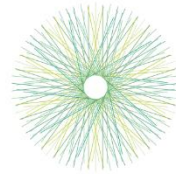
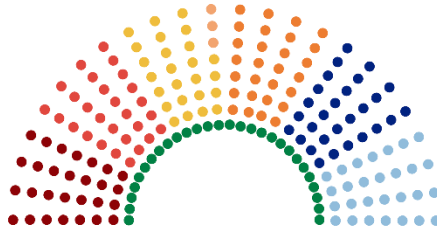




European
Commission



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AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION



European Rural Networks'
Assembly

Report of the 1st Meeting of the Permanent Subgroup on Leader and Community-Led Local Development

Brussels, 21 April 2015



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Session 1. Introduction

Presentation of objectives, agenda, subgroup role and operations	
9.30 – 10.00	<i>Note: Presentations can be directly downloaded by clicking on the link provided</i>
Opening remarks by Markus Holzer (DG AGRI)	<p>Markus Holzer, Head of Unit of the European network and monitoring of rural development policy (DG AGRI) presented the objectives of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to update on the state of play of implementation of Leader and TNC in 2007-2013 period and programming of Leader/CLLD in 2014-2020 • to present and discuss the role of the Leader/CLLD subgroup • to present the range of tools and discuss priorities related to Leader/CLLD in networking activities • to initiate peer learning and exchange between Leader/CLLD stakeholders; <p>and briefly outlined its agenda.</p> <p>A warm-up exercise facilitated by Mike Gregory from the ENRD Contact Point helped participants to see who had already been involved in previous editions of Leader starting in 1991.</p>
Presentation by Riin Saluveer (DG AGRI)	Riin Saluveer (DG AGRI) presented the role, operations and composition of the Leader/CLLD subgroup of the Rural Networks' Assembly
Questions and answers	<p>Brief summary of discussion</p> <p>The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the need to strengthen cooperation with third countries, particularly in the Western Balkans where there is already a strong interest in the Leader approach. Commission response was that relatively few cooperation projects involved third countries so far, but there will be further efforts to make this happen. - what would be the response to a proposal submitted by the Economic and Social Committee to carry out a study on the programming of CLLD. Commission representatives explained that this requires further in-depth study by all the DGs concerned. - the fact that some countries did not nominate LAG representatives. The Commission response was that some Member States may have been waiting with nominations until new LAGs are in place, but in any

case all LAG representatives should be nominated by the next subgroup meeting.

- is it mandatory to set up at the national level a similar body as the Leader/CLLD subgroup? Commission responded it is not an obligation but NRNs are responsible for training of LAGs and support to cooperation, so Member States should set up the most adequate working procedures to accomplish this.

Session 2. The state of play

Presentation of objectives, agenda, subgroup role and operations

10.00 – 10.45

Note: Presentations can be directly downloaded by clicking on the link provided

[Presentation by Karolina Jasinska-Mühleck \(DG AGRI\) and Urszula Budzich-Tabor \(ENRD CP\)](#)

Karolina Jasinska-Mühleck presented the state of implementation of Leader from the 2007-2013 funding period, including the information on cooperation projects. Urszula Budzich-Tabor presented an overview of the programming of Leader in 2014-2020, as well as the information about CLLD in Partnership Agreements.

Questions and answers

Brief summary of discussion

Several participants stressed that the level of implementation of Leader during 2007-2013 was disappointing and that the delays may have been due to the late start of the previous programming period, with many LAGs selected only by 2010. The Commission explained that there are mechanisms in place for the 2014-2020 period to avoid such delays. Another cause of the slow progress could have been complicated delivery procedures. Hence many participants pointed out that it is of great importance to simplify delivery and harmonise procedures between the different ESI Funds. Such coordination is necessary both at the national and the EU level. A representative of DG MARE added that it is the intention of all four DGs responsible for CLLD to ensure good cooperation and coordination.

State of play: interactive exercise

10.45 – 11.15

Facilitators from the ENRD CP asked representatives of Member States to indicate, on a timeline, the approximate dates of:

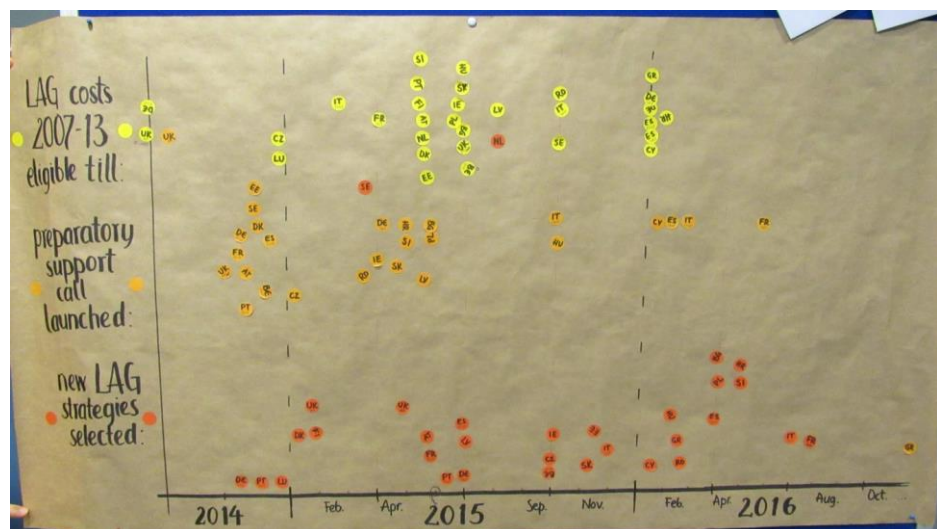
- end of operations of 2007-2013 LAGs,
- launch of preparatory support,
- selection of new LAG strategies.

