LEADER LAG Survey 2017

Working Paper

Findings at Member State level

Member State: Greece

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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

- Greece (EL)
- 9 LAGs responded, representing 1.3% of total LAG responses
- 19% of Greek LAGs responded to the survey

Total Number of Responses 9

Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- Greece has one national RDP.

Total Number of Responses 9

Question 4

Respondents were asked to identify which position they held within the LAG.

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

Total Number of Responses 9

- In comparison to the survey responses from Greek LAGs, the EU sample contained a small percentage of LAG Chair / President and other LAG Board members (7%).

- The share of 'other LAG Staff' was larger in Greece (44%) than in the responses across Europe (21%).

Respondents' Position

44%

56%

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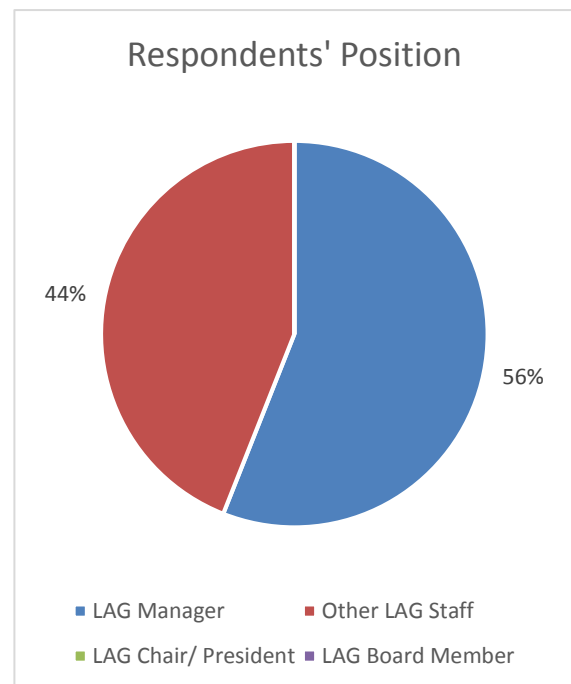
Question 7

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 9

- In the Greek sample, substantially more LAGs originated from the LEADER I period than was the case in the EU sample, (56% vs 8%). None of the responding Greek LAGs became operational during LEADER+ or during the period of 2007-2013 in comparison to 53% of the EU sample.

First Period LAG became Operational

22%

22%

56%

■ New LAG 2014-2020   ■ 2007-2013   ■ LEADER+ LAG

■ LEADER II   ■ LEADER I
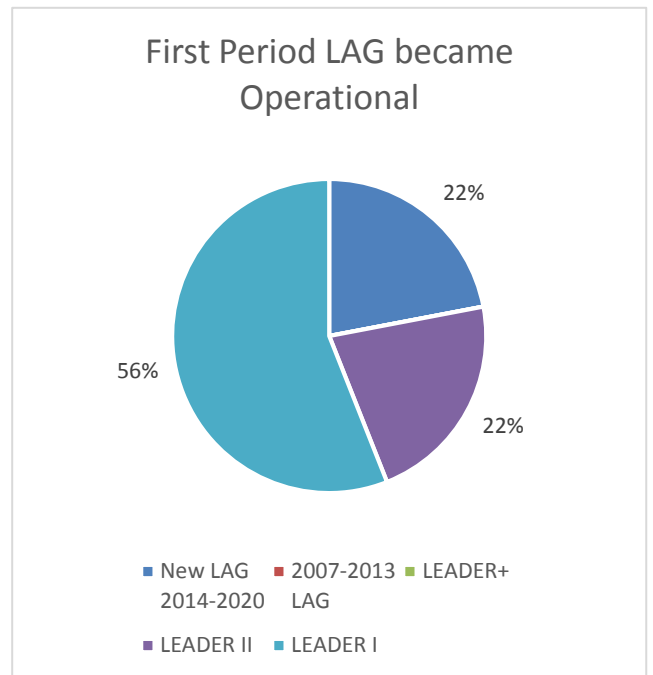
Question 8

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

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

Total Number of Responses 9

Time LAGs were Formally Selected in 2014-2020 Programme Period
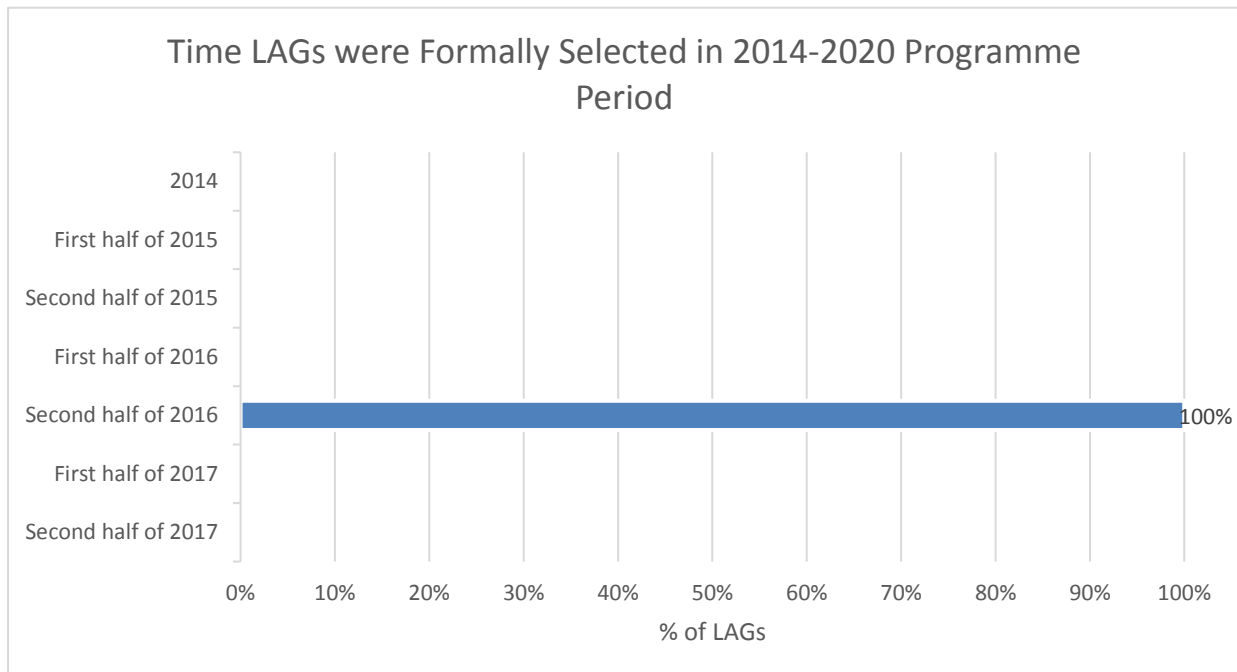
- All of responding LAGs (100%) from Greece were formally selected in the second half of 2016. In the EU sample, 73% were formally selected before this time and 10% after.

Question 9

When did / will your LAG first launch a call for projects?

- First half of 2015
- Second half of 2015
- First half of 2016
- Second half of 2016
- First half of 2017
- Second half of 2017
- 2018

Total Number of Responses 9

Timing of LAGs Launch of First Call for Projects

Category	% of LAGs
First half of 2015	
Second half of 2015	
First half of 2016	
Second half of 2016	
First half of 2017	
Second half of 2017	22%
2018	78%

% of LAGs
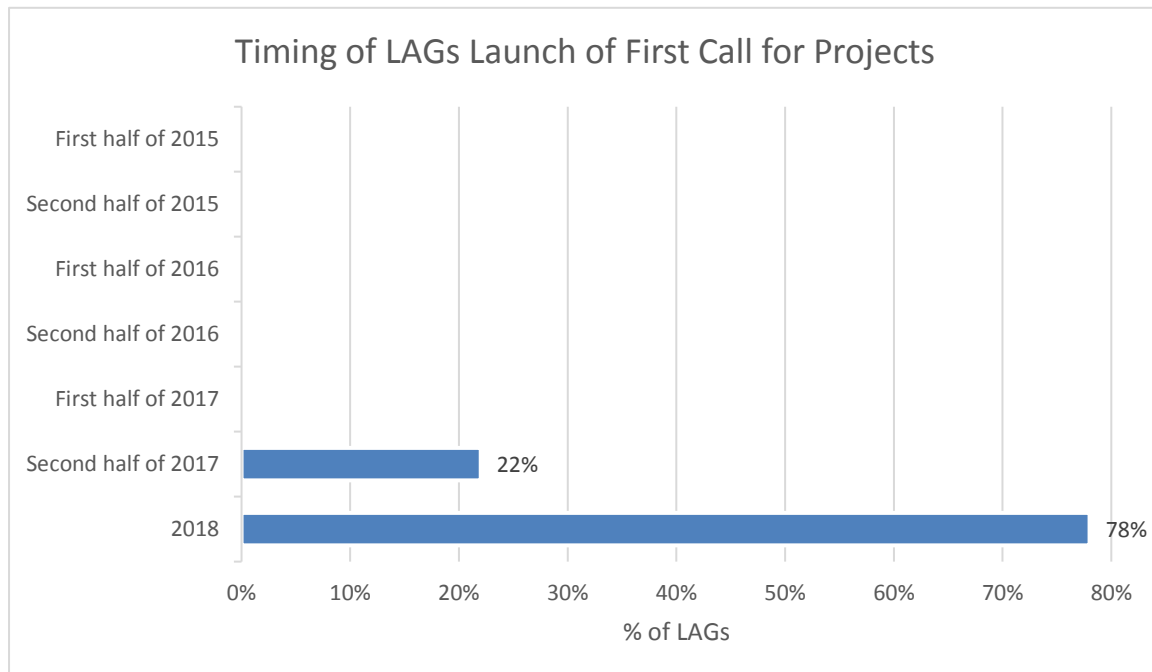
- The vast majority of the responding LAGs in Greece (78%) had their first call for projects in 2018. In comparison to 90% of the EU sample had their first calls before this time.

LAG Funding

Question 10

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

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

It should be noted that the percentages sum up to more than 100% as this was a multiple choice question.

Total Number of Responses 9

LAG Use of ESI Funds in addition to EAFRD
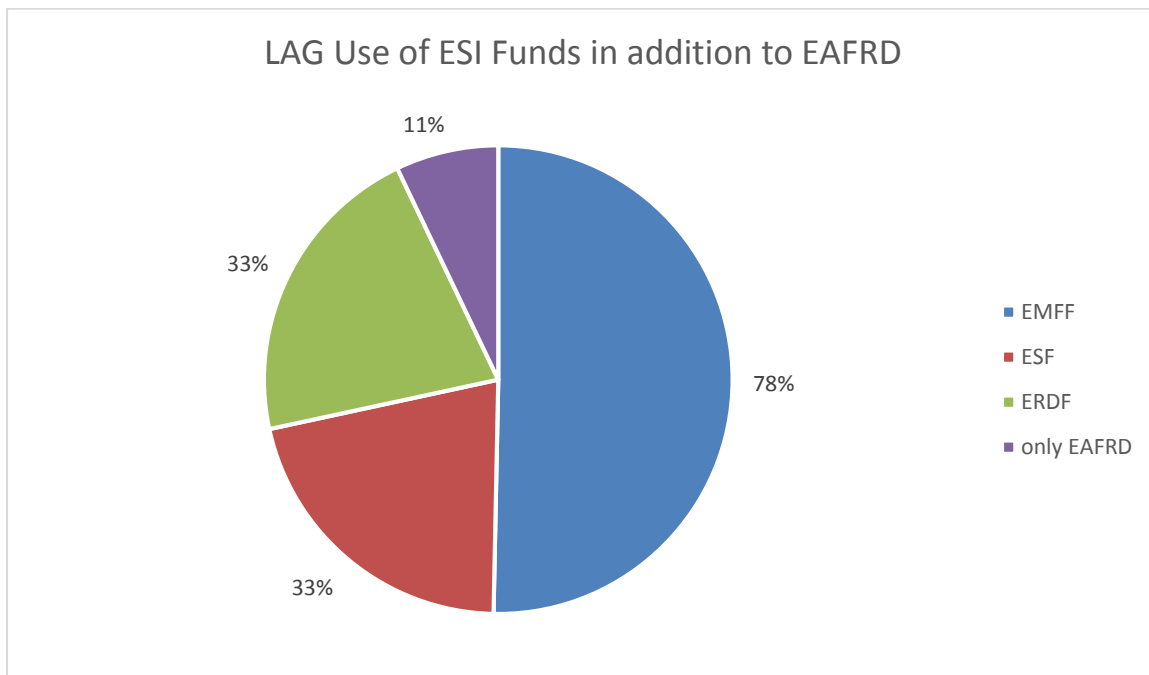
- The responses from LAGs in Greece indicated that the proportion of LAGs using a multi-fund approach is larger than that in the EU sample, where 67% of LAGs who responded use EAFRD only in comparison to 11% in Greece.

- In Greece 78% of responding LAGs used EMFF vs 9% of the wider sample. ERDF (33% VS 25%) and ESF (33% VS 16%) were both used more extensively by Greek respondents.

