

MA 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 your LAGs translate their strategy into action and the way in which the delivery of the LDS is monitored and evaluated.

- 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.
- 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:

e-mail address:

Role in relation to LEADER:

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

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.

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1. To what extent are Local Action Groups (LAGs) able to focus on the achievement of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) outcomes rather than the delivery of a volume of projects to address the financial imperative spending the allocated funding (n+2)?

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

2.Strategy implementation

1.1 What was the principal reason for this?

2.Strategy implementation

2. Are LAG project application processes designed to steer applicants towards the LDS strategic objectives?

- Yes
- No

2.Strategy implementation

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

- Yes
- No

2.Strategy implementation

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2.1 If yes, how do LAGs 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

3.1 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

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

3.1 Reporting

4. Are LAGs provided with a structured system for monitoring the performance of the local development strategy?

- Yes
- No

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

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5. What are the principal elements of performance on which the LAG(s) regularly report to the Managing Authority (MA)? Please select from the list below:

- Financial progress(e.g. spend, commitment, match funding, total project costs, progress against targets),
- Numbers and Types of Projects
- CMEF Output indicators
- CMEF Result indicators
- Additional indicators
- Equal Opportunity questions
- Other

If other, please specify

6. What is the frequency of this reporting?

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

If other, please specify

7. What is the main purpose of LAGs monitoring activity?

	High importance	Medium importance	Low importance
Reporting progress to MA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial revisions within strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Revision of strategic priorities or objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Targeting (area or target group)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If other, please specify

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

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

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

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9.3 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

10. Those MAs which are using additional LEADER specific monitoring indicators developed for their own programme please provide up to 7 most important examples.

10.1 Linked to question 10, where these additional indicators apply specifically to any of the 7 LEADER features please indicate to which they apply.

Integrated territorial approach

Pilot, innovative nature of actions

Operation of the partnership

Cooperation

Networking

Local development strategy priorities

Area-based approach

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11. If gaps in indicator coverage are evident, what are the principal gaps you perceive? Please list up to 3 in each category. Please make a split between quantitative and qualitative indicators.

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

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

8. Are LAG strategies required to have quantified performance targets or objectives?

- Yes
 No

9. Are your LAGs required to use performance indicators to measure physical achievement against objectives?

- Yes
 No

3. Monitoring and evaluating the Local Development Strategy

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9.1 If yes, which of the following performance indicators do LAGs 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

3.3 Strategy Review

12. Where the MA authorises the LAGs to modify its LDS during its implementation phase, what is the scope of this?

- Financial revision
- LDS priorities
- Action plan
- LAG structure and organisation
- LAG area
- Other

If other, please specify

13. What proportion of your LAGs have modified their strategies as a result of undertaking a formal review?

- 0%
- 1 – 25%
- 26 – 50 %
- 51 – 75%
- 75 – 99%
- 100%

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14. Which have been the main aspects of LAG strategies modified as a result of performance monitoring?

	Not at all	Little extent	Some extent	Large extent	Very considerably
Financial allocations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LDS priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LDS targeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Action planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG structure and organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LAG area	<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

15. Where revisions have taken place/are planned what is the basis of the revision, what evidence or justification is required?

- External evaluation/performance review
- Self evaluation/internal performance review
- Specific study
- A mix of the above
- No specific requirement
- Other

If other, please specify

16. 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

4. EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION

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17. 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

18. Do LAGs employ a structured system for evaluating the outcomes and performance of the local development strategy?

- Yes
- No

26. Do you have any comments?

4. EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION

18.1 If yes, what is specified by the MA? Please tick main method.

- External evaluation
- Self evaluation
- Mixed approaches

4.EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION

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

4. EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION

19. What is the scope of LAG LDS evaluation?

Please tick those which are relevant.

- Achievement of LDS Objectives - Quality of operations/projects
- 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

20. What support was provided to LAG staffs and partners regarding monitoring, evaluation and 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

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21. Is there any financial support for LAGs to perform their own LDS evaluation

- Yes, an additional allocation
- Yes, included in LAG budgets
- No
- Other

If other, please specify

21.1 Please select from the list which are relevant.

- Contributing to the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was compulsory and LAGs were supported
- Contributing to the MTE was compulsory and LAGs were not supported
- LAGs were expected to contribute to the MTE and were supported
- LAGs were expected to contribute to the MTE and were not supported
- LAGs were not expected to contribute to the MTE

21.2 Please tick which is relevant.

- Contributing to the Ex-Post Evaluation is compulsory and LAGs are supported
- Contributing to the Ex-Post Evaluation is compulsory and LAGs are not supported
- LAGs are expected to contribute to the Ex-Post Evaluation and are supported
- LAGs are expected to contribute to the Ex-Post Evaluation and are not supported
- LAGs are not expected to contribute to the Ex-Post Evaluation

22. Are the evaluation results disseminated?

- Yes
- No

4. EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION

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22.1 If yes who is this disseminated to?

- LAG members
- Partner organisations
- Other rural development stakeholders
- Local community
- Managing Authority (MA)
- Other LAGs
- National Rural Network (NRN)
- Other
- 22.2 If yes how have the results been disseminated? (local press, specialist press, publications, website, evaluation meetings, local events, email, other

If other, please specify

22.2 If yes how have the results been disseminated?

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

If other, please specify

4.2 SELF EVALUATION

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)

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

- Yes
- No

4.1. SELF EVALUATION

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

- Annually
- More frequently
- Less frequently

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

- Yes
- No

24.1 If yes has the aggregation or synthesis of results been undertaken?

- Yes
- No

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