

LAG Questionnaire 2: Focus Group on Better Local development

1. Basis for responses

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.

This questionnaire examines two main elements relating to the quality of local development strategy implementation, the effects of the processes through which you translate your strategy into action and the way in which you monitor and evaluate the delivery of your strategy.

- Where text answers are required please keep your answers as short and to the point as possible.
- Where possible questions have been structured in such a way as to minimise text responses, this has been done to make the analysis more straightforward.
- The deadline for returning the completed questionnaire is the 29 February 2012.
- 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.
- The questionnaire should be completed in English which is the working language of the focus group.
- 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

Respondent's name:

LAG name:

e-mail address:

Role in relation to LEADER:

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

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Did you complete the previous questionnaire in Phase 1 of this Focus Group?

Yes

No

2. Strategy Implementation

In this section of the questionnaire we consider the extent to which delivery considerations either facilitated or impeded the achievement of the strategic objectives.

1. To what extent is your LAG's Local Development Strategy (LDS) implementation method adapted to ensure the achievement of the objectives?

Not at all

Little

Some

Large

Totally

2. Strategy implementation

1.1 What were the three most important steps which contributed to this?

2. Strategy implementation

2. Was your LAG awarded the amount of budget sought in the LDS?

Yes

No

2. Strategy implementation

2.1 If yes, to what extent was the amount of funding which you were awarded adequate to enable you to achieve your LDS objectives?

Wholly inadequate

Little adequate

Some extent adequate

Largely adequate

Wholly adequate

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2.Strategy implementation

2.2 To what extent has the level of available match funding been adequate to enable you to achieve your LDS objectives?

- Wholly inadequate
- Little adequate
- Some extent adequate
- Largely adequate
- Wholly adequate

2.3 Where funding has been inadequate have you had the opportunity to adjust your strategy and its objectives?

- Yes
- No

3. Does your project application processes steer applicants towards the LDS strategic objectives?

- Yes
- No

Copy of page: 2.Strategy implementation

3.1 If yes, how do you achieve this? Please tick the three main methods used.

	Most important
Through LDS promotion and publicity	<input type="radio"/>
Targeted thematic calls for project applications	<input type="radio"/>
Area based calls for applications	<input type="radio"/>
Calls to particular target groups	<input type="radio"/>
Structured application materials	<input type="radio"/>
Application guidance	<input type="radio"/>
Animation by LAG staff	<input type="radio"/>
Animation by LAG members	<input type="radio"/>

2.Strategy implementation

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4. Do your project selection procedures prioritise the projects potential contribution to the achievement of LDS objectives?

- Yes
- No

2.Strategy implementation

4.1 If yes, to what extent do the following elements contribute to this prioritisation?

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Considerably	Very considerably
Project eligibility criteria	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As an essential element in the decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Project selection criteria	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allocation of funding/intervention rate, Feedback re conditions of award	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other, please specify

2.Strategy implementation

5. In implementing your LDS to what extent have you been able to focus on the achievement of the LDS outcomes rather than the delivery of a volume of projects to address the financial imperative of spending the allocated funding (n+2)?

- Not at all, we were driven by financial considerations
- Little
- Some extent
- Large extent
- Totally, we were able to develop and select those projects which contributed most

2.Strategy Implementation

5.1 What was the principal factor which drove or enabled you to pursue this approach?

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

3.1 Monitoring

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6. Does your LAG employ a structured system for regularly monitoring the performance of the local development strategy?

- Yes
- No

If no, please indicate what other means are used, if any?

7. What are the principal elements of performance monitoring activity which the LAG regularly undertakes? Who is this communicated to?

	Managing Authority	Local Action Group	Local communities
Financial progress(e.g. spend, commitment, match funding, total project costs, progress against targets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial plan revisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Numbers and Types of Projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical progress: Output indicators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical progress: Result indicators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical progress: Additional indicators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Targeting (area or target group)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revision of strategic priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informing local communities and media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify

8. What is the frequency of this reporting?

	Physical reporting	Financial reporting
Monthly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quarterly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bi-annually	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Annually	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other, please specify

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

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3.2 Targets, objectives and indicators

Background information:

The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) provides a single framework for monitoring and evaluation of all rural development interventions for the programming period 2007-2013. The CMEF establishes means for improving programme performance, ensuring the accountability of programmes and allowing an assessment on the achievement of established objectives.

