LEADER LAG Survey 2017

Working Paper

Findings at Member State level

Member State: Portugal

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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

- Portugal (PT)
- 29 LAGs responded, representing 4.1% of total LAG responses
- 48% of Portuguese LAGs responded to the survey

Total Number of Responses 29

Question 2

Please select your Rural Development Programme (RDP)

- Portugal has 3 regional RDPs.
- Responses were received from all 3 regional RDPs.

Total Number of Responses 29

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 29

- The responses from Portugal were very similar to the EU sample, however double the percentage of LAG Chairs/Presidents responded, 10% compared to 5% in the EU sample.

Respondents' Position

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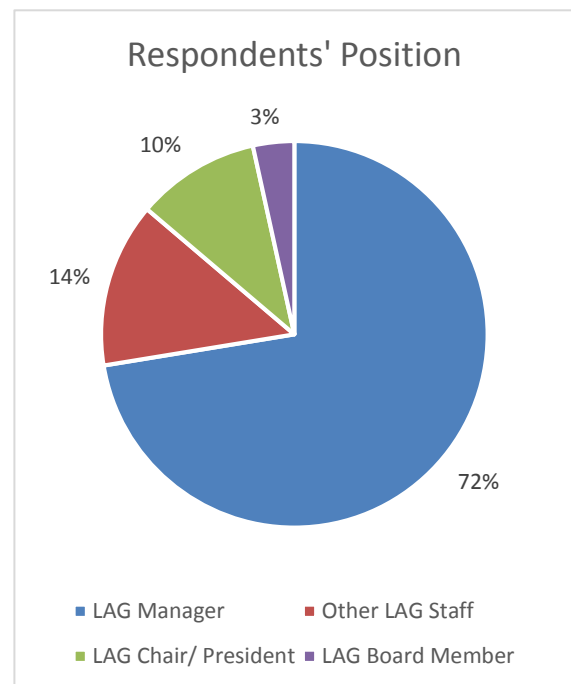
Question 7

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 29

- In the Portuguese sample, many more LAGs (52%) originated from LEADER II period, compared to the EU sample of 17%. Additionally, there was a higher percentage of LEADER I LAGs, with 21% in Portugal vs 8% in the EU sample.

- There were also many less LAGs formed in the 2007-2013 Programming period than the EU sample, (3% vs 34%).

First Period LAG became Operational

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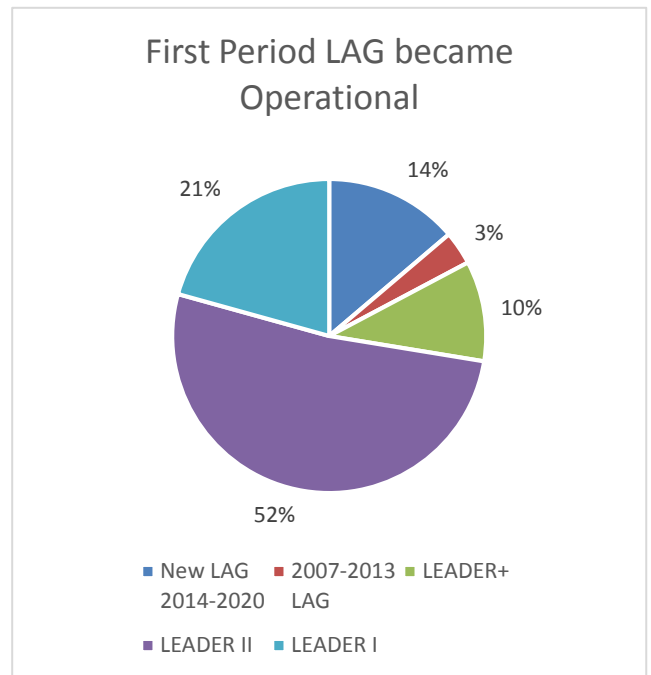
Question 8

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 29
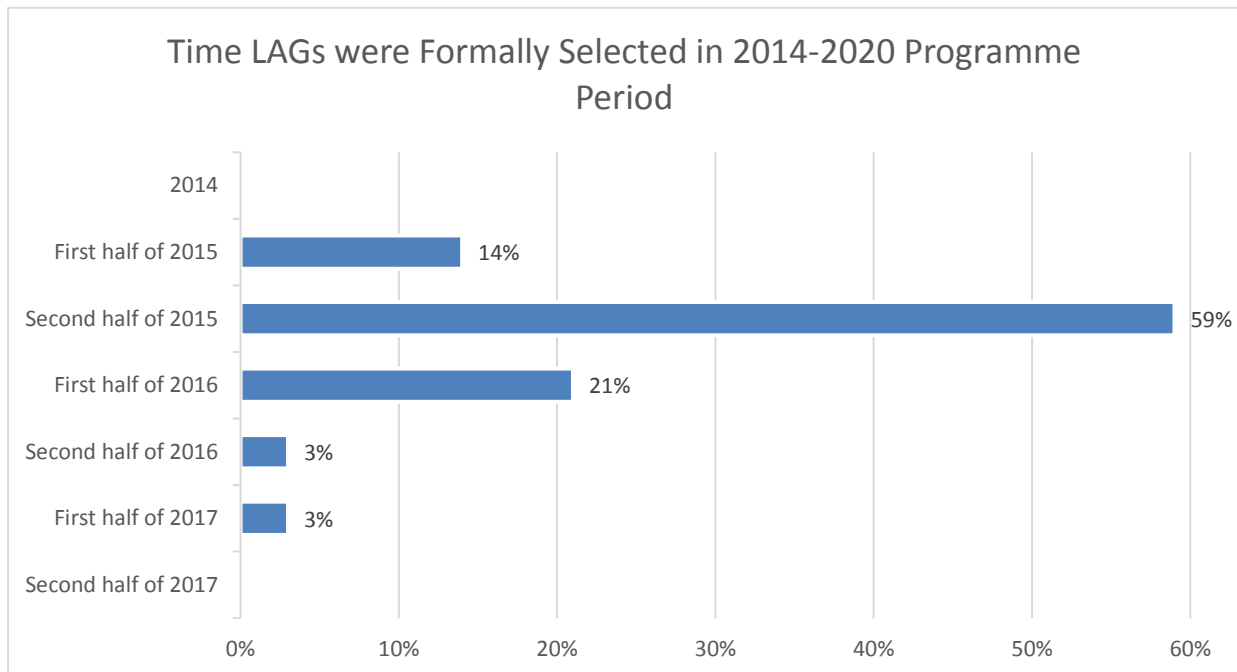
- By the end of 2015, 73% of responding LAGs from Portugal were formally selected, in comparison to 59% of the EU sample.

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 29

Timing of LAGs Launch of First Call for Projects

Category	Value
First half of 2015	
Second half of 2015	3%
First half of 2016	31%
Second half of 2016	62%
First half of 2017	
Second half of 2017	4%
2018	
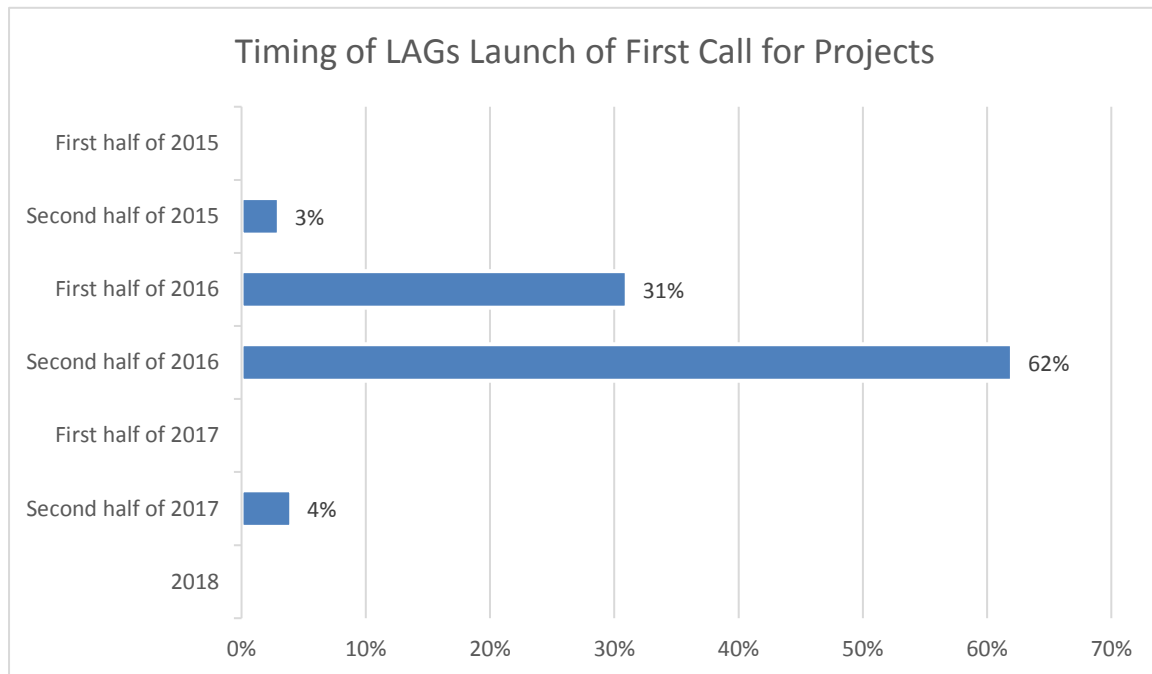
- Only 3% of the responding LAGs in Portugal, had their first call of projects in 2015 in comparison to 32% of the EU sample.

- 96% of Portuguese 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
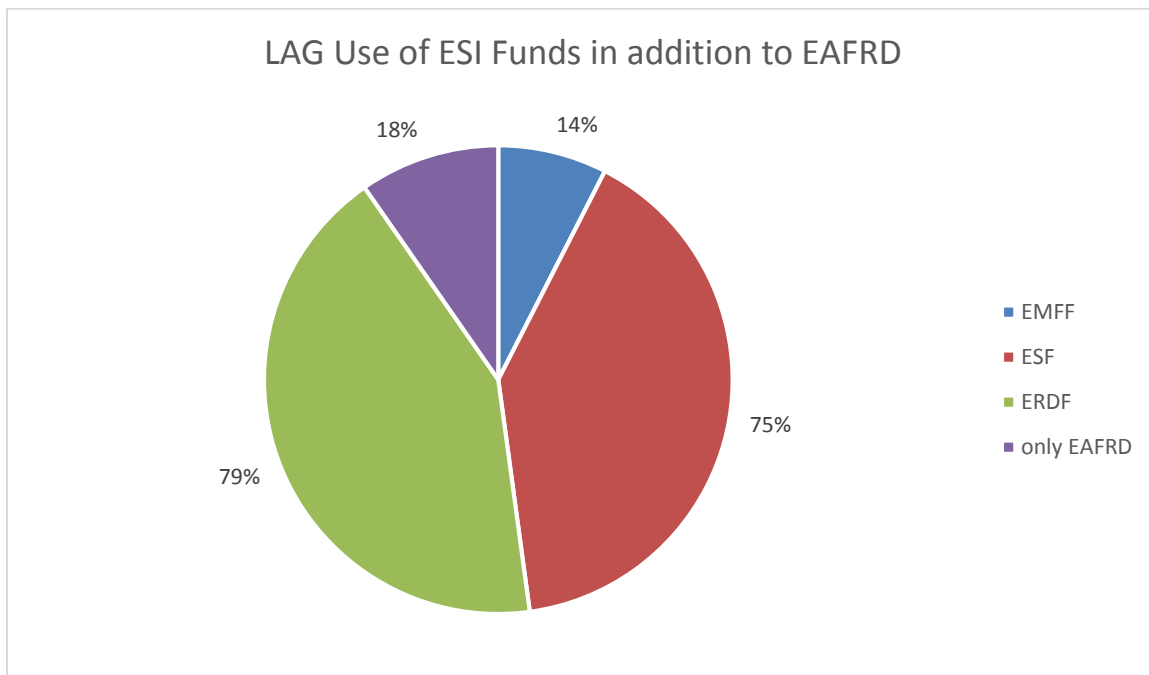
- A considerably lower proportion of Portuguese LAGs who responded reported using 'only EAFRD' in comparison to other European LAGs who used multiple funds more often (18% vs 67%).