Question 11

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

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

Total Number of Responses 9

Range of Budgets from Responding LAGs

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

11%   11%

78%
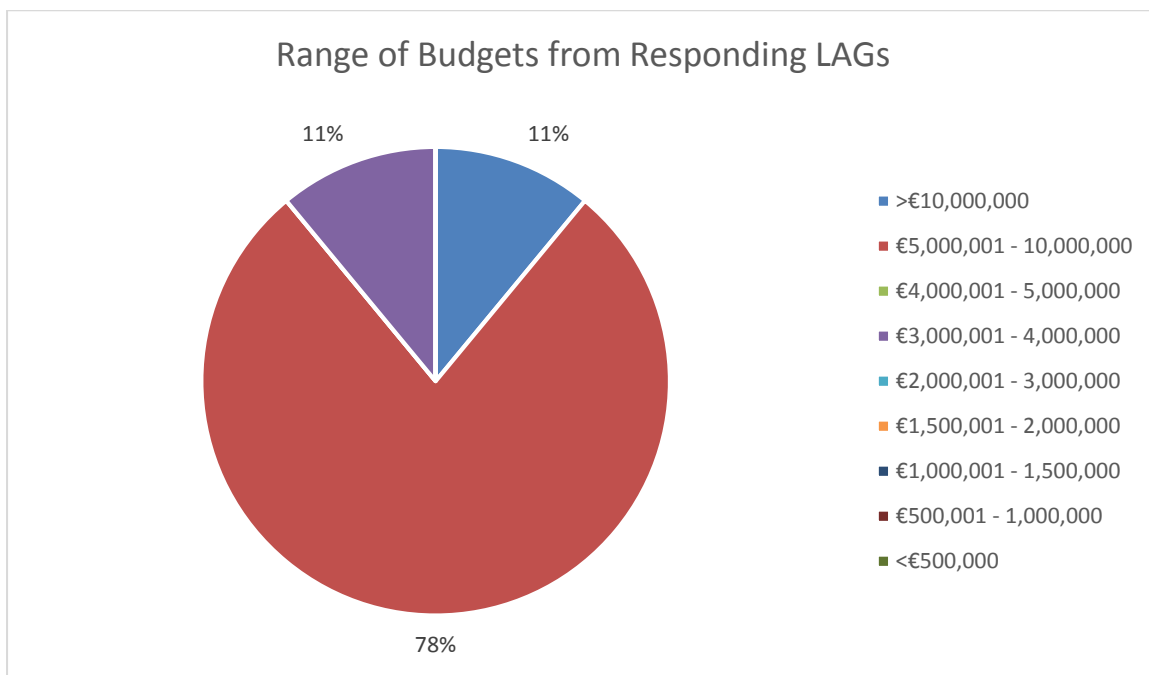
- The vast majority of the responding LAGs in Greece (89%) had budgets over €5m, in comparison to 15% of LAGs from wider sample.

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 9

- A considerably larger proportion of LAGs in Greece (89%) reported budget allocation of over 17% for animation and running costs vs 64% of the EU sample.

% of LAG Budget Spent on Animation & Running Costs

11%

33%

56%

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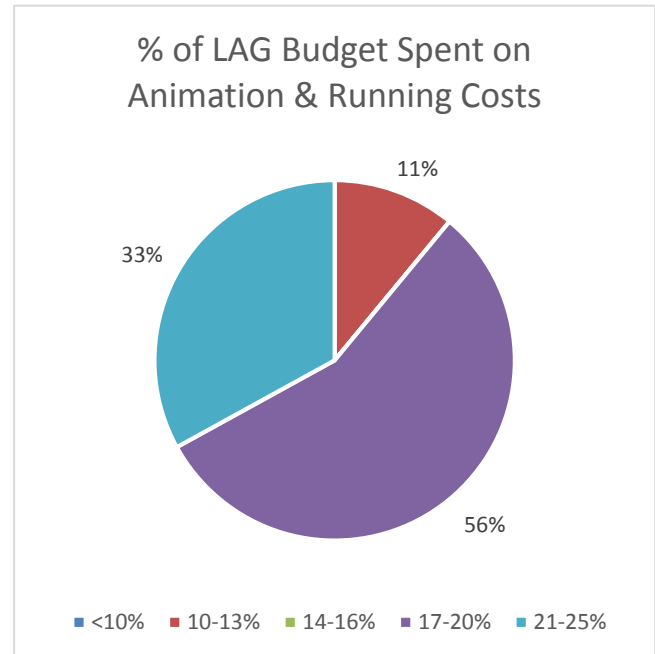
LEADER Principles

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 7

Relative Importance of LEADER Principles

Principle	Essential	Important	Medium importance	Low importance
Bottom-up approach	86%	14%		
Local public private partnerships	86%		14%	
Area based LDSs	72%	14%	14%	
Networking	57%	43%		
Multi-sectoral	71%	29%		
Innovative approaches	72%	14%	14%	
50% requirement in project selection	57%	29%		14%
Cooperation projects	43%	43%	14%	
49% limitation on voting rights	57%		29%	14%

Legend: ■ Essential ■ Important ■ Medium importance ■ Low importance ■ Not at all
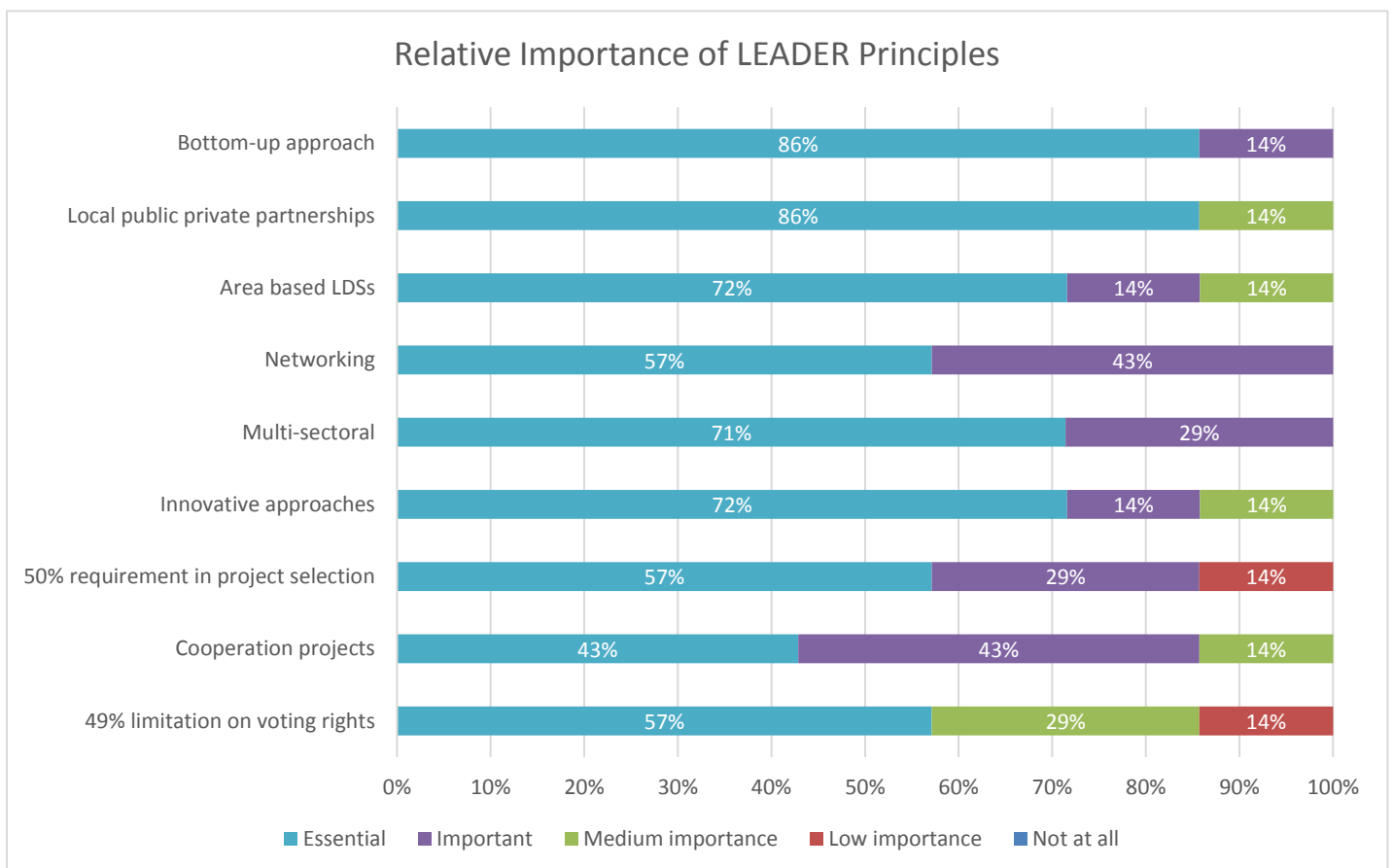
- In most cases, LAGs in Greece assessed the relative importance of LEADER principles in a similar manner to the wider EU sample. A larger proportion of Greek respondents considered all these elements to be 'essential' than their European counterparts, some markedly so e.g. innovative approaches (72% vs 29%), the 50% requirement on project selection (57% vs 34%) and the 49% limitation on voting rights (57% vs 25%).

- When essential and important rankings are added which included the 'networking' (100% vs 82%), 'multi-sectoral' (100% vs 76%) and 'cooperation projects' (86% vs 61%) score markedly higher.

Question 14

To what extent is your LAG able to implement the following elements of the LEADER approach? (please rate each option from 1-5, where 1= not at all, 5 = fully)

- Area-based local development strategies intended for well-identified sub-regional rural territories.
- Local public-private partnerships (local action groups).
- Bottom-up approach with decision-making power for local action groups concerning the elaboration and implementation of local development strategies.
- Multi-sectoral design and implementation of the strategy based on interaction between actors and projects of different sectors of the local economy.
- Implementation of innovative approaches.
- Implementation of cooperation projects.
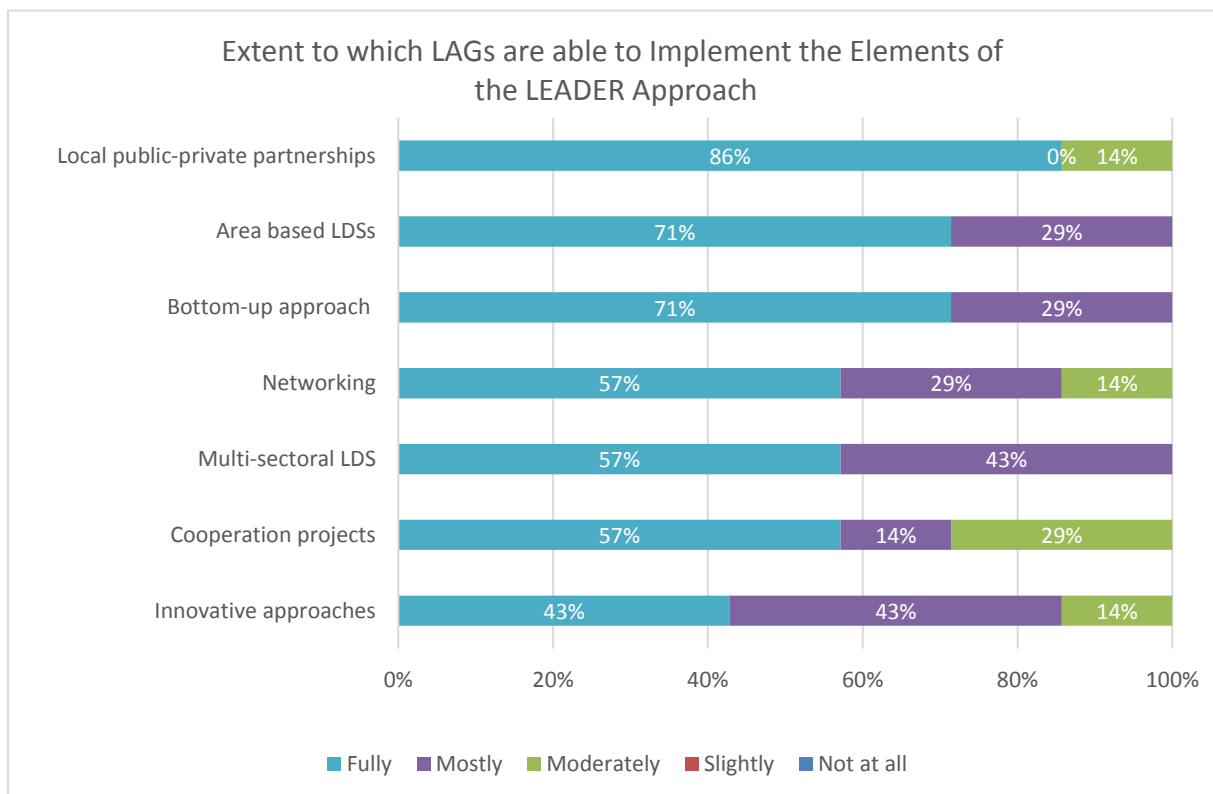- Networking of local partnerships.

Total Number of Responses 7

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

- The pattern of responses of the LAGs in Greece were similar to those of the EU sample, overall Greek respondents were notably more positive regarding their ability to fully (or fully and mostly) implement all the various elements of the LEADER approach, most notably for innovative approaches.

Question 15

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

- LEADER implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible, innovative way.
- The project application procedure is designed to be accessible and encourage local stakeholders to participate in LEADER.
- The LAG has overall control of setting selection criteria and defining calls for projects.
- The LAG is able to use qualitative criteria and local knowledge to inform project selection decisions.
- The decision-making power of LAGs is not overly limited by Rural Development Programme (RDP) level procedures and regulations.
- Your LAG's ability to implement the LEADER approach is constrained by bureaucracy and administrative burden.
- Project holders` ability to implement LEADER projects is not overly constrained by the level of bureaucracy and administrative burden.
- Eligibility conditions for LEADER beneficiaries are appropriate and proportionate to the amount of support sought.
- LAG funding for the animation of local stakeholders and networking is sufficient.
- Administrative and reporting requirements limit your LAG's capacity for animation and other development oriented activities.

