

Connecting rural Europe

Learning from the past, preparing for the future

FACTSHEET



European Network for
Rural Development

Workshop 3:

An enlarged role for networking in cooperation and LEADER

Networking has been a key feature of LEADER for many years at both the European, national and regional levels. During the 2007-2013 programming period the role of networks as a policy instrument has been extended to include a wider range of rural development stakeholders. Networking is also seen as a main driving force behind setting up and operating cooperation structures (including transnational and inter-territorial cooperation within LEADER).

Community-led Local Development (CLLD) provides new opportunities during the 2014-2020 programming period for supporting local development through integrated strategies and through using multiple funds. CLLD/LEADER will remain a mandatory part of Rural Development Programmes funded by EAFRD.

ENRD provided extensive networking support for LEADER and Local Action Groups (LAGs) during the 2007-2013 programming period, including meetings and workshops of the LEADER Sub-committee (LSC); LEADER Focus Groups addressing various LEADER-related issues through in-depth analysis and participatory methodology; the LEADER

Gateway of the ENRD website; support for transnational cooperation, including the Cooperation Offers Database; support for the NRN Thematic Cluster on CLLD and LEADER events.

Workshop 3 will focus on understanding what benefits rural networking across EU Member States have brought to rural development stakeholders, specifically in promoting joint activities and forms of cooperation at different levels including LEADER LAGs, within and across Member States.

“The National Rural Networks (NRNs) and the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) have significantly contributed to the consistency in programming, notably by ensuring an exchange of information and practices between RDPs’ managers and stakeholders and by carrying out joint analyses.”

EC report on the implementation of the National Strategy Plans and the Community strategic guidelines for rural development (July 2011)

Disclaimer:

The purpose of the fact-sheet is to support workshop discussion and provide a general outline of the theme in relation to ENRD achievements. The information provided is not comprehensive. For more information please visit the ENRD website: www.enrd.eu

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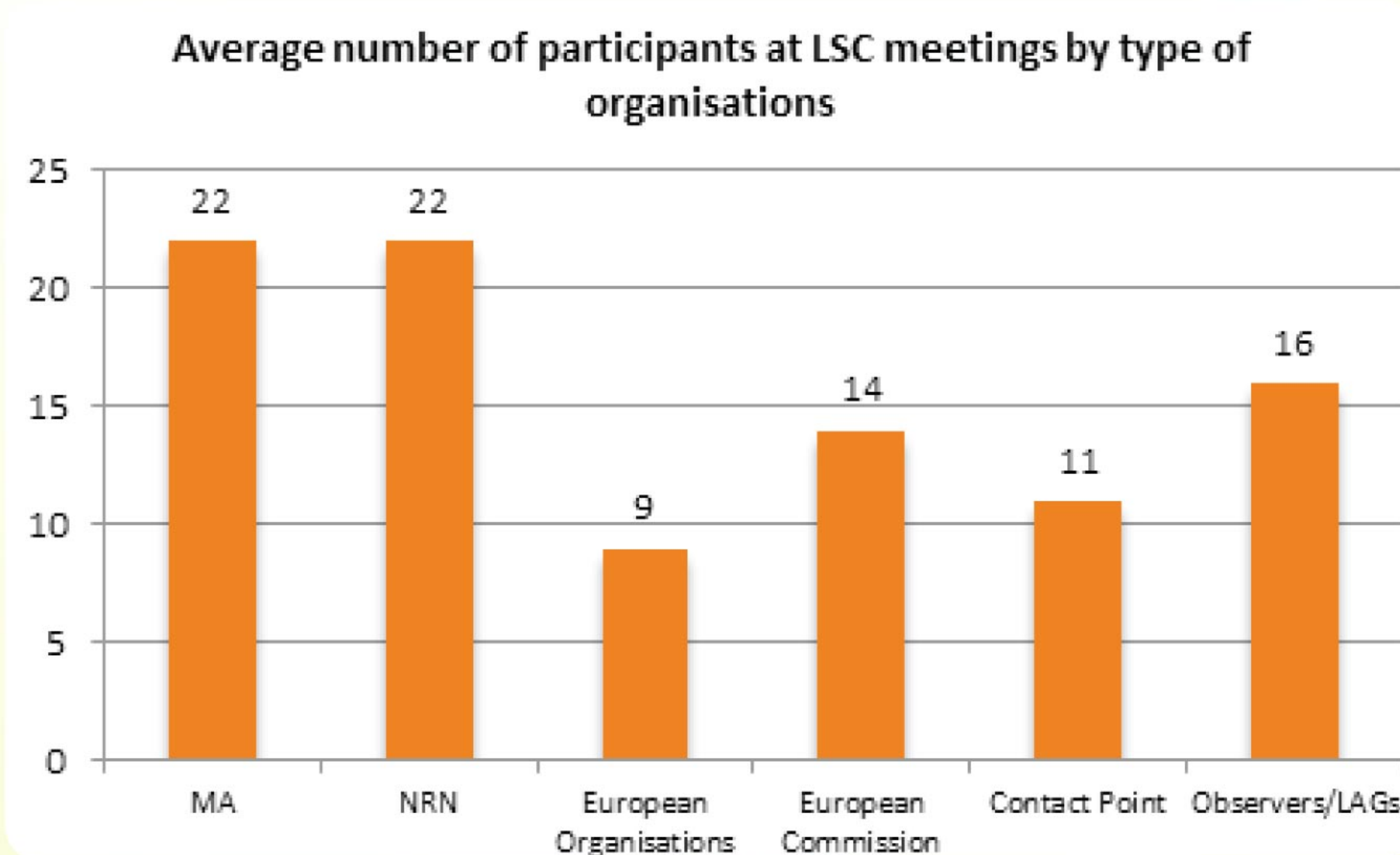
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1. Support provided by ENRD through the LEADER Sub-Committee (LSC)

