



European Leader Association
for Rural Development
Brussels, www.elard.eu

ESTONIAN
PRESIDENCY
2016-2017



Analysis of integrated rural development and LEADER/CLLD implementation

Brussels, 2016



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union



Under the auspices of
the Secretary General of
the Council of Europe,
Mr Florentine Jagland



Table of contents

1. General information about countries.....	2
Summary of country features.....	8
2. Needs and problems related to integrated rural development and LEADER/CLLD implementation.....	9
Summary.....	13

1. General information about countries

This chapter describes main figures concerning LEADER/CLLD implementation in ELARD member countries including budget; multi-fund; number of LAGs, FLAGs, Urban LAGs; animation and running costs, SCO, umbrella project, etc. There is a short summary at the end of the chapter. To learn more about LEADER/CLLD implementation in all member states see the figures on ELARD website http://www.elard.eu/news/en_GB/2016/06/05/readabout/clld-infographics

Table 3. Budget of RDP and LEADER/CLLD, geographical coverage^{3,4}

Country	Total amount (EU and national) of RDP (Rural Development Program) for entire 2014-2020 in euros	Total budget for LEADER/CLLD from the RDP budget in euros	LEADER/CLLD % of RDP ⁵	Geographical coverage %	Rural population ⁶	Rural population %	LEADER/CLLD budget €/person
Croatia	2,026,000,000	60,786,653	3.0	94.38	3600000	81.9	17
Czech Republic	4,100,000,000	205,000,000	5.0	95	8000000	75.8	26
Denmark	1,200,000,000	60,000,000	5.0	100	4300000	78	14
Estonia	1,000,000,000	90,000,000	9.0	100	782000	60.4	115
Finland	8,365,000,000	300,000,000	3.6	100	3800000	71.1	79
France	15,900,000,000	687,000,000	4.3	80	42500000	65	16
Greece	4,718,291,793	400,000,000	8.5	selection ongoing	6000000	54.5	67
Hungary	4,173,989,953	191,783,851	4.6	100	8100000	82.3	24
Ireland	4,100,000,000	250,000,000	6.1	100	3300000	72.4	76
Italy	2,140,000,000	93,200,000	4.4	92	37600000	63.3	2
Latvia	1,531,595,209	79,088,514	5.2	100	1000000	50.1	79
Lithuania	1,983,000,000	114,000,000	5.7	100	1000000	35.4	114
Poland	13,513,295,000	735,000,000	5.4	96	27700000	71.8	27
Portugal	4,057,788,374	228,000,000	5.6	100	5100000	51.3	45
Slovakia	3,000,000,000	105,000,000	5.0 ⁷	selection ongoing	4800000	88.7	22
Slovenia	1,100,000,000	52,370,000	4.8	100	2100000	100	25
Spain	9,480,000,000	820,310,000	8.7	90	19100000	40.9	43
Sweden	4,300,000,000	200,000,000	4.7	93.4	7000000	77.8	29
United Kingdom	7,637,090,378	418,235,856	5.5	85.5	18600000	57.6	22
Bosnia and Herzegovina	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable			
Macedonia-FYROM	RDP 29,356,016 for 2014-2016 (IPARD 60,000,000 for 2014-2020)	0		50			
Serbia	230,000,000 (IPARD 2014-2020, still not operative and national budget)	5,833,333		15.4			

³The calculation of geographical coverage of Italy and the United Kingdom is based on the information on their rural area and doesn't include the coverage of LAGs.

⁴Budget numbers are changing according to the RDP changes and selection process.

⁵LEADER/CLLD percentage is calculated by ELARD according to the RDP amount and LEADER budget.

⁶DG AGRI, Rural development 2014-2020, <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/>

⁷Percentage is calculated from RDP II pillar budget, which is 2 079 595 129€.