Total Number of Responses 7

Aspects of LEADER Implementation as seen by Local Action Groups

Statement	Agree strongly / agree	Disagree strongly / disagree	Don't know
LAG's ability to implement LEADER constrained by bureaucracy & admin	71%	14%	15%
LAG is able to use qualitative criteria & local knowledge for project selection decisions	86%	14%	
Admin & reporting requirements limit LAG's capacity for animation & local development	71%	14%	15%
LAG has overall control of setting selection criteria & defining calls for projects	57%	43%	
LAG funding for the animation of local stakeholders & networking is sufficient.	100%		
Implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible, innovative way	100%		
Eligibility conditions for LEADER beneficiaries are appropriate & proportionate to support sought	57%	29%	14%
Project application procedure is accessible & encourage local stakeholders to participate in LEADER	100%		
Decision-making power of LAGs is not overly limited by RDP level procedures & regulations	71%	29%	
Project holders` ability to implement LEADER projects is not overly constrained by bureaucracy & admin burden	43%	57%	

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

- A considerably greater proportion of Greek LAGs agreed/strongly agreed with many of the statements than did the wider sample.

- They were much more positive about the following aspects:
  - o 'project application procedure is accessible and encourages local stakeholders to participate in LEADER' in comparison to their European peers (100% vs 33%),
  - o 'implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible, innovative way' (100% vs 51%) and
  - o 'LAG funding for the animation of local stakeholders & networking is sufficient' (100% vs 54%).

Question 16

The LEADER approach can deliver qualitative local effects which are distinctive from those of other rural development activities. The importance of these effects and how easy they are to achieve may vary by LAG.

Please rank how important and how achievable each of the possible effects is for your LAG according to the following scale. 1= Very important and achievable, 2 = Very important and difficult, 3 = Important and achievable, 4 = Important and difficult, 5 = Not important but achievable, 6= Not important and difficult.

- Directly addressing local issues and opportunities.
- Strengthening stakeholder participation in local partnership and its governance.
- Strengthening economic linkages among local actors.
- Strengthening public private partnership.
- Unpaid work carried out by LAG members.
- Mobilising local / endogenous resources (human, physical, financial).
- Improving local community social capital and cohesion.
- Improving local individual's knowledge, skills and capacities.
- Finding / implementing innovative solutions to local problems.
- Cooperating with other LAG territories.

Total Number of Responses 7

Importance and Achievability of LEADER Effects
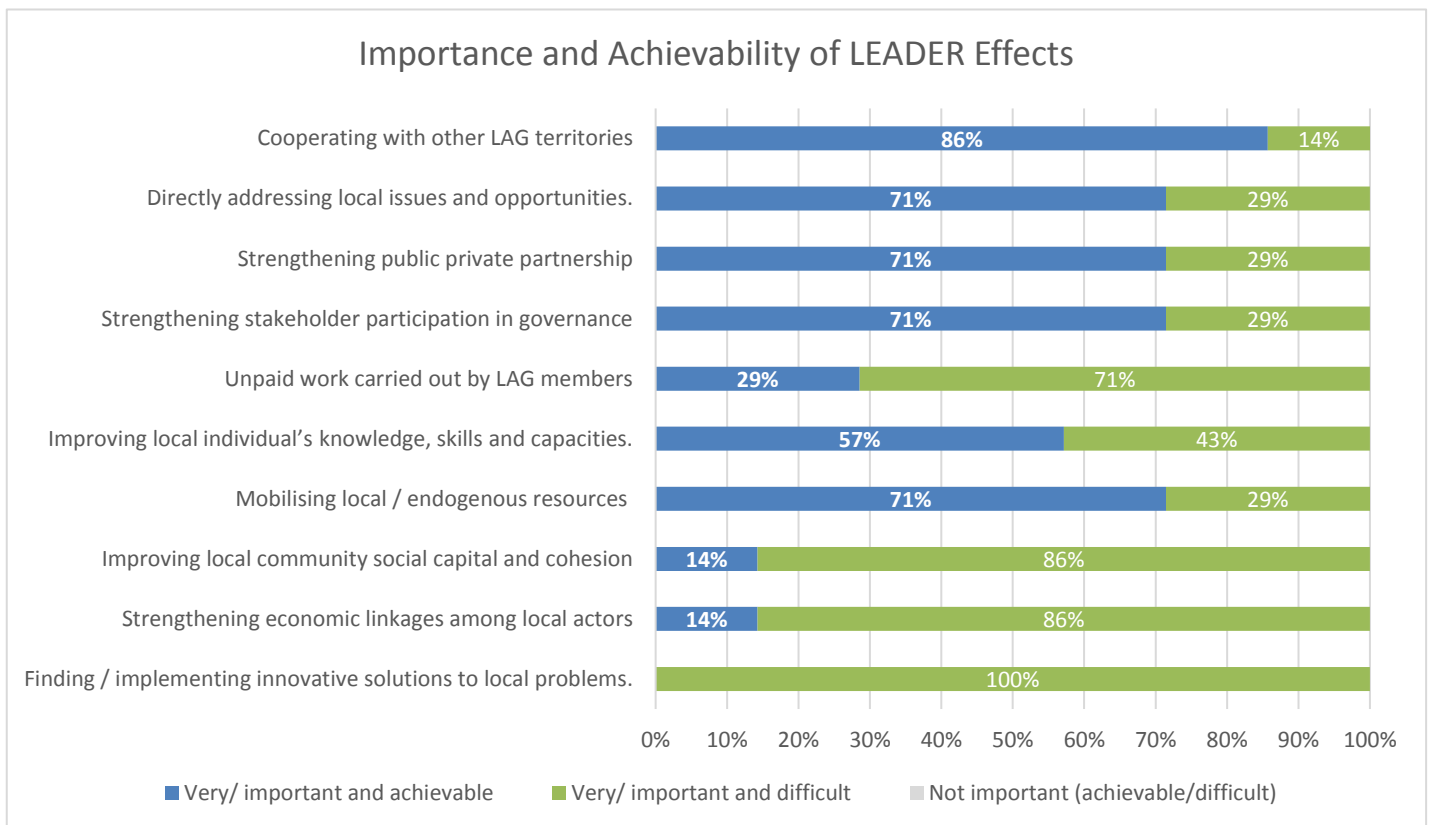
- In comparison to the EU sample, considerably more Greek respondents considered the LEADER effects as 'very/important and achievable'.

- In a few areas, Greek respondents found some of the LEADER effects more difficult to achieve. These included:
  - o 'finding / implementing innovative solutions to local problems', which all Greek LAGs (100%) found this difficult to achieve in comparison to 64% of their EU peers.
  - o 'improving local community social capital and cohesion' (86% vs 56%).
  - o 'strengthening economic linkages among local actors' (86% vs 56%).
  - o 'unpaid work carried out by LAG members' (71% vs31%).
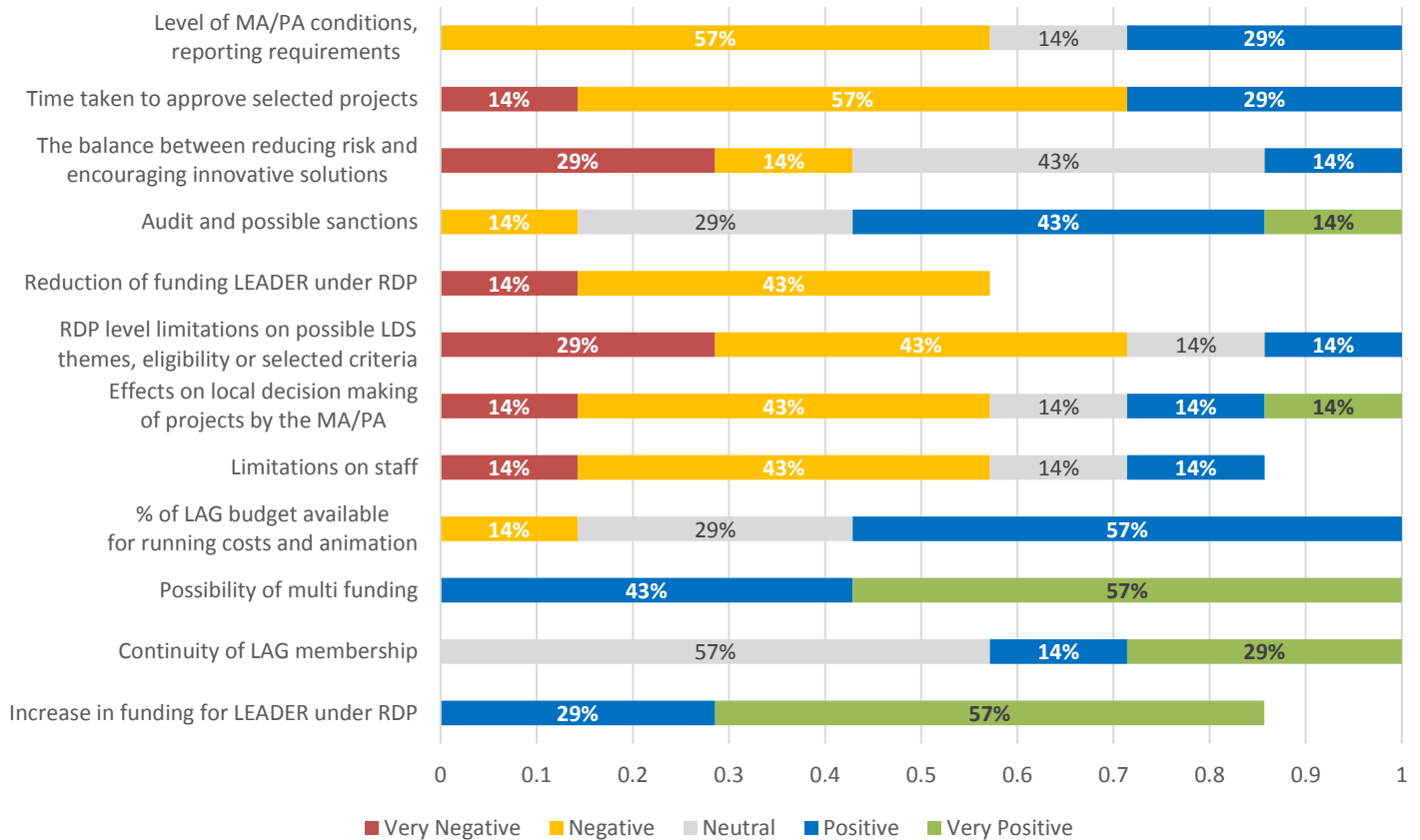
LEADER Operation

Question 17

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

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

Total Number of Responses 7

Level of Effects on LEADER Implementation

	Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Positive
Level of MA/PA conditions, reporting requirements		57%	14%	29%	
Time taken to approve selected projects	14%	57%		29%	
The balance between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions	29%	14%	43%	14%	
Audit and possible sanctions		14%	29%	43%	14%
Reduction of funding LEADER under RDP	14%	43%			
RDP level limitations on possible LDS themes, eligibility or selected criteria	29%	43%	14%	14%	
Effects on local decision making of projects by the MA/PA	14%	43%	14%	14%	14%
Limitations on staff	14%	43%	14%	14%	
% of LAG budget available for running costs and animation		14%	29%	57%	
Possibility of multi funding				43%	57%
Continuity of LAG membership			57%	14%	29%
Increase in funding for LEADER under RDP				29%	57%

For the purposes of improving the clarity of the analysis the 'not applicable' responses have been removed from the chart.
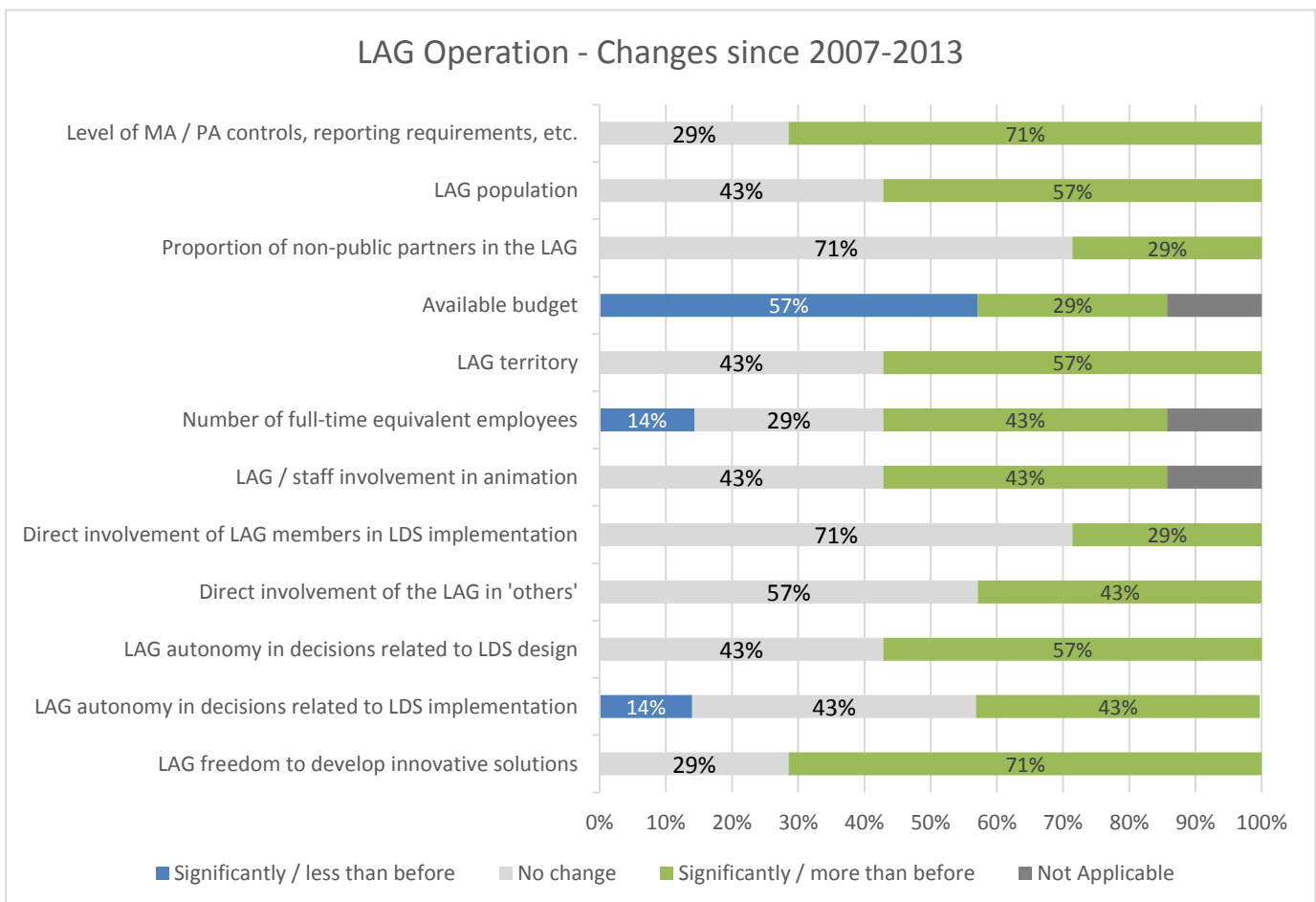
- Proportionately much more LAGs in Greece than in the EU sample identified 'very positive' and 'positive' effects across the various factors of LEADER implementation.