Question 11

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

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

Total Number of Responses 28
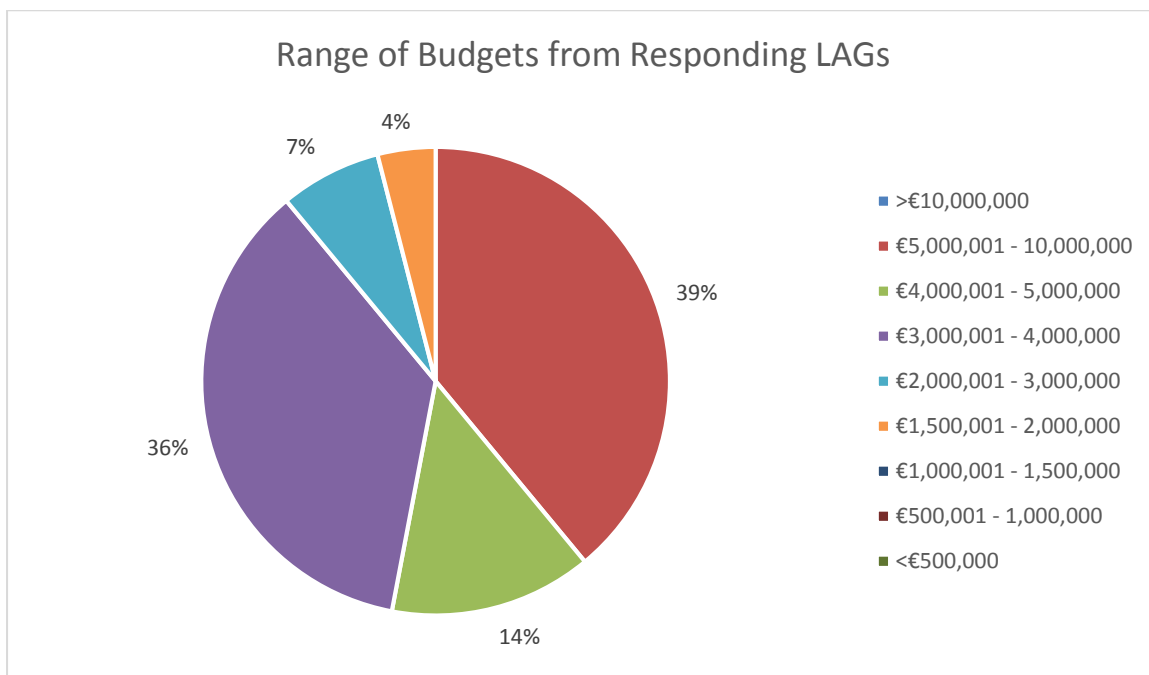
- The budgets from responding Portuguese LAGs were larger than those of the EU sample, with 89% of respondents in Portugal having budgets between €3 and €10m in comparison to 49% of total responding LAGs.

- No responding Portuguese LAGs had budgets in excess of €10m.

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

- Responding Portuguese LAGs were broadly in line with the EU sample.

- Slightly more responding Portuguese LAGs reported using less than 10% than the EU sample (21% vs 10%).

% of LAG Budget Spent on Animation & Running Costs

Pie chart values: 21%, 7%, 18%, 21%, 32%

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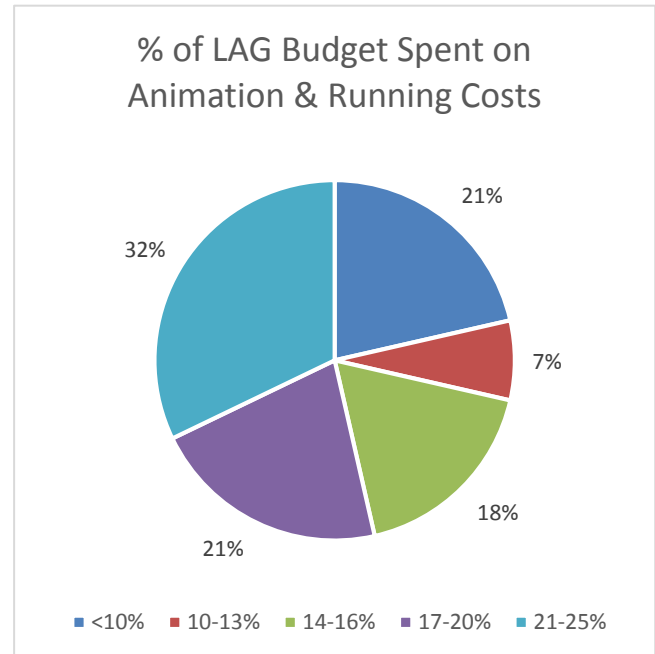
LEADER Principles

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 24

Relative Importance of LEADER Principles

Principle	Essential	Important	Medium importance	Low importance	Not at all
Bottom-up approach	67%	33%			
Local public private partnerships	50%	38%	13%		
Area based LDSs	61%	26%	4%	4%	4%
Networking	61%	39%			
Multi-sectoral	63%	21%	17%		
Innovative approaches	33%	63%	4%		
50% requirement in project selection	25%	29%	38%	4%	4%
Cooperation projects	38%	54%	8%		
49% limitation on voting rights	17%	38%	33%	13%	
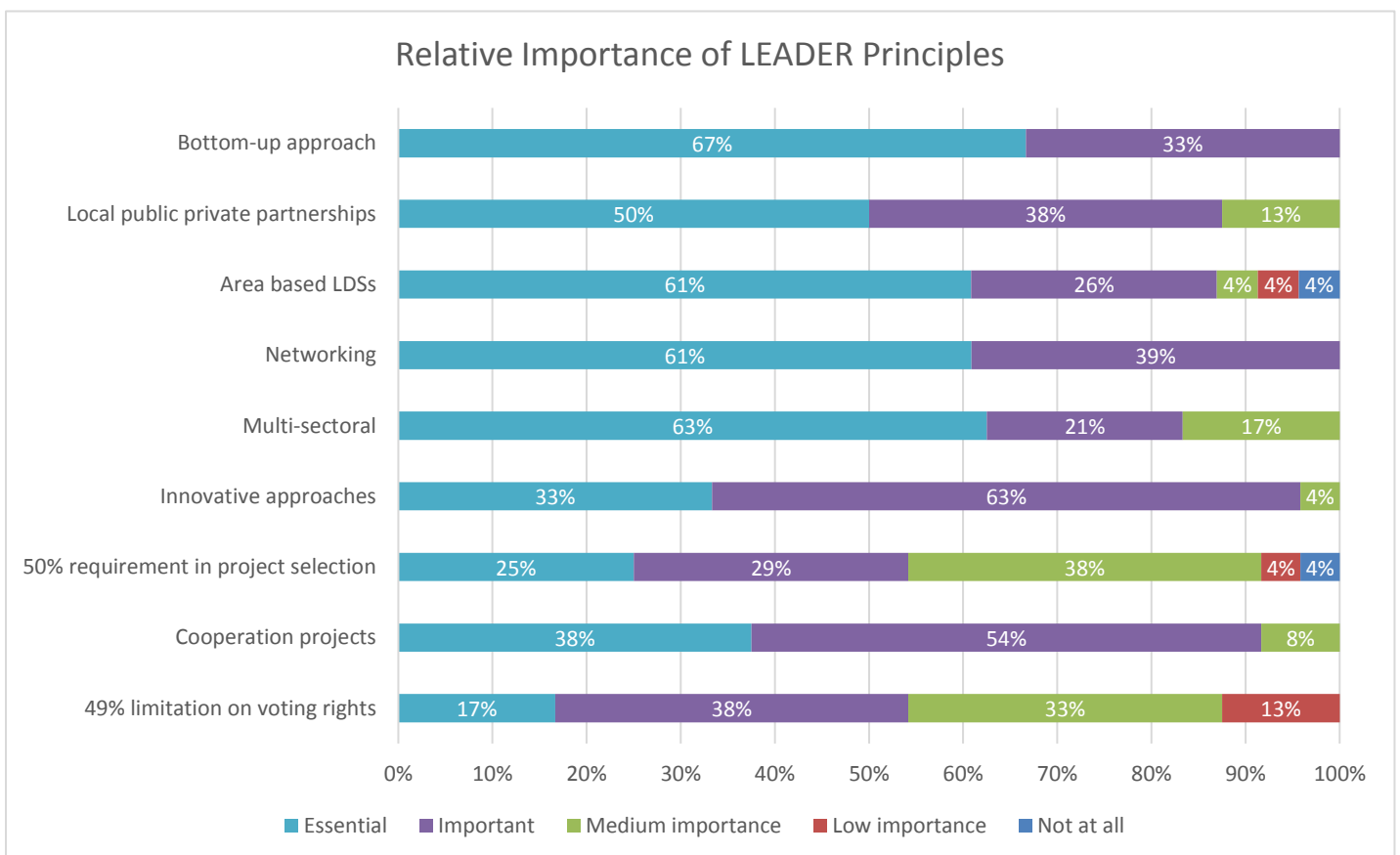
- Overall responding Portuguese LAGs rated LEADER principles more important than the EU sample as a whole.

- Bottom-up approach and networking were rated essential or important by 100% of responding LAGs in Portugal, compared to 90% and 85% respectively, in the EU sample.

- Innovative approaches were rated as essential or important by 96% of responding Portuguese LAGs in comparison with 68% in the EU sample.

- Cooperation projects were ranked as essential or important in Portugal by 92% of responding LAGs, in comparison to the EU sample 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
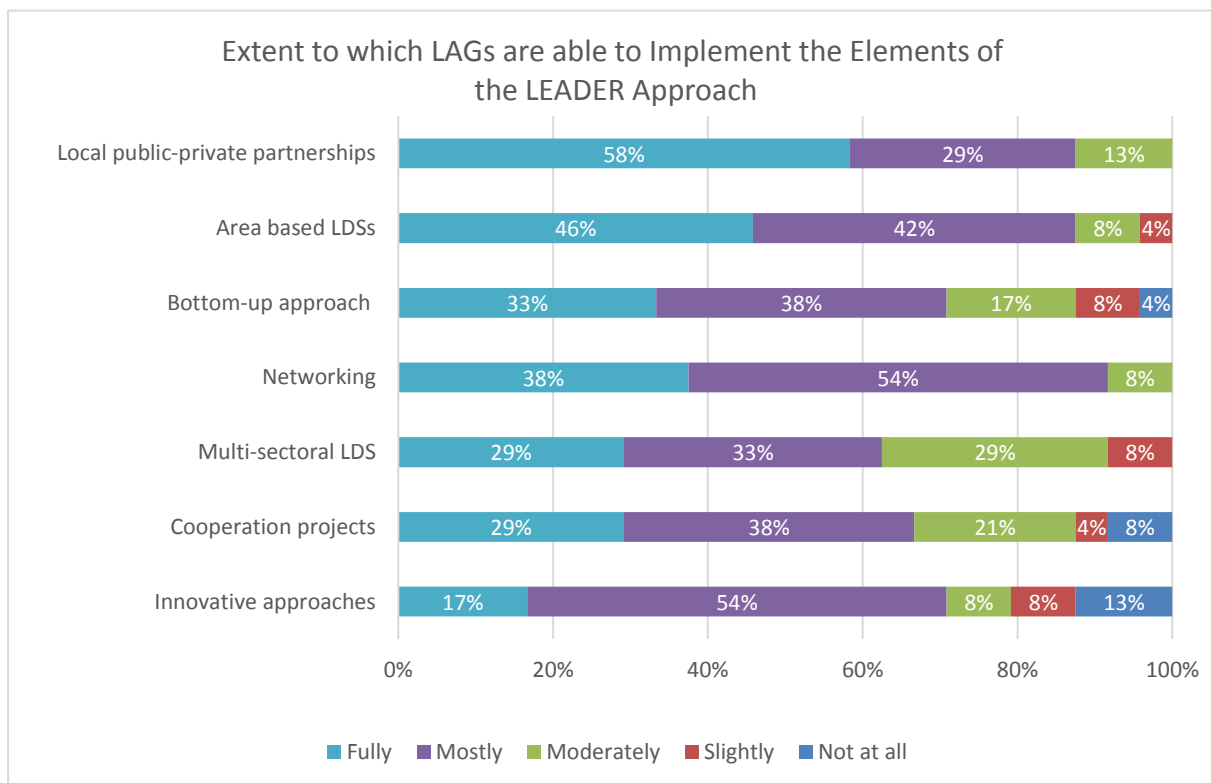
- Overall responding Portuguese LAGs ranked their ability to implement elements of the LEADER approach similarly to the EU sample. The differences that occurred were in networking and innovative approaches which responding Portuguese LAGs found they were able to more fully or mostly implement than the EU sample (92% vs 75%) and (71% vs 54%) respectively.