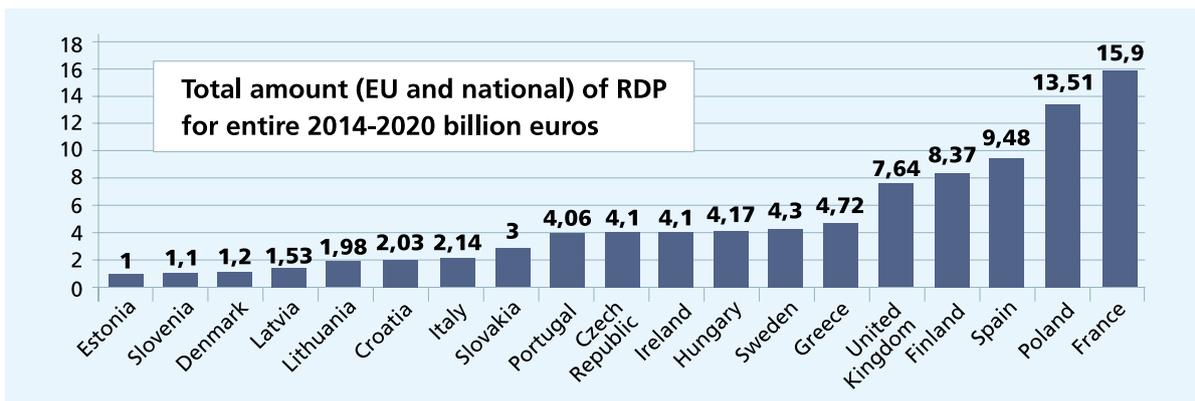


Diagram 4. Total amount of RDP 2014-2020

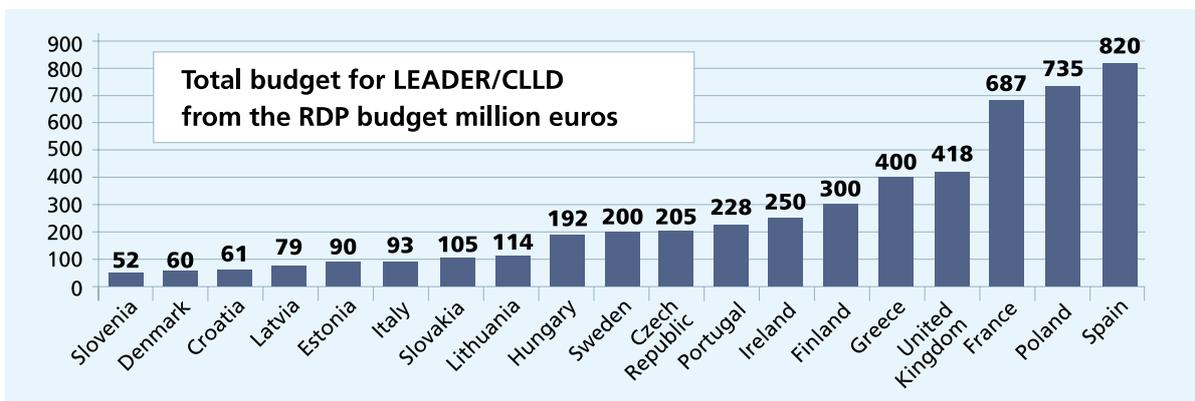


Diagram 5. Total budget for LEADER/CLLD 2014-2020

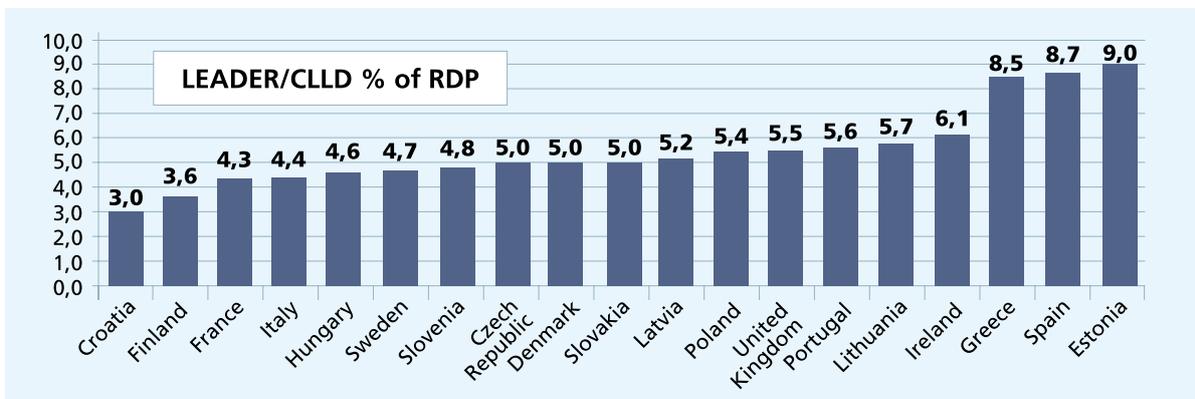


Diagram 6. Total budget for LEADER/CLLD in % of RDP

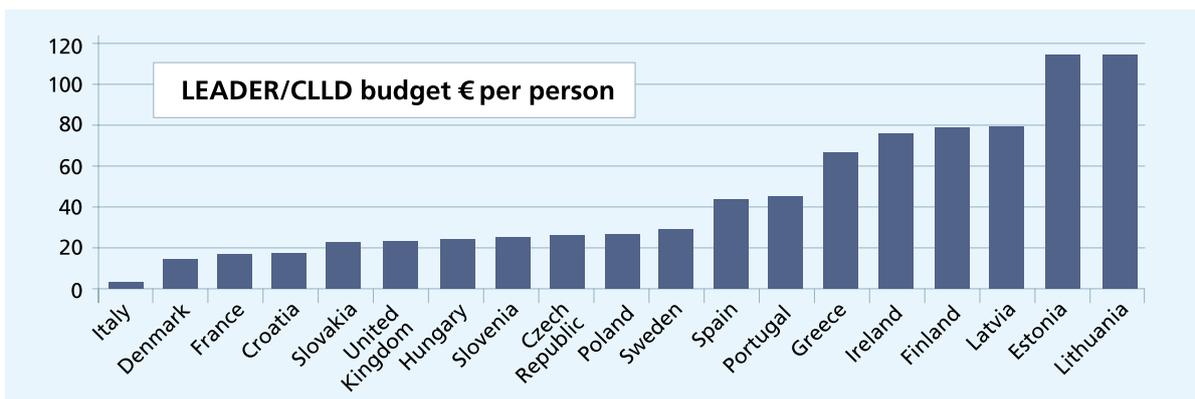


Diagram 7. LEADER/CLLD budget per person per country in euros, calculated according to number of rural population