More explanation on the CMEF indicators can be found here:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/guidance/note_f_en.pdf

Rural Development policy 2007-2013/ Common monitoring and evaluation framework:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/index_en.htm

9. Does your LAG strategy have quantified performance targets or objectives?

- Yes
- No

10. Are project targets aligned with the objectives and targets of the strategy i.e. are projects expected to report against specific targets?

- Yes
- No

11. How is project performance against/contribution to the strategy monitored?

Through:

- Performance checks and visits
- Performance reporting (by project holders)
- The claims process
- Audit
- Other

If other, please specify

12. Do you use performance indicators to measure achievement (e.g. new jobs, new services, new networks etc) against objectives?

- Yes
- No

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

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12.1 If yes, which of the following performance indicators do you use? Options:

- Relevant CMEF indicators
- Additional programme specific indicators
- Additional LDS specific indicators
- Other area specific indicators
- Other

If other, please specify

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

12.2 If no, how do you measure achievement against LDS objectives?

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

12.3 Which of the following performance indicators are capable of aggregation at RDP level? Please tick all that apply.

- Relevant CMEF indicators
- Additional programme specific indicators
- Additional LDS specific indicators
- Other area specific indicators
- Other – please specify below
- Not a consideration at LAG level

If other, please specify

13. LAGs which are using additional indicators developed for their own LDS or RDP, please provide up to 7 most important examples indicating whether introduced by the LAG or MA.

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13.1 Linked to question 13, where these additional indicators apply specifically to any of the 7 LEADER features please indicate to which they apply.

Integrated territorial approach	<input type="text"/>
Pilot, innovative nature of actions	<input type="text"/>
Operation of the partnership	<input type="text"/>
Cooperation	<input type="text"/>
Networking	<input type="text"/>
Local development strategy priorities	<input type="text"/>
Area-based approach	<input type="text"/>

14. Indicator coverage. Please think about the qualitative and quantitative indicators which you apply to the performance measurement of your strategy and put your assessment of their overall adequacy in allowing you to fully address your strategy.

14.1 QUALITATIVE split by Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) and additional (i.e. introduced by LAG or MA)

	Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF)	Additional (i.e. introduced by LAG or MA)
Wholly inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Little adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small extent adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Largely adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fully meets requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14.2 QUANTITATIVE split by CMEF and additional (i.e. introduced by LAG or MA)

	Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF)	Additional (i.e. introduced by LAG or MA)
Wholly inadequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Little adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some extent adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Largely adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fully meets requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14.3 If gaps in indicator coverage are evident, what are the principal gaps you perceive? Please list up to 5 priority examples split by the above categories (as at 14.1 and 14.2).

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3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

3.3 Strategy Review

15. Have you conducted a formal progress review or taken other formal steps to revise your strategy?

- Yes
- No

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

16. How frequently was this done?

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Bi annually
- Annually
- Other

If other, please specify

17. Which aspects of your strategy did you modify as a result of performance monitoring?

- Financial allocations
- LDS priorities
- LDS targeting
- Action planning
- LAG structure and organisation
- LAG area
- Other

If other, please specify

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18. What was/were the principal factor(s) which led to the revision of the strategy/strategies?

- Changing local conditions
- Changing external/macro conditions
- Performance against the strategy
- Other

If other, please specify

3. Monitoring and evaluating the LDS

3.4 Resourcing

19. What proportion of LAG staff team time (% of total available) is committed to monitoring and evaluation activity? Please indicate in the table of staff type

Manager (% of total available time)

Coordinator (% of total available time)

Administrator (% of total available time)

20. 1 What support was provided to LAG staffs and partners regarding monitoring?

	Nil	Little	Some	Substantive	Comprehensive
Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Templates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One to one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other, please specify

20. 2 What support was provided to LAG staffs and partners regarding evaluation?

	Nil	Little	Some	Substantive	Comprehensive
Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Templates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One to one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other, please specify

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20.3 If your LAG is expected to self-evaluate, what support was provided to LAG staffs and partners regarding self-evaluation?

	Nil	Little	Some	Substantive	Comprehensive
Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Templates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One to one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other, please specify

21. Are there any outstanding needs for monitoring and evaluation support? Please identify up to three priority gaps or needs.

4. EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION

22. Does your LAG employ a structured system for evaluating the outcomes and performance of the local development strategy?