- Particularly in the cases of 'possibility of multi funding', 'increases in funding for LEADER under RDP', 'audit and possible sanctions', and '% of LAG budget available for running costs' substantially more Greek respondents felt positive about these effects ('positive' and 'very positive') than their European counterparts.

Question 18

How have the following aspects changed for your LAG between the 2007 – 2013 and 2014-2020 Programming periods? (1 = significantly less than before, 2 = less than before, 3 = no change, 4 = more than before, 5 = significantly more than before) (routed for only those LAGs previously operational)

- Available budget.
- LAG territory.
- LAG population.
- Number of full-time equivalent employees.
- LAG / staff involvement in animation.
- LAG autonomy in decisions related to local development strategy design.
- LAG autonomy in decisions related to local development strategy implementation.
- Level of MA controls, reporting requirements etc.
- LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions.
- Proportion of non-public partners in the LAG.
- Direct involvement of LAG members in LDS implementation.
- Direct involvement of the LAG in other regional and territorial development actions or structures.

Total Number of Responses 7

LAG Operation - Changes since 2007-2013

Aspect	Significantly / less than before	No change	Significantly / more than before	Not Applicable
Level of MA / PA controls, reporting requirements, etc.		29%	71%	
LAG population		43%	57%	
Proportion of non-public partners in the LAG		71%	29%	
Available budget	57%		29%	(grey)
LAG territory		43%	57%	
Number of full-time equivalent employees	14%	29%	43%	(grey)
LAG / staff involvement in animation		43%	43%	(grey)
Direct involvement of LAG members in LDS implementation		71%	29%	
Direct involvement of the LAG in 'others'		57%	43%	
LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS design		43%	57%	
LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS implementation	14%	43%	43%	
LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions		29%	71%	

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

- The Greek respondents answered most of the questions more positively than those in the EU sample with the exception of 'available budget' where more Greek LAGs indicated that they experienced reductions than their EU counterparts (57% vs 43%).

- Areas where the proportion of Greek LAGs experiencing 'significantly/more than before' was much higher than in the EU sample included 'LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions' (71% vs 14%), 'LAG autonomy related to LDS implementation' (43% vs 17%), 'LAG autonomy related to LDS design' (57% vs 17%)' and "LAG territory' (57% vs 27%).

Question 19

Please think about your day-to-day work in the LAG and rank the three types of activity which your LAG staff spend most time on overall on a scale of 1 – 3 where 1 = most time spent.

- Reporting to /working with LAG board and members.
- Supporting project development and implementation.
- Financial and administrative management of LAG and local projects.
- Reporting and communication with the Managing Authority and Paying Agency (including regional intermediaries).
- Animation, capacity building and training of local stakeholders (inc LAG members).
- Supporting innovation at the local level.
- Monitoring and reviewing the local development strategy.
- Developing /managing cooperation projects.
- Working with other LAGs, the regional/national rural network and the ENRD.

Total Number of Responses 7

Activities LAG Staff Spend Most Time On

| Activity	1st	2nd	3rd
Supporting project development and implementation		1	4
Financial & administrative management of LAG and local projects	3	1	
Reporting and communication with the MA/PA (including regional intermediaries)	2	2	1
Reporting to /working with LAG board /LAG members	1	1	
Animation, capacity building and training for local stakeholders (inc LAG members)		1	
Developing / managing cooperation projects.			2
Working with other LAGs, the regional/ national rural network and the ENRD			
Monitoring and reviewing the LDS	1	1	
Supporting innovation at the LAG level			
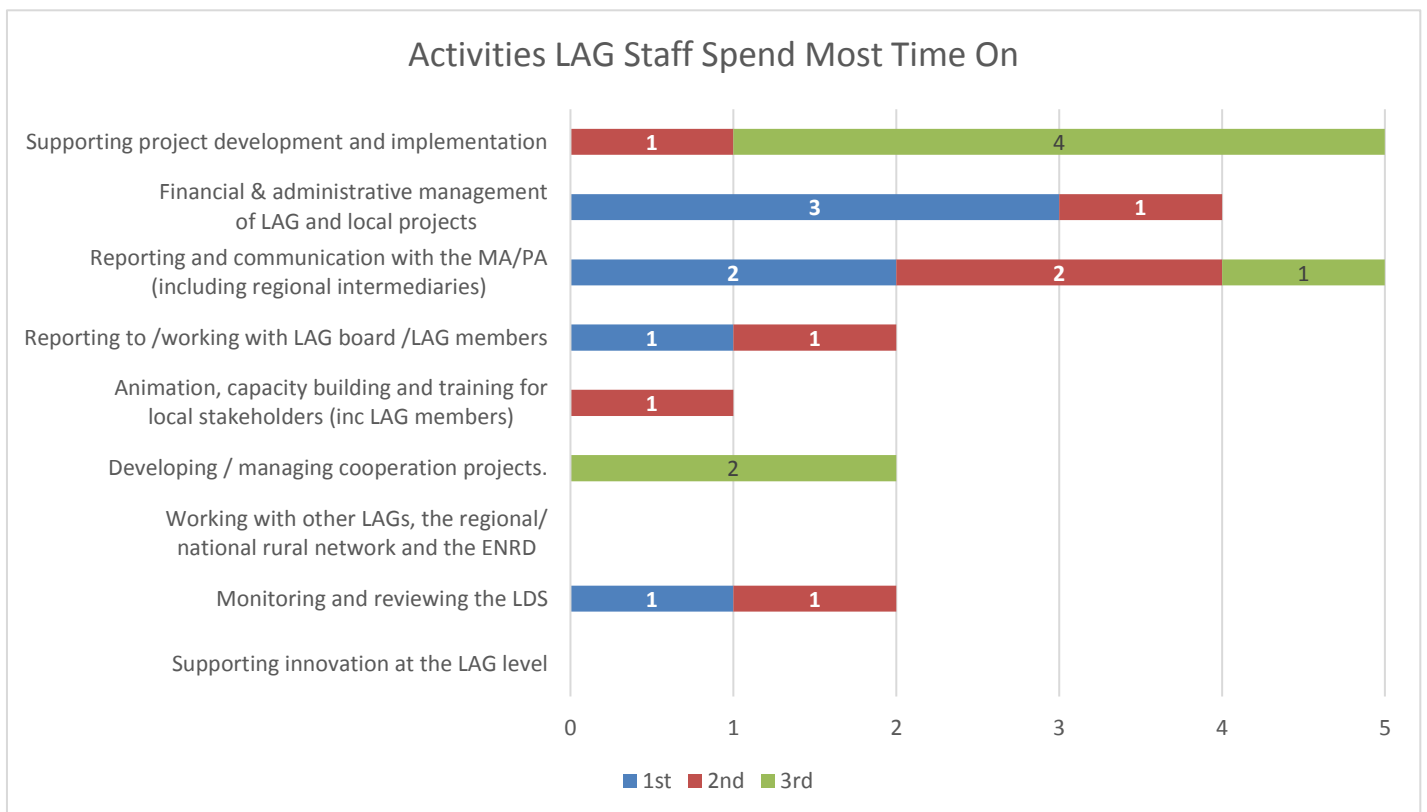
- The responses of the Greek LAGs followed largely the pattern of the EU sample. Slight differences related to a higher ranking of time spent on 'financial and administrative management of LAG and local projects' and 'reporting and communication with the MA/PA) than in the EU sample.

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 7

Activities LAGs would like Staff to Devote More Time To
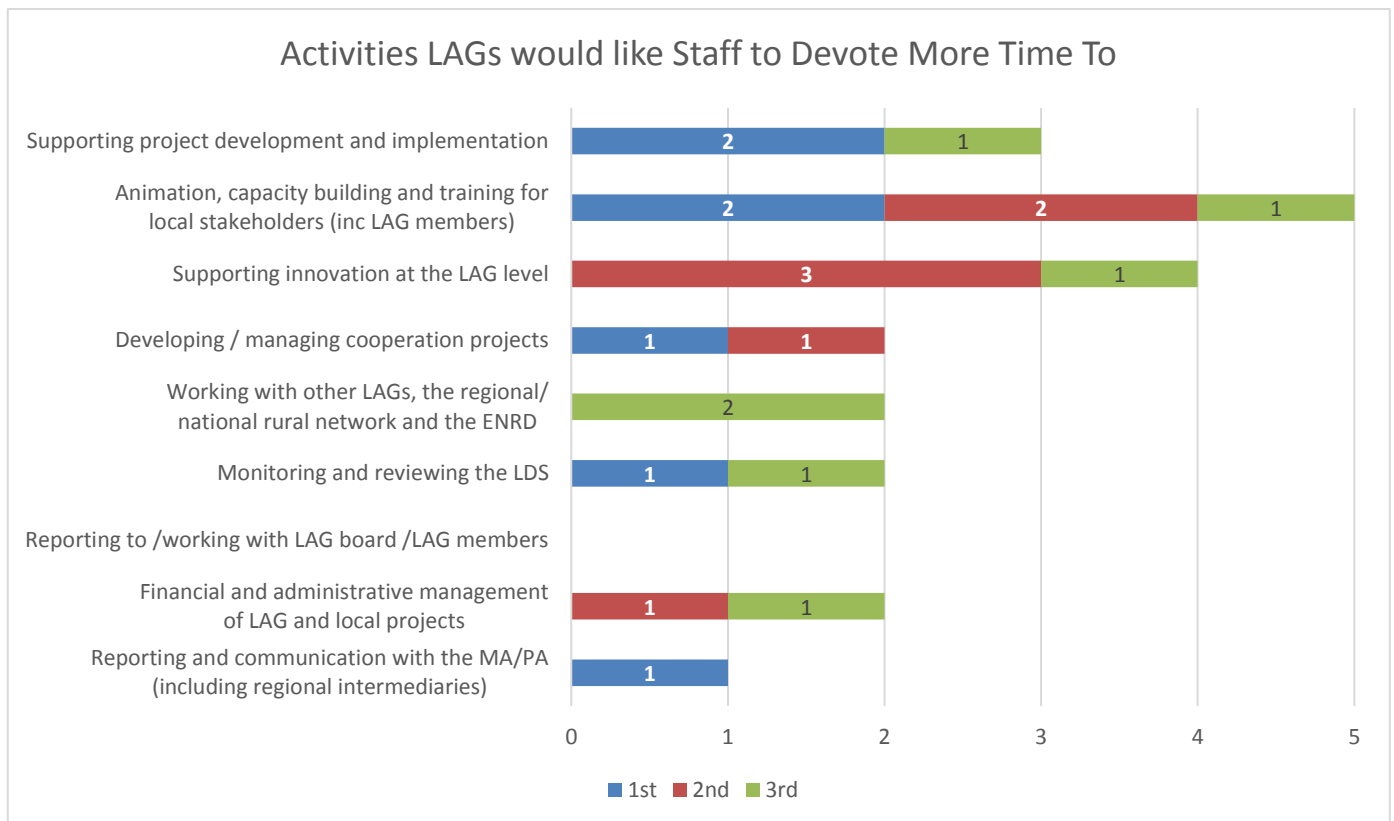
- The responses of the Greek LAGs were largely in line with those of the wider EU sample.