Table 4. Number of LAGs, FLAGs (fisheries/coastal) and Urban LAGs⁸

Country	Number of LAGs 2007-2013	Number of LAGs 2014-2020	Number of Fisheries/ coastal LAGs for 2007-2013	Number of Fisheries/coastal LAGs for 2014-2020	Number of Urban LAGs for 2014-2020 ⁹
Croatia	42	57	0	9	0
Czech Republic	112	185	0	0	0
Denmark	55	26	15	12	0
Estonia	26	26	8	8	0
Finland	55	54	7	9	0
France	222	350	10	15	0
Greece	41	50	8	10	0
Hungary	96	103	0	0	60
Ireland	35	28	10	10	13
Italy	192	186	43	43	0
Latvia	40	35	24	6	0
Lithuania	51	49	11	9	59
Poland	335	322 ¹⁰	48	35	7
Portugal	53	60	7	12	26
Slovakia	29	63	0	0	0
Slovenia	33	38	1	3	0
Spain	264	252	30	30	0
Sweden	63	48	14	13	39
United Kingdom	109	119	23	22	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable
Macedonia-FYROM	not applicable	12 (estimate)	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable
Serbia	20 pre-LAGs	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable

⁸The selection process of local action groups is still ongoing in those countries marked in green and the numbers can change.

⁹Urban LAGs – local action groups in cities who implement CLLD

¹⁰Total number of LAGs, including FLAGs and Urban LAGs.

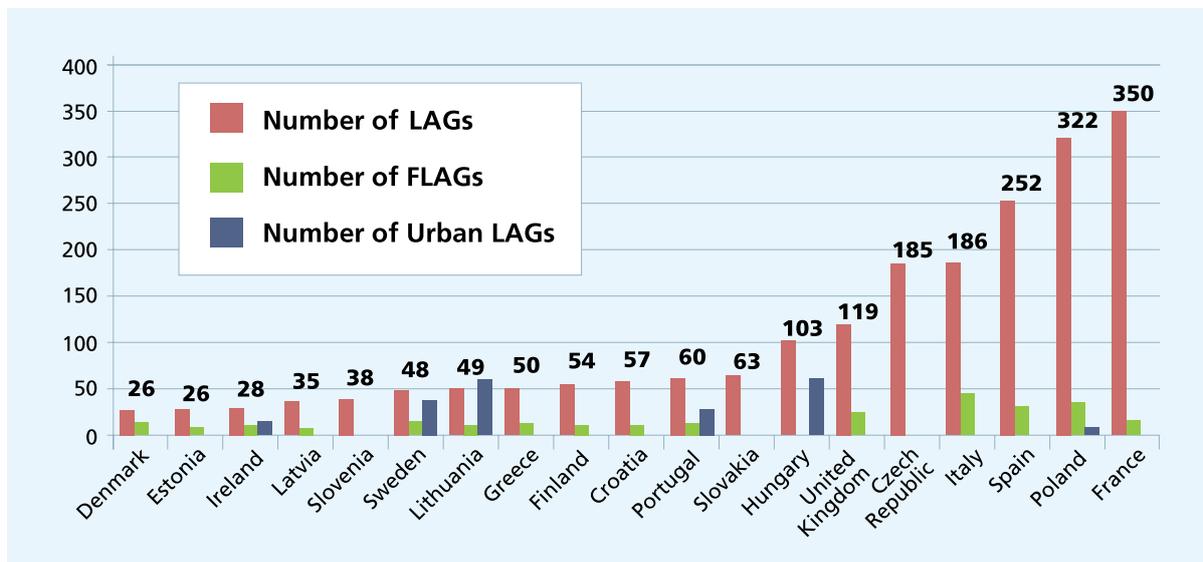
**Diagram 8.** Number of LAGs, FLAGs and Urban LAGs 2014-2020

Table 5. Allocations of different funds per country¹¹

Country	EAFRD	EMFF	ERDF	ESF	Total
Croatia	60,786,653	0	0	0	60,786,653
Czech Republic	205,000,000	0	475,000,000	85,000,000	765,000,000
Denmark	60,000,000	0	0	0	60,000,000
Estonia	90,000,000	130,000,000	0	0	220,000,000
Finland	240,000,000	9,400,000	0	0	249,400,000
France	687,000,000	0	0	0	687,000,000
Greece	345,882,352	54,117,648	0	0	400,000,000
Hungary	171,533,383	0	93,602,959	46,229,504	311,365,846
Ireland	250,000,000	0	0	0	250,000,000
Italy	0	0	0	0	93,200,000
Latvia	79,088,514	12,750,000	0	0	91,838,514
Lithuania	114,000,000	1,000,000	0	0	115,000,000
Poland	467,700,000	93,000,000	69,700,000	62,500,000	692,900,000
Portugal	228,000,000	35,000,000	83,000,000	93,000,000	439,000,000
Slovakia	105,000,000	0	100,000,000	0	205,000,000
Slovenia	52,370,000	6,660,000	36,750,000	0	95,780,000
Spain	1,034,770,000	0	0	0	1,034,770,000
Sweden	200,000,000	16,600,000	16,500,000	16,300,000	249,400,000
United Kingdom	0	0	0	0	418,235,856
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	0	0	0	0
Macedonia-FYROM	0	0	0	0	0
Serbia	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4,390,130,902	358,527,648	874,552,959	303,029,504	6,437,676,869

¹¹There wasn't information available about Italy and UK, only the total budget.

