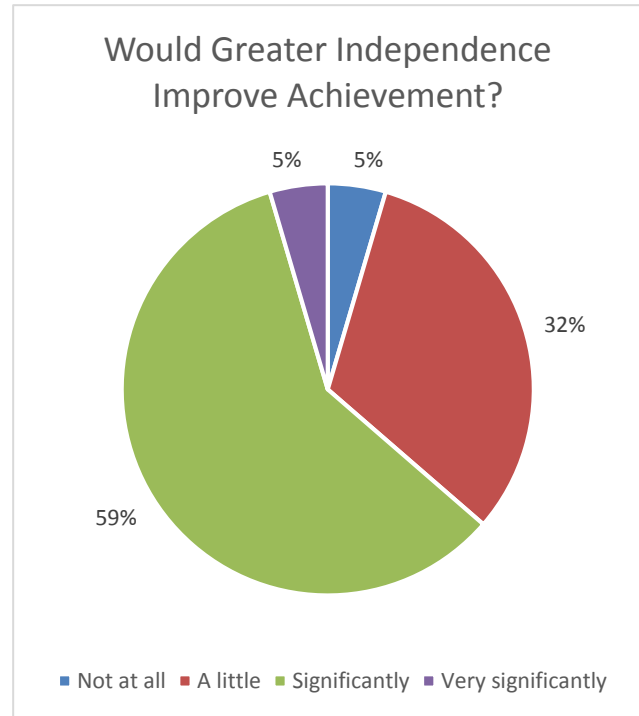
Question 29

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 22

- A larger proportion of Polish than EU respondents indicated that greater independence would improve the achievement of LAGs significantly (59% vs 42%).


Would Greater Independence Improve Achievement?

5% 5%
32%
59%

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

Question 30

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

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

Total Number of Responses 22

Would a Centralised Support Service Improve LAGs' Level of Achievement?