- However, proportionately slightly less Greek respondents prioritised that their staff would like to devote more time on 'supporting project development and implementation' 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 7

Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs
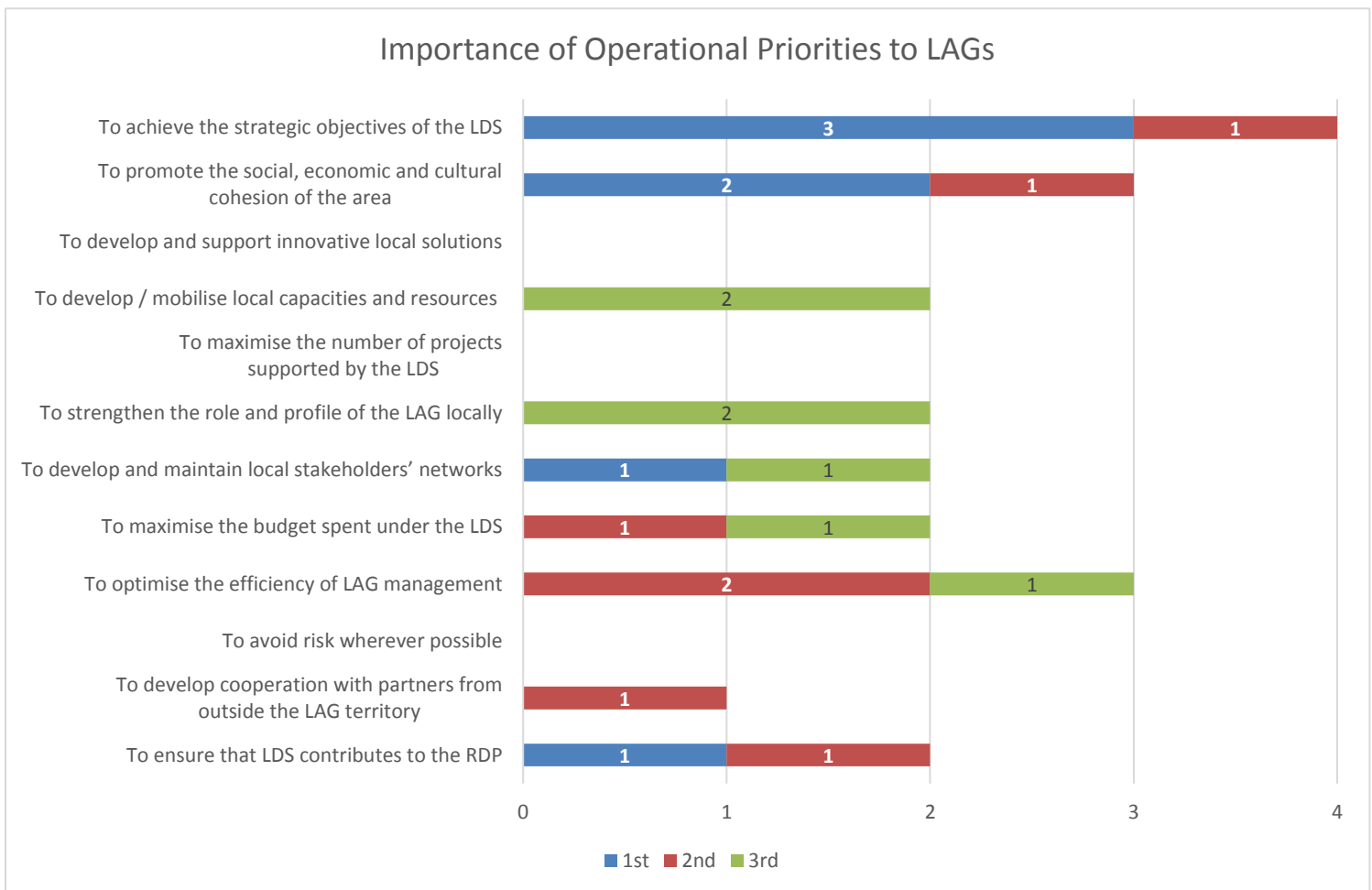
- The Greek LAGs ranked the operational priorities largely in a similar manner to the LAGs of the EU survey. However, differences include the higher importance given to 'ensure that LDS contributes to the RDP'.

- The operational priorities of 'developing and supporting innovative local solutions', maximising the number of projects supported by the LDS' and 'to avoid risk wherever possible' were not ranked at all by the Greek respondents, while the first two of these were rated more highly in the EU sample.
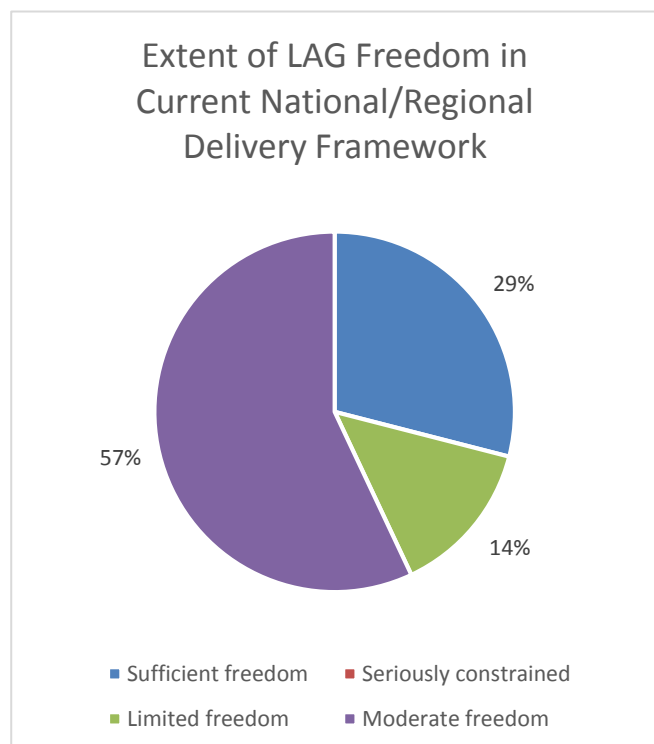
Question 22

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 7

- Some differences exist between the Greek and the European samples: while 29% of the responding LAGs felt that they had 'sufficient freedom', less European LAGs stated this (17%).

- None of the respondents in Greece felt that they were 'seriously constrained' in their freedom, whereas 11% of the EU sample stated this.


Extent of LAG Freedom in Current National/Regional Delivery Framework

29%

14%

57%

- 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 7
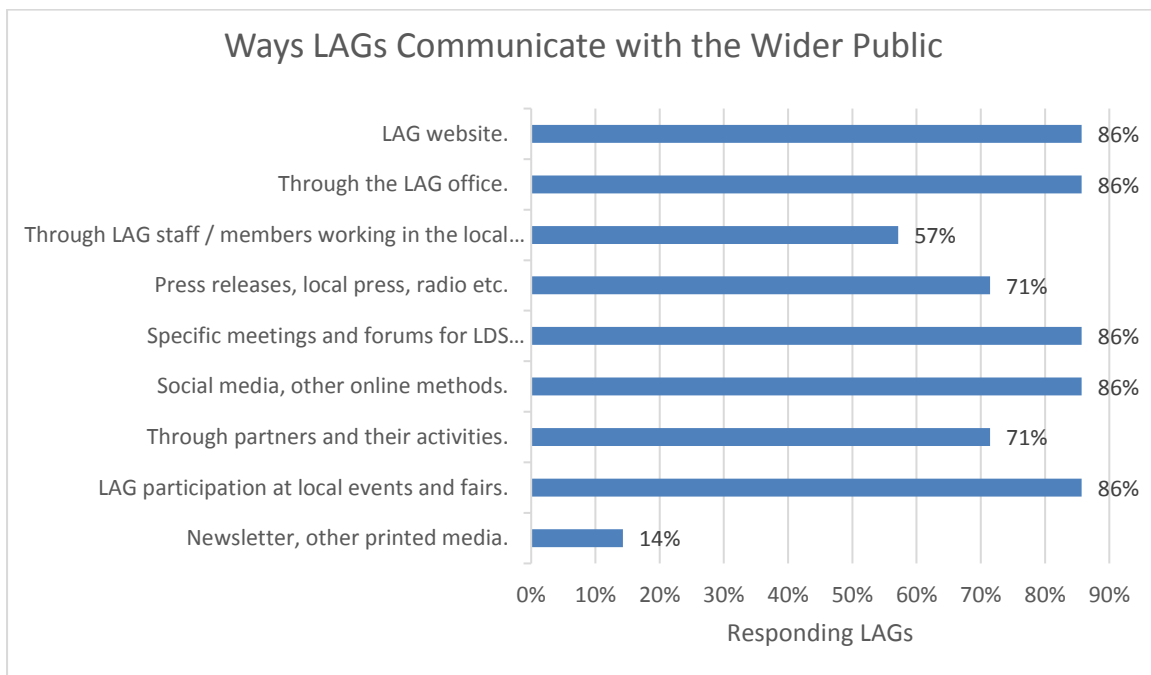
- Considerably more Greek LAGs stated that they utilised a wide and comprehensive range of communication tools. This included higher proportions of LAGs using 'LAG participation at local events and fairs (86% vs 52%).

- Communication via social media, was utilised by more Greek LAGs (86%) in comparison to other European LAGs (61%). This was also the case for 'specific meetings and forums for LDS' (86% vs 62%).

- Much fewer LAGs in Greece indicated to utilise 'newsletters, other printed media' than in the EU sample (14% vs 45%).

Question 24

What are the main ways in which you receive information from the Managing Authority? Please select those methods which are most used

- Managing Authority website.
- Regular meetings and forums organised for LAGs.
- Through National Rural Network.
- Social media.
- Printed publications and guidance.
- Email.
- Through intermediary e.g. regional office or network.

Total Number of Responses 7

Ways LAGs Receive Information from MA/PA

|	
Email	100%
Regular meetings and forums organised for LAGs	71%
Managing Authority website	43%
Through National Rural Network	57%
Through intermediary e.g. regional office or network	
Printed publications and guidance	57%
Social media	
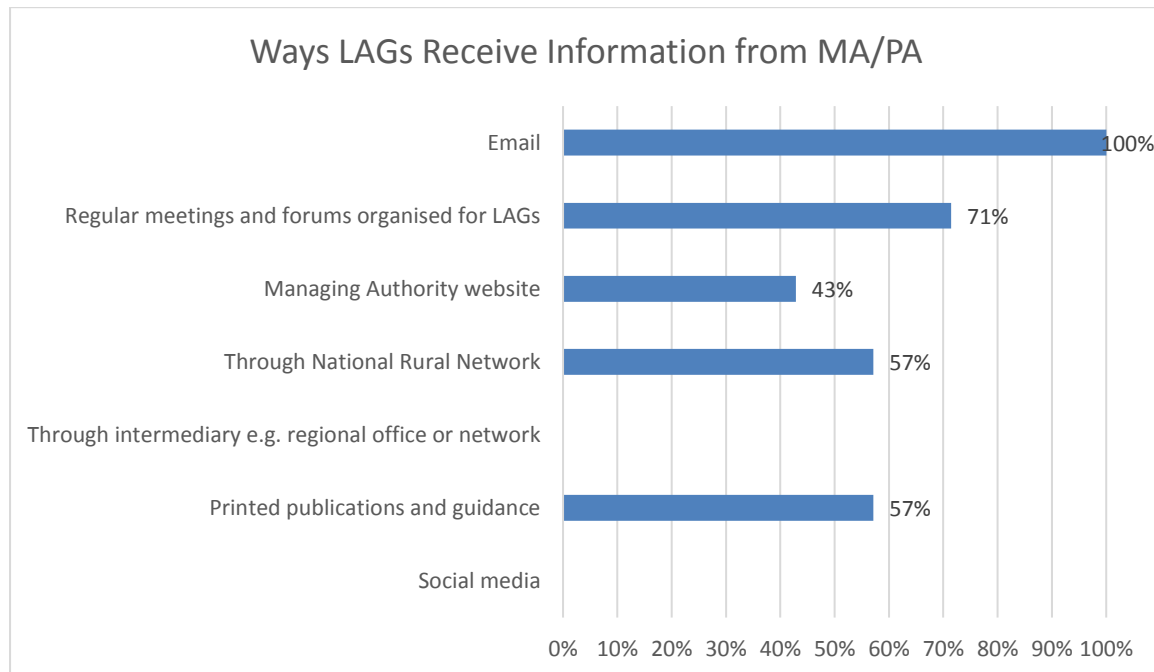
- Comparatively more Greek LAGs indicated to receiving information via 'National Rural Network' (57% vs 31%), and 'through intermediaries' (9% vs 22%). The percentage of Greek LAGs receiving information through 'printed publications and guidance' (57%) was also much higher than that of the EU sample (22%).

- However, none of the respondents in Greece indicated that information was received 'through intermediaries' or through 'social media', whereas in the EU sample 22% and 5% respectively received their information in this manner.

Which of the following priority themes relate most closely to your Local Development Strategy objectives? Please select (up to) the three most relevant ones from the options provided.

- Knowledge transfer, education, capacity building.
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Agriculture and farming, supply chains, local food.
- Local economy (non-agriculture), job creation.
- Culture, traditions, built environment.
- Natural environment and resources, landscape.
- Social inclusion, equality of opportunity, cohesion, services.
- Local governance and community development.
- Broadband, internet, ICT.