In case of regionalised countries, the Managing Authorities were asked to present the situation of the most advanced and the least advanced regions.

LAGs in most Member States will cease operations in mid-2015, although some have already stopped in 2014 (some regions of DE and UK, CZ and LU), while other DE regions as well as ES, CY, GR and HR will continue until the end of 2015.

A large group of MS (including EE, SE, DK, AT, CZ, some regions of UK, ES, FR, DE and PT) have already launched preparatory support during 2014. Others are currently focused on this task. However, some Member States (including CY, some regions of ES and FR, as well as GR) are only expecting to start preparatory support in 2016.

The selection of LAG strategies is spread more or less evenly across the timeline (i.e. from mid 2014 to late 2016). This process is already largely completed in FI, DK, LU, SE, some regions of PT, UK and ES. For some of the Member States that are planning to select LAGs rather late, it is important that preparatory support is provided so as to avoid the potential loss of skills and motivation in the local community during the funding gap.



Session 3. Practical tools and priorities

Presentation of ENRD tools, capacity building questionnaire and potential themes

11.45 – 12.15

Note: Presentations can be directly downloaded by clicking on the link provided

[Presentation by John Grieve and Urszula Budzich-Tabor \(ENRD CP\)](#)

John Grieve presented the key ENRD tools to support Leader/CLLD. Urszula Budzich-Tabor presented the preliminary results of the CLLD capacity building questionnaire and the potential themes for future work.

Working group discussion: potential themes for future work

12.15 – 13.00



Discussion in small groups

The participants were split in eight working groups facilitated by team members of the ENRD CP. Each group went through the seven themes which emerged from previous ENRD work on Leader:

- approaches to multi-funding
- delivery systems
- capacity building for LAGs
- supporting TNC effectively
- measuring the success of Leader/CLLD
- Leader/CLLD as a tool to achieve rural development priorities
- Leader/CLLD and innovation.

Brief summary of points raised by theme:

(1) APPROACHES TO MULTI-FUNDING:

- in most cases strategic decisions on multi-funding have already been taken. LAGs should look for ways to operate within the given

framework and they can also take into account other sources of funding (e.g. private). Some Member States may want to move towards multi-funding in stages;

- there is a need to increase cooperation on CLLD across DGs concerned and between the ESI Fund managers (and not simply to raise awareness among potential beneficiaries);
- coordination is more important than simple demarcation, and harmonisation of procedures is needed at different levels;
- administrative procedures for enabling multi-funding need to be developed;
- this theme could also cover topics such as combining the intervention of different funds to achieve different priorities in the same strategy, coordination with the fisheries sector and urban-rural linkages. It is important to ensure certain groups do not lose out in multi-fund approach.

(2) DELIVERY SYSTEMS:

- it is a cross-cutting theme with direct links to multi-funding;
- we should focus on real lessons and evidence (e.g. from audit findings), to identify key problems where improvement from the past period has not been achieved;
- capacity building is needed for programme authorities to exchange on good practices;
- examples are needed of cooperation between levels and between different agencies (Paying Agencies, Managing Authorities, auditors);
- a dialogue between all actors is needed to achieve simplification;
- exchange between regionalised Member States would be useful (e.g. on coordinating national/regional level guidance);
- support would be needed in particular on clear definition of roles of Managing Authorities/Paying Agencies/LAGs to avoid duplication of tasks and not to overburden LAGs, and on applying simplified costs.

(3) CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LAGS:

- it is important to ensure smooth transition into the new programming period, with no gaps;
- we must build up the skills of new LAGs, but also “refresh” the roles and approaches of established LAGs;

- local interaction and communication is particularly important, including effective involvement of LAG Boards as well as involving new groups (i.e. not the 'usual suspects');
- skills are needed in particular on evaluation (including self-evaluation), cooperation with research, financial instruments, multi-funding, strategy design and implementation, monitoring indicators;
- capacity building is needed not only for LAGs but also Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and National Support Units;
- national (informal) LAG networks can be a good tool to stimulate capacity building and support TNC.