- Over the six years **11 LSC meetings** were held in Brussels.
- On **average 2 meetings** took place each year.
- **Organisations** represented in the LSC include Managing Authorities (MAs), National Rural Networks (NRNs) of each Member State, 13 European-level organisations, and Local Action Groups (LAGs) as observers in extended LSCs.
- The **participation** at LSC meetings and the level of engagement of different MAs and NRNs **from different Member States varied** (there are 8 Member States who were presented at all meetings, and three that were presented at less than 3 meetings).

The average number of participants at the LSC meetings by the type of organisation (based on data available for the first four years) is presented in the chart below



Source: ENRD Self-assessment, 2013.

Various **LEADER seminars** were also organised 'back-to-back' with LSCs meetings addressing key topics of interest such as 'Community-led Local Development' (in June 2012) and 'Financing for LEADER/CLLD' (in November 2013).

The mandate of the LEADER Sub-Committee (LSC)

The LEADER Subcommittee's mandate was to:

- contribute to the work of the Coordination Committee;
- advise the Commission on the annual work programme of the ENRD concerning the LEADER axis, as well as to contribute to the choice and coordination of thematic work in this field;
- support the Commission in monitoring the implementation of transnational cooperation projects;
- regularly report to the Coordination Committee on its activities.

Source: Article 4 of Commission Decision of 20 February 2008 (2008/168/EC)

LSC meetings were useful platforms for information exchange.

Participants particularly valued practically focused sessions and those that concentrated on recent developments. Interactive sessions and small group discussions were appreciated.

ENRD Self-assessment, 2013

2. LEADER Focus Groups and the LEADER Gateway

The LEADER Gateway has been one of the main and most visited, on-line support tools provided by ENRD. Among others, the LEADER Gateway provides practical information on analyses done in relation to LEADER in the framework of the LEADER Focus Groups (FGs). Members of the LEADER FGs were selected on a voluntary basis and the groups' activities were carried out through participatory methods. FGs covered specific LEADER-related issues, namely:

- FG1 on the 'Implementation of the bottom-up approach of LEADER'
- FG2 on 'Preserving the innovative/experimental character of LEADER'
- FG3 on the 'Implementation of the cooperation measure in LEADER'
- FG4 on 'Better Local Development Strategies'.