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Question 15

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

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

Total Number of Responses 24

Aspects of LEADER Implementation as seen by Local Action Groups

	Agree strongly / agree	Disagree strongly / disagree	Don't know
LAG's ability to implement LEADER constrained by bureaucracy & admin	92%	8%	
LAG is able to use qualitative criteria & local knowledge for project selection decisions	75%	25%	
Admin & reporting requirements limit LAG's capacity for animation & local development	92%	8%	
LAG has overall control of setting selection criteria & defining calls for projects	42%	58%	
LAG funding for the animation of local stakeholders & networking is sufficient.	13%	83%	4%
Implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible, innovative way	67%	33%	
Eligibility conditions for LEADER beneficiaries are appropriate & proportionate to support sought	43%	57%	
Project application procedure is accessible & encourage local stakeholders to participate in LEADER	38%	63%	
Decision-making power of LAGs is not overly limited by RDP level procedures & regulations	25%	75%	
Project holders` ability to implement LEADER projects is not overly constrained by bureaucracy & admin burden	17%	83%	

- 92% of responding Portuguese LAGs agreed or strongly agreed that admin and reporting requirements limit LAG's capacity for animation and local development, in comparison to 69% in the EU sample. At the same time 83% of responding LAGs disagreed or disagreed strongly that LAG funding for animation of local stakeholders and networking is sufficient, in comparison to 39% in the EU sample.

- 67% of responding Portuguese LAGs agreed or strongly agreed that implementation procedures are able to meet local development needs in a flexible and innovative way, compared to 51% in the EU sample.

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	Not important (achievable/difficult)
Cooperating with other LAG territories	58%	42%	
Directly addressing local issues and opportunities.	46%	54%	
Strengthening public private partnership	50%	50%	
Strengthening stakeholder participation in governance	46%	54%	
Unpaid work carried out by LAG members	29%	50%	
Improving local individual's knowledge, skills and capacities.	50%	50%	
Mobilising local / endogenous resources	48%	52%	
Improving local community social capital and cohesion	38%	63%	
Strengthening economic linkages among local actors	42%	58%	
Finding / implementing innovative solutions to local problems.	29%	67%	

- In comparison to the EU sample, slightly more Portuguese respondents considered the LEADER effects as very/important and difficult, therefore less achievable, e.g. 54% of responding Portuguese LAGs said that directly addressing local issues and opportunities was very/important and difficult as opposed to 36 % 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

	Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Positive
Level of MA/PA conditions, reporting requirements	13%	35%	35%	17%	
Time taken to approve selected projects	30%	35%	13%	17%	4%
The balance between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions	22%	26%	9%	30%	13%
Audit and possible sanctions	13%	48%	22%	17%	
Reduction of funding LEADER under RDP	57%	22%	9%	4%	
RDP level limitations on possible LDS themes, eligibility or selected criteria	26%	43%	13%	17%	
Effects on local decision making of projects by the MA/PA	26%	17%	26%	22%	9%
Limitations on staff	43%	30%	13%	4%	9%
% of LAG budget available for running costs and animation	48%	30%	4%	9%	9%
Possibility of multi funding	13%	13%	13%	43%	17%
Continuity of LAG membership	9%	9%	22%	26%	35%
Increase in funding for LEADER under RDP		4%	9%	17%	22%

For the purposes of improving the clarity of the analysis the 'not applicable' responses have been removed from the chart.

- The responses of Portuguese LAGs were quite different to the overall EU sample, with their top three responses different to the EU sample.

- Responding Portuguese LAGs report the following elements to be very negative more than the EU sample:
  o Reduction of funding under RDP (57% vs 28%)
  o % of LAG budget available for running costs and animation (48% vs 10%)
  o Limitations on staff (43% vs 16%)

- Responding Portuguese LAGs were much more positive or very positive in regard to continuity of LAG membership (61% vs 38%), the possibility of multi funding (60% vs 37%) and the balance between reducing risk and encouraging innovative solutions (43% vs 9%) than the EU sample.
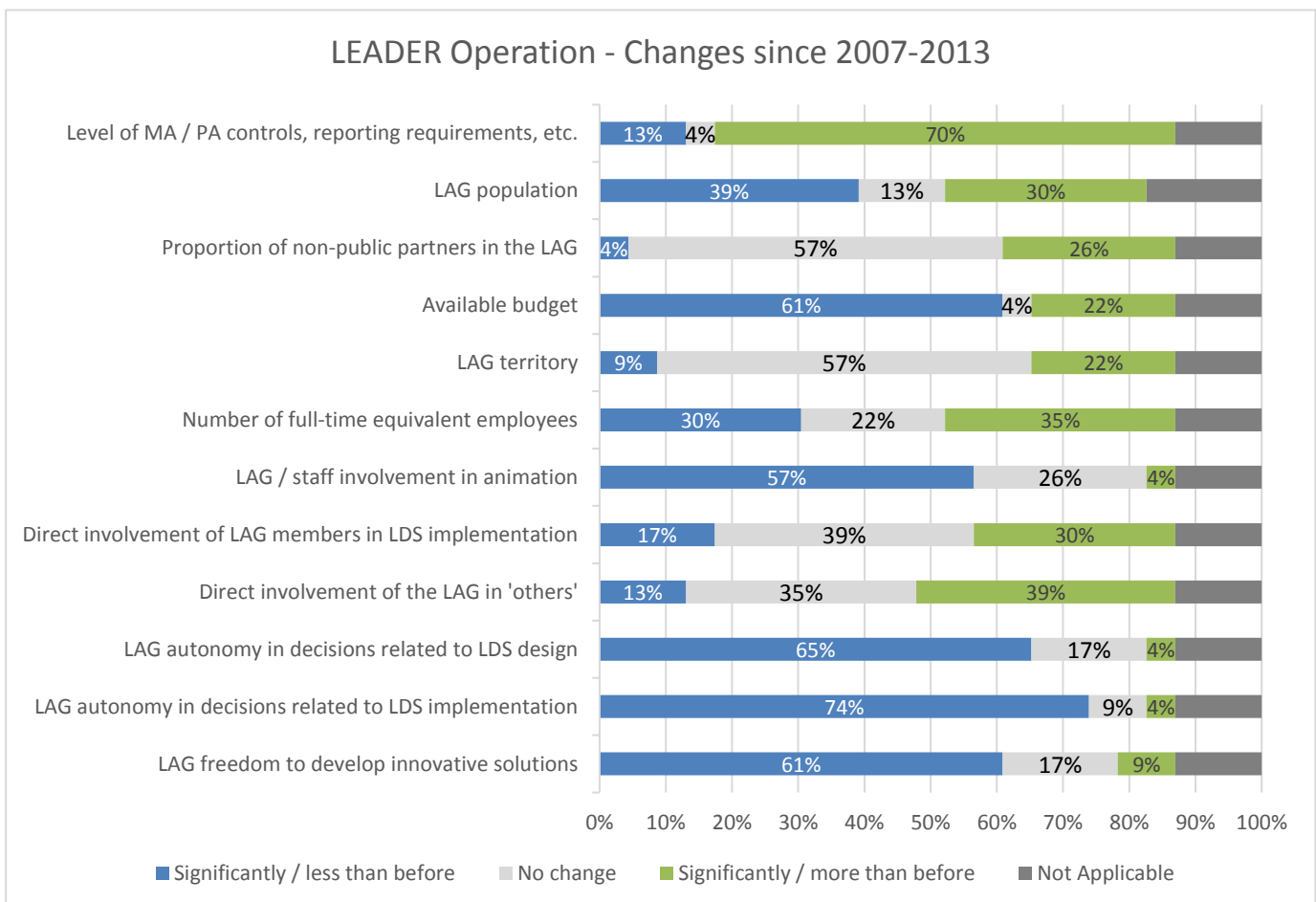
Question 18

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 23

LEADER 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.	13%	4%	70%	
LAG population	39%	13%	30%	
Proportion of non-public partners in the LAG	4%	57%	26%	
Available budget	61%	4%	22%	
LAG territory	9%	57%	22%	
Number of full-time equivalent employees	30%	22%	35%	
LAG / staff involvement in animation	57%	26%	4%	
Direct involvement of LAG members in LDS implementation	17%	39%	30%	
Direct involvement of the LAG in 'others'	13%	35%	39%	
LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS design	65%	17%	4%	
LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS implementation	74%	9%	4%	
LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions	61%	17%	9%	

- The biggest differences between the Portuguese responses and the EU sample is that the following are reported to be significantly/less than before:
    - LAG / staff involvement in animation (57% vs 18%)
    - LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS implementation (74% vs 33%)
    - LAG autonomy in decisions related to LDS design (65% vs 23%)
    - LAG freedom to develop innovative solutions (61% vs 37%)