(4) SUPPORTING TNC EFFECTIVELY:

- the need for simple, common/harmonised rules developed by Managing Authorities for cooperation projects, including synchronised calls; support from the ENRD would be useful here, for instance in the form of a thematic group;
- cooperation should be established at LAG level, and not just between individual partners of one-off projects;
- more training and guidance is needed on developing TNC projects, including thematic seminars on specific cooperation themes; there is also need for technical support and space to develop the project partnership;
- there needs to be a clearer role for National Rural Networks; the informal LAG networks can also play a role in stimulating TNC;
- we need to raise the profile of TNC, show how important it is (also to auditors).

(5) MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF LEADER/CLLD:

- we should measure both the tangible results (e.g. jobs created) and the less tangible ones (qualitative impacts, social capital);
- SWOT analysis can be used to help identify (at an early stage) indicators for measuring LAG success(es);
- it is important to select the right indicators (taking into account data availability) and integrate them into project selection criteria;
- training for LAGs is needed on evaluation at the local level and self-evaluation;
- guidance from the Evaluation Helpdesk could be useful;
- this theme should also cover better communication of Leader success.

(6) LEADER/CLLD AS A TOOL TO ACHIEVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES:

- it is a cross-cutting theme;
- we have to clarify where and how Leader can add value to these themes. In particular, its potential to provide integrated packages of support for particular objectives rather than just investment support, and the role of Leader as seed or pilot funding to lever in other funds;
- we should exchange knowledge and experience on how to support projects providing multiple social, economic and environmental benefits;
- specific themes relevant for Leader/CLLD include: creating jobs; addressing depopulation; supporting cooperatives and cooperative approaches; supporting gender approach; involving young people (including young farmers); social inclusion, including groups particularly challenging to reach (e.g. Roma communities); environment (including Natura 2000)
- this theme should also include combining different Rural Development priorities within the same project.

(7) LEADER/CLLD AND INNOVATION:

- innovation is a basic element of Leader and it covers more than EIP-AGRI; however, it has already been addressed through a focus group in the previous period;
- LAGs can play a role in bringing together civil society for social innovation;
- LAGs can play an important role in animating EIP Operational Groups, and they can be innovation brokers;
- how to transfer the innovative character of Leader to mainstream RDP measures?;
- how to avoid heavy delivery systems which block innovation?

Missing themes

In most groups the theme of communication was considered sufficiently important to be addressed separately. It was therefore suggested to add an eighth theme: (8) LAGS AS COMMUNICATORS.

Other proposed themes included:

- combining support from Leader with other measures;
- capacity building for Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and auditors;
- cooperation between funds without multi-funding;
- explaining state aid and *de minimis* exemptions;
- how to reconcile the Leader approach with growing centralisation;
- the future of Leader (involving stakeholders in the discussion).

Session 4: Developing solutions together

Peer exchange in small groups on themes, relevant practices and priorities for common action

14.30 – 16.00

The participants split into eight working groups, each discussing a specific theme identified in the previous session. Each group, supported by a CP facilitator, was asked to identify:

- the key issues and capacity building needs related to this theme
- existing examples of solutions/good practices
- possible future actions to make progress on this theme

The single most important and most urgent action that the group agreed on was to be presented briefly at the end of the workshop.



Approaches to
multi-funding
(facilitator: Paul
Soto)

The following needs and issues linked with this theme were identified:

- how to identify the advantages of multi-funding and communicate them to ESI Fund managers;

- capacity building for delivery stakeholders;
- identification of promising solutions and pitfalls from multi-funding pioneers need to be transferred to others;
- harmonisation of systems and procedures between ministries, DGs and agencies;
- achieving a balance between demarcation and flexible complementarity;
- the coordination of policies at local level rather than just Funds;
- the role and mandate of National Rural Networks in supporting multi-funding.

Examples were identified in: training for programme managers and LAGs on multi-funding (PL), developing a template and guidance for multi-fund strategies, as well as a joint Managing Authority and Monitoring Committee for CLLD in different Funds (SE), a single Monitoring Committee for all EU Funds (but there is a risk that CLLD will be marginalised) and joint training for LAGs and FLAGs (UK Scotland).

The activity identified as highest priority was to find examples of delivery systems with harmonised procedures for multi-funding. Other priorities included: capacity building for all delivery actors using examples, information to local actors about the advantages of multi-funding and things to avoid, and support to local actors for dealing with multi-funding.

Delivery systems
(facilitator: Fabio
Cossu)

Key issues related to the theme:

- 'umbrella' projects: how to make them work in practice;
- Simplified Cost Options in practice (e.g. setting up databases of reference prices);
- simplified procedures (e.g. checklists) for project selection;
- compliance with regulation/rules, audit trails and cooperation with auditors;
- establishing dialogue and cooperation between Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and LAGs and coping with time pressure;
- comparing and understanding implementing rules across Member States;
- ensuring simplification without hampering innovation;

- comparing and understanding implementing rules across Member States.

Some examples were identified including: umbrella projects in SE¹; a workshop in DK between the Managing Authority and LAGs on application procedures; coordination bodies and national guidelines for regional selection procedures in ES; cooperation between Paying Agencies and LAGs at an early stage of project selection and participation of LAGs in coordinating bodies at regional level in DE.

