

FOCUS GROUP 4 of the LEADER Sub-Committee on Better Local Development Strategies (LDS)



Mandate of the Focus Group

Objectives

- to advise the MS (the current and next programming period);
- to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the LEADER approach.

Operational objectives

- to identify the critical requirements in the design of the Local Development Strategies (LDSs);
- to collect tools and good practices used at LAG level ensuring an efficient implementation of the LDSs.

Co-chairs of the Focus Group



Petri Rinne, President of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD);

Sanna Sihvola, Finnish Managing Authority; and

Ana Pires da Silva, Portuguese National Rural Network (NRN).



Organisation of the Work Plan

The work of the FG is planned in **2 Phases**:

Phase 1: July to December 2011 - "Elaboration of the Local Development Strategy"

Phase 2: January to June 2012 - "Implementation, and Monitoring & Evaluation of the strategies".

PHASE 1

Phase 1 Findings of FG4

Starting the Strategy preparation



- Ensure sufficient time to prepare a quality LDS
- Early start based on clear guidance and support
- Strategy submission: take responsibility and avoid delays, allow enough time
- Involve People
- Continuity, Supporting and Resourcing Development
- Take Advantage of Mentoring
- Plan a Staged Approach

Guidance



- **Guide the LDS Method:** Guidance, instruction for LAGs on strategy content and method is required
- **Improve Standards Through Training:** Knowledge transfer within programmes and within and between LAGs appears to be important

LDS elements

Most essential elements of the LDS:

- Area covered
- Territorial SWOT analysis
- Clear evidence of the LEADER features
- Local engagement and process



LDS elements

Improve/strengthen the following elements:

- Innovation
- Cooperation
- Intervention logic
- Plan Monitoring and Evaluation
- Prioritise Training in the Strategy
- Learning from others and from the past
- Strategic linkages (RDP priorities)

LAG autonomy to define area and themes



Seek a Balance

- autonomy of LAGs to define their area
- autonomy of LAGs to choose their strategic themes



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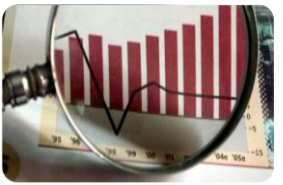
Phase 1 Findings of FG4

Strategy selection

- Use objective quality criteria (eg. checklist)
- Providing quality feedback on LDS -multiple step (at least 2) or iterative approach
- Set evidence based budgets (Indicative budgets)
- Compete on quality

Strategy submission

- **Single or multiple rounds**
Multiple rounds: resubmissions; lack of familiarity with LEADER approach; large number of LAGs
- **Single or multiple stages**
Expression of Interest (Eoi) with pre-selection or other form of pre-selection -strategic priorities