14%

23%

64%

- Not at all
- A little
- Significantly
- Very significantly
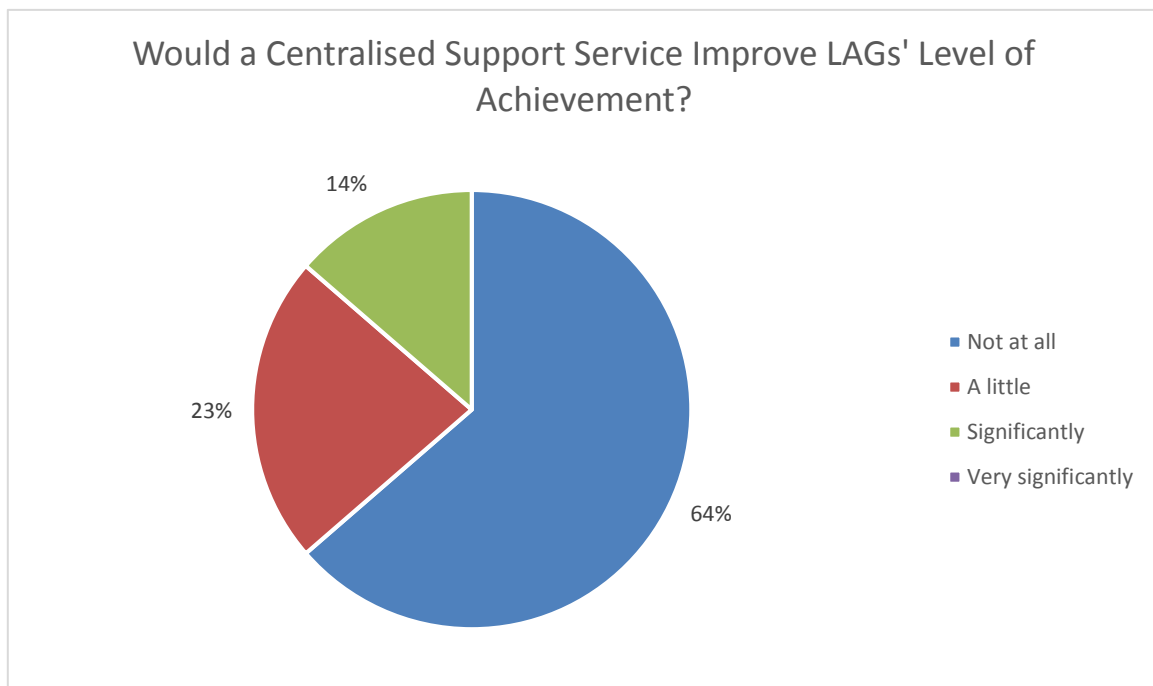
- A much larger proportion of the Polish respondents