- Overall the changes that are significantly/ more than before are similar to the EU sample, with the only real deviation being the direct involvement of the LAG in other regional and territorial development actions or structures where 39% of responding Portuguese LAGs indicated significantly/ more than before compared to 25% 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
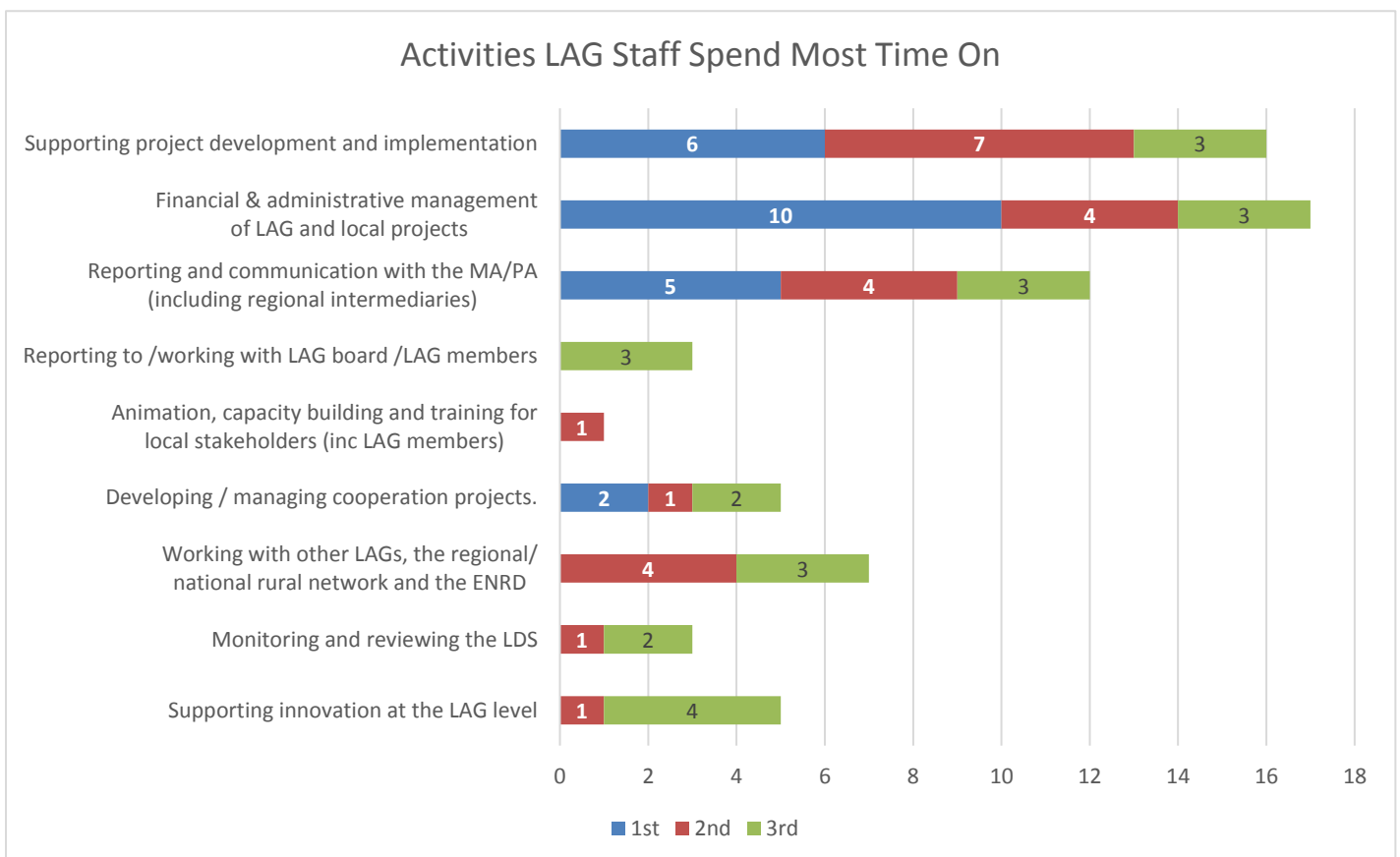
- Proportionately the Portuguese LAGs report that staff spend more time on working with other LAGs, the regional/national NRN and the ENRD and supporting innovation in the LAGs than the EU sample.
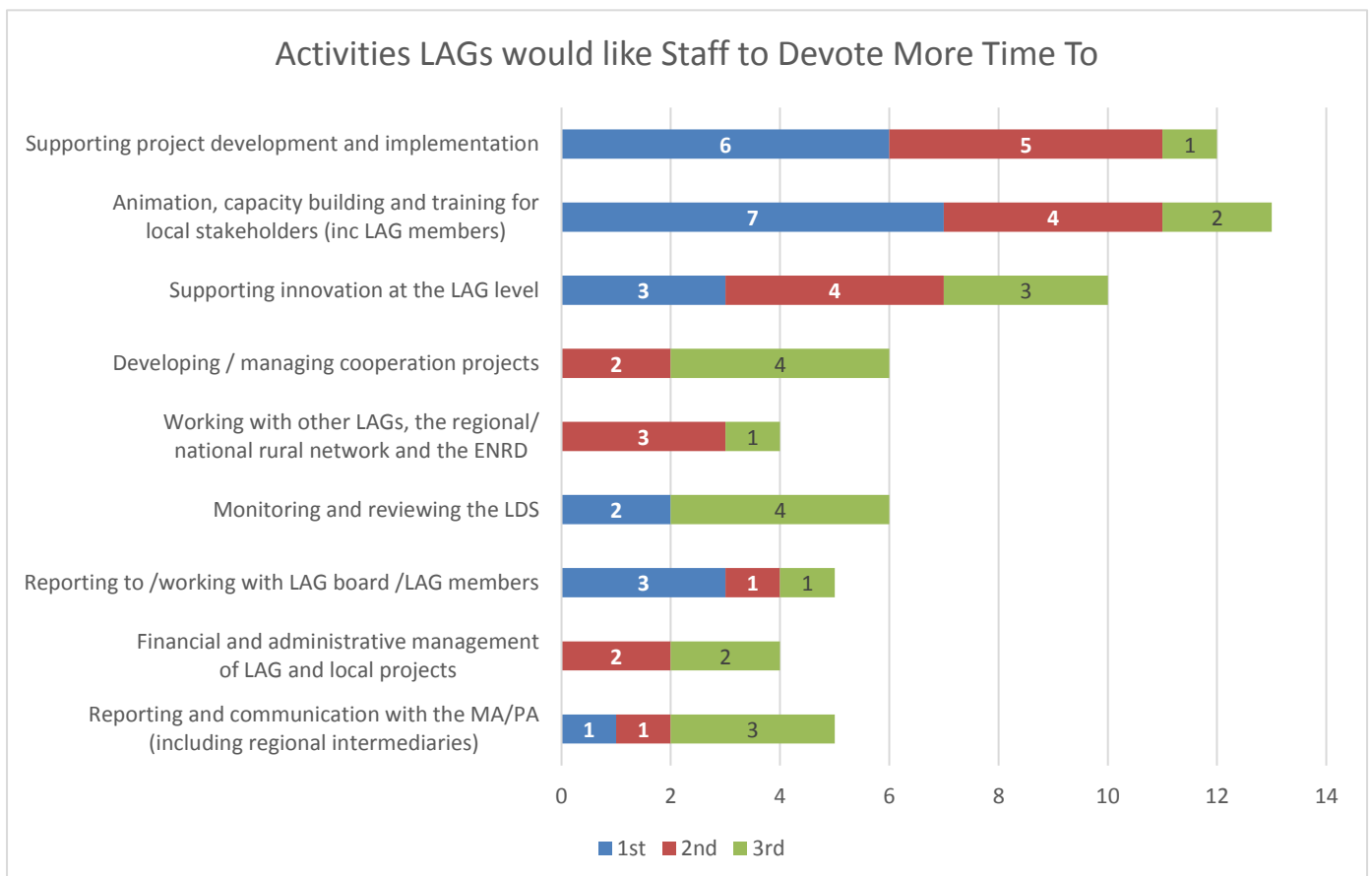
- Responding Portuguese LAGs spend proportionately less time on animation, capacity building and training for local stakeholders and on reporting to / working with LAG board / LAG members than the EU sample.

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

Activities LAGs would like Staff to Devote More Time To

Activity	1st	2nd	3rd
Supporting project development and implementation	6	5	1
Animation, capacity building and training for local stakeholders (inc LAG members)	7	4	2
Supporting innovation at the LAG level	3	4	3
Developing / managing cooperation projects		2	4
Working with other LAGs, the regional/ national rural network and the ENRD		3	1
Monitoring and reviewing the LDS	2		4
Reporting to /working with LAG board /LAG members	3	1	1
Financial and administrative management of LAG and local projects		2	2
Reporting and communication with the MA/PA (including regional intermediaries)	1	1	3

- There are no major differences between the sample responses of the EU and Portuguese LAG.

- The exceptions are that proportionately more responding Portuguese LAGs would like their staff to devote more time to reporting and communicating with the MA/PA than in the EU sample whilst proportionately fewer want more time spent on developing / managing cooperation projects.
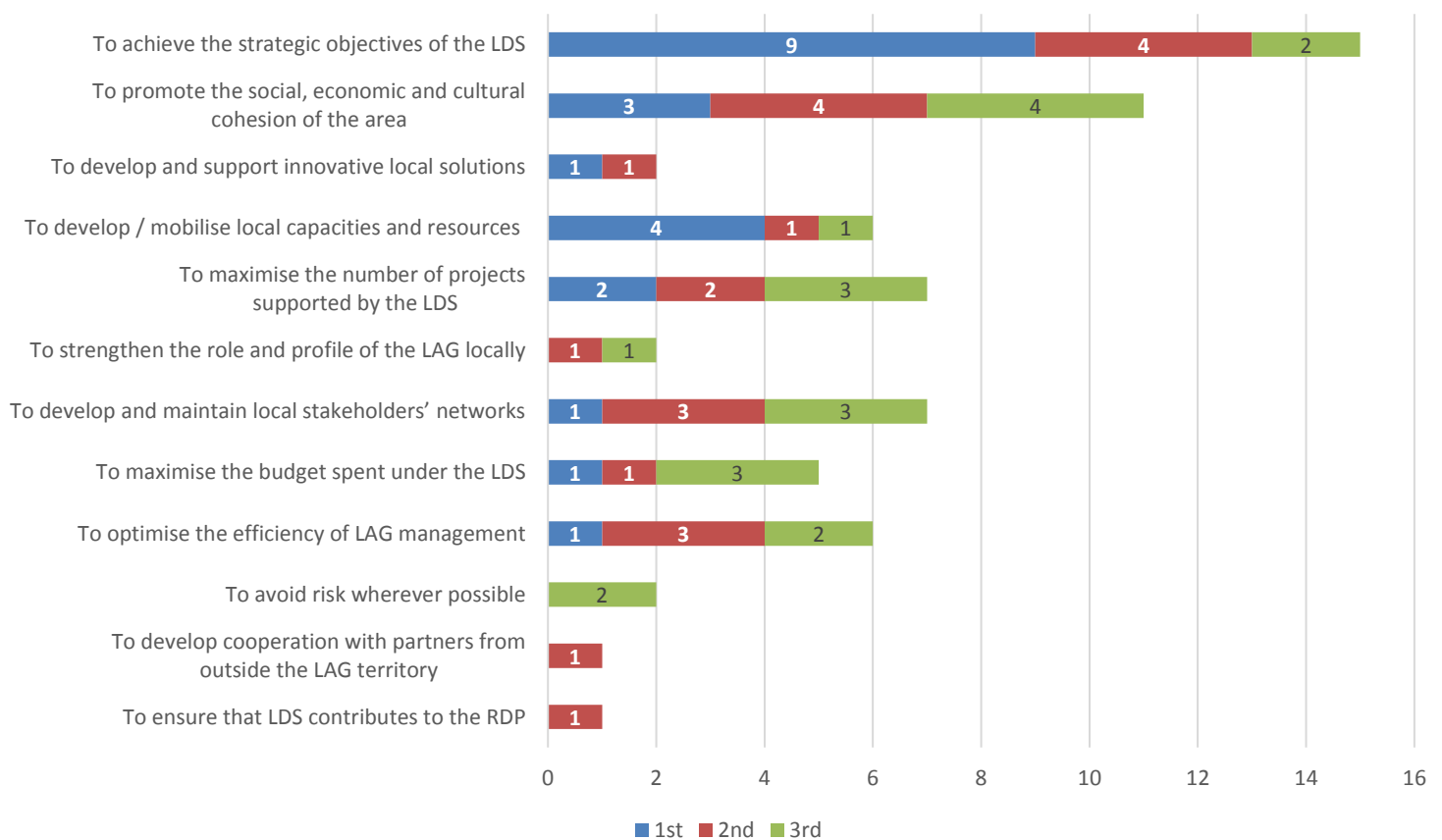
Question 21

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 22

Importance of Operational Priorities to LAGs

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

■ 1st ■ 2nd ■ 3rd

- Proportionately, Portuguese LAGs placed a lot less importance on developing and supporting innovative local solutions and strengthening the role and profile of the LAG locally than the EU sample.
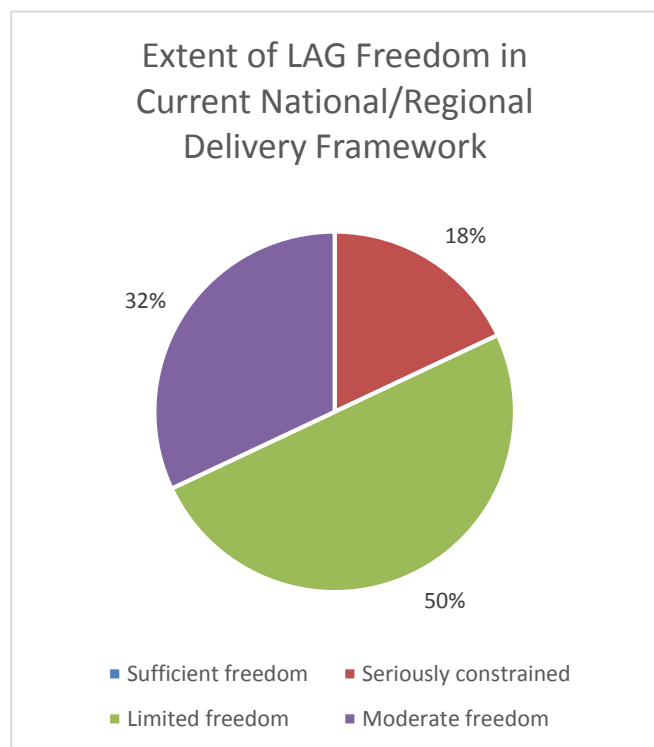
Question 22

