

LAG Questionnaire: Focus Group on Better Local development Strategies

1. Basis for responses

Instructions for the completion of the Local Action Group (LAG) questionnaire:

First of all thank you for your commitment to support the work of the Focus Group on Better Local Development Strategies, please find some guidelines below that would help you to complete the questionnaire.

- The deadline for returning the completed questionnaire is the 30 September 2011.
- This questionnaire is designed for completion by individual LAGs and where possible this is the preferred approach. This is the primary basis on which the analysis will be conducted.
- Where possible the questionnaire should be completed in English which is the working language of the focus group. Questionnaires completed in other languages will be accepted but this will slow the process of their analysis. Ideally in such cases NRNs, MAs or peers may be able to assist with translation prior to the submission of completed questionnaires.
- In order to ensure that their analysis is valid and consistent it is essential that the basis on which questionnaires were completed is clear. Where groups of LAGs respond, either through the NRN or some other mechanism this should be made very clear in the relevant section of the questionnaire specifying the number of LAGs concerned.
- Where groups of LAGs are responding please take care to ensure that all contributors validate the shared response confirming that it adequately represents their perspectives and specificities.
- The collection of relevant guidance materials, specifications, criteria etc is an important part of the work of the Focus Group. Please forward copies of relevant documents to the Focus Group secretariat, judit.torok@enrd.eu
- Finally, please can you be as concise as possible in your responses, we are hoping for a large response but need to be able to manage the information if we are to get the best value from your input.

Respondent's name:

LAG name:

e-mail address:

Role in relation to Leader:

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The title of the Rural Development Programme(s)(RDP) on which the responses below are based:

Please tick if you have consulted the Managing Authority and Paying Agency in completing this questionnaire?

- Managing Authority
- Paying Agency

Is this response on behalf of an individual LAG or a group of LAGs?

- Individual
- Group

Where responding on behalf of a group of LAGs how many directly contributed to this?

2. Elaboration of local development strategy

NB, all references to LAGs include both existing and prospective LAGs.

2.1.a.) Did LAGs receive guidance, instruction or any other form of direction relating to the elaboration of local development strategies?

- Yes
- No

2.1.b.) If yes, what did the main elements of this relate to e.g. content, method, prescribed elements etc? Please highlight what worked well and any perceived gaps.

2.2.a.) At what stage in the programme period were LAGs asked to start their strategy development process? (please describe both the stage of programme development, Rural Development Programme(RDP) and Leader and provide date)

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2.2.b.) What issues, if any, did this present?

2.2.c.) Was there a single application period?

- Yes
 No

2.2.d.) If no, what were the arrangements, why was this?

2.2.e.) What was the period allowed for the development and submission of strategies?

2.2.f.) To what extent was this adequate, were there any issues?

2.3.a.) To what extent did the LAG have the autonomy to define their area ?

- None
 Little
 Largely
 Totally

2.3.b.) To what extent has this been successful?

2.4.a.) Did the LAG have autonomy to choose their strategic themes?

- Yes
 No

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2.4.b.) If no, was a focus/main theme imposed by the Managing Authority ?

If yes go to 2.4.c, if no go to 2.4.d.

Yes

No

2.4.c.) If yes, to what extent has this been successful?

2.4.d.) If no, to what extent has this been successful?

2. Elaboration of local development strategy

2.5.a.) Does the strategy only consider the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) supported actions?

Yes

No

2.5.b.) Is there a pre-existing long term local development strategy for the area (beyond the programming period) adopted by the LAG?

Yes

No

2.5.c.) To what extent was the development of the strategy driven by the development priorities of the area rather than by financial considerations as a bid for LAG funding?

None

Little

Largely

Totally

2.5.d.) Why was this?

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2.5.e.) To what extent has this been successful?

2.6.a.) Was an indicative budget figure provided?

- Yes
 No

2.6.b.) If yes, what effects did this have on the strategies and how they were prepared?

2.7.a.) Please describe the basis on which resources were allocated within the strategy or action plan.

2.7.b.) To what extent was the focus or balance of resources in the LAG strategy affected by the levels of co-financing or intervention rates for specific measures?

- None
 Little
 Significant

2.7.c.) Where this effect was significant please briefly explain.

2.8.a.) Was any form of training or briefing provided for LAGs on a collective basis?

- Yes
 No

2.8.b.) If yes, what training/ briefing was provided and what did the main elements of this relate to e.g. content, method, prescribed elements etc? Please highlight what worked well or any perceived gaps.