thought that a centralised support service would not improve LAG achievements at all than at EU level (64% vs 36%).
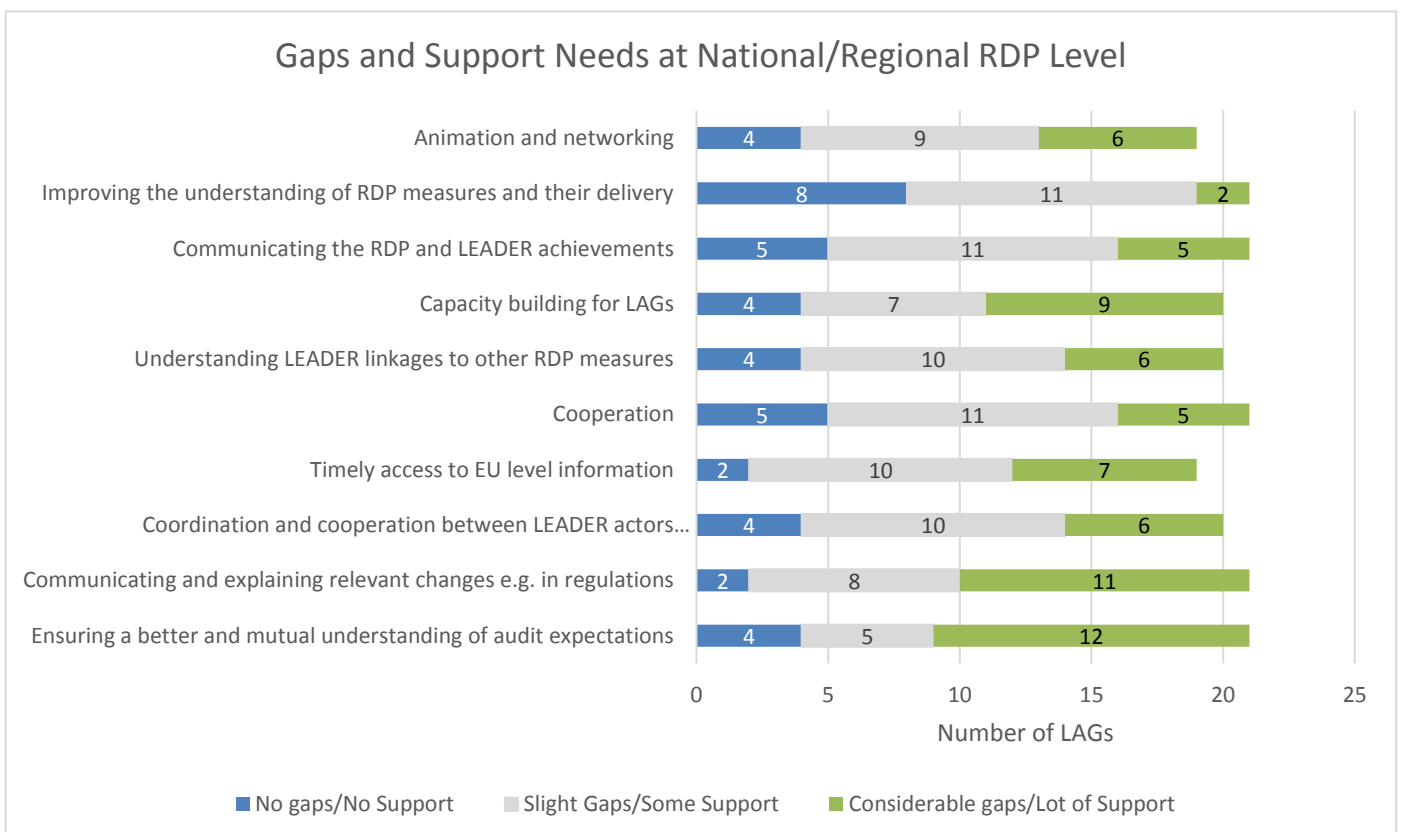
Question 31