Potential impact of ENRD Thematic Working Groups and Focus groups included:

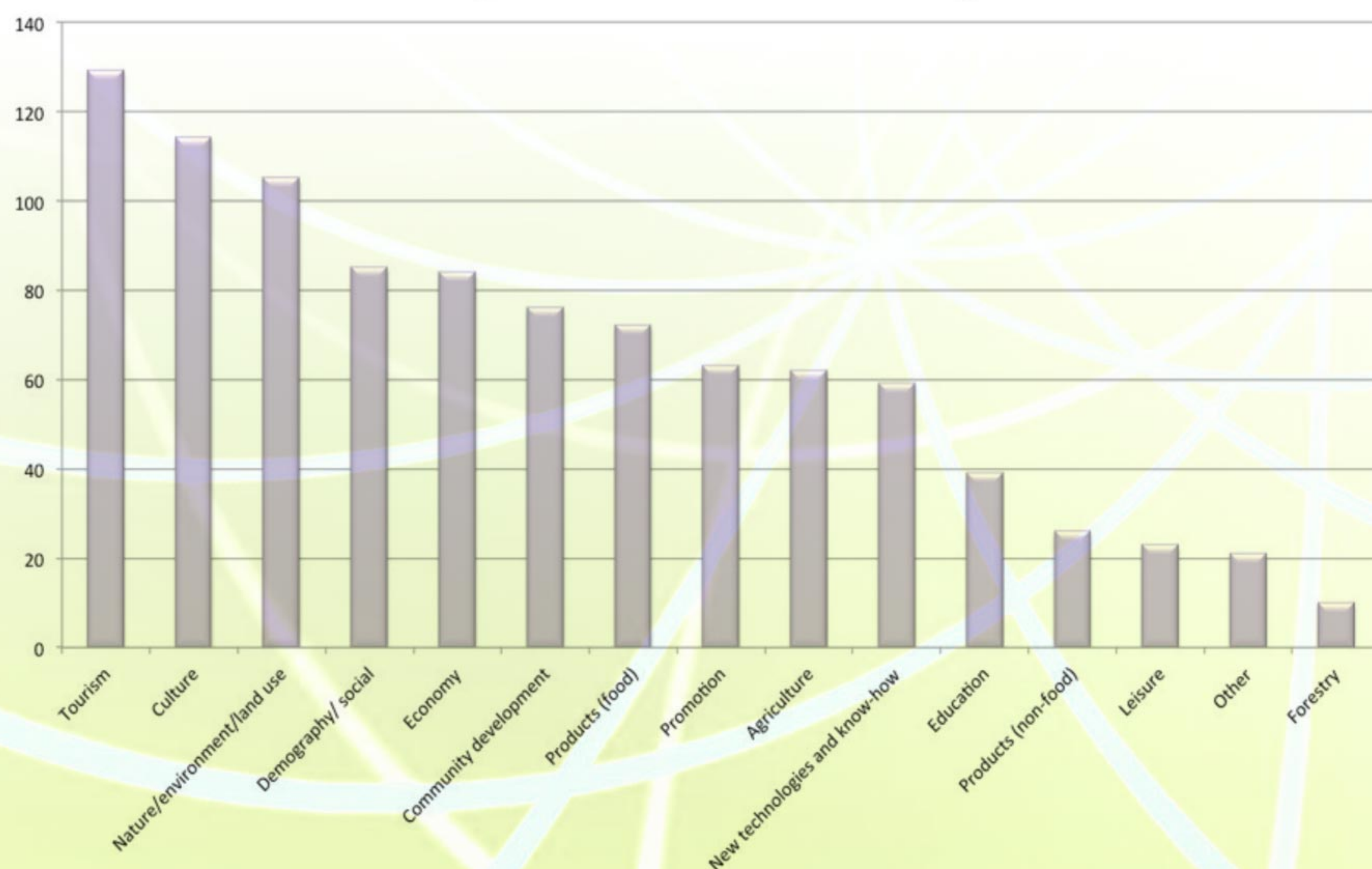
- Their contribution to the EAFRD Regulation,
- Contribution to guidelines for Member States,
- Impact at local level,
- More effective preparation of RDPs,
- Impacts at the personal level.