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

- None of the responding Portuguese LAGs reported that they had sufficient freedom, compared to 17% in the EU sample

- 68% of responding Portuguese LAGs reported that they had limited freedom or were seriously constrained in comparison to 38% of LAGs in the EU sample.
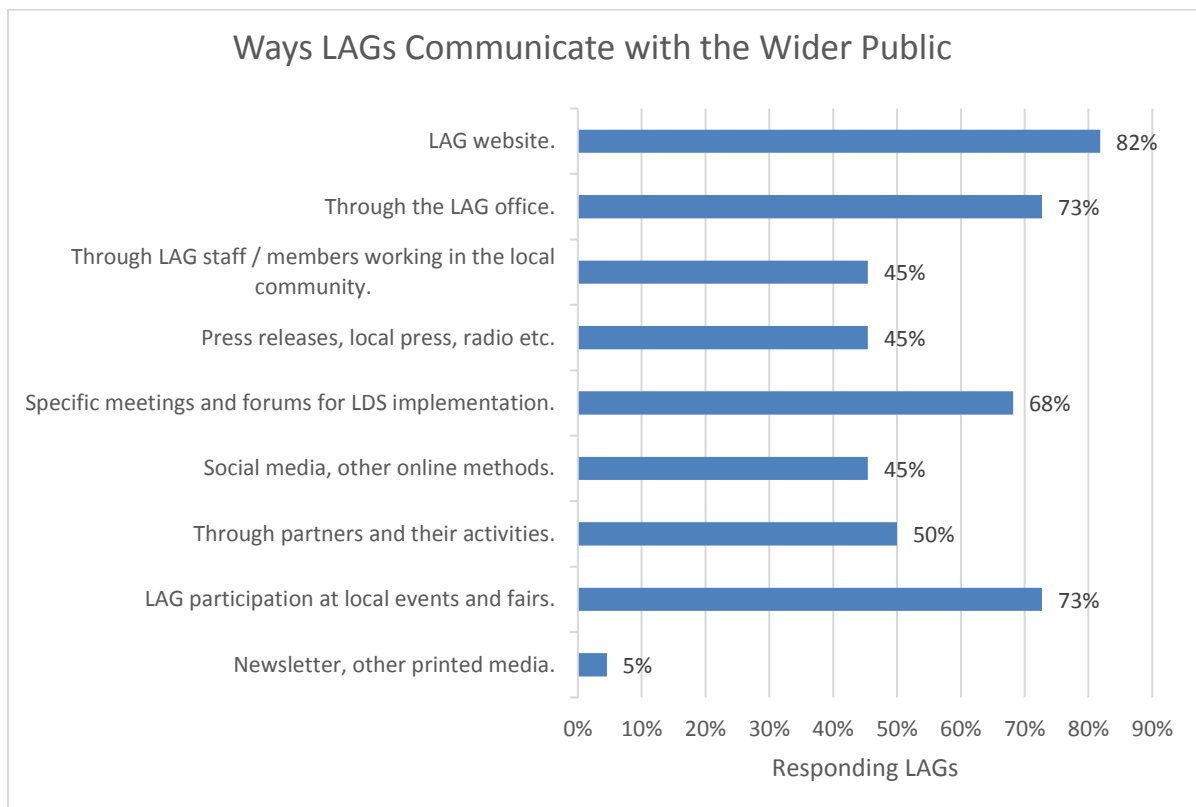
Extent of LAG Freedom in Current National/Regional Delivery Framework

18%

32%

50%

- 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	Responding LAGs
LAG website.	82%
Through the LAG office.	73%
Through LAG staff / members working in the local community.	45%
Press releases, local press, radio etc.	45%
Specific meetings and forums for LDS implementation.	68%
Social media, other online methods.	45%
Through partners and their activities.	50%
LAG participation at local events and fairs.	73%
Newsletter, other printed media.	5%

- Responding Portuguese LAGs reported much higher use of LAG participation at local events and fairs than the EU sample (73% vs 52%) but lower use of LAG staff or members working in the local community (45% vs 66%).

- Social media use was below the EU level (45% vs 61%) and they also reported much lower use made of newsletters, other printed material than the EU sample (5% 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 22

Ways LAGs Receive Information from MA/PA

Category	Value
Email	86%
Regular meetings and forums organised for LAGs	68%
Managing Authority website	41%
Through National Rural Network	14%
Through intermediary e.g. regional office or network	9%
Printed publications and guidance	14%
Social media	
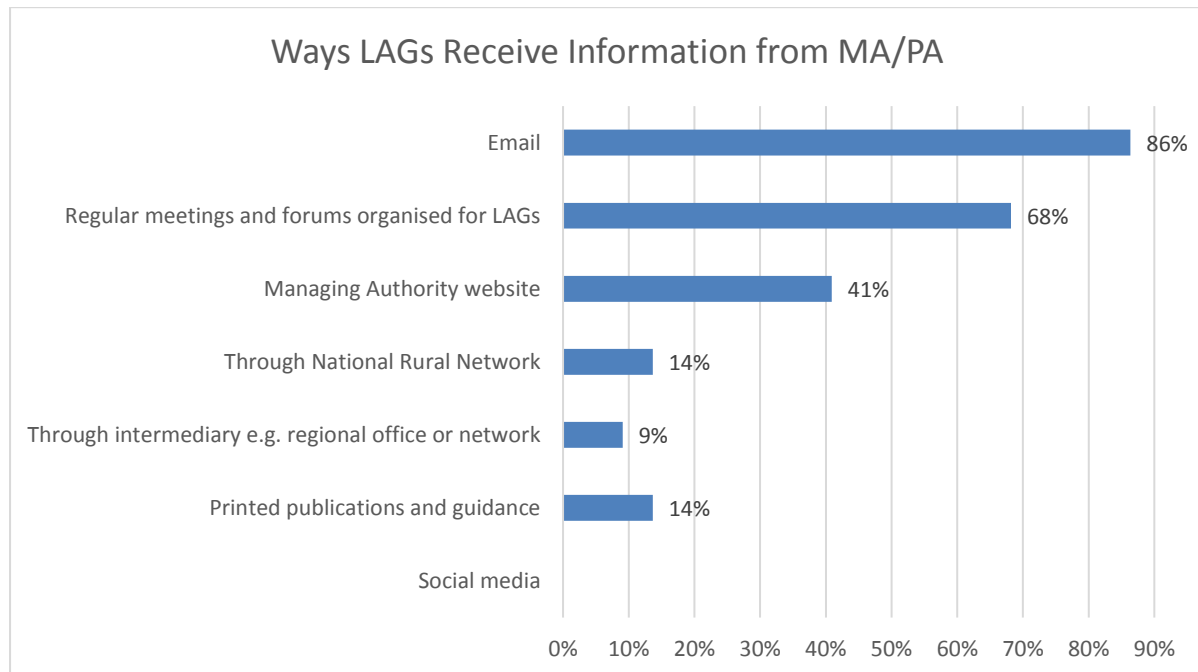
- Responding Portuguese LAGs received information from the MA/PA it in a similar way to the EU sample. The role of the NRN was less prominent in Portugal than in the wider sample (14% vs 31%).

Question 25

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

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

Total Number of Responses 22
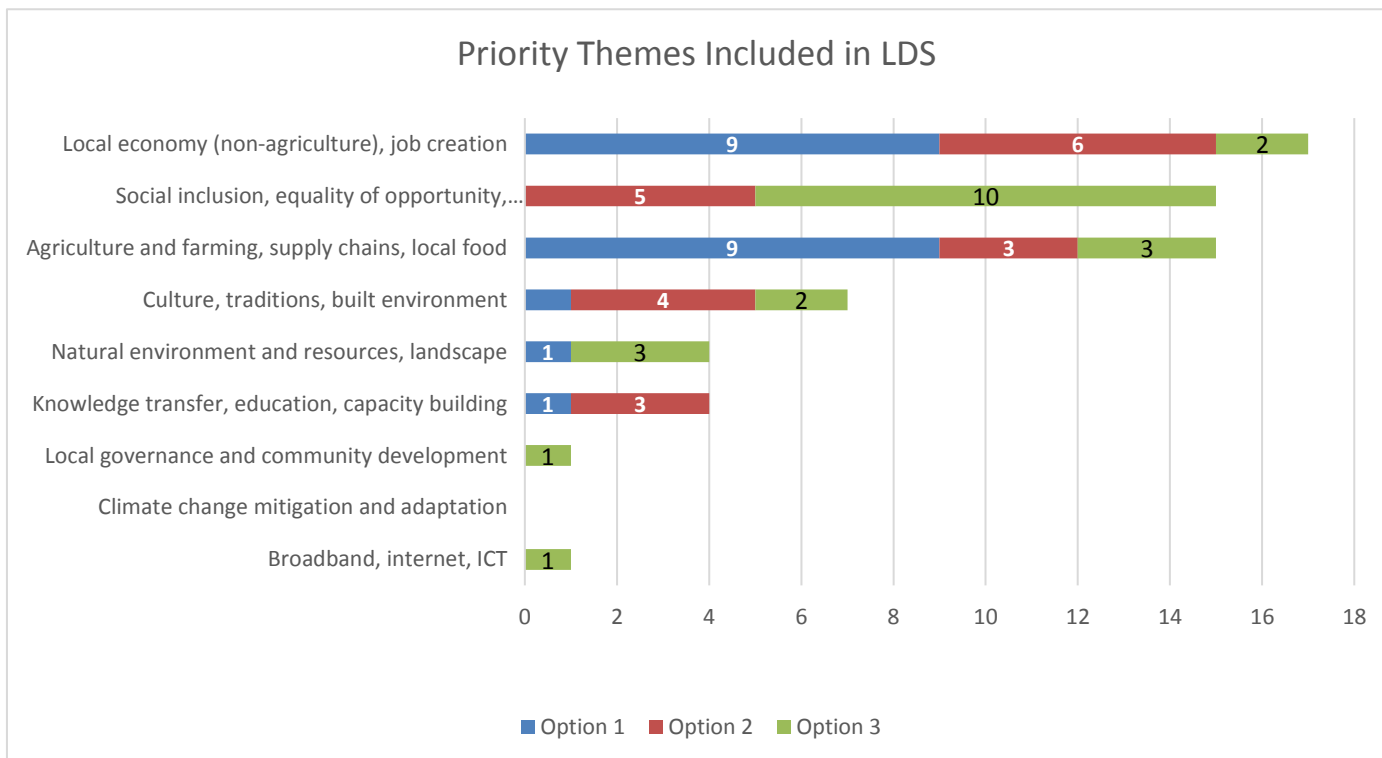
- The Portuguese LAGs responded that their inclusion of LDS priority themes are largely in line with those provided by the EU sample, however, none included climate change mitigation and adaption vs circa 14% of the EU sample.
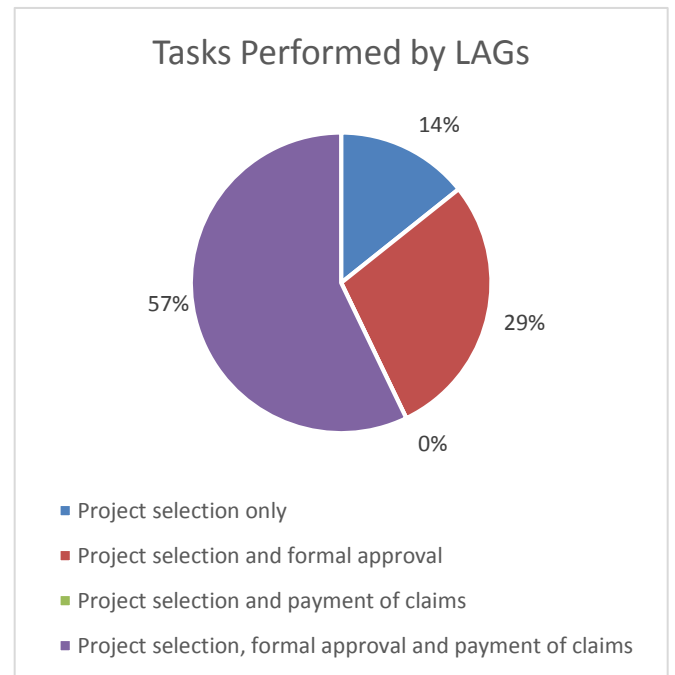
Question 26

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 21

- A much larger percentage of responding Portuguese LAGs (57%) reported that they are responsible for project selection, formal approval and payment of claims than the EU sample where only 19% of LAGs perform these tasks.