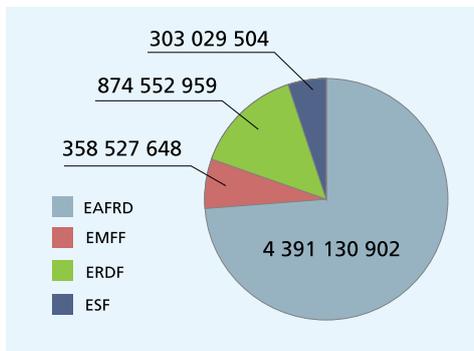


Diagram 9. Share of budget between all 4 funds for LEADER/CLLD

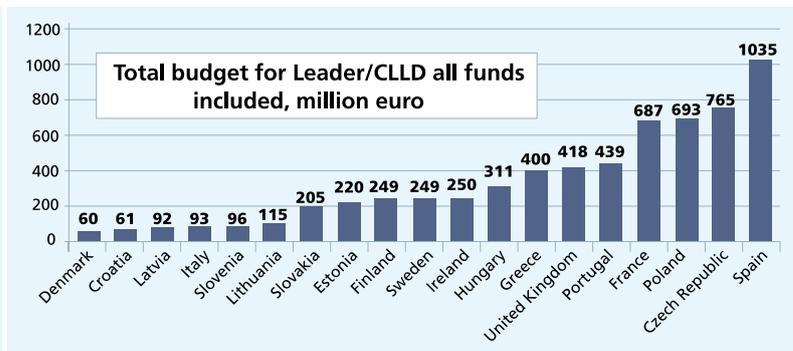


Diagram 10. Total budget for LEADER/CLLD 2014-2020, including all funds available for countries

OVERVIEW OF MULTI-FUND

MULTIFUNDING	COUNTRIES
Yes, we have multifunding in entire country	Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom
Yes, we have multifunding in some regions	Italy, Poland, Portugal
No, we don't have multifunding, only EAFRD	France, Lithuania
No, we don't have multifunding, only EAFRD and Fisheries Fund	Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Spain
Accessing countries, no multifunding	Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia-FYROM, Serbia

Category	Count
Yes, we have multifunding in entire country	3
Yes, we have multifunding in some regions	6
No, we don't have multifunding, only EAFRD	8
No, we don't have multifunding, only EAFRD and Fisheries Fund	2
Accessing countries, no multifunding	3

Table 6. Overview of multi-fund

Diagram 11. Overview of multi-fund

Table 7. Approval of the LDS (Local Development Strategy), SCO (Simplified Cost Options) and umbrella projects

Country	Approval of LDS Month, year	Use of SCO in LEADER/CLLD	Use of umbrella projects in LEADER/CLLD
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Croatia	October, 2016	No	No
Czech Republic	September, 2016	Yes, lump sum just for small administration costs	No
Denmark	01.12.2014 for LAGs 01.05.2016 for FLAGs	No	No
Estonia	March, 2016	Flat rate	Not decided yet
Finland	January, 2015	Flat rate (in use), lump sum (to be confirmed)	Yes
France	Depends on RDP	Not decided yet	No
Greece	October, 2016	Not decided yet	Not decided yet
Hungary	July, 2016	Flat rate shall be used for sub-measure 19.2, and we plan to use lump sum for 19.4.	Not decided yet
Ireland	Most strategies were approved by June 2016. Approx 4 remain to be approved.	Not decided yet	Not decided yet
Italy	March-September 2016	No information	No information
Latvia	January – April, 2016	No	No
Lithuania	June, 2016	Flat rate	No
Macedonia-FYROM	2017	Not decided yet	Not decided yet
Poland	May, 2016	Lump sum	Yes
Portugal	August, 2015	Yes. In Preparatory support to Rural LAGs – lump sum of 25,000 EUR per LAG; and as indirect costs (communications, water, electricity, etc) in LAGs running costs operating expenses based on a rate of 5% on the human resources costs.	No
Serbia	2018 (expected)	No	No
Slovakia	Still in process	Not decided yet	No
Slovenia	August-October 2016	No	No
Spain	November 2015 to september 2016	No	Not decided yet
Sweden	March, 2016	Flat rate for car travel expenses Flat rate for meal costs Indirect costs for projects with employees = 15% of salary costs (salary + social security)	Not decided yet
United Kingdom	Still in process	No information	No information

Table 8. Running and animation costs per country

Country	The allowed % of running and animation costs
Croatia	25%
Czech Republic	0% from RDP, running and animation costs paid from ERDF, it will make ca 11,3% out of LEADER/CLLD allocation from all funds
Denmark	20%
Estonia	20%
Finland	25%
France	Up to 25%
Greece	Up to 20% is graded to all LAG's. An additional 5% is graded to those LAG's to which innovative measures consist 10% of their total allocated budget.
Hungary	15%
Ireland	Max of 25% for both administration and animation
Italy	No data available
Latvia	If LAG operates only within LEADER (RDP), then 15% from the total amount of the strategy. If LAG operates also as FLAG with CLLD (RDP and OP of EMFF), then 20% from the amount of the strategy that is co-financed by EAFRD.
Lithuania	20% (from that 5% for animation)
Poland	17-25% for monofund LAGs and 12-19% for multifund ones
Portugal	25% of EAFRD allocated to LDS, average including other funds is 16%
Slovakia	Still not settled, but will be probably around 15%
Slovenia	20%
Spain	20% + 5%
Sweden	25 %
United Kingdom	22-25%

