



Vaasan yliopisto
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Comparative Study on LEADER-administration

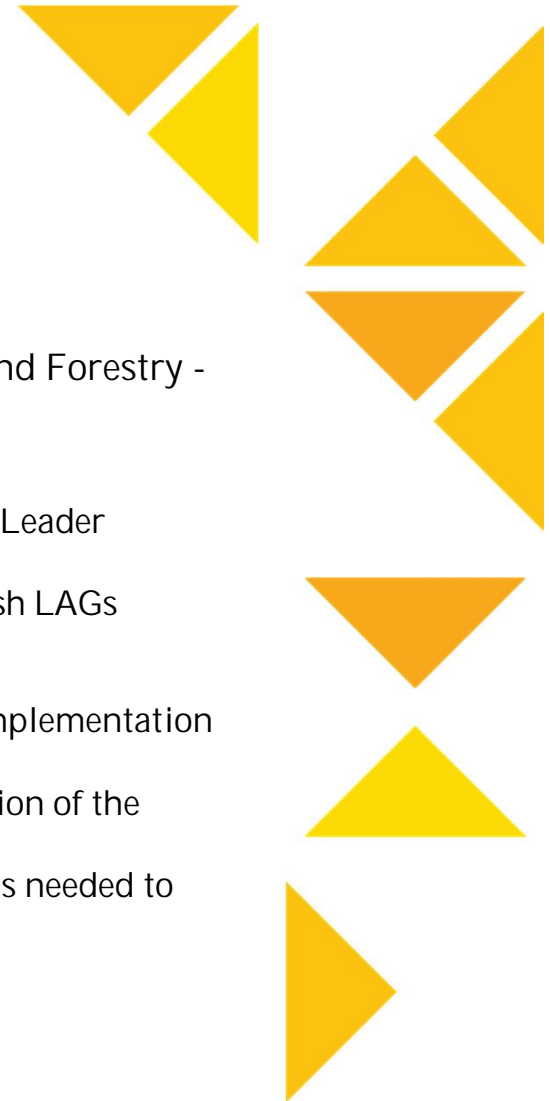
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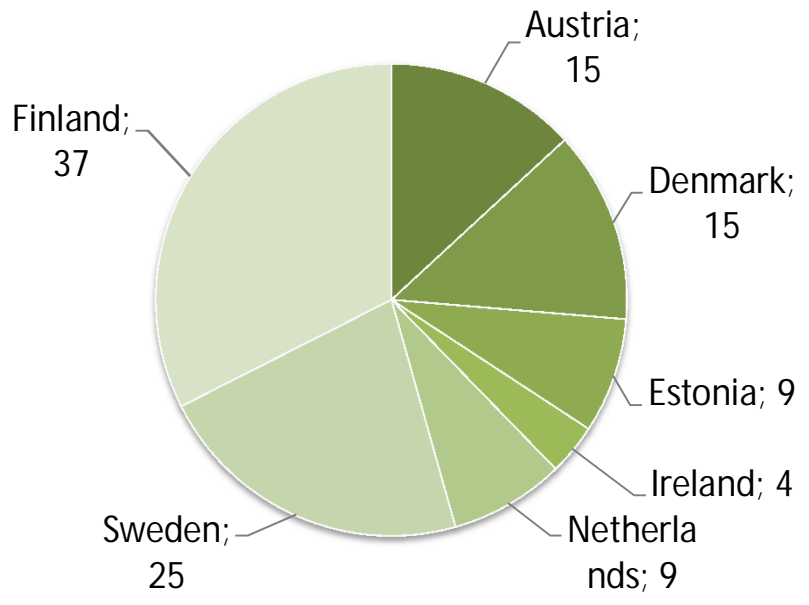
Background