- In contrast, a much smaller proportion of Portuguese respondents stated that their LAGs carried out project selection only (14%) in comparison to 48% of LAGs in the EU sample.

Tasks Performed by LAGs

14%

29%

0%

57%

- ■ Project selection only
- ■ Project selection and formal approval
- ■ Project selection and payment of claims
- ■ Project selection, formal approval and payment of claims
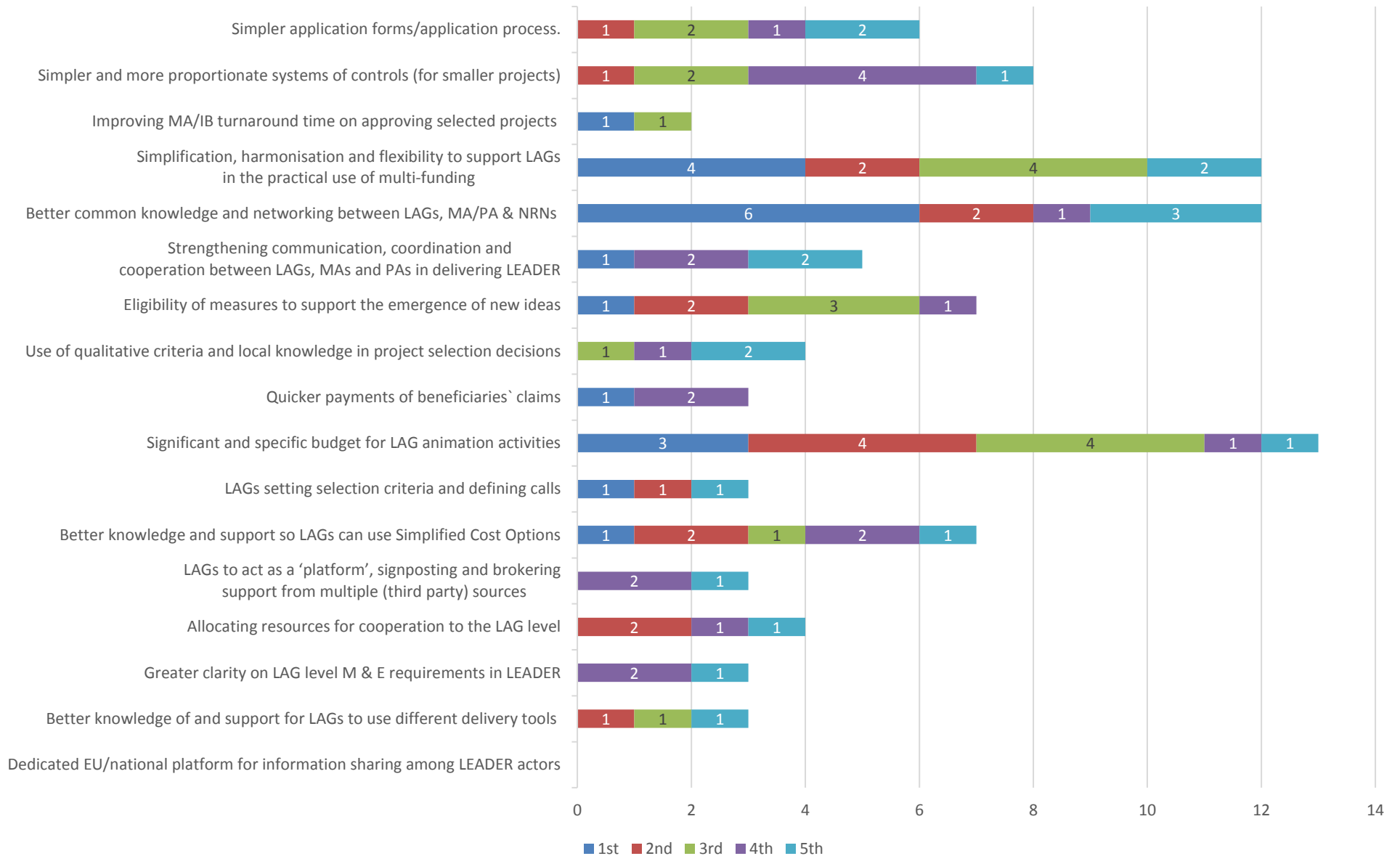
LEADER Improvements

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 20

- Portuguese responses placed very different emphasis on where change is needed to improve implementation now, providing totally different top three responses to the EU sample.

- Responding Portuguese LAGs placed significant and specific budget for LAG animation activities as their top priority, the 10th priority at EU level. Improving MA/PA turnaround time on approving selected projects, third highest in the EU sample was their lowest priority. Simpler application forms and process, the top EU priority ranked 7th for Portuguese LAGs.

Most Important Changes to Improve Implementation Now

Change	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Simpler application forms/application process.	1		2	1	2
Simpler and more proportionate systems of controls (for smaller projects)	1		2	4	1
Improving MA/IB turnaround time on approving selected projects	1		1		
Simplification, harmonisation and flexibility to support LAGs in the practical use of multi-funding	4	2	4		2
Better common knowledge and networking between LAGs, MA/PA & NRNs	6	2		1	3
Strengthening communication, coordination and cooperation between LAGs, MAs and PAs in delivering LEADER	1			2	2
Eligibility of measures to support the emergence of new ideas	1	2	3	1	
Use of qualitative criteria and local knowledge in project selection decisions			1	1	2
Quicker payments of beneficiaries` claims	1			2	
Significant and specific budget for LAG animation activities	3	4	4	1	1
LAGs setting selection criteria and defining calls	1	1			1
Better knowledge and support so LAGs can use Simplified Cost Options	1	2	1	2	1
LAGs to act as a 'platform', signposting and brokering support from multiple (third party) sources				2	1
Allocating resources for cooperation to the LAG level		2		1	1
Greater clarity on LAG level M & E requirements in LEADER				2	1
Better knowledge of and support for LAGs to use different delivery tools		1	1		1
Dedicated EU/national platform for information sharing among LEADER actors					

Question 28:

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

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

Total number of responses – 20
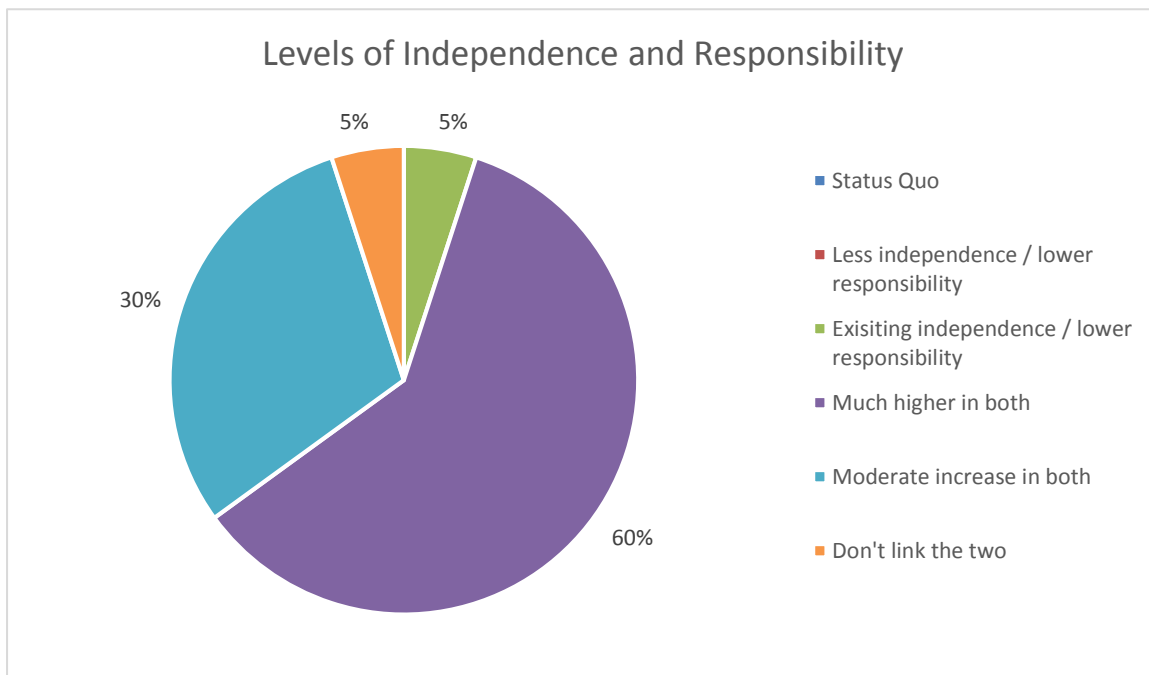
- A much higher percentage of responding Portuguese LAGs reported a desire for much higher independence and responsibility than the EU sample (60% vs 19%).

- None of the responding Portuguese LAGs wanted to maintain the status quo, in comparison to 20% in the EU sample.
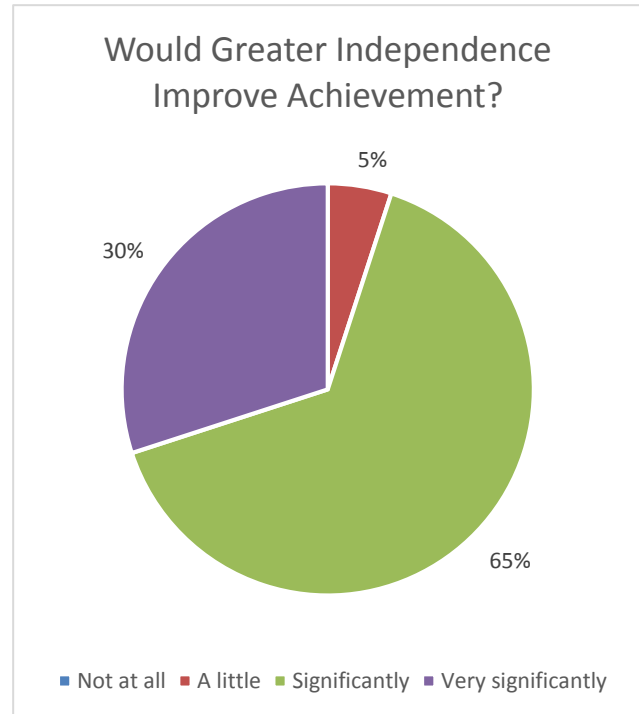
Question 29

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 20

- A considerably larger proportion of Portuguese respondents in comparison to the EU sample indicated that greater independence would improve LAGs achievement very significantly (65% vs 42%) or significantly (30% vs 12%).

- None of the responding Portuguese LAGs thought that greater independence would improve achievement not at all, compared to 12% in the EU sample.

Would Greater Independence Improve Achievement?