Total Number of Responses 7
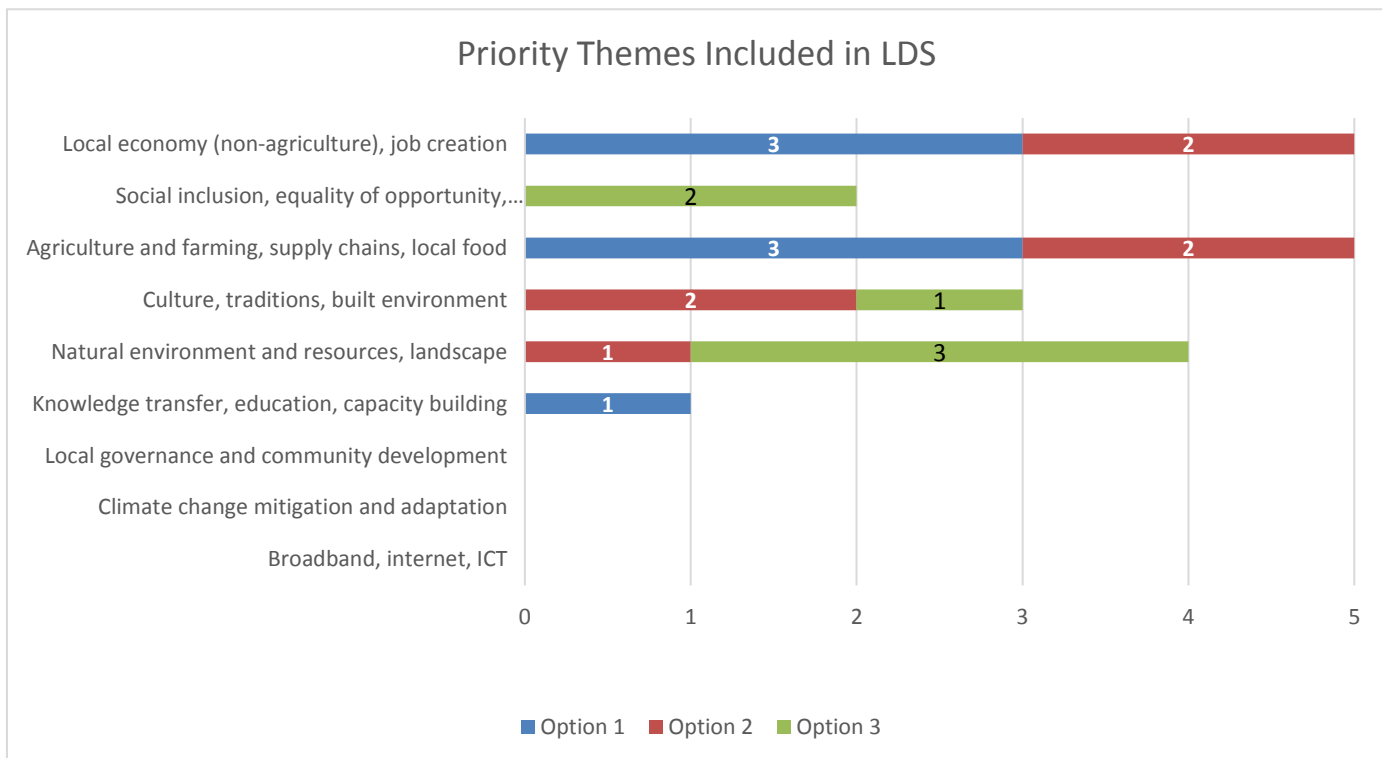
- The Greek responses were similar to those provided by the EU sample. However, there was a slightly weaker linkage with the LDS identified regarding the priority theme of 'social inclusion, equality of opportunity, cohesion' than in the EU sample
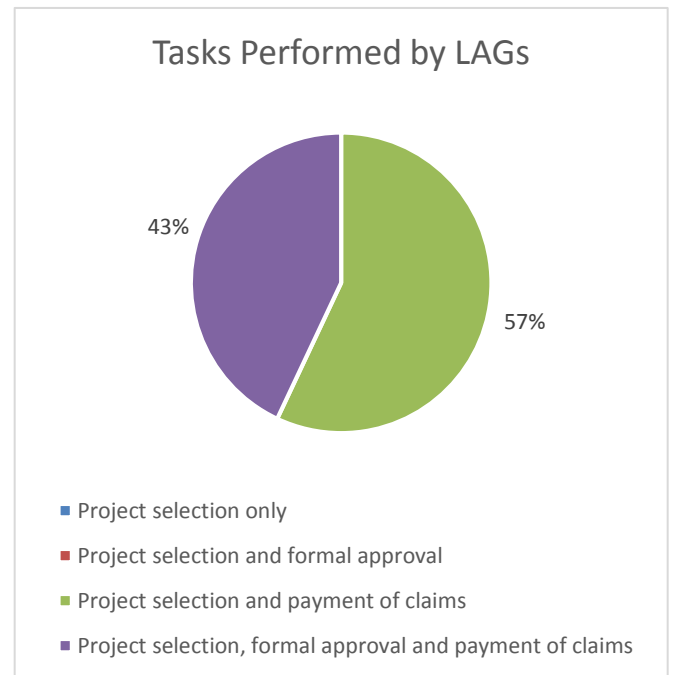
Question 26

What tasks does your LAG perform in relation to LEADER projects as part of your LDS implementation?
Please select one of the options.

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

Total Number of Responses 7

- A considerably larger percentage of Greek LAGs (57%) reported that they are in charge of 'project selection and payment of claims'. At EU level only 3% of LAGs perform these tasks.

- In addition, much more Greek respondents stated that their LAGs were in charge of 'project selection, formal approval and payment of claims' (43%) in comparison to 19% LAGs across Europe.

Tasks Performed by LAGs

43%

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 7

- The Greek respondents provided slightly different responses to the EU sample, for example 'better common knowledge and networking between LAGs, MA/PA and NRN' was given highest priorities to improve implementation now. In the EU sample it was the fifth highest priority.

- No emphasis was given by Greek respondents to 'improving the MA/IB turnaround time on approving selected projects' than across European LAGs of the wider sample which rated this as their third highest important change.

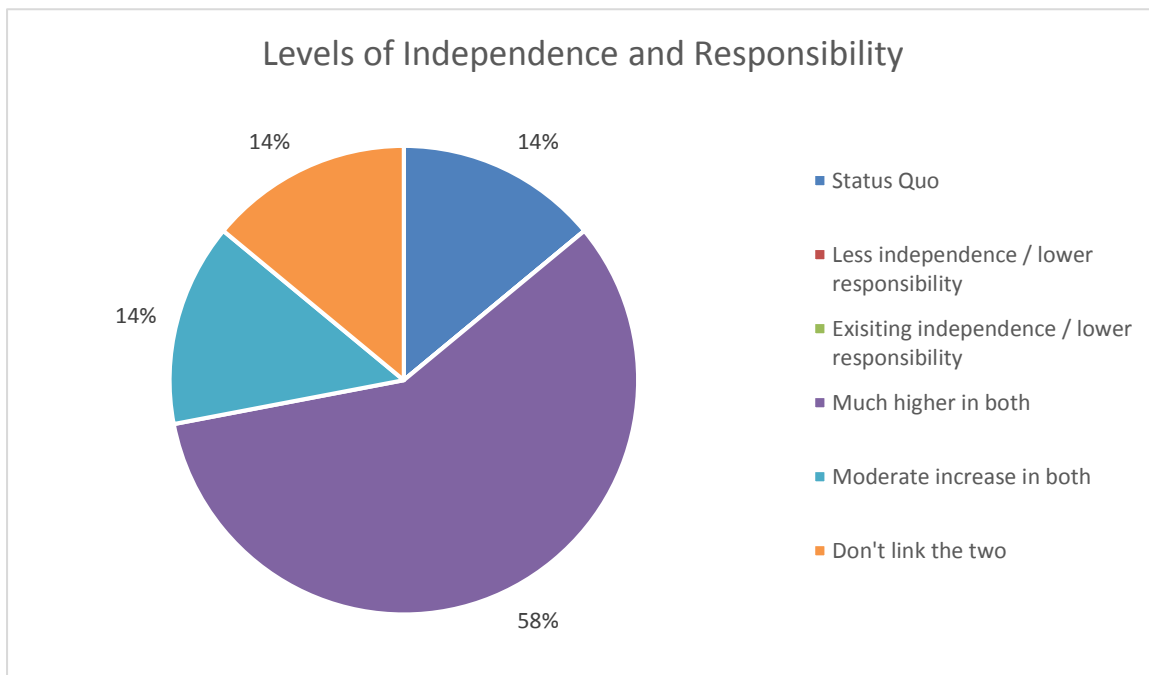Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now

| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th |
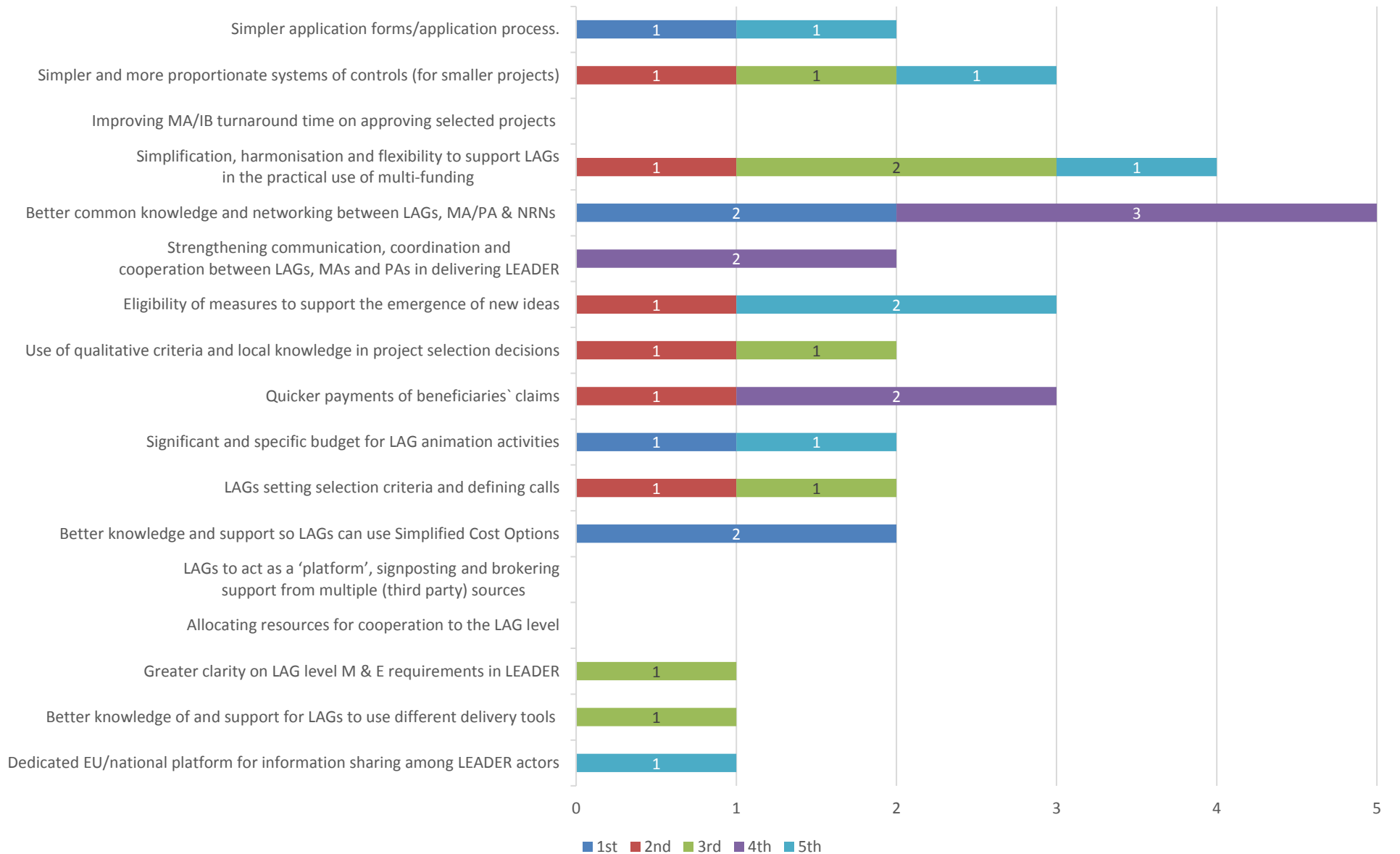
Question 28:

Some LAGs desire greater independence in their operations with more power and responsibility e.g. in project selection and approvals, project management, use of funds, managing risk etc. Which one of these statements best reflects your LAG`s position?

- We are happy with the existing levels of responsibility, independence and accountability
- We prefer less independence with a lower level of direct LAG responsibility and financial accountability
- We prefer the existing level of independence with a lower level of direct LAG responsibility and financial accountability
- We prefer a much higher degree of independence and would be happy with a significantly higher degree of direct responsibility and financial accountability
- We prefer a moderate increase in independence with a moderate increase in direct responsibility and financial accountability
- Any increase in independence should not be linked to increased LAG responsibilities and accountability

Total number of responses 7

Levels of Independence and Responsibility

- Status Quo
- Less independence / lower responsibility
- Exisiting independence / lower responsibility
- Much higher in both
- Moderate increase in both
- Don't link the two

14% | 14% | 14% | 14% | 58%

- There was a considerably higher percentage of Greek LAGs that desired 'much higher' levels of independence and responsibility than at EU level (58% vs 19%).

- None of the Greek respondents indicated the wish for 'less independence and lower responsibility' nor for 'existing independence/lower responsibility' than the EU sample (1% and 8% respectively).

- Less Greek LAGs suggested 'don't link the two' than their European peers (14% vs 24%).

Question 29

To what extent would greater independence, power and responsibility for your LAGs improve what you are able to achieve? Please select one option.

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

Total Number of Responses 7

- A much larger proportion of Greek respondents indicated that greater independence would improve the achievement of LAGs 'significantly', in comparison to the EU sample (86% vs 42%).

- None of the responding LAGs in Greece thought that greater independence would 'not at all' or 'a little' improve achievement, whereas this was stated by 12% and 34% of the EU sample respectively.

Would Greater Independence Improve Achievement?