2. Elaboration of local development strategy

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2.9.a.) What kind of direct support was available to individual LAGs for the preparation of their local development strategy?

	Yes	No
Consultancy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG Staff resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner staff resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MA technical assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other technical assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other (please specify)

2.9.b.) If yes, duration in months prior to submission

Consultancy	<input type="text"/>
LAG staff resources	<input type="text"/>
Partner staff resources	<input type="text"/>
Local training	<input type="text"/>
Mentoring	<input type="text"/>
MA technical assistance	<input type="text"/>
Other technical assistance	<input type="text"/>

2.9.c.) If yes, please state value and/or source(s)

Consultancy	<input type="text"/>
LAG staff resources	<input type="text"/>
Partner staff resources	<input type="text"/>
Local training	<input type="text"/>
Mentoring	<input type="text"/>
MA technical assistance	<input type="text"/>
Other technical assistance	<input type="text"/>

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2.10.a.) What was the extent of any consultant involvement in the development of the strategies?

- None
- Little
- Largely
- Totally

2.10.b.) What form did this typically take? Why?

2.10.c.) To what extent has this been successful? Why?

2. Elaboration of local development strategy

2.11.a.) Thinking about the development process at local level who was involved and in what way? In each case please specify.

	Led the process i.e. the formal lead	Full participant e.g. steering group member	Lesser role
Local community groups/orgs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local business organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff of local authority e.g. county/municipality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elected members of local authority / municipality etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sectoral or service public body/org. (please specify sector)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NGOs (please specify sector)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other (please specify)

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2.11.b.) Main contribution. e.g. time, resources, skills etc.of those involved.

Local community groups/orgs	<input type="text"/>
Individuals	<input type="text"/>
Local business organisations	<input type="text"/>
Businesses	<input type="text"/>
Staff of local authority e.g. county/municipality	<input type="text"/>
Elected members of local authority / municipality etc	<input type="text"/>
Regional administration	<input type="text"/>
Sectoral or service public body/org. (please specify sector)	<input type="text"/>
NGOs (please specify sector)	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

2.12.a.) What methods were used?

	Extensively	Moderately	Not at all
Participative methods i.e. required active involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Questionnaires	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thematic groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Own publications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Press	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Electronic media/websites etc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other (please specify)

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2.12.b) Comments on the methods/How successful were they?

Participative methods i.e. required active involvement	<input type="text"/>
Questionnaires	<input type="text"/>
Public meetings	<input type="text"/>
Workshops	<input type="text"/>
Focus groups	<input type="text"/>
Thematic groups	<input type="text"/>
Own publications	<input type="text"/>
Press	<input type="text"/>
Electronic media/websites etc	<input type="text"/>
Local events	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

2.12.c.) How were the main methods used facilitated?

2.12.d.) How were the main methods used resourced?

2.13.a.) What actions were taken by the LAG to ensure that the strategy and the development process were formally endorsed or otherwise validated by the local community or LAG partnership?

2.13.b.) What weighting was this given in the LAG/strategy selection process?

- None
- Little
- Significant
- Essential

3. Content of the Local Development Strategy

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3.1.a.) Was a specific format, content and structure of Local Development Strategy (LDS) defined by the Managing Authority (MA)?

- Yes
- No

3.2.a.) Please indicate the elements which were to be included as part of the local development strategy indicating whether these were regarded as essential requirements or desirable elements?

Elements:

	Essential (i.e. formally assessed)	Desirable
Clear evidence of the Leader features	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence of the community engagement and consultation process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Territorial SWOT analysis/analysis of needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- social analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- economic analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- environmental analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- territorial analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Area covered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intervention logic (Objectives and hierarchy of actions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SMART Objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quantified indicators and targets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Demonstrate balance between the objectives (e.g. presence of rationale for a main theme and secondary themes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integrated character of the strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interaction of LDS with regional and national rural development strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovation as an objective or in character of strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperation with other rural territories: strategy or plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking proposals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Lessons and achievements
from the previous period

Please add any remarks (including any aspects considered to be problematic or representing good practice)