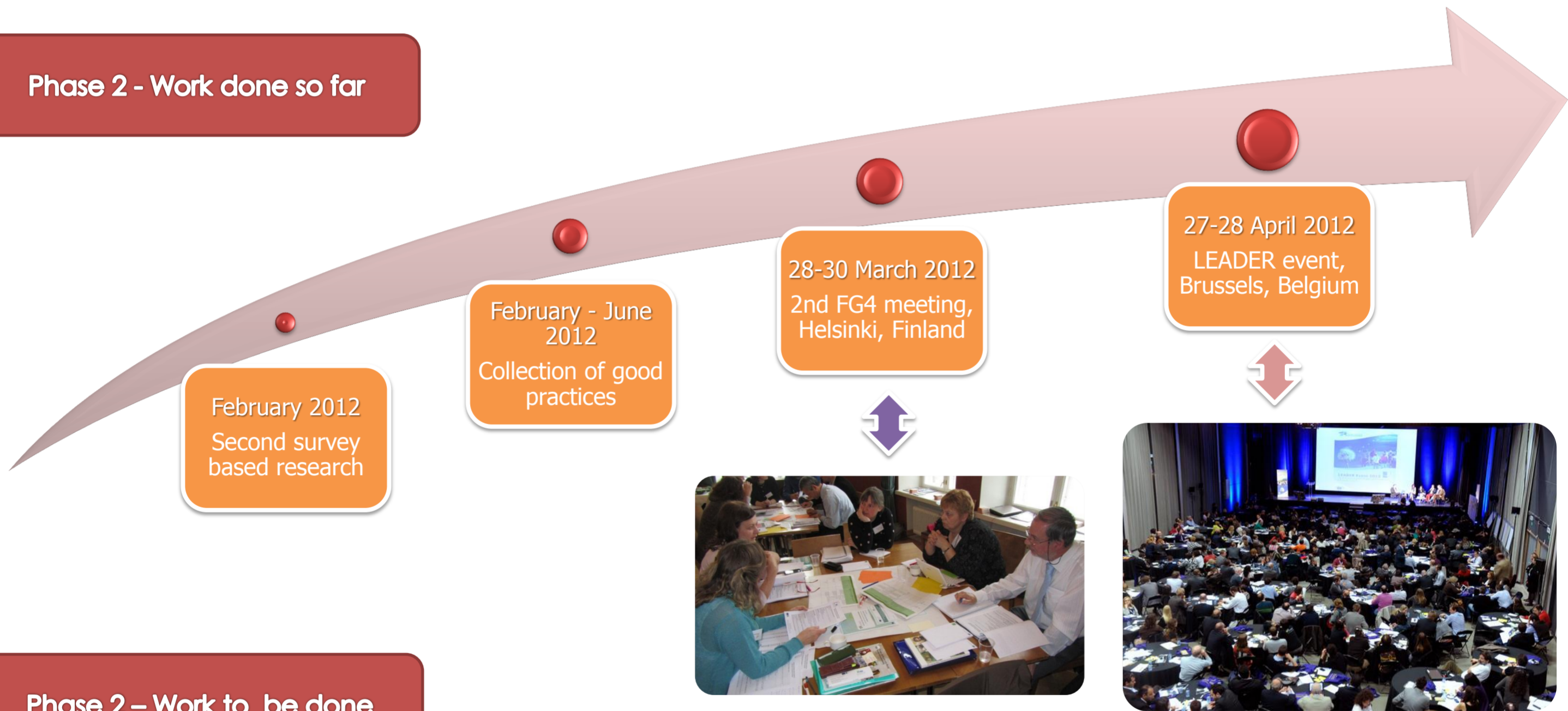


Planning Monitoring and evaluation

- Improving Performance - LAGs should actively monitor their performance against the delivery of the strategy
- Clearer direction - Guidance on self-evaluation