The highest priority would be further work on **umbrella projects** (sharing case studies acceptable to auditors, workshop targeting MAs, Paying Agencies and auditors). Exchange on Simplified Cost Options (common understanding of rules, using lump-sums and focusing on outcomes, reference framework for flat rates) was also considered important.

Capacity building
for LAGs
(facilitator: Elena
Maccioni)

Key issues on LAG capacity building needs include:

- how to create Local Development Strategies, including multi-funded strategies and those linking rural-urban areas;
- training for animation as a crucial element of success (but it is important to train people who will carry out animation in practice);
- monitoring and evaluation, including communication of Leader achievements;
- analysis of causes of staff turnover in LAGs (some Member State rules may result in loss of skilled staff);
- addressing problems of Member States with a high number of LAGs, e.g. how to reach them all with capacity building?

Examples identified included guidance for LAGs and workshops on strategies (SI) and disseminating good practices on animation activities (EE); the Evaluation Helpdesk guide on capturing impacts of Leader might also be of use.

The following priority activities were identified: **capacity building for better animation, for monitoring/self-evaluation, and for the creation of Local Development Strategies.** A very important tool for capacity

¹ This example was not discussed at the subgroup meeting but was identified in December 2014 during previous CP work with Leader Managing Authorities

building is collection and dissemination of good practices (e.g. through competitions). EU level capacity building and networking events for LAGs are also useful.

Supporting TNC effectively
(facilitator: Ines Jordana)

The following needs were identified:

- lack of harmonised rules for TNC among Member States; hence there is a need to share information on calls and rules;
- to facilitate exchange between Managing Authorities, communication tools are needed such as online discussion forums, social media;
- face-to-face exchange is important to stimulate cooperation between LAGs;
- there should be thematic approach to cooperation for LAGs with similar priorities in their strategies;
- collecting information and showcasing good practices are important.

A number of examples have been identified of Member State activities to stimulate cooperation, including TNC events (FR, UK), thematic study trips (FI-AT), thematic seminars to foster cooperation on RDP priorities (FI). Transnational events such as LINC² can also be helpful to promote cooperation. EU level support can take the form of a community of practice/cluster to exchange information, studies and transnational Leader events.

A priority would be to set up a **cooperation cluster** collecting information on national regulations and timing of calls for TNC projects. Other proposals include face-to-face events for LAGs (possibly a big event in 2016, with tools to overcome language barriers), expanding the Leader/CLLD subgroup meetings to two-day meetings with more focus on cooperation, and a joint methodology to show the added value of TNC good practices.

Measuring the success of Leader
(facilitator: Edina Ocsko)

The key needs include:

- finding good indicators with consistent definitions at EU level (not only for individual projects but the whole strategy), both common and LAG-specific, finding data, measuring the social effect of Leader;
- developing clear and easy-to-use guidance;
- capacity building for LAGs and Managing Authorities;

² Leader Inspired Network Community, annual gatherings of LAGs in different MS.

- demonstrating the added value to the broader audience (e.g. politicians).

Existing practices include: community development assessment through the ACRE Network (England), training on evaluation planning (PT, GR), training on good quality strategies (PL), MA, NRN and LAG exchange in LV.

All the above activities were considered equally important, but the most urgent one is to work on **indicators**.

Leader as a tool to achieve RD priorities
(facilitator: Urszula Budzich-Tabor)

The following issues were identified:

- it is necessary to reconcile the 'top-down' and the 'bottom-up' priorities (i.e. those defined at EU, national, regional and local levels), it should be an iterative process;
- the following specific themes could be addressed: social inclusion, creating jobs, creating synergies and connections;
- capacity building for LAGs is needed on achieving objectives by being proactive and not only reactive (working with the local community to ensure certain issues are addressed, and not just waiting for project promoters to come forward with their ideas) and on matching local needs to broader priorities;
- thematic exchange could be useful between LAGs addressing the same priorities (themes should be indicated in the LAG database);
- achieving Rural Development priorities also involves LAGs being able to reach out to specific groups, for instance farmers: a whole range of communication activities is needed here.

Experience exists in: active promotion of projects in certain sectors, for instance in the Heritage Trails in SI; addressing Roma issues in HU; stimulating thematic cooperation between LAGs by the national Leader network in CZ. There are also useful materials from the ENRD's 2007-2013 Thematic Working Group 4 on Leader.

The development of **good practices on methods to achieve LAG strategic priorities** was considered a priority by all participants. Other suggestions included EU level Leader events and thematic exchanges, a match-making partner search tool to identify LAGs with the same priorities, supporting LAGs in the process of participatory strategic

**Leader and
innovation**
(facilitator: Mike
Gregory)

planning. Improved linkages between LAGs and key local actors such as farmers can be achieved e.g. through participation in fairs and events (this could be supported by the National Rural Networks).