- 7 Countries compared in terms of a sound management procedures
 - Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, and Sweden
- The research project is funded by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry - Development Fund Agriculture and Forestry (MAKERA)
- The purpose of our research project was:
 - To provide information about sound management practices within the Leader programme and
 - To propose alternative development strategies, especially the for Finnish LAGs
- Questions:
 - In what different ways there exists to organize the LEADER-method implementation in 7 countries
 - What kinds of challeges and “pain spots” are related to the administration of the LEADER measures
 - What developmental needs are expressed in these countries? => what is needed to improve administration in LEADER-programme?
- Methods:
 - Documents analysis
 - Interviews (total. 51)
 - Selected 5 LAG managers (total 35)
 - 7 representatives of Managing Authority
 - 7 representatives of Paying Agency
 - 7 representatives of The National Rural Networks (NRNs)
 - Internet-Based Survey to 7 Countries / LAG managers (n=349, response rate 32.8%)

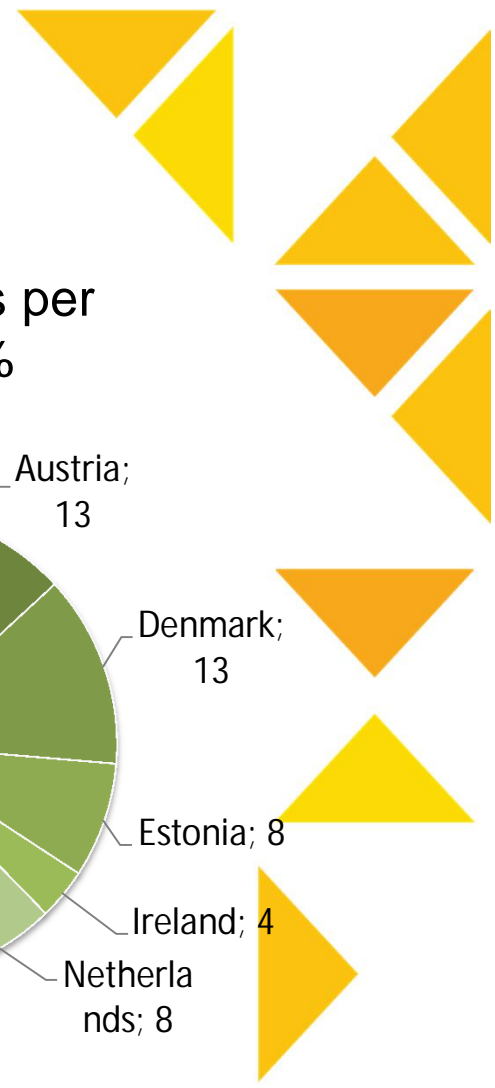
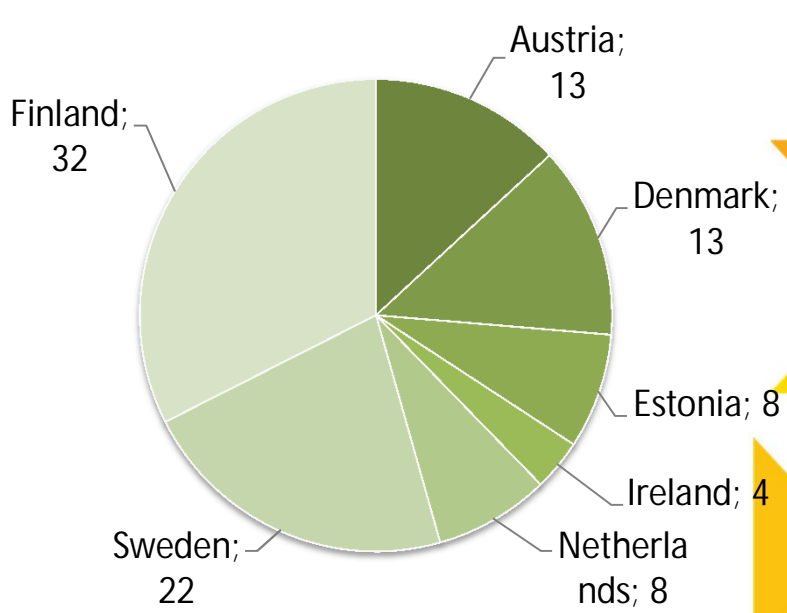