- Yes, external evaluation as specified by the Managing Authority
- Yes, self-evaluation as specified by the Managing Authority
- Yes, mixed approaches as specified by the Managing Authority
- Yes, external evaluation specified by the LAG
- Yes, self-evaluation as specified by the LAG
- Yes, mixed approaches as specified by the LAG
- No

4.EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION

22.1 If no, please briefly explain how the outcomes and performance of the local development strategy are evaluated?

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23. What is the main purpose and use of LAG LDS evaluation activity? Please rank the 9 options listed below according to their importance.

	No relevance	Little relevance	Some relevance	Large relevance	Totally relevant
Demonstration of achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improvement in rural policy performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improvement in current LDS performance/action plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preparation of next programme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving the future LDS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning from experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transferring good practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is a requirement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other, please specify

24. What do you consider the scope of LAG LDS evaluation to be?

Please tick those which are relevant.

- Achievement of LDS Objectives
- Coherence of delivery with the LDS
- Effectiveness of targeting, groups and areas
- Delivery system (Improved access to funding, leverage effect, projects approval and payments deadline, effect on project execution, transparency)
- LAG operation /animation /governance/participation/ collaboration between bodies of the LAG (e.g. LAG offices, steering committees, working groups)
- Economic impact
- Environmental impact
- Impact on the social and human capital of the area (knowledge acquisition, networking, innovation, cooperation)
- Expected effects
- Unexpected effects
- Other

If other, please specify

25. Are the evaluation results disseminated?

- Yes
- No

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4. EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION

25.1 If yes, who are the evaluation results disseminated to? Please tick those which are relevant.

- LAG members
- Partner organisations
- Other rural development stakeholders
- Local community
- Managing Authority
- Other LAGs
- National Rural Network (NRN)
- Other

Other (please specify)

25.2 If yes, what tools did you use for dissemination?

- Local press
- Specialist press
- Publications
- Website
- Evaluation meetings
- Local events
- E-mail
- All relevant
- Other

If other, please specify

26. To what extent did your LAG contribute to the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the relevant RDP?

- LAGs contributed directly and received support
- LAGs did not contribute but received support from
- LAGs contributed but did not receive support
- LAGs neither contributed nor received support

4.1 SELF EVALUATION

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Please answer the following questions only if your LAG is involved in self-evaluation.

Self-Evaluation may be seen as an internal tool for learning and quality control based on the LAG level rather than the programme level. It directly addresses the LEADER stakeholders (LAG representatives and common public in the area).

The goal of such an exercise is to reflect upon the performance in the past and thus identify possible potentials for improvements. It can contribute to identity building and specifications of LAG strengths and self-understanding. Self-evaluation codifies LAG knowledge and experiences over time, so that in case of personnel discontinuity the LAG as organisation may rely on a stock of knowledge from the past." (based on Handbook on Self-evaluation, B. Schuh, 2007)

27. Is self-evaluation the normal or expected practice in your region or Member State?

- Yes
- No

4.1. SELF EVALUATION

27.1 If yes, how frequently do you undertake these activities?

- Annually
- More frequently
- Less frequently

27.2 If yes, is it used to directly inform the:

- RDP Mid-term or ex-post evaluations
- More frequent needs explanation/expansion
- On-going

4.1. SELF EVALUATION

28. Do you use any self-evaluation practices?

- Yes
- No

4.1. SELF EVALUATION

29. How is the process of self-evaluation organised? In six bullet points please briefly list the key steps in your process.

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30. Who is involved in self-evaluation and in what way?

Please indicate in the table the type of involvement of the different type of stakeholders.

	LAG staff	Consultants	LAGs members	Projects owners	Project beneficiaries (local community)
Evaluation steering group or team member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of evaluation questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting consultations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collecting data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing case studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feedback/dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

31. How were the self-evaluation questions developed?

- From first principles
- From guidance
- From other examples/best practice
- Through networks
- Other

If other, please specify

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32. What were the main self-evaluation tools used?

- Questionnaires
- Surveys
- Consultation
- Case studies
- Discussion/focus groups
- Peer appraisal
- Project records
- Data analysis
- Other

If other, please specify

33. Is the self-evaluation process coordinated between LAGs within your region or Member State?

- Yes
- No

4.1. SELF EVALUATION

35. Do you have any comments?

4.1 SELF EVALUATION

33.1 If yes, was any aggregation or synthesis of results performed?

- Yes
- No

34. In planning and undertaking self-evaluation what are the three most important forms of support which were/could be provided to LAGs?