ENRD Self-assessment, Case Study 2, 2013

According to a Coordination Committee and LSC member survey in May 2011, over 75% felt that the quality of LEADER Focus Group reports were excellent or good.

3. Support to Transnational Cooperation (TNC)

Cooperation Offers: Thematic Coverage



"The LEADER section of the website is visited the most by the interviewed Network Support Unit members. Typically, NSUs use the LEADER section to identify potential transnational partners or to respond to other enquiries coming from LAGs."

ENRD Self-assessment, Case Study 2, 2013

The main ENRD activities in support of TNC included:

- Needs assessment and identification of useful guides,
- Electronic TNC Guide updated and enhanced,
- Cooperation offers database maintained and continuously enhanced with new offers (regular update and uploading of approved TNC project list),
- Partner-search support provided during events (such as LEADER events),
- Participation and representation of ENRD at various TNC events.

The TNC cooperation offers database was regularly updated with new offers and currently has more than 380 offers. The analysis of the thematic focus of cooperation offers shows that Local Action Groups most often search for partners in the area of tourism, culture and nature/environment through the TNC database.

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4. Support for Community-led Local Development (CLLD): An outlook to the future

NRNs from each Member State increasingly formed geographic and thematic clusters to develop activities, promote greater cooperation and promote technical exchange and dialogue between networks. The NRN Cluster on CLLD was one of the thematic clusters.

Facts about the NRN Cluster on CLLD:

- **Launch** of the cluster: June 2013
- **Youngest NRN cluster** of ENRD
- Led by the **Hungarian NRN**
- **Members:** NRNs, but also Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and Local Action Groups.

The NRN Cluster on CLLD aims to:

- enhance cooperation and exchange of experience among key stakeholders;
- help to concentrate and economise the efforts of networks (and avoid duplication of work);
- produce practical tools and guidance that can assist NRNs and other key stakeholders with CLLD implementation;
- articulate the needs and information gaps in view to inform the development process of the CLLD Guidelines and other strategic documents.

The main outputs of the cluster to date include:

- Two **mapping reports on the state-of-play of CLLD** in Member States
- **Three cluster meetings/conferences** to discuss CLLD-related issues
- **CLLD on-line exchange platform** set up on the ENRD website

“Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) is an approach that requires time and effort, but for relatively small financial investments, it can have a marked impact on people’s lives and generate new ideas and the shared commitment for putting these into practice.”

(European Commission Guidance on CLLD)

5. Towards enhanced implementation of LEADER/CLLD and cooperation

- What were the main challenges of promoting joint activities and forms of cooperation among LAGs (and other rural stakeholders) through rural networking across Member States?
- What were the most useful forms of support provided to LEADER and LAGs and what were the key benefits brought by these?
- What are the new challenges brought by CLLD and how they can be best addressed and supported through networking during the 2014-2020 programming period?



Useful links

1. LEADER Gateway: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/en/leader_en.cfm
2. LEADER Sub-Committee: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/meetings/en/lsc-meetings-list_en.cfm
3. Financing for LEADER/CLLD: Opportunities and relevant practices, 12 November 2013: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/financing-for-leader-clld/en/financing-for-leader-clld_en.cfm
4. Workshop on Community-led Local Development, 1 June 2012: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/workshop-on-community/en/workshop-on-community_en.cfm
5. LEADER Focus Groups: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/leader/en/leader-focus-group_en.cfm
6. LEADER Event 2013: Building Bridges for the Future: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/leader-event-2013/en/leader-event-2013_en.cfm
7. LEADER Event 2012: Local Development Strategies and Cooperation: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/leader-event-2012-local-development-strategies/en/leader-event-2012-local-development-strategies_en.cfm
8. LEADER Transnational Cooperation: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/leader/en/transnational-cooperation_en.cfm
9. NRN Thematic Cluster on CLLD: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/clld/nrn-thematic-initiative-on-clld/en/clld-working-group-one_en.cfm
10. Themes, Community-led Local Development: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/clld/en/clld_en.cfm