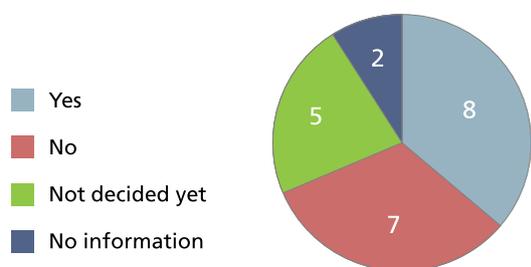


Diagram 12. Simplified Cost Options' availability in ELARD member countries

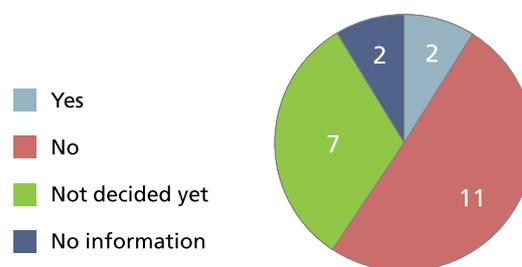


Diagram 13. Umbrella projects' availability in ELARD member countries

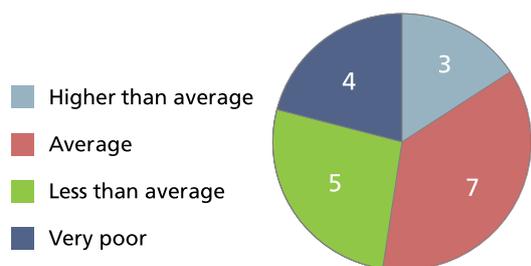


Diagram 14. Evaluation by members – general satisfaction with LEADER/CLLD implementation

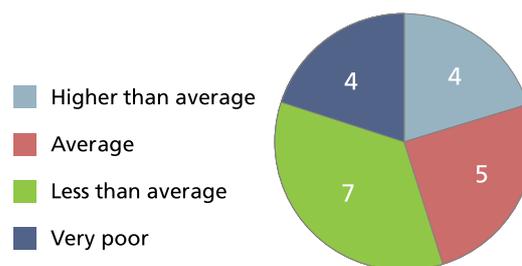


Diagram 15. Evaluation by members –improvement compared to previous programming period

Summary of country features

Geographically, coverage of rural areas by LAGs is very significant – the minimum level is 80% in the EU states. Beyond the EU, the percentage is lower but growing due to still ongoing processes of accepting new LAGs. 100% coverage is quite common. It should be mentioned that the definition of rural areas varies.

Altogether there are **1,951** LAGs, **246** FLAGs and **131** Urban LAGs in ELARD member countries. The number of rural LAGs has slightly reduced (about 30 LAGs less) compared with the previous period; the number of FLAGs has remained almost the same.

The most common legal form of LAGs is an association and an NGO-type organization, only in Ireland and Greece the LAGs are enterprises, in Slovenia the lead partner will give the entity to LAG.

The biggest budgets for LEADER/CLLD are: Spain (EUR 820 million), Poland (EUR 735 million), France (EUR 687 million). The highest percentage devoted to the LEADER measure from the RDP budget is: Estonia (9.0%), Spain (8.7) and Greece (8.5). There are 7 countries where percentage is under 5%.

The contribution from the other 3 funds (EMFF, ESF, ERDF) for LEADER/CLLD has increased to 25%. Inclusion of other funds have resulted in a very good contribution to the LEADER/CLLD budget in many countries, especially in the Czech Republic, Portugal, Hungary and Slovakia, where the contribution from other funds is almost 50%.

Usually there is no multi-funding for FLAGs, only Portugal (ESF and ERDF), Poland (EAFRD, ESF, ERDF), Sweden (EAFRD, ESF, ERDF) and Latvia (EAFRD) use other funds besides Fisheries Fund for FLAGs.

Urban LAGs are only present in a few countries (Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Ireland, Sweden), where they are financed from ESF or/and ERDF.¹²

16 countries have only one national RDP, while for 6 countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Bosnia & Herzegovina and the UK) the RDP have the regional set of the programmes, e.g. 27 RDPs in France.

Approval of LDS has been a long process, starting at the end of 2014 and the process is still ongoing. The majority of the strategies was approved in early spring 2016. Many countries (Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom) are still waiting for approvals in autumn 2016.

The average percentage of animation and running costs is about 20% of the local action group budget. Higher rates of up to 25% have been allowed in the UK, Ireland, France and Spain. Whereas the highest percentage rate - 25% - is used in Sweden, Croatia and Finland. See also table 8 above.

Simplified Cost Options are for now available in 8 countries (Czech, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Sweden) where the most common method is flat rate but some countries have allowed lump sum also (Czech, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Portugal). However, many countries are still considering whether they can and will use SCO or not.