5%

30%

65%

■ 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 20

Would a Centralised Support Service Improve LAGs' Level of Achievement?
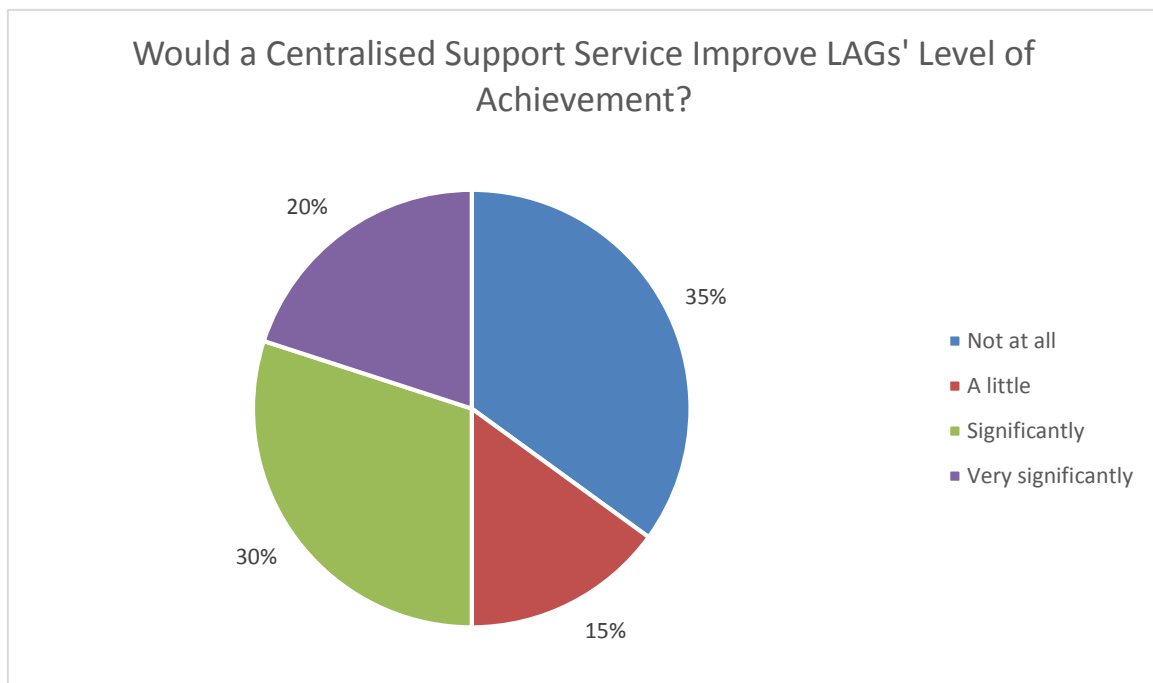
- Double the percentage of responding Portuguese LAGs thought a centralised support service would improve LAGs level of achievement (20% vs 9%) compared with the EU sample.

- At the same time, the percentage of responding Portuguese and EU LAGs which thought that it would not at all improve achievement was very similar (35% vs 36%).
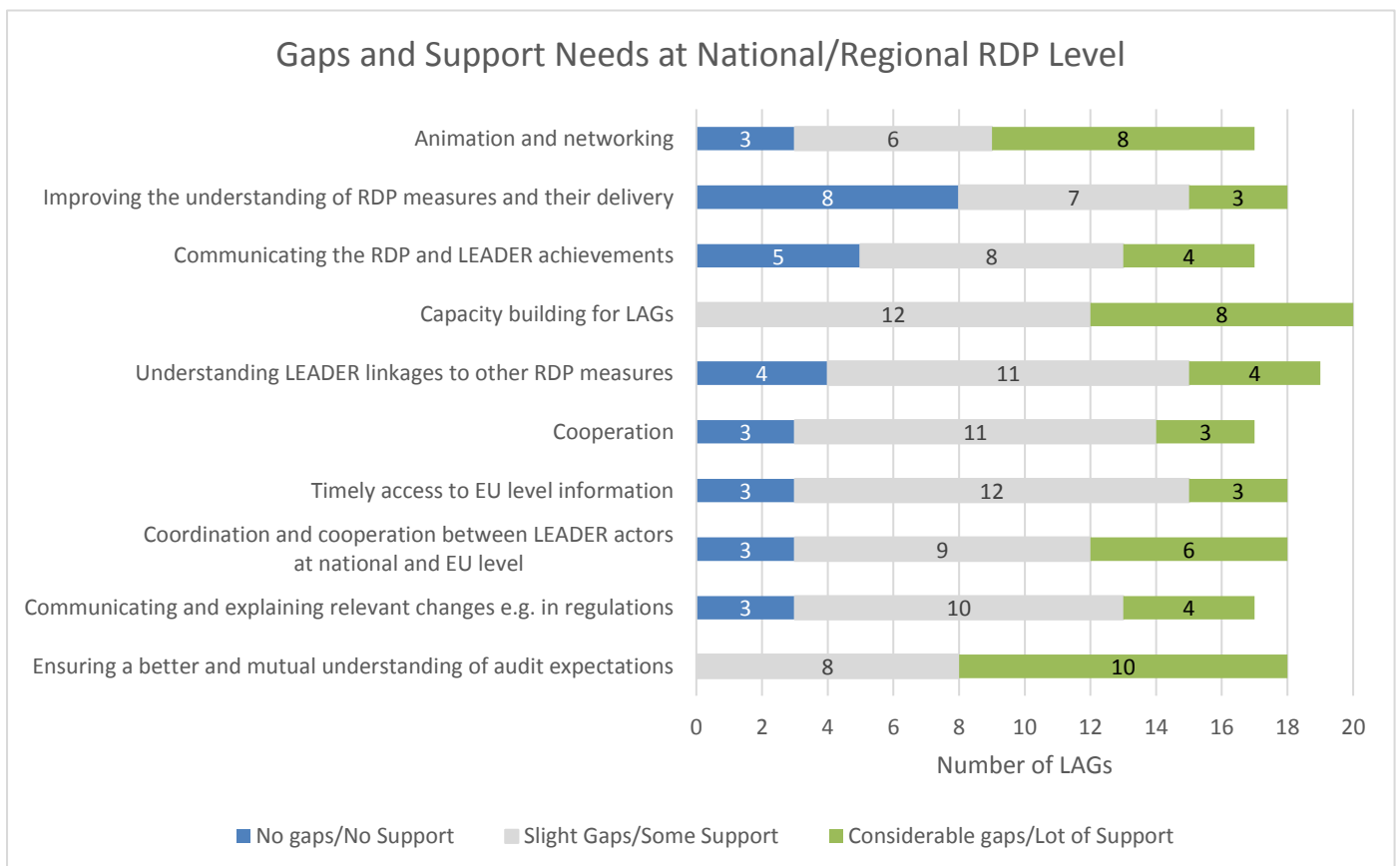
Question 31

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 20

Gaps and Support Needs at National/Regional RDP Level

Category	No gaps/No Support	Slight Gaps/Some Support	Considerable gaps/Lot of Support
Animation and networking	3	6	8
Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery	8	7	3
Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements	5	8	4
Capacity building for LAGs		12	8
Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures	4	11	4
Cooperation	3	11	3
Timely access to EU level information	3	12	3
Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level	3	9	6
Communicating and explaining relevant changes e.g. in regulations	3	10	4
Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations		8	10

Number of LAGs

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

- Comparatively, responding Portuguese LAGs identified more gaps and support needs at national/regional RDP level in relation to animation and networking and capacity building for LAGs than the EU sample.
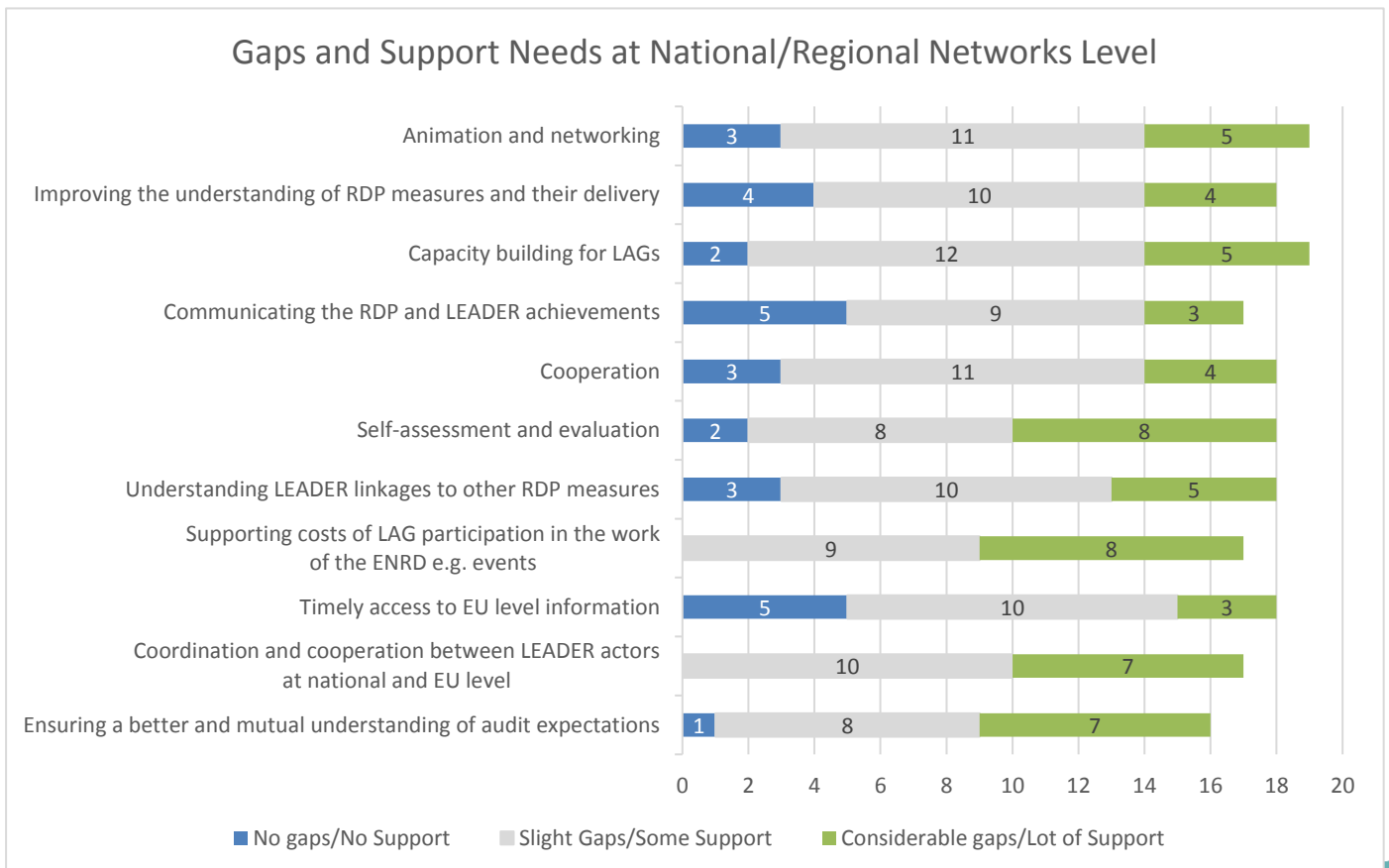
Question 32

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 20

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	3	11	5
Improving the understanding of RDP measures and their delivery	4	10	4
Capacity building for LAGs	2	12	5
Communicating the RDP and LEADER achievements	5	9	3
Cooperation	3	11	4
Self-assessment and evaluation	2	8	8
Understanding LEADER linkages to other RDP measures	3	10	5
Supporting costs of LAG participation in the work of the ENRD e.g. events		9	8
Timely access to EU level information	5	10	3
Coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level		10	7
Ensuring a better and mutual understanding of audit expectations	1	8	7

- Proportionately responding Portuguese LAGs reported more considerable gaps/ lot of support needed for self-assessment and evaluation from national/regional networks, than the EU sample.