To what extent does support from national and regional Rural Development Programme authorities (e.g. Managing Authority, Paying Agency) meet LAG needs and enhance LEADER implementation? Please, use the following scale to rank the provision against the specified needs:

1= no gaps in support – no support needed,
2 = slight gaps – some support needed,
3 = considerable gaps – lot of support needed.

- Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery.
- Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements.
- Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures.
- Capacity building for LAGs.
- Animation and networking.
- Cooperation.
- Timely access to EU level information.
- Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level.
- Communicating and explaining relevant changes e.g. in regulations.
- Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations.

Total Number of Responses 22

Gaps and Support Needs at National/Regional RDP Level

- The clearest differentiation from the EU sample is that Polish LAGs more frequently report considerable gaps/lot of support needed in relation to capacity building for LAGs, than the EU sample.
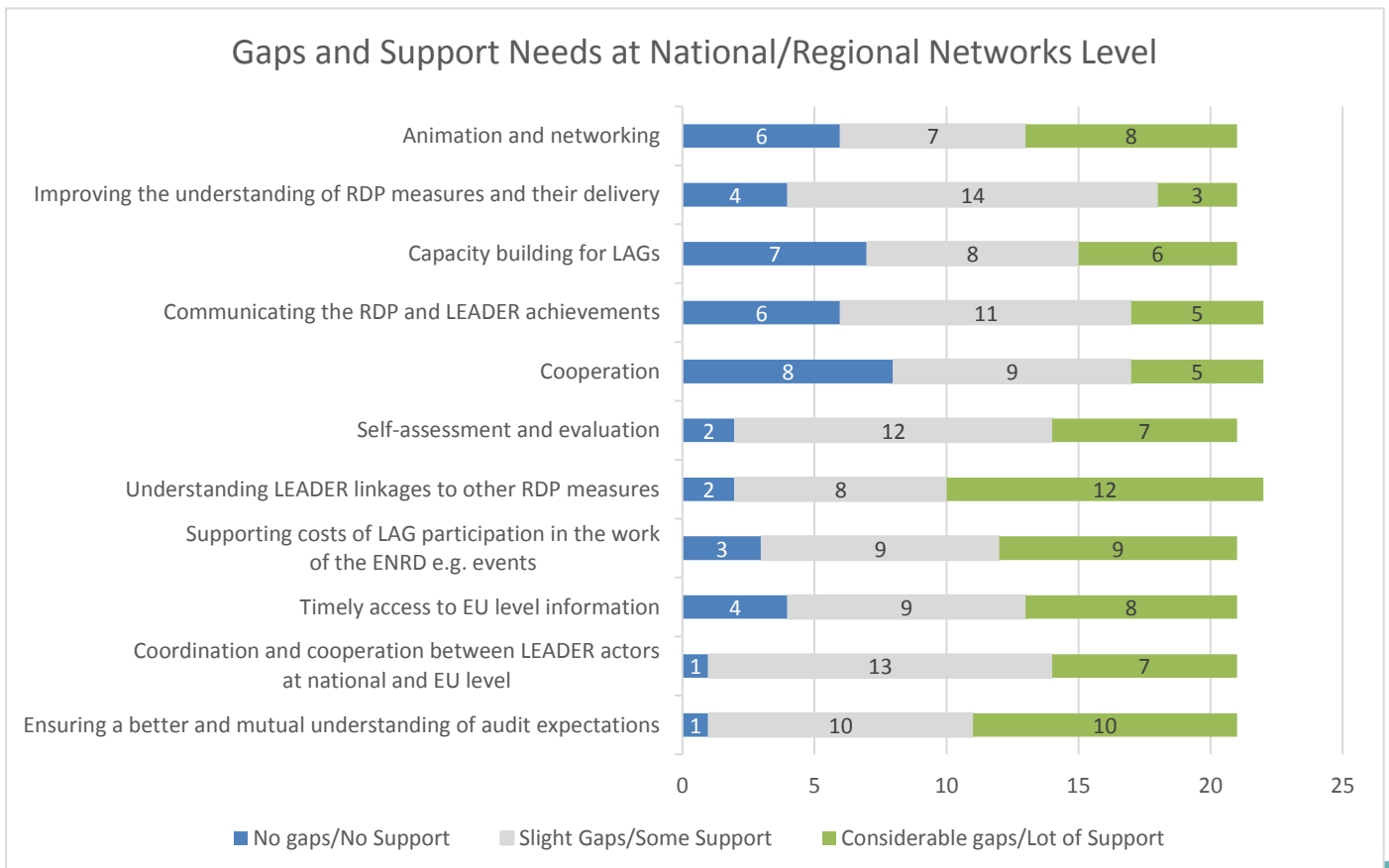
Question 32