The option for Umbrella projects has for now been implemented in 2 countries (Finland, Poland), whereas 10 countries have decided not to implement Umbrella projects. 7 countries have still not decided if they want to make use of this option.

According to the 5 points scale (5-maximum, 3-average, 1-minimum) evaluation the average satisfaction with LEADER program implementation was 2.7 and the average points to the improvement of the LEADER program compared with previous programming period was 2.5. It shows that the general satisfaction with LEADER program implementation is a little bit lower than average.

¹²Urban LAGs – local action groups in cities who implement CLLD

2. Needs and problems related to integrated rural development and LEADER/CLLD implementation

Under this section in the questionnaire ELARD members could express their concern and make proposals related to LEADER/CLLD implementation. In the process of analysis similar answers were compounded and the most frequent were brought forward. In order not to lose the meaning of what members have said the wording of the sentences has been kept as similar to original as possible.

Members expressed their opinion about the following issues:

- Main needs/difficulties with implementing LEADER/CLLD;
- Biggest challenges for the future (post 2020 period) related to LEADER/CLLD;
- Main needs/difficulties related to legislation;
- Main needs/difficulties related to technical implementation of LDS (Local Development Strategy);
- Biggest challenges related to monitoring and evaluation of LDS (Local Development Strategy);
- Biggest challenges related to transnational cooperation projects.

Table 9. Main needs and difficulties with implementing LEADER

No	NEEDS/DIFFICULTIES
1	<p>Complexity at national level. LAGs are in very different positions, levels; following different rules; even starting up procedures can be different within the same country. Complexity of LEADER/CLLD both to LAGs and project promoters (regulations, IT systems, several Management Authorities, etc). Difficult to orientate, different RDPs, different rules in one country. It makes inter-territorial co-operation, development difficult. Harmonization is needed. Multi-funded trap: activities, which were financed from EAFRD previously have been left out from EAFRD and haven't been included in other Funds. Multi-funding caused cut from EAFRD budget for LEADER. Huge problems due to change of ministry, change of personnel, no continuation, hardly any handover. Options were restricted by very detailed national regulation. Central control instead of decentralised governance.</p>
2	<p>Need to strengthen national policies regarding LEADER/CLLD. Lack of commitment and political will and decision; minimum from EAFRD 5%, in some cases budget reduced compared to previous period per LAG. Political changes have been harmful for LEADER/CLLD. A need to prevent domination of local municipalities. Uncertainty of government, LAGs' financial situation.</p>
3	<p>Need for better coordination and cooperation between LEADER actors. Weak exchange of information between LAGs and MA, PA. Slow administration and lack of cooperation between different ministries.</p>
4	<p>Lack of training and capacity building. For LAGs and partnerships to increase/strengthen human capacity. Training for MAs and PAs to improve their capacity and arise their knowledge about LEADER/CLLD principles.</p>
5	<p>Lack of support to LAGs from MA/PA. Legal aspects, IT-solutions, etc. Heavy burden of bureaucracy. Complicated administration, need for simplification. Under the bureaucracy pressure LAGs can't work clearly with new targets for new period.</p>
6	<p>Problems with electronic systems. Danger to standardize the systems; losing bottom-up approach, LEADER identity.</p>
7	<p>Long time to start up LEADER, CLLD, IPARD. Especially from MA (Managing Authority) side. Long gap between program periods. LEADER/CLLD is not a priority for the MAs. Delays in national legislation.</p>

Table 10. Main challenges for the future related to LEADER/CLLD

No	CHALLENGES
1	To have a fully integrated CLLD approach that is supported by all ESI funds and is implemented also in urban areas. CLLD piloting in accession countries. Same management rules for all funds. Creating a unique MA for CLLD prepared to provide both financial and technical support to LAGs. To increase the budget of CLLD. High level of capacity and co-operation of MA/PA, including different ministries.
2	Ensuring the continuity between program periods. The challenge is to keep experienced staff and knowledge while the gaps in funding and implementation between periods seem to be getting even longer.
3	To strengthen the national policies regarding LEADER/CLLD. To include the high priority of rural environment in the political agenda. Rural-urban synergy (rural visibility).
4	Flexible and innovative implementation of LDS. Combination of activities, soft projects to start up ideas, etc. Viable and inclusive LDS. More freedom to LAGs, less regulations. Simple and transparent LEADER/CLLD implementation. 4.1. To assume the importance of territorial animation as an asset to make things happen, more than sums of projects. 4.2. The creation and retention of job positions; attractive jobs in rural areas; to empower small organizations to make them alive after project. 4.3. Regional and transnational co-operation projects that have clear achievements and sustainability. Good support for LAGs to make TNC and inter-territorial projects. 4.4. The challenge of innovation in all processes of the development and implementation of LDS, LEADER (the Smart strategies, new technologies, participation systems, new forms of management in the territories, cooperation as a way to increase competitiveness). 4.5. Flexible electronic platforms for LAGs. 4.6. Evaluation models and systems of LDS.
5	Simplification. Simplified costs for small projects (< 5,000 EUR) without detailed financial reports. To give support as Lump Sum. Reduction of bureaucracy. High level of capacity of MA/PA is needed.
6	Refreshing the LEADER-method. Further developing the almost 25-year-old LEADER-method, keeping it responsive and adaptive to the changing working and living environment.