14%

86%

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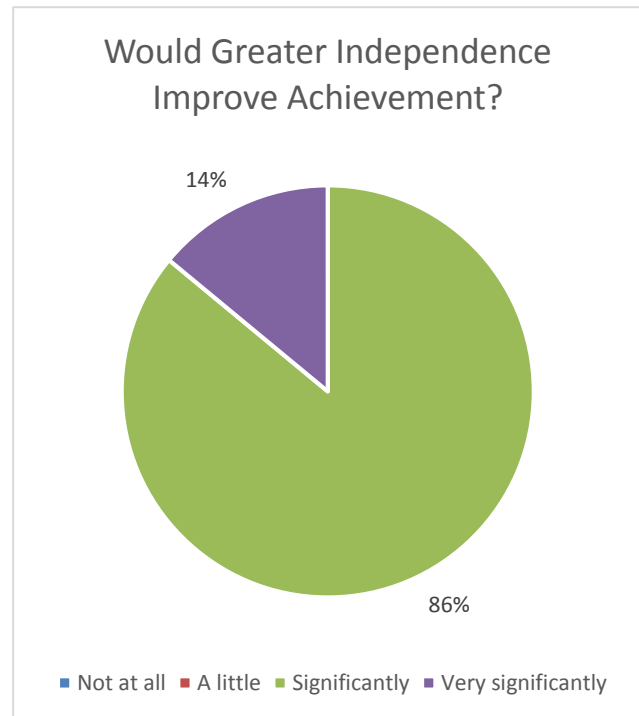
Question 30

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 7

Would a Centralised Support Service Improve LAGs' Level of Achievement?
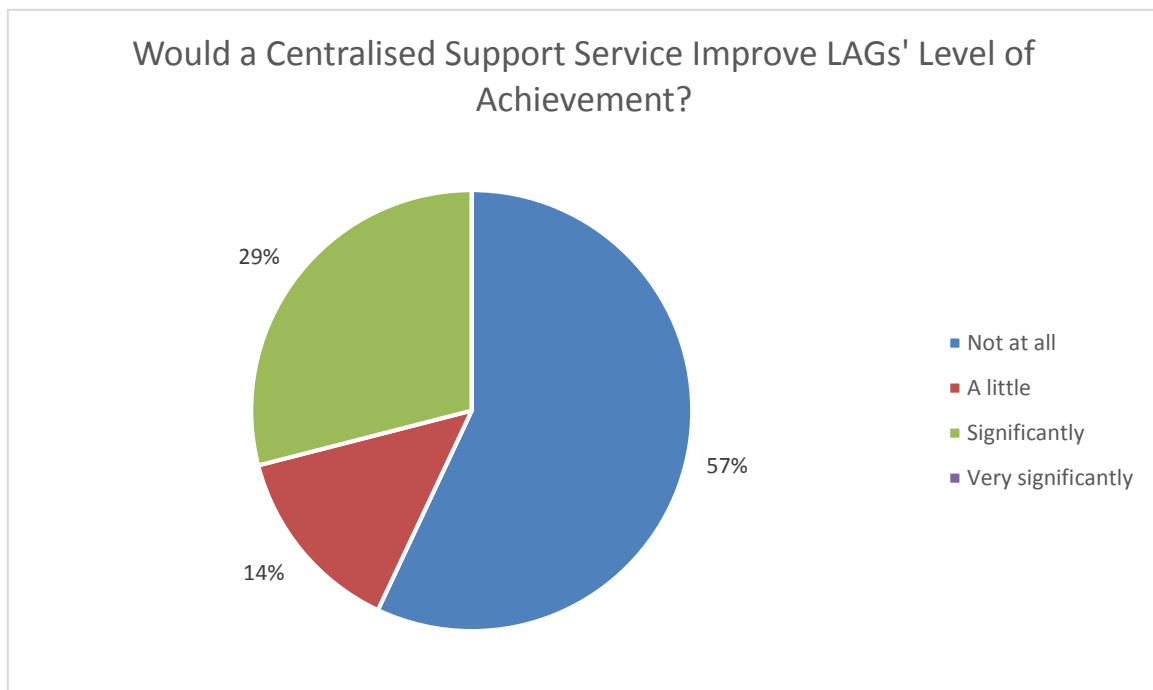
- None of the Greek respondents thought that a centralised support service would improve the achievements of the LAG 'very significantly' in contrast to the EU level where 9% stated this.

- Over half of the Greek LAGs thought that there would be 'no change at all' (57%) in comparison to 36% of their EU peers.

Question 31

To what extent does support from national and regional Rural Development Programme authorities (e.g. Managing Authority, Paying Agency) meet LAG needs and enhance LEADER implementation? Please, use the following scale to rank the provision against the specified needs:
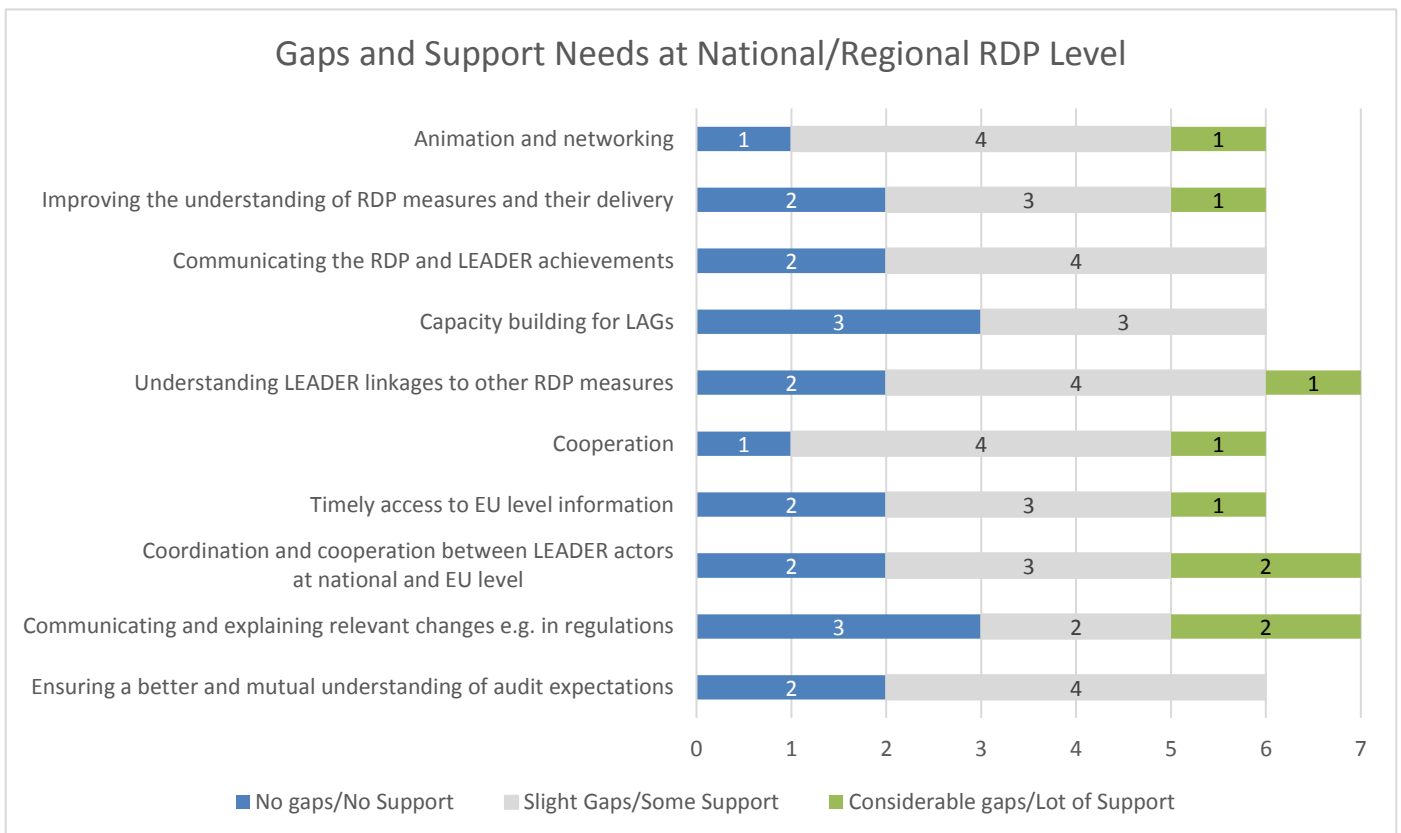
1= no gaps in support – no support needed,
2 = slight gaps – some support needed,
3 = considerable gaps – lot of support needed.

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

Total Number of Responses 7

Gaps and Support Needs at National/Regional RDP Level

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

- Overall, less Greek respondents identified gaps across the range of support needs in comparison to the other European LAGs. Particularly in the areas of 'capacity building for LAGs' and 'better and mutual understanding of audit expectations' none of respondents in Greece did identify any considerable gaps or a lot support needs.
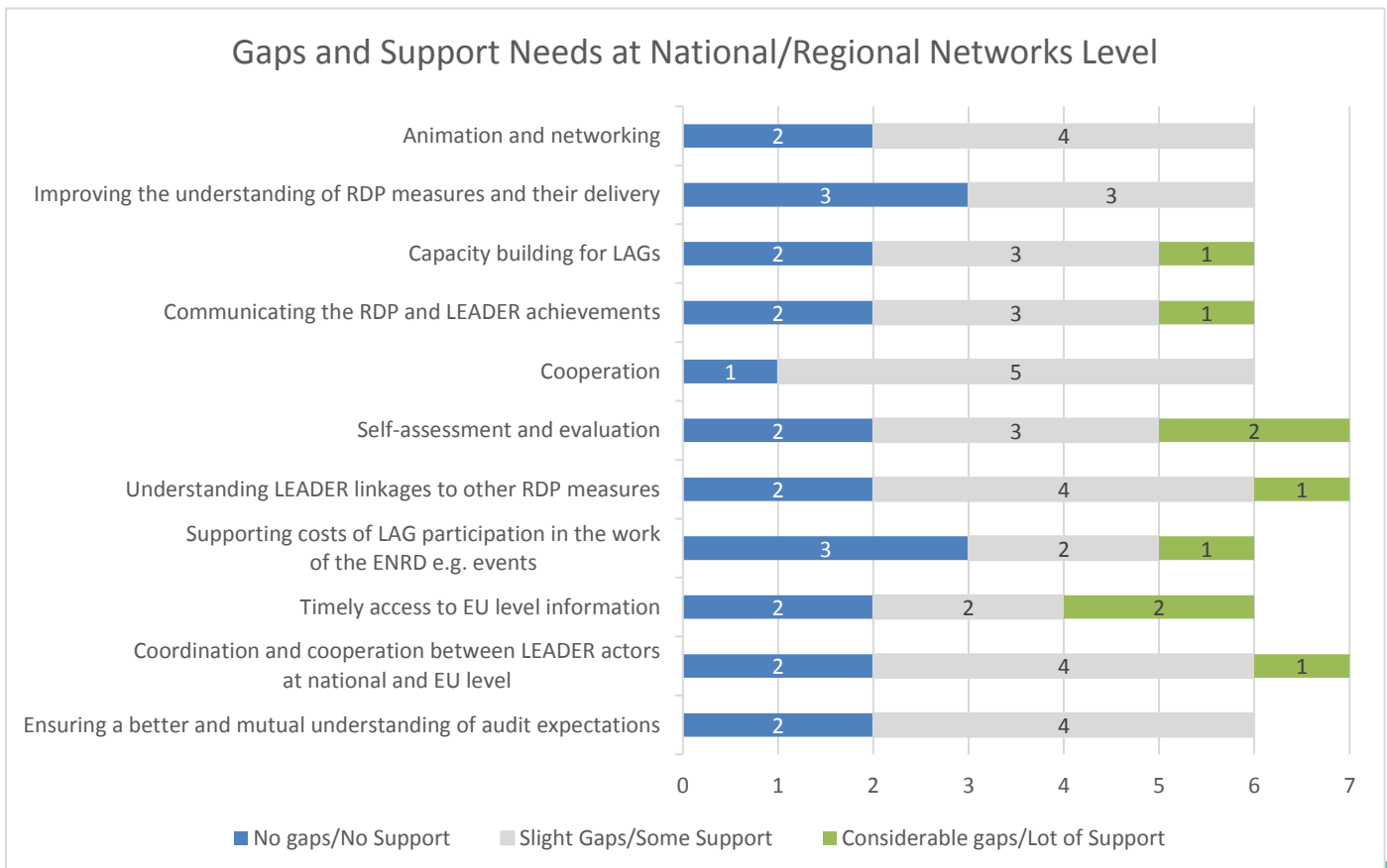
Question 32

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 7

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	2	4	
Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery	3	3	
Capacity building for LAGs	2	3	1
Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements	2	3	1
Cooperation	1	5	
Self-assessment and evaluation	2	3	2
Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures	2	4	1
Supporting costs of LAG participation in the work of the ENRD e.g. events	3	2	1
Timely access to EU level information	2	2	2
Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level	2	4	1
Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations	2	4	