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 22

Gaps and Support Needs at National/Regional Networks Level

Category	No gaps/No Support	Slight Gaps/Some Support	Considerable gaps/Lot of Support
Animation and networking	6	7	8
Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery	4	14	3
Capacity building for LAGs	7	8	6
Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements	6	11	5
Cooperation	8	9	5
Self-assessment and evaluation	2	12	7
Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures	2	8	12
Supporting costs of LAG participation in the work of the ENRD e.g. events	3	9	9
Timely access to EU level information	4	9	8
Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level	1	13	7
Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations	1	10	10

- Overall, responses from Polish LAGs are similar to the EU sample in their support needs at National/Regional network level.

- Support needs are proportionately higher for Polish respondents in animation and networking, self-assessment and evaluation and understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures, than the EU sample.

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.
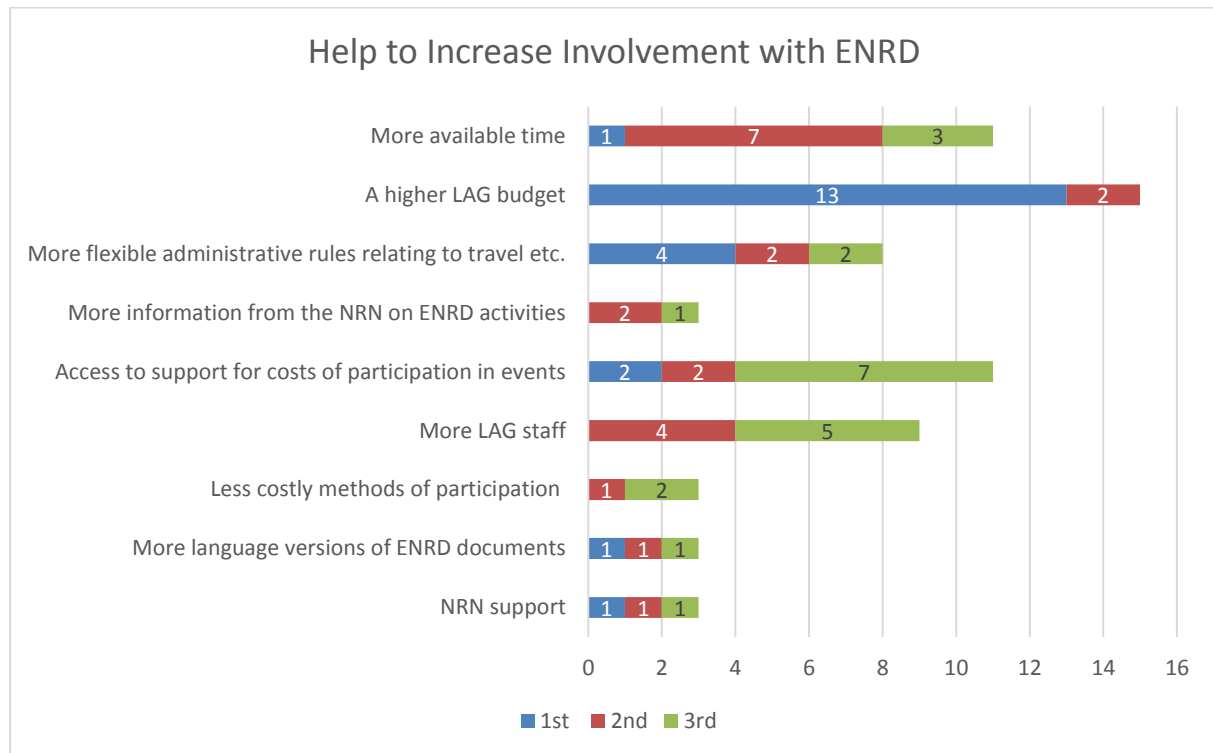
Total Number of Responses 22
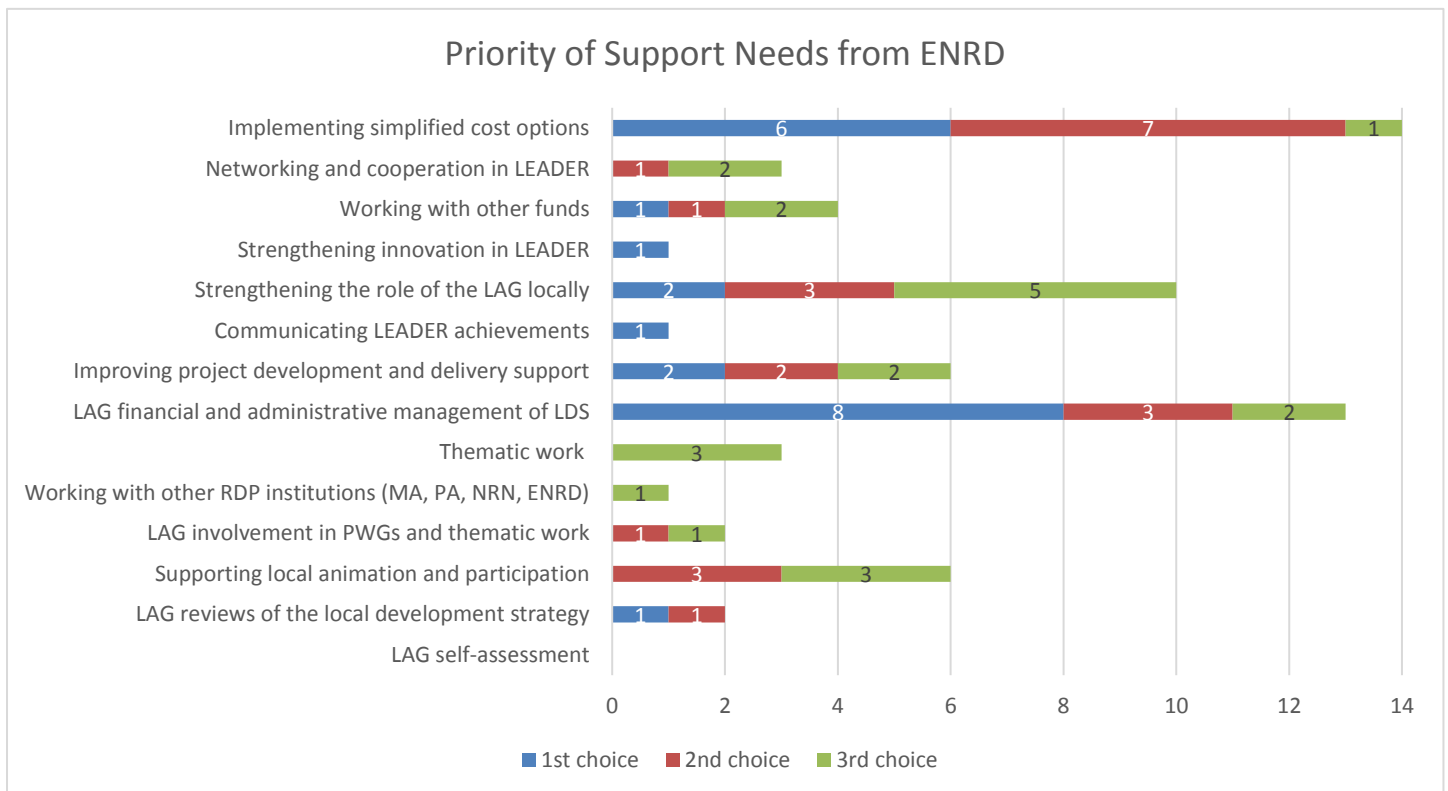
- Responding Polish LAGs indicate a much greater need for support from ENRD in LAG financial and administrative management of the LDS, strengthening the role of the LAG locally and supporting local animation and participation than the EU sample.