Table 11. Main difficulties in legislation

No	MAIN DIFFICULTIES IN LEGISLATION
1	Weak information exchange between LAGs and managing body. Poor capacities of MA/PA (understaffed and under-trained). Unclear legislation, heavy bureaucracy, simplification is unclear, long treatment deadlines of PAs. Sanctions for LAGs are unreasonable and unexplained.
2	Weak coordination. Lack of coordination and greater commitment from the authorities to capitalize on the opportunity of Financial Instruments under the EAFRD. No clear description of responsibility. Bureaucracy tends to hold on to power - this prevents decentralisation, which is necessary for the LEADER method.
3	Very general National Framework. Regulations vary from one nation to another, from one region to another.
4	Difficulties with TNC and inter-territorial projects. The sub-measure "Co-operation" is paradigmatic for the great difficulties that can be generated to implement inter-territorial and transnational cooperation (different, complex regulations, unsynchronized calls, etc). Co-operation with third countries is unclear.
5	Starting up umbrella projects. These type of projects accounted for a large part of indicators and targets in the last period in some countries. Umbrella projects enable to simplify the implementation of small projects but at the same time increase impact through umbrella managing model. Only a few countries have still decided to implement umbrella projects in this programming period. More assistance is needed.
6	Uncertainty of applicants and unforeseen risks. Applicants must prove their costs when applying. In an ongoing project of 2-3 years, it is difficult or even impossible to get quotes that apply until the end of the project period. Much can happen in the meantime.
7	Same rules and regulations for LEADER as for other measures. Being part of RDP and LEADER/CLLD is "submitted" to the same general regulations and laws, so now LEADER is living like a normal European Structural and Investment Fund. And the territorial specificities, identified in LDS cannot be really translated into the project selection process.
8	Reduction of opportunities. The possibilities to support the development of local entrepreneurs have been reduced by the legislation since the previous program period.

Table 12. Needs and difficulties related to technical implementation.

No	TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION – NEEDS/DIFFICULTIES
1	Problems with electronic systems. Lack of a computerized management program that is uniform for the entire state (ensuring the singularities of each LAG) and allows common and measurable indicators.
2	Unclear and time demanding procedures. Procurement procedure; usage of simplified cost options; unclear requirements for project applicants, lack of information; complicate procedures and fear of making mistakes. Surplus control from Paying Agency and requirements for approval for even the simplest papers/actions done by LAGs.
3	Unnecessarily big involvement of state. Top-down influence on decisions, what is right and what is not.
5	Unclear roles of MA/PA. Roles and co-operation of managing authority and paying agency need clarification and improvement.
6	Complexity. 20 RDPs in one country means 20 different ways of managing EAFRD, 20 departments of officials whose qualification can be poor, 20 ways of relationship with PA.
7	Losing LEADER approach. Our applicants are often amateurs who do this in their spare time. If the requirements are too massive, we lose these groups. The application of the proportionality principle. LAGs are small technical structures, which are obliged to follow the same rules of the administration (like public procurement, for example). The same is valid for LEADER projects (selected, followed-up, monitored by LAGs) which are also subject to the same level of requirements applied to big projects.
8	High level of justification for LAGs. When LAG administrators must devote all their time on technology and justification instead of being out in the field and stimulating the development of new projects and supporting ongoing projects, there is a risk that we do not reach the high quality of implementation that we would otherwise have done. LAGs' teams are focused on administrative procedures, rather in knowing and helping to solve problems of their territories.
9	Big burden of bureaucracy, less resources. Administration is now 70% of coordinators time - previously it was 30%. Funding of LAGs has been reduced in many countries, paper work has been increased. No time and resources for animation activities.

Table 13. Challenges related to monitoring and evaluation.

No	CHALLENGES/DIFFICULTIES - MONITORING AND EVALUATION
1	National targets. Lack of national targets of LEADER beside jobs and it is not clear if MAs will develop any. MAs are not paying sufficient attention to monitoring and evaluation of LEADER on national level, especially regarding methodological support.
2	Added value of LEADER. We need to show the added value of the LEADER-method. We have started doing so through storytelling, but we would like to find more effective means. Good indicators to measure LEADER's added-value, at the right time (take inspiration in ROI and SROI methodologies).
3	Finding solutions for increasing the number of innovative projects. We are struggling with the indicators, making us not take enough risks for innovation. We are supposed to create jobs. When our LAGs focus too much on this, innovative projects never get a chance.
4	Capacity building activities for LAGs organized by LAGs Network or NRN. Using evaluation as a learning tool for communities, enterprises. Access to inhabitants. Capacity building for LAGs and MA and PA at the same time.
5	Creation of evaluation models. To build up monitoring and evaluation models which give continuous feedback about implementation and help to make good decisions, amendments into LDS implementation. High cost of external evaluation is problematic; therefore LAGs could work out their own evaluation models that work also as a learning tool for communities regarding development of their area.
6	Support for EU accessing countries. Expertise - it would be great to obtain funds for external expertise from experienced countries/LAGs to work on monitoring.

Table 14. Challenges related to TNC projects.