Key issues identified in the discussion:

- definition of innovation and its criteria;
- delivery systems tendency to block innovative actions (hence the need for flexibility in implementation rules);
- creation of jobs in innovative sectors;
- innovation in the food chain (including cooperative organisations);
- social innovation (including civil society organisations, new actors not yet involved in RDPs);
- links between Leader and EIP-AGRI.

The capacity building needs are as follows:

- support to improve delivery systems to ensure innovation actions are not precluded (including a specific training for Paying Agencies);
- exchanges between Member States to share innovative ideas (such as good practices and cooperation, including the Cooperation measure);
- communication tools, examples and methods to diffuse new ideas;
- support to mechanisms for including LAGs in Operational Groups;
- support to social innovation.

No specific examples were identified because the theme remains relatively new. Priorities for action included **good practice examples** (starting with 2007-2013 period), developing indicators and types of results as well as **common guidelines** for delivery actors (Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies, LAGs and National Rural Networks) on how to support and communicate innovation. At a later stage, a range of on-line tools including databases of innovative projects and an e-learning platform could be developed. Building a cadre of facilitators to promote innovation in the RDP, especially through Leader (starting with a training of trainers at the EU level), was also proposed.

**LAGs as
communicators**
(facilitator: Ed
Thorpe)

The following needs were identified:

- improved understanding at the local level of the Leader approach and rural development more broadly;
- more collaboration with media, especially local TV and radio;

- improved coordination and exchange with other Rural Development stakeholder groups, in particular the Managing Authorities and National Support Units;
- communication and exchange between LAGs (including from other Member States) on communication activities and approaches;
- a comprehensive communications strategy/plan;
- better understanding of the possibilities of social media.

Examples include: BE (Wallonia) has produced “portraits” of young farmers through cooperation with local TV. They have also produced a guide on using social media; the DE National Rural Network produced a three minute film explaining Leader (in 2014) and a guide to LAG communication. ELARD has provided exchanges/work placements between LAGs.

The most important activity for the future would be **training for LAGs on developing effective communication plans/strategies, on how to communicate and the potential of social media**. Other proposals include creating at EU level a pool of resources to enable translation of materials produced in national languages, opportunities/platforms for more transnational exchange between LAGs, a common campaign bringing LAGs together (e.g. a photo competition and exhibition) and a common presentation/explanation of Leader in basic terms (using lay-person language).

Conclusions

Concluding
comments by
Paul Soto (ENRD
CP)

At a time when the level of trust in public institutions is dangerously high, we remember that Leader/CLLD is the only EU wide programme where local people both design their strategy and select projects. Leader was developed first within the framework of EU rural development policy, and it is now being applied to other areas and other policies. At the beginning it was a Community Initiative, later it was ‘mainstreamed’, but unfortunately this did not mean a broader application of the Leader principles, but rather that Leader had to follow the implementation methods and practices of other measures and Axes.

In the period 2014-2020 there is the possibility of linking Leader with other EU Funds in a multi-funded strategy, but we must make sure its design and procedures do not create further barriers. Support from EU level networks and National Rural Networks can help to achieve this.

The participants of this meeting have broadly agreed on the eight themes for future work and we should now go more into the detail. A lot of good practices already exist so we do not need to reinvent the wheel. We basically have to identify them and make sure they are disseminated and used. We are hoping that Member States that are more advanced in their work on Leader/CLLD will share their experience, and we plan to deploy a number of exchange tools. We will continue to work on the themes during the next subgroup meetings, and also between them.

Final remarks by
Markus Holzer,
DG AGRI

Markus Holzer expressed thanks to all the participants for taking such an active part in the discussion. He said all the good ideas would now be disseminated and work on putting them into practice would commence.