PHASE 2

Phase 2 - Work done so far



Phase 2 - Work to be done



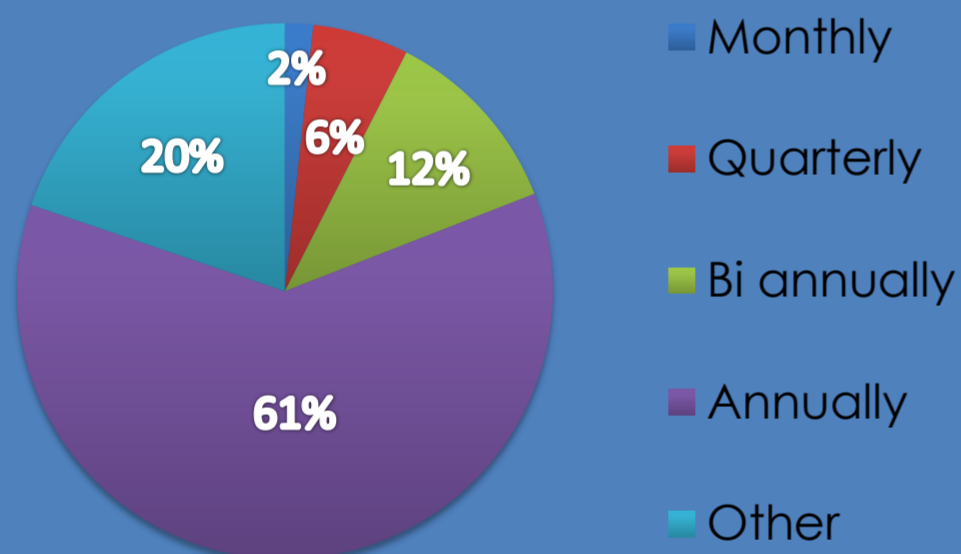


Survey Analysis Overview

- ✦ Better planning and stronger participation of the different types of stakeholder groups
- ✦ An LDS should be dynamic and regularly reviewed
- ✦ Variety of implementation methods
- ✦ Animation as a tool should be also reinforced in the future
- ✦ Monitor and evaluate the LDS performance on an on-going basis
- ✦ Need for a consistent monitoring process and adequate LEADER specific indicators
- ✦ Clarity of the purpose of monitoring and evaluation and support
- ✦ Self-evaluation done by LAGs is a good tool for the assessment of the LDS progress

Spotlight Strategy Review

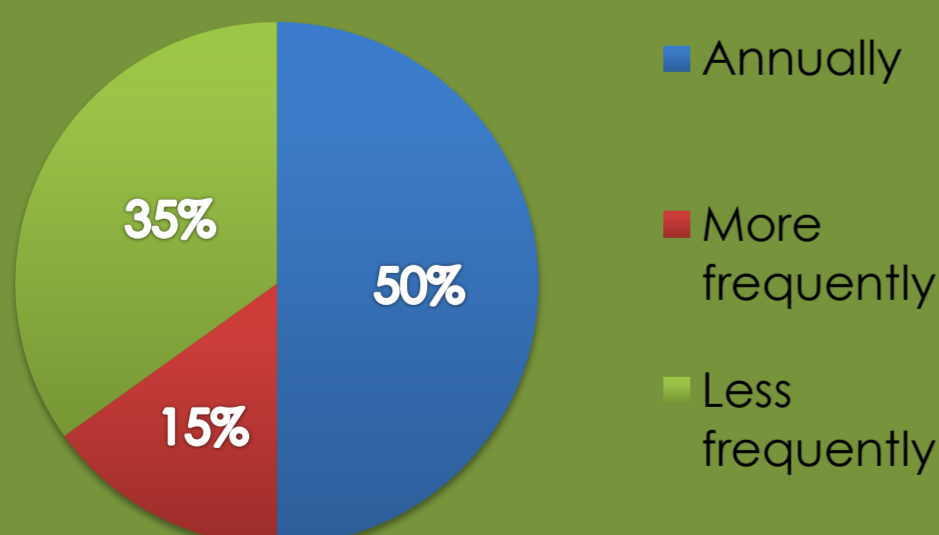
How frequently was this done?



- ❑ 73% of the MAs indicated that they authorise LAGs to modify their LDS.
- ❑ In all such cases this revision was expected by MAs to include a financial revision with the other major elements being the LDS priorities and action plan.
- ❑ Reviews of LAG structure and organisation and LAG area were permitted in about 30% of cases.
- ❑ MAs did not place particularly rigorous justification criteria on LAGs for implementing the findings of such reviews.
- ❑ A mix of approaches was favoured with some variation depending on the scope of the review.

Spotlight Self Evaluation

How frequently was this done?



- ❑ Three-quarters the total LAG respondents confirmed that they undertook some form of self-evaluation.
- ❑ From the MAs who responded, 55% indicate that LAG self-evaluation is expected.
- ❑ Almost half of those who undertake self-evaluation do so on an on-going basis.
- ❑ A third do so in relation to the main evaluation moments, MTE and Ex Post.