- None of the Portuguese LAGs reported there were no gaps/no support needed for supporting costs of LAG participation in the work of the ENRD and for coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors at national and EU level, each is proportionately much lower 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 20


Priority of Support Needs from ENRD
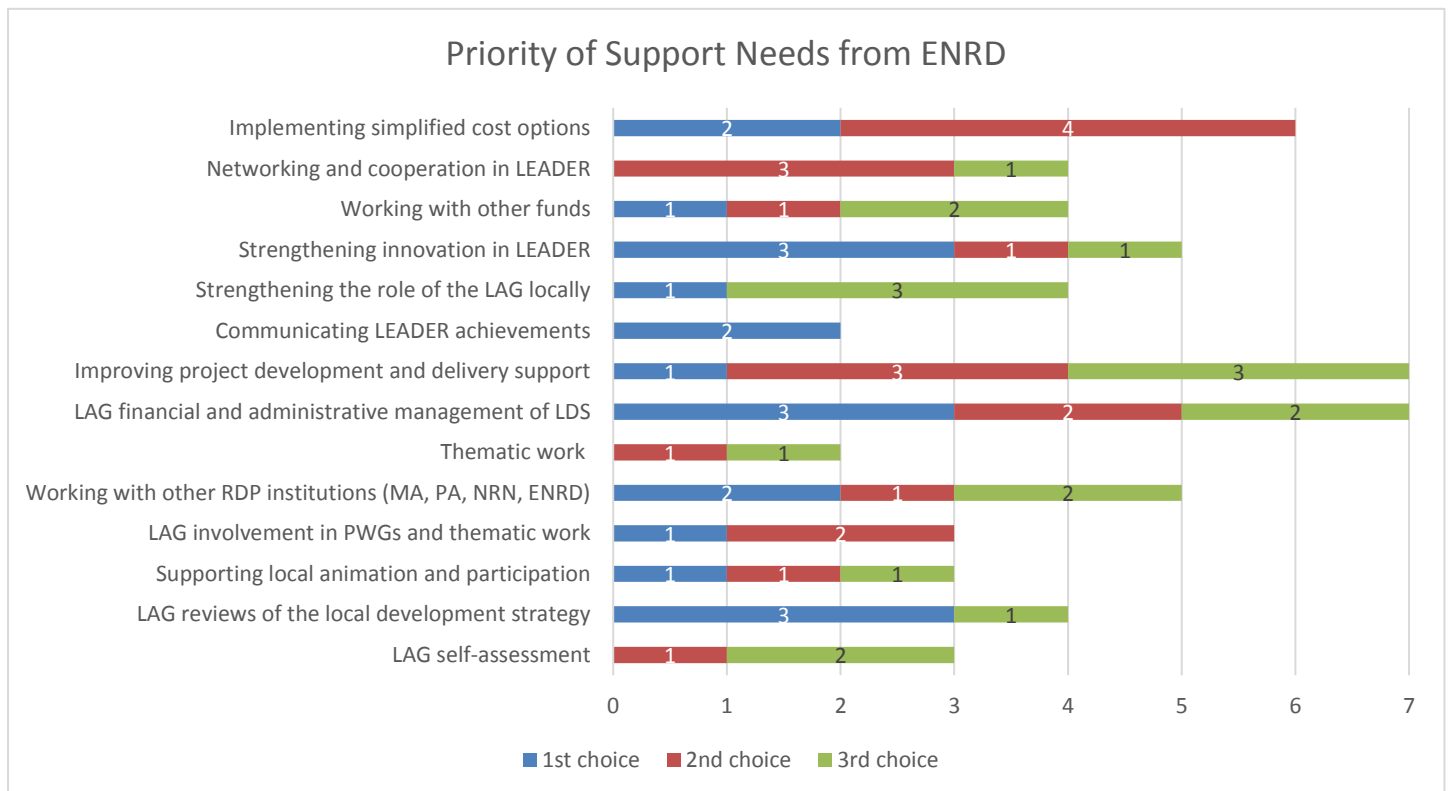
- Although broadly similar there were a number of differences in the priority which Portuguese respondents accorded their support needs from the ENRD in comparison to the EU sample.

- The responding Portuguese LAGs top two priority needs from ENRD were improving project development and delivery support and LAG financial and administrative management of LDS which ranked much lower (7th and 8th respectively) in the EU sample.

- Responding Portuguese LAGs also prioritised LAG reviews of the LDS higher than the EU sample and communicating LAG achievements lower than the EU.

Question 34

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

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

Total Number of Responses 20


Help to Increase Involvement with ENRD
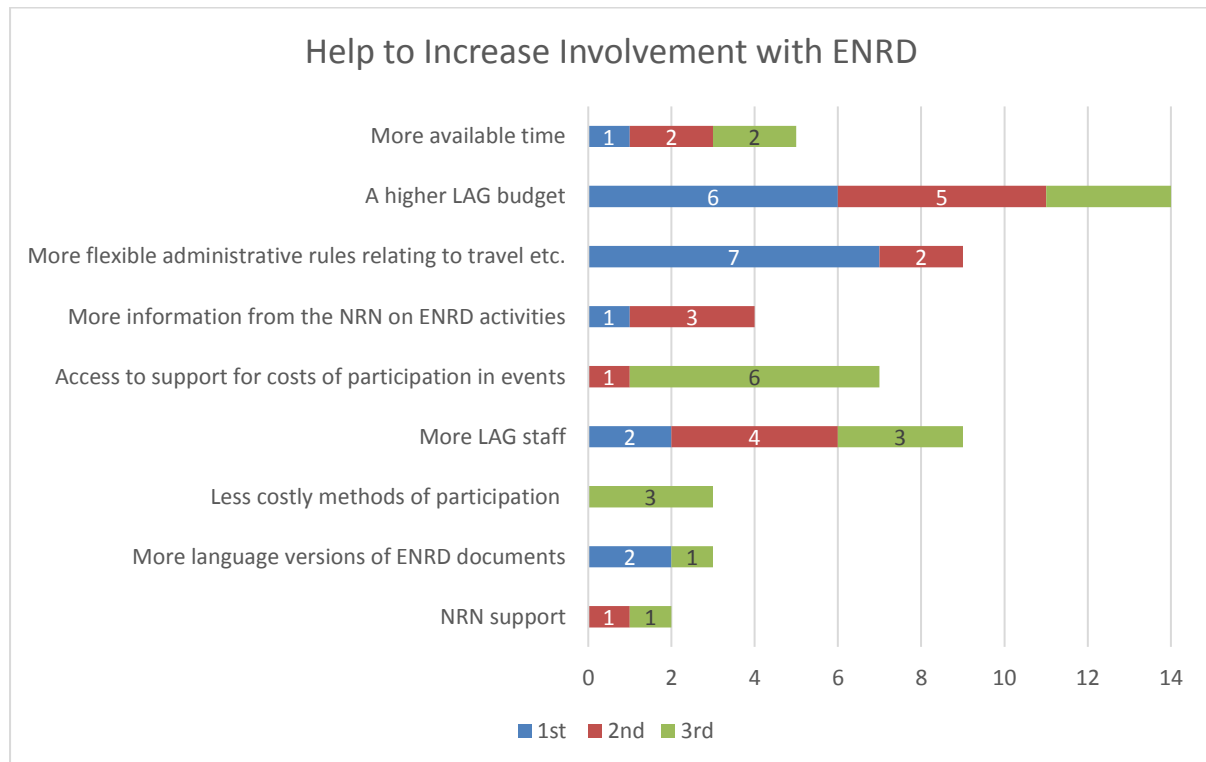
- Proportionately more responding Portuguese LAGs ranked a higher LAG budget and more LAG staff as help that would increase their involvement with ENRD, these were the main areas which differed from the priorities identified in the EU sample as a whole.

Question 35

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

- Not very important
- Moderate importance
- Important
- Essential

Total Number of Responses 20

Importance of Self-assessment of LDS to Improve LAGs' Operation
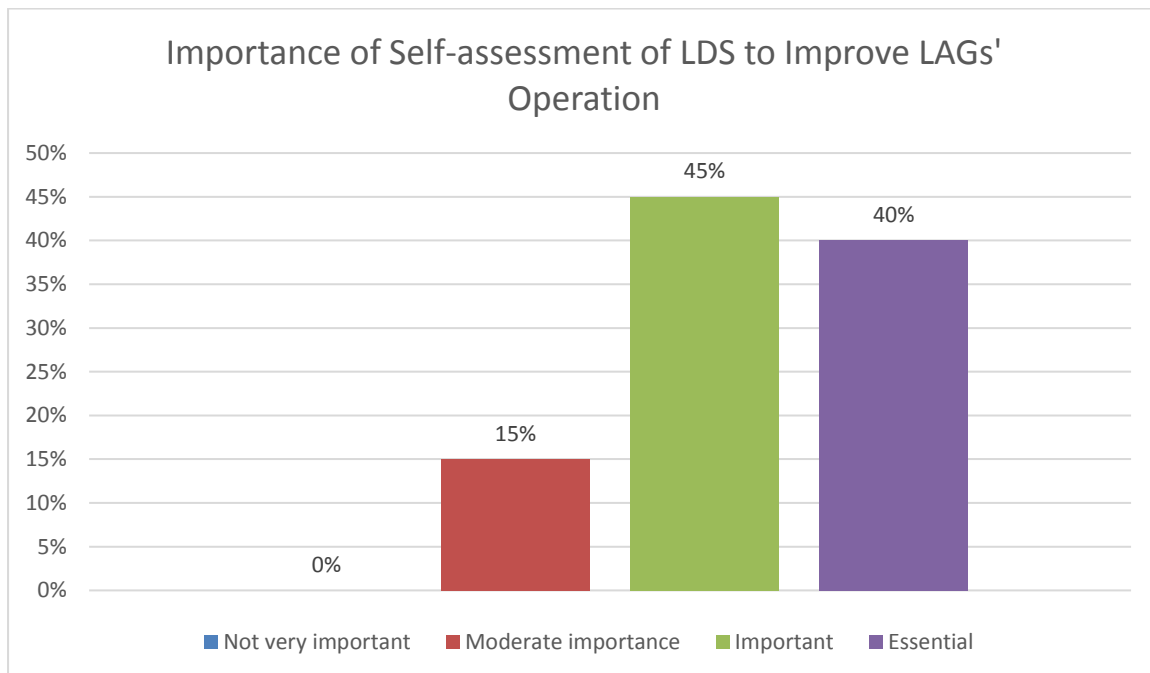
- More responding Portuguese LAGs considered self-assessment as essential than in the EU sample (40% vs 28%).

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 20

Time Line - Launch of First Self-assessment
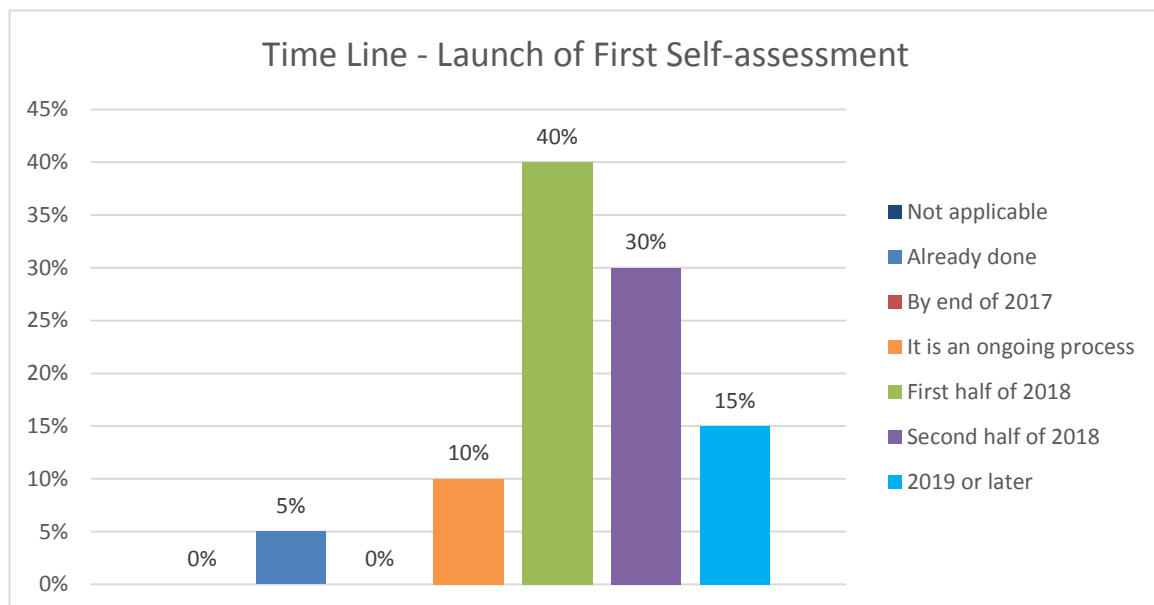
- More responding Portuguese LAGs indicated they planned to launch their first self-assessment in 2018, 70% compared to 48% in the EU sample.

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 – 100%
- No – 0%

Total Number of Responses 20