Response rates

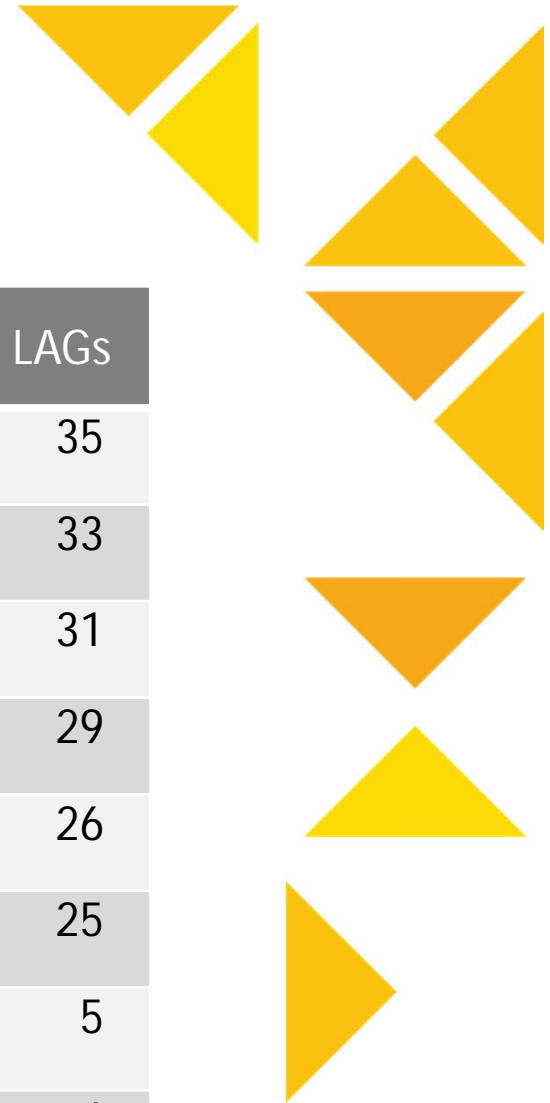
Number of Respondents



Respondents per country %

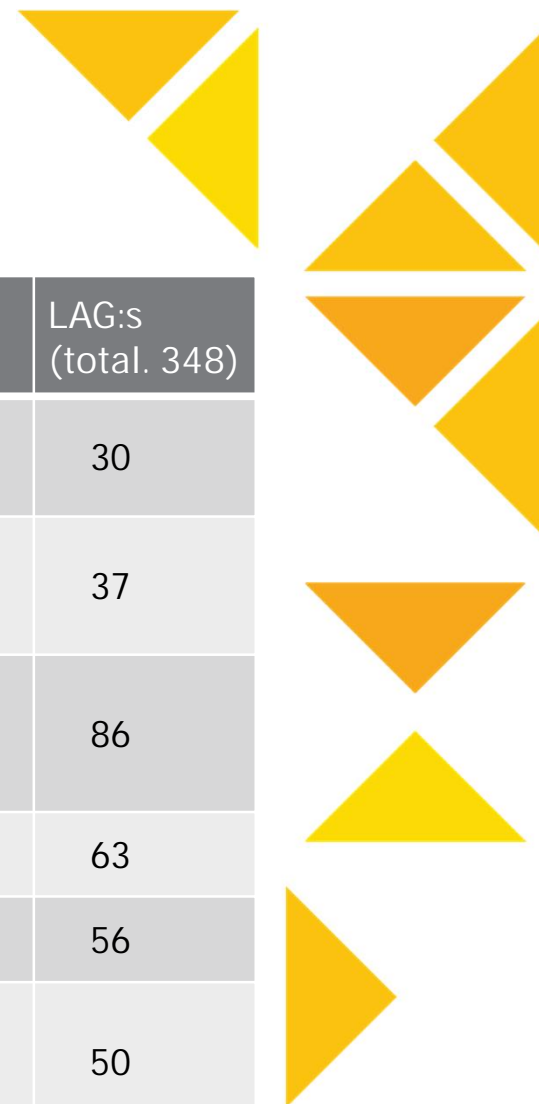


Local Action Groups (LAG) in Europe, total 2 325



Country	LAGs	Country	LAGs	Country	LAGs
Poland	337	Romania	81	Bulgaria	35
Spain	264	Sweden	63	Slovenia	33
Germany	243	Finland	56	Netherlands	31
France	221	Portugal	53	Slovakia	29
Italy	192	Denmark	51	Estonia	26
Czech republic	112	Lithuania	51	Belgium	25
UK	108	Greece	43	Luxemburg	5
Hungary	96	Latvia	40	Cyprus	4
Austria	86	Ireland	36	Malta	3