Clear evidence of the Leader features	<input type="text"/>
Evidence of the community engagement and consultation process	<input type="text"/>
Territorial SWOT analysis/analysis of needs	<input type="text"/>
- social analysis	<input type="text"/>
- economic analysis	<input type="text"/>
- environmental analysis	<input type="text"/>
- territorial analysis	<input type="text"/>
Area covered	<input type="text"/>
Intervention logic (Objectives and hierarchy of actions)	<input type="text"/>
SMART (Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, Time bound) objectives	<input type="text"/>
Quantified indicators and targets	<input type="text"/>
Demonstrate balance between the objectives (e.g. presence of rationale for a main theme and secondary themes)	<input type="text"/>
Integrated character of the strategy	<input type="text"/>
Interaction of LDS with regional and national rural development strategies	<input type="text"/>
Innovation as an objective or in character of strategy	<input type="text"/>
Cooperation with other rural territories: strategy or plan	<input type="text"/>
Networking proposals	<input type="text"/>
Lessons and achievements from the previous period	<input type="text"/>

3. Content of the Local Development Strategy

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3.2.b.) Please indicate the elements of action planning which required indicating whether these were regarded as essential requirements or desirable elements?

The collection of relevant guidance materials, specifications, criteria etc is an important part of the work of the Focus Group. Please forward copies of relevant documents to the Focus Group secretariat, judit.torok@enrd.eu

	Essential (e.g. specified by MA)	Desirable	Not considered
LAG structure/composition of partnership and organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A full implementation /action plan or specification of main actions (i.e. translating objectives into actions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial plan profiled over period	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criteria for project selection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG decision making structures, roles and procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG functions and operational procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG staffing, job specifications etc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training action plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provision for interaction with other local/regional bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LDS Monitoring system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LDS evaluation plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Any LDS revision procedure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication and information action plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provisions for complementarity, demarcation and synergy with other programming instruments including EU funds in the case of multi-fund strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other (please specify)

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3.2.c.) Please indicate the elements of action planning which required indicating whether these were regarded as part of the local development strategy or as separate elements?

	Part of strategy	Added separately
LAG structure/composition of partnership and organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A full implementation /action plan or specification of main actions (i.e. translating objectives into actions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial plan profiled over period	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Criteria for project selection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG decision making structures, roles and procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG functions and operational procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG staffing, job specifications etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training action plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provision for interaction with other local/regional bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LDS Monitoring system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LDS evaluation plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Any LDS revision procedure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication and information action plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provisions for complementarity, demarcation and synergy with other programming instruments including EU funds in the case of multi-fund strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other (please specify)

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3.3.a.) Was there any element in the specified content which LAGs had difficulty in addressing e.g. through availability of relevant information or data?

- Yes
 No

3.3.b.) If yes, please describe

3.4.a.) Was there element missing in the specified content which you feel would have been to the benefit of the quality of LAG strategy?

- Yes
 No

3.4.b.) If yes, please describe

3.4.c.) Was there any requirement which was considered excessive?

- Yes
 No

3.4.d.) If yes, please describe explaining why so.

3.5.a.) Did the legal status or form of organisation of the LAG present any challenges or limitations affecting the content of the strategy and its proposed actions?

- Yes
 No

3.5.b.) If yes, please describe

4. Qualitative assessment of Local Development Strategy (LDS) by Managing A...

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4.1.a.) Please indicate:

	Not at all	Little	Significantly	Completely
How transparent was the LAG/strategy selection process?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How satisfied were you with the type or level of feedback provided?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4.1.b.) Please briefly describe any significant changes made to your strategy as a result of the feedback or conditions applied.

5. Implementation of Local Development Strategies (LDS)

5.1.a.) Does the LAG actively monitor its performance against the delivery of the strategy

- Yes
 No

5.1.b.) If yes, how is this done? (how often and by whom)

5.2.a.) Does the LAG target, animate or promote actions in specific sectors or activities in support of strategic priorities?

- Yes
 No

5.2.b.) If yes, how is this done?

5.3.a.) Are LAGs able to revise the LDS during the programming period?

- Yes
 No

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5.3.b.) If yes, please describe the occurrence/frequency, basis and the scope of revision (e.g. formal review or mid-term evaluation(MTE), adding priorities, amending priorities, modifying project selection criteria etc).

5.3.c.) If no, please explain.

5.4.a.) Are LAGs expected to undertake self evaluation?

- Yes
 No

5.4.b.) If yes, please describe:

5.4.c.) If no, please explain e.g. are external consultants used?

6. Any other points

6.1.) Please add any other relevant points on the elaboration or implementation of LDS that you consider to be significant.

6.2.) Please summarise the main problems (difficulties/bottlenecks) and solutions (good practice) you would like to bring to the attention of Focus Group 4 and the Leader Subcommittee to improve the quality of LDSs.