No	TNC CHALLENGES/DIFFICULTIES
1	Lack of national regulations, guidelines. Regulations and guidelines are poor. The delay at the beginning of the program period with partners is problematic when launching a TNC project.
2	Partner search. To find good partners with similar rules of project implementation. We also need more opportunities to meet potential partners. Electronic databases are ok, but this is not sufficient. Maybe ELARD can play a role in this. Delays in the TNC toolkit.
3	Long time planning. There are no possibilities to prepare a TNC project from animation budget. Requirement to have pre-project that has also the decision of General Assembly. It takes a long time for partner search, contract and implementation. In some cases, one can find it difficult to see the possibilities of cooperation. Implementation starts and ends sooner in countries, which already started LEADER implementation in 2014/2015 than in many other member countries which leaves only 2-3 years to implement TNC projects.
4	Sustainability of TNC projects. How to continue cooperation after a project - to create permanent links with businesses and organizations (to make other projects). Long-term projects.
5	Finding contribution sources, co-financing. It is difficult for LAGs to find co-financing resources.
6	TNC from bottom-up. In some countries cooperation was managed directly by National Rural Network - allocation, dissemination, selection and monitoring - reducing the bottom-up process and freedom of choice to a minimum.
7	Harmonization of rules. Synchronization of calls and harmonization of procedures, and eligibility rules (clarified from the beginning of the projects). The difference in rules and regulations between partners' countries is often a challenge. Possibility to link the Project with other European Funds.
8	Co-operation and support to EU accessing countries. Available funds for EU accessing countries and their partners. A guideline for TNC with third countries is needed.

Summary

According to the analysis of the third and fourth sections of the questionnaire, ELARD should pay more attention to the following areas and needs:

1. Improving CLLD and multifund approach implementation:

- 1.1. Cohesion of different funds. This is to create real synergy between different funds and avoid the multi-funded trap, where previously financed activities from EAFRD are not financed anymore from EAFRD and also not included in the other funds (ESF, ERDF);
- 1.2. Simplification of procedures. Additionally to SCO methods there is a need to simplify the procedures (LAGs and authorities). There has been a lack of attention to simplifying procedures but these are very time consuming;
- 1.3. Clarification and wider promotion of SCO methods. Experience exchange between different programmes that already has knowledge and practice of SCO methods' implementation. Clearer descriptions of SCO mechanisms;
- 1.4. Increasing the budget of CLLD for viable and further developed CLLD;
- 1.5. Capacity building of authorities and LAGs to implement CLLD;
- 1.6. Support services' (legal advisory, trainings, etc) quality and further development for LAGs;
- 1.7. Mentoring programs for EU pre-accession countries to provide support to establish LAGs and start LEADER/CLLD implementation.

2. Strengthening national policies and rising co-operation capability between authorities:

- 2.1. Effective and transparent coordination between different authorities and ministries at national level;
- 2.2. Definition of roles of different LEADER bodies and authorities;
- 2.3. Clear instruments and guidelines to achieve cohesion of rural and urban areas;
- 2.4. Simplification and harmonization of national regulations and rules;
- 2.5. National targets for evaluation of LEADER/CLLD. Defining also impact and result indicators at national level;
- 2.6. Ensuring the continuity between program periods and smooth implementation in order to guarantee the sustainable functioning of LAGs.

3. Innovative and flexible implementation of local development strategies (LDS):

- 3.1. Giving importance and promotion of LAGs' animation activities. Defining indicators to measure the impact of animation;
- 3.2. Creation of attractive and viable jobs;
- 3.3. Innovation of strategies' implementation and regional development processes (Smart strategies, new technologies, involvement methods, new forms of management and co-operation, regional clusters, etc);
- 3.4. Clear and simple evaluation and monitoring models of LDS, the results of which are also available for communities. Evaluation is a part of a community's learning process;
- 3.5. Increasing LAGs' independence and decision making rights (incl. TNC projects);
- 3.6. Support systems to simplify LEADER/CLLD implementation processes. F.g. flexible IT platforms for projects treatment, selection and evaluation;
- 3.7. To achieve the balance between administrative procedures and development/animation activities. Time resources have been spent in reasonable proportion – 70% on development activities and 30% on administrative activities.

4. Transnational and inter-territorial co-operation

- 4.1. Simplification and harmonization of national regulations, drawing up guidelines;
- 4.2. Harmonization of regulations and rules of co-operation measure in Europe;
- 4.3. Drawing up co-operation regulations and guidelines at national level for co-operation with EU pre-accession and other third countries;
- 4.4. Guaranteeing the sustainability and effectiveness of co-operation;
- 4.5. Enable LAGs to implement umbrella projects. Simplification of models of umbrella projects and their implementation;
- 4.6. Promotion and simplification of inter-territorial co-operation, regional co-operation clusters, co-operation across sectors.

5. Renewal of the 25-year-old LEADER method for 2020+ period.

- 5.1. Keeping LEADER/CLLD in accordance and adaptive with changing living and working environment in rural areas (social cohesion, migration, regional clusters, green economy, climate change, smart solutions, technology, etc);
- 5.2. Revolution of new technologies and IT creates new opportunities, which should be integrated into the LEADER/CLLD methodology;
- 5.3. Territorial cohesion creates synergy and helps use new resources and opportunities.