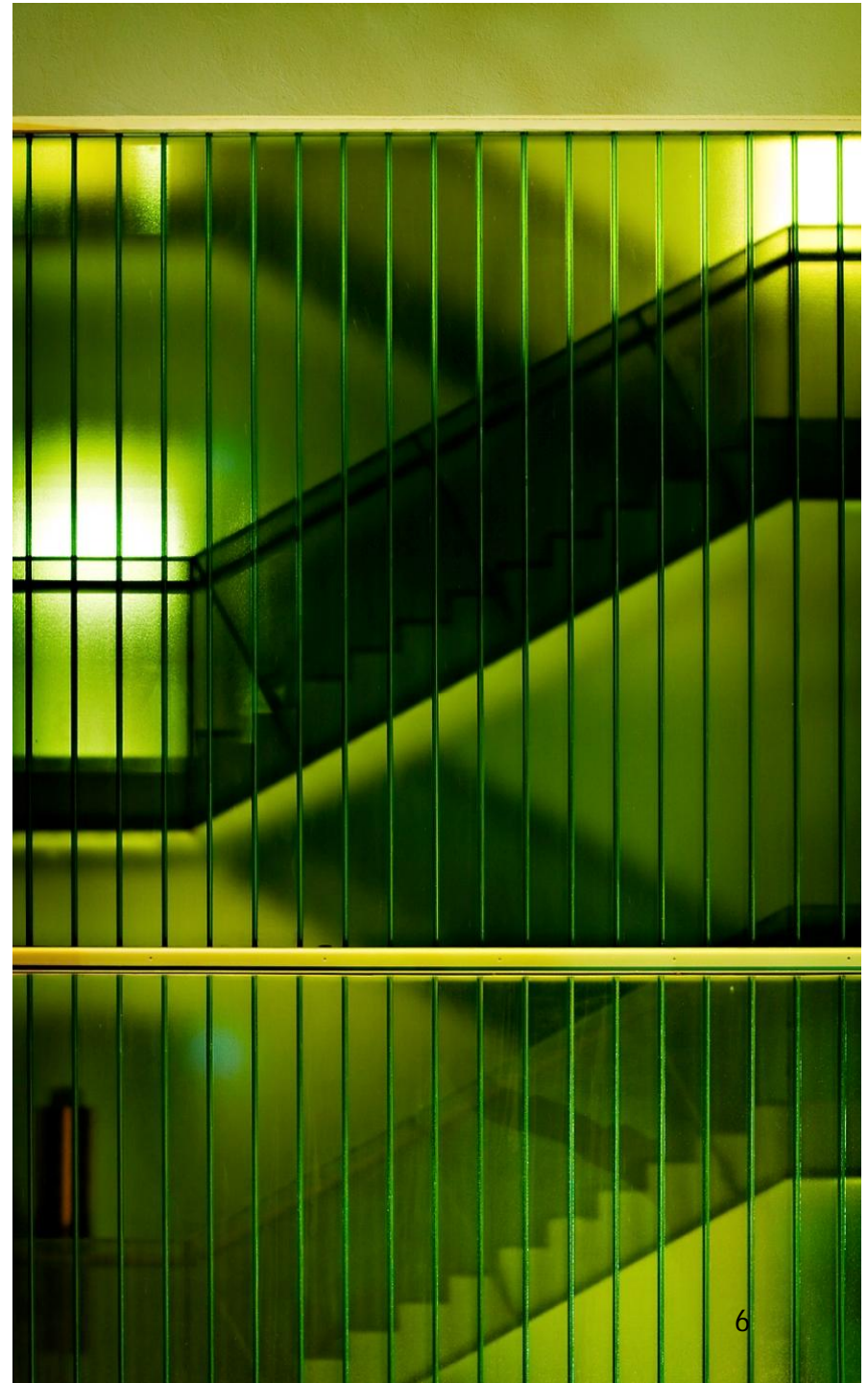
Key Actors in Compared 7 Countries



Country	Managing Authority	Paying Agency	LAG:s (total. 348)
Netherlands	Minister van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit	Dienst Landelijk Gebied	30
Ireland	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government	The Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	37
Austria	Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management	AgrarMarkt Austria	86
Sweden	Jordbruksverket	Jordbruksverket	63
Finland	Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö	Maaseutuvirasto	56
Denmark	Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri ved Direktoratet for FødevareErhverv	FødevareErhverv	50
Estonia	Põllumajandusministeerium	Põllumajanduse Registrate ja Informatsiooni Amet (PRIA)	26

Administrative apparatus in LEADER

There are surprising similarities despite the fact that member states have diversity in local and regional government – the EU has integrated the management of the spending programs and their administration