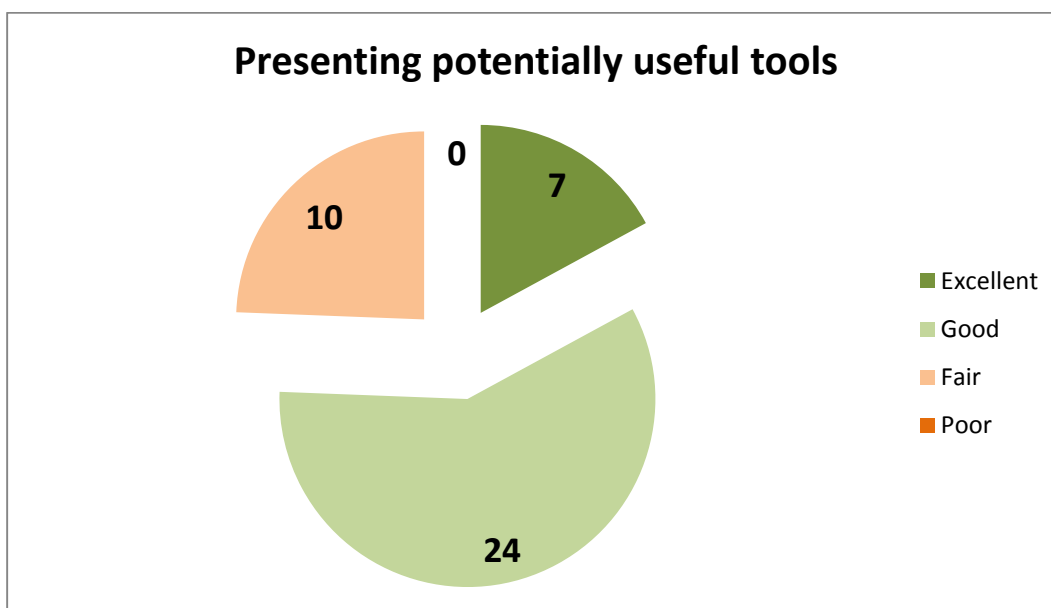
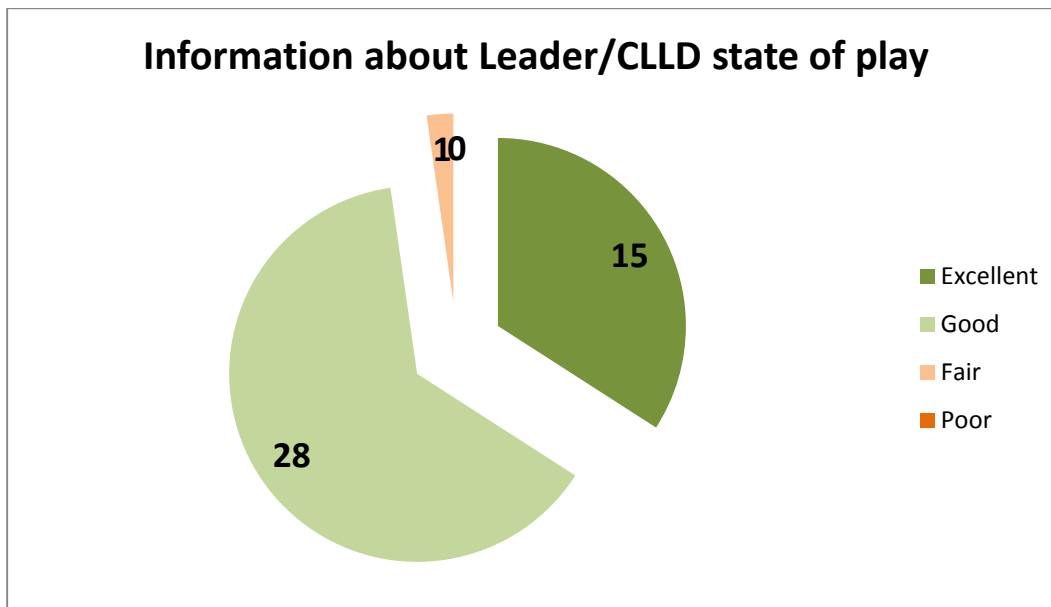
At the end of September there will be another opportunity for the same participants to meet in a slightly different format: a meeting focusing on (among other things) good practices in Leader TNC is planned to take place during the World Expo in Milan (IT). This will be confirmed shortly.