- In Poland less emphasis is given to ENRD support for strengthening innovation in LEADER and for networking and cooperation than 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 22

Help to Increase Involvement with ENRD

| Option	1st	2nd	3rd
More available time	1	7	3
A higher LAG budget	13	2	
More flexible administrative rules relating to travel etc.	4	2	2
More information from the NRN on ENRD activities		2	1
Access to support for costs of participation in events	2	2	7
More LAG staff		4	5
Less costly methods of participation		1	2
More language versions of ENRD documents	1	1	1
NRN support	1	1	1

- Polish respondents overwhelmingly saw a larger LAG budget being the most important option to increase participation with ENRD, whereas more available time was the top option at EU level.

- The Polish LAGs saw less need for more information on the NRN and ENRD activities to increase their involvement, 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 21

Importance of Self-assessment of LDS to Improve LAGs' Operation
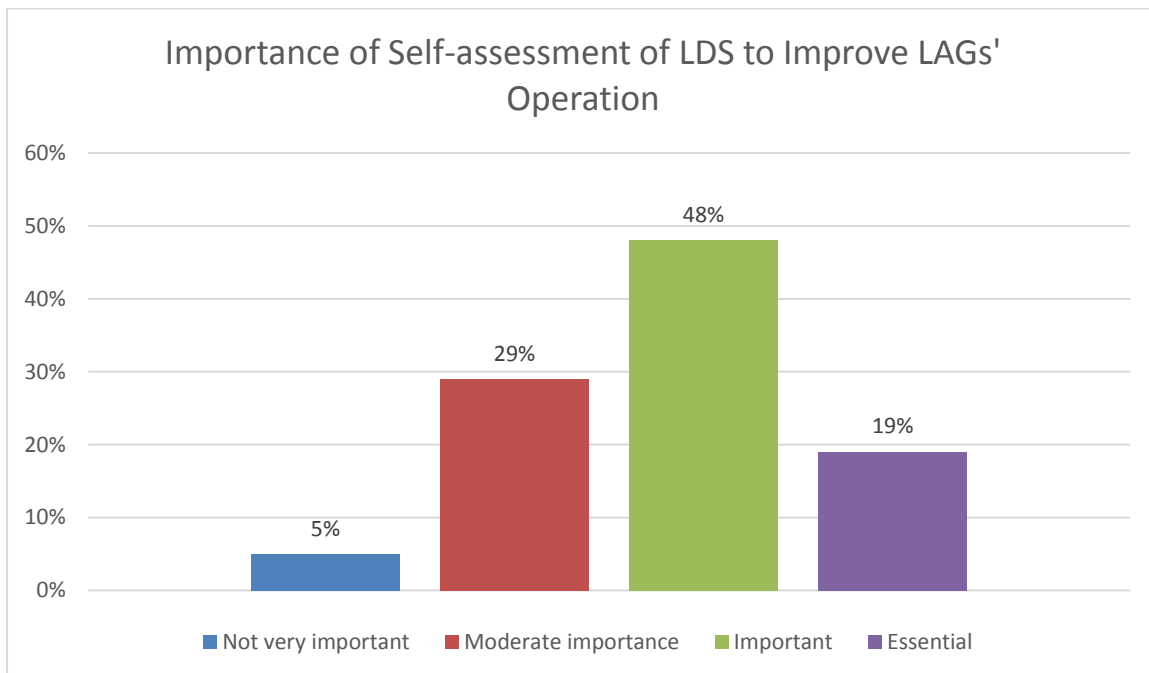
- The Polish LAGs had a broadly similar pattern of views to the importance of self-assessment as the EU sample.

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 22
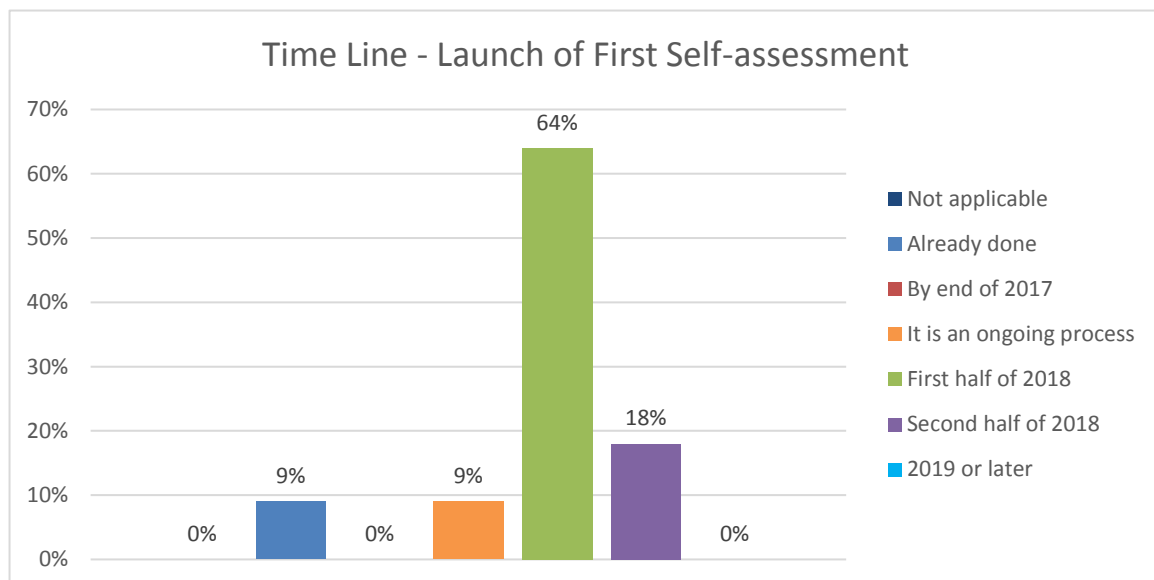
- For most Polish LAGs (82%) the first self-assessment will take place in 2018, in comparison to 48% of the EU sample.

- A smaller percentage of respondents indicated that self-assessment is an 'ongoing process' (9%) 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 22