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

- Fewer Greek LAGs believed that there were 'considerable gaps and lot of support needs' across the various topics. Proportionately more Greek respondents indicated 'slight gaps/some support' than the EU sample in 'cooperation'.
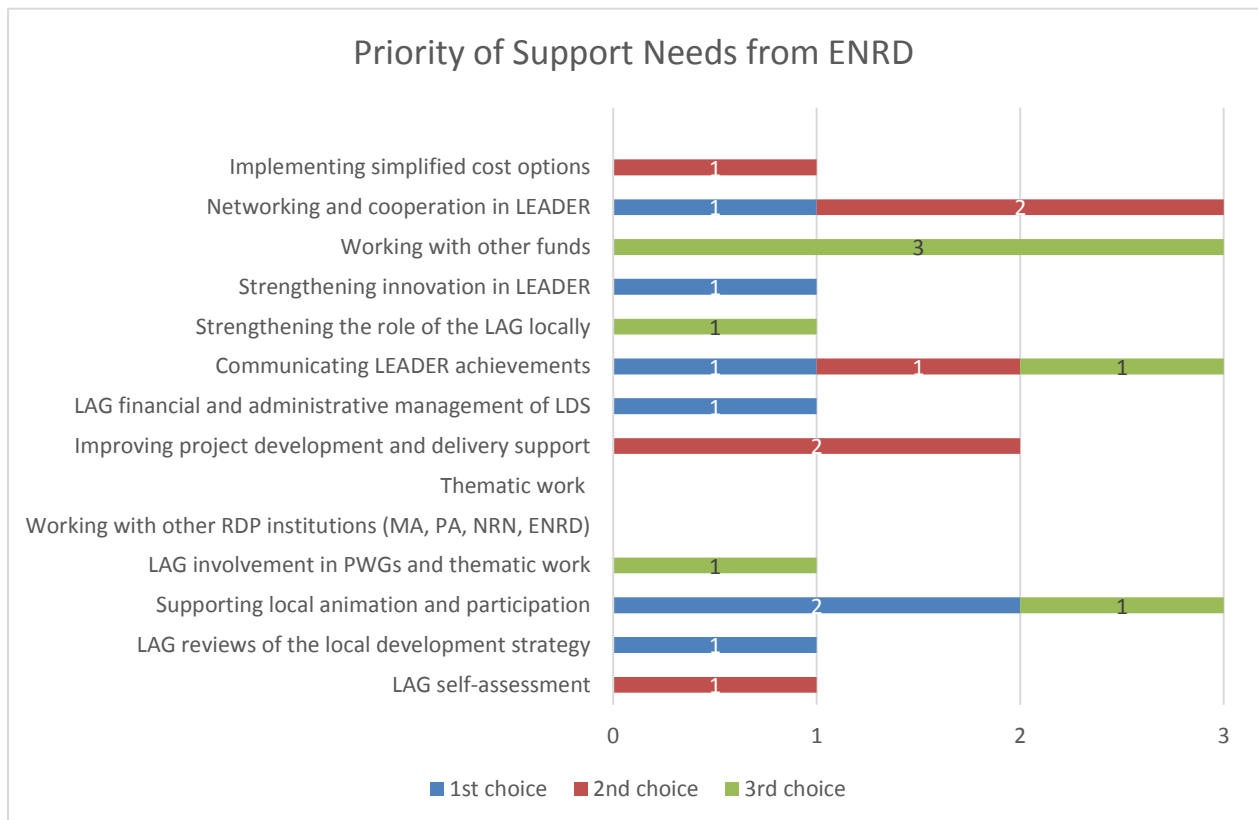
Question 33

Which of the following areas of your LAG's activity are the priorities which the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) should work on to help your LAG most?

Please rank the three most important options below on a scale of 1 – 3 where 1 = most important.

- LAG reviews of the local development strategy.
- LAG financial and administrative management of local development strategy implementation.
- Improving project development and delivery support.
- Implementing simplified cost options.
- Networking and cooperation in LEADER.
- Communicating LEADER achievements.
- Strengthening innovation in LEADER.
- Strengthening the role of the LAG locally.
- Supporting local animation and participation.
- Thematic work (e.g. Greening the local economy, social innovation, ICT & broadband, smart villages, etc.).
- Working with other RDP institutions (MA, PA, NRN, ENRD).
- LAG self-assessment.
- Working with other funds.
- LAG involvement in practitioner-working groups and thematic work.

Total Number of Responses 7

Priority of Support Needs from ENRD

| Category	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Implementing simplified cost options		1	
Networking and cooperation in LEADER	1	2	
Working with other funds			3
Strengthening innovation in LEADER	1		
Strengthening the role of the LAG locally			1
Communicating LEADER achievements	1	1	1
LAG financial and administrative management of LDS	1		
Improving project development and delivery support		2	
Thematic work			
Working with other RDP institutions (MA, PA, NRN, ENRD)			
LAG involvement in PWGs and thematic work			1
Supporting local animation and participation	2		1
LAG reviews of the local development strategy	1		
LAG self-assessment		1	

- There were a number of differences in the way in which Greek respondents identified their support needs from ENRD in comparison to the EU sample. For example, the Greek LAGs prioritised 'communicating LEADER achievements' and 'supporting local animation and participation' as two of their highest rating in view of support needs (at EU level these only reached a position around the middle and at the lower end of the above list).

- In comparison to the EU sample, much less emphasis was given in Greece to the following support needs: 'implementing simplified cost options', 'strengthening innovation in LEADER' and 'strengthening the role of the LAG locally'.

Question 34

What could help you get more involved in the work of the ENRD? You may select up to three of the options below. Please rank the three most important options below on a scale of 1 – 3 where 1 = most important.

- More flexible administrative rules relating to travel, participations in conferences etc.
- A higher LAG budget
- More available time
- More LAG staff
- More language versions of ENRD documents
- More information from the NRN on ENRD activities
- NRN support
- Less costly methods of participation (e.g. Online meetings)
- Access to support for costs of participation in events
- Other, please describe

Total Number of Responses 7
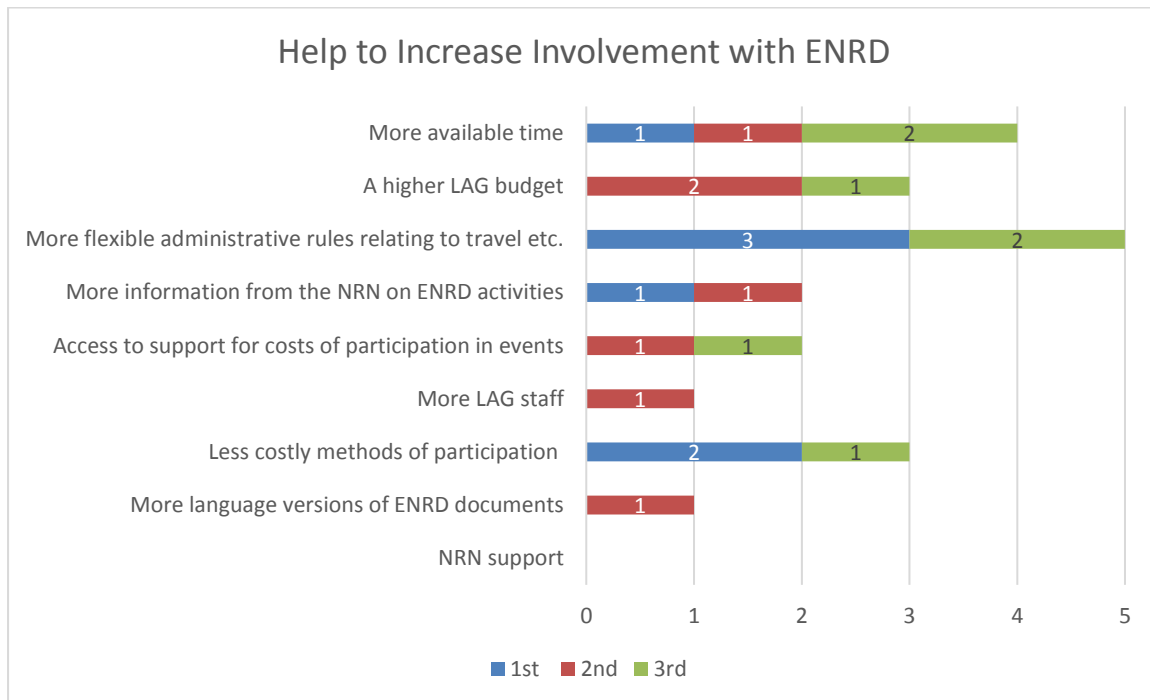
- The Greek responses were similar to those given by the EU sample, however more respondents priorities the need for 'more flexible administrative rules relating to travel' than other European LAGs.

- In addition, more respondents in Greece prioritised the need for 'less costly methods of participation'.

Question 35

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

- Not very important
- Moderate importance
- Important
- Essential

Total Number of Responses 7

Importance of Self-assessment of LDS to Improve LAGs' Operation
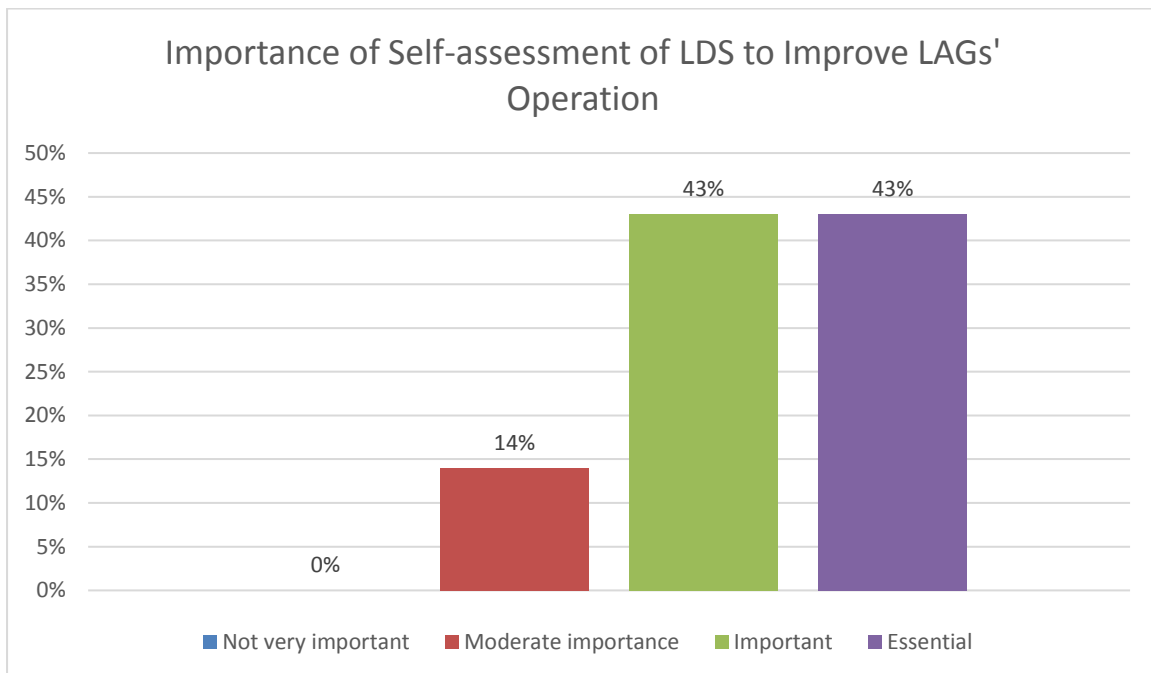
- Considerably more LAGs in Greece considered 'self-assessment' as 'essential' (45%) than in the EU sample (28%).

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 7

Time Line - Launch of First Self-assessment
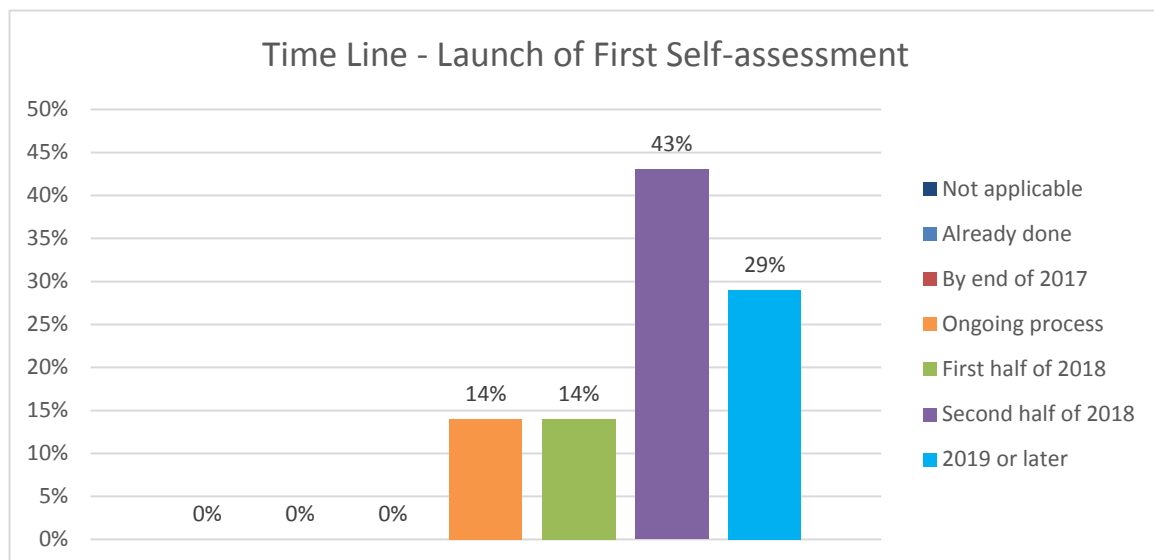
- For a larger proportion of LAGs in Greece (43%) the first self-assessment was planned in the second half of 2018 in comparison to 23% in the EU sample.

- By the end of 2017, a fifth (20%) of EU LAGs elsewhere have launched their first self-assessment, whereas none of the responding Greek LAGs indicated this.

Question 37

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

- Yes – 86%
- No – 14%

Total Number of Responses 7