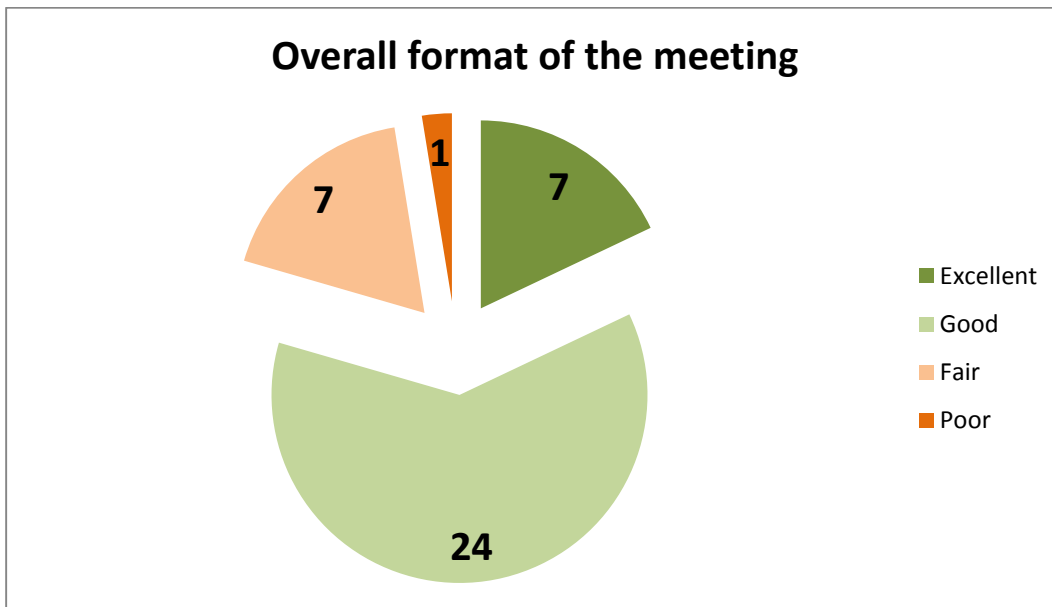
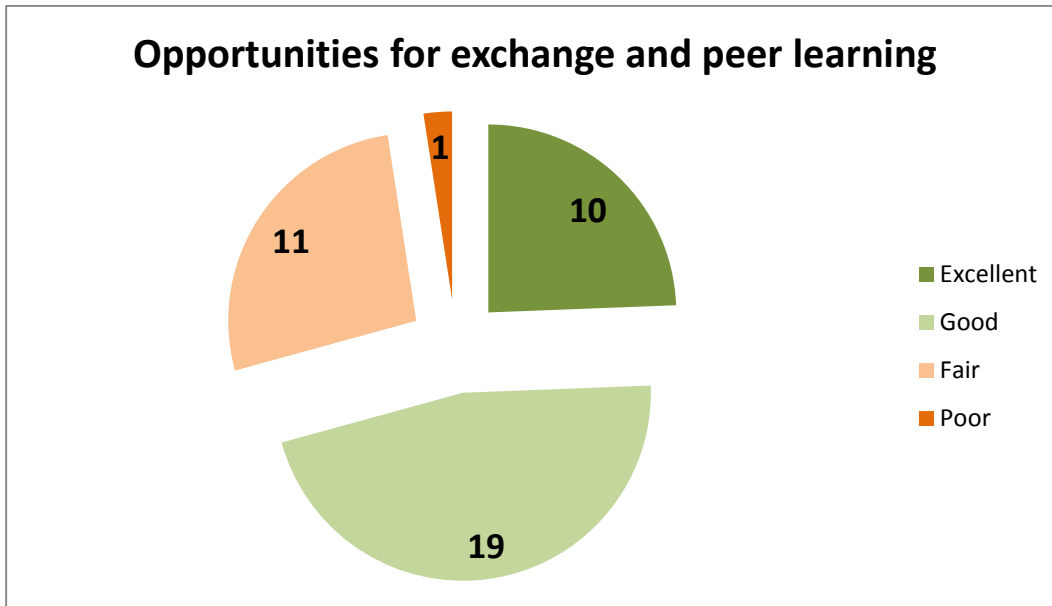


ANNEX 1. FEEDBACK RESULTS FROM THE MEETING

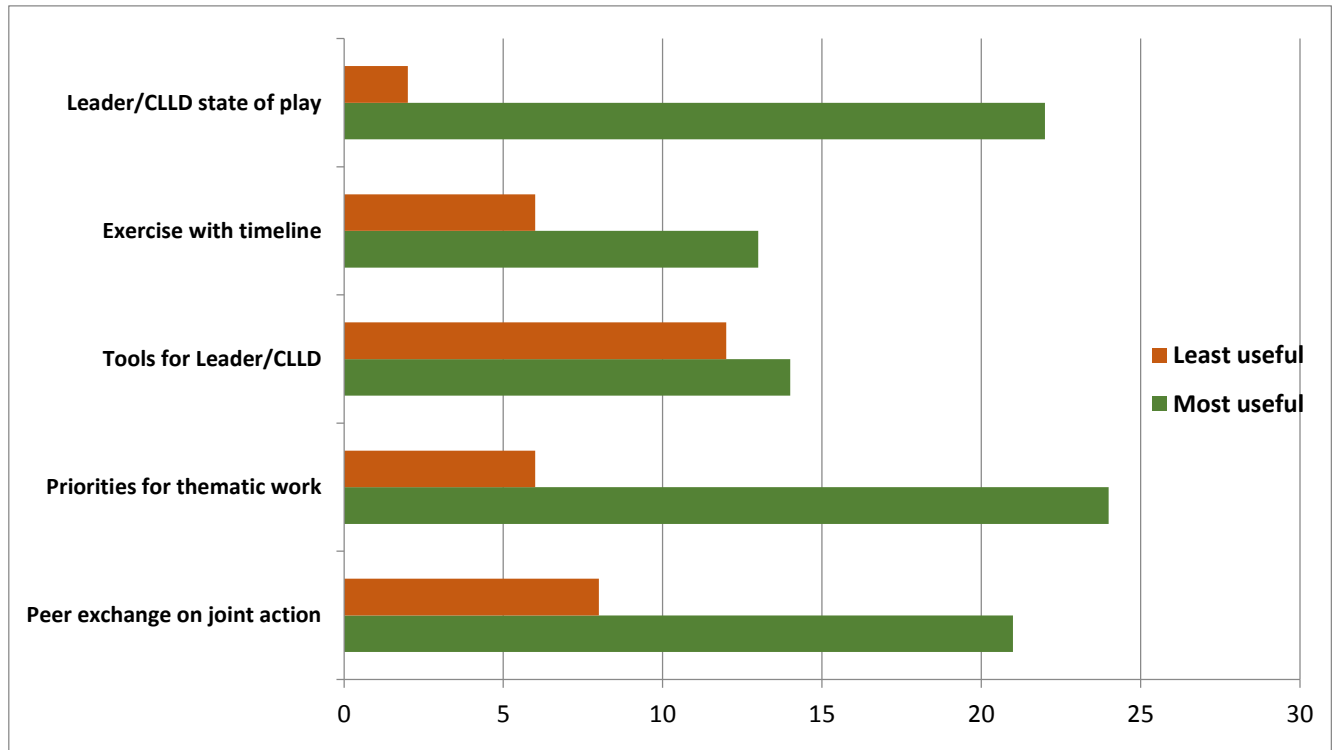
The participants were asked to fill a short Feedback Form. Forty three responses have been received, with the following results:

1. The participants were asked to rate the relevance of the following aspects of the meeting for their work:





2. The participants were asked to indicate which elements of the meeting they found most useful, and which – least useful:



3. Participants also provided comments on:

(a) *the most important lessons/messages from their work in small groups:*

- get inspired to be inspiring, it enables you to animate bottom-up initiatives;
- meet partners from different level all over the EU, exchange experience; peer exchange is very important – we appreciate it;
- all the MS have the same needs. We can exchange experiences and keep talking;
- the need for better dialogue on national level;
- we must foster real cooperation with PAs;
- the need to involve as many LAGs as possible among each other and with MA/PA, DG AGRI and ENRD;
- that we have good cooperation between LAG network, PA and MA, compared to other countries;
- focus on the main purpose of Leader (which is bottom-up) and design all systems to support (not hinder) this;
- all MS are having problems with the control regime; dialogue is necessary between auditors and policy makers to simplify the programme;
- problems of “rules” which make Leader complicated, don’t allow to start the process of simplification (general opinion of LAG representatives);
- Managing Authorities are concerned about the impact of compliance regulations on innovation and that projects do not look for Leader funding because of bureaucracy;
- the need for transnational cooperation;
- there is a general agreement between MS regarding needs to coordinate MA approaches to TNC;
- ENRD tools for Leader/CLLD;

- it seems it is still possible to influence the action plan of the ENRD CP to make it really useful for all stakeholders involved: ENRD listens to proposals;
- the Commission has a very good and concrete approach to the problems.

(b) *the most important thing they would do to apply the outcomes of the meeting in their daily work:*

- set a minimum limit on project grant aid;
- more teamwork with other countries;
- continue the process of simplification through dialogue between MA-PA-LAG;
- discuss with NRN possibilities of joint activities; discuss with MA/PA possibilities of simplifying delivery framework;
- start a working group for LAGs and MA about guidelines for dealing with applications;
- write a suggestion letter to NRN about training needs of LAGs;
- work on LAGs as communicators;
- more discussion inside LAGs;
- build on confidence among stakeholders about Leader;
- communicate already existing support for LAGs on the European level;
- focus more precisely on the potential for TNC by my Leader group and other LAGs in my country (which has no track record in that respect);
- survey TNC;
- prepare a report for the network, share key points with colleagues;
- share information about CLLD state of play in our NRN;
- use and adapt the practical tools already made by ENRD, also on the social media;
- check website for presentations, visit ENRD website more often.

(c) *topics they would like to cover during the next Subgroup meeting:*

- the state of play of Leader in the new 2014-2020 programming period;
- coordination of MA approaches (procedures, calls) for TNC projects, accelerating calls for new TNC projects; harmonizing and simplifying TNC implementation;
- multi-funding, including examples of multi-funded LDS;
- simplification;
- delivery systems: good and simple examples;
- Leader and state aid rules;
- preparatory support and the financial allocation to this support;
- animation, supporting bottom-up processes; animation of the territory;
- agro-forestry urban-rural relations as a horizontal measure;
- social inclusion;
- innovation and Leader approach;
- cooperation;
- how to measure specific Leader results (outcomes);
- action plan of NRNs and new approaches;
- how to promote Leader/CLLD among non-Leader people at national and local level;
- the strengthening of LAGs as true sub-regional development agencies, capable of using multiple funds and of securing continuity from one programme period to the next;
- reaction to priorities for joint action brought forward at this meeting.

(d) **other comments and suggestions:**

- please send agenda/plan for meeting if possible 3 weeks before to enable us to consult our networks;
- a 2-day meeting would enable more in-depth exchange/networking and maximise the cost of bringing us so far;
- please include former results of discussion in the new discussions, not to end up with always the same reflections;
- facilitators/moderators should only facilitate the work in the groups, and not direct and suggest the conclusions;
- it is very important to have a report with all the main findings and results of this meeting. All the things we discussed should have continuity;
- the participants should wear badges with country names visible from a distance;
- please try to find a second room for the next meeting, it is better for the working groups;
- difficult to hear anything in the small workshops;
- a disappointing day, because too rushed an agenda in a very awkward room.