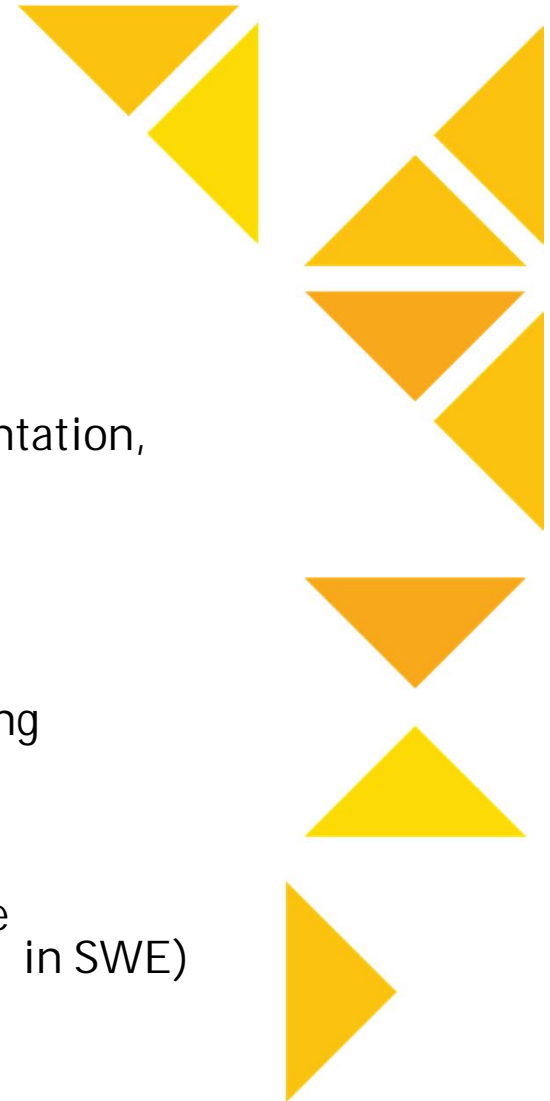
All Countries: What issues/ tasks stress the LEADER- administration most?

Positive aspect

- 1) Guidance and counseling (applications, Project implementation, payment procedures, etc.)
- 2) Spreading information about Leader-actions

Negative aspects

- 1) Changes in the regulations and the guidelines, and steering documents
- 2) Detailed controlling and monitoring of the LAGs
- 3) Too long processing of the payments and approvals of the applications (e.g. ELY centres check legality; Länstyrelse in SWE)
- 4) Most of the personnel in LAGs has a fixed term contracts
- 5) Matching funding for the projects
- 6) The preparation of various documents: e.g. LAG board, audits



What do you think of the current administration of the Leader method?

It is organised bottom-up instead of top-down.

It has clear goals and objectives.

It puts local needs first.

It is innovative.

It forms a coherent system.

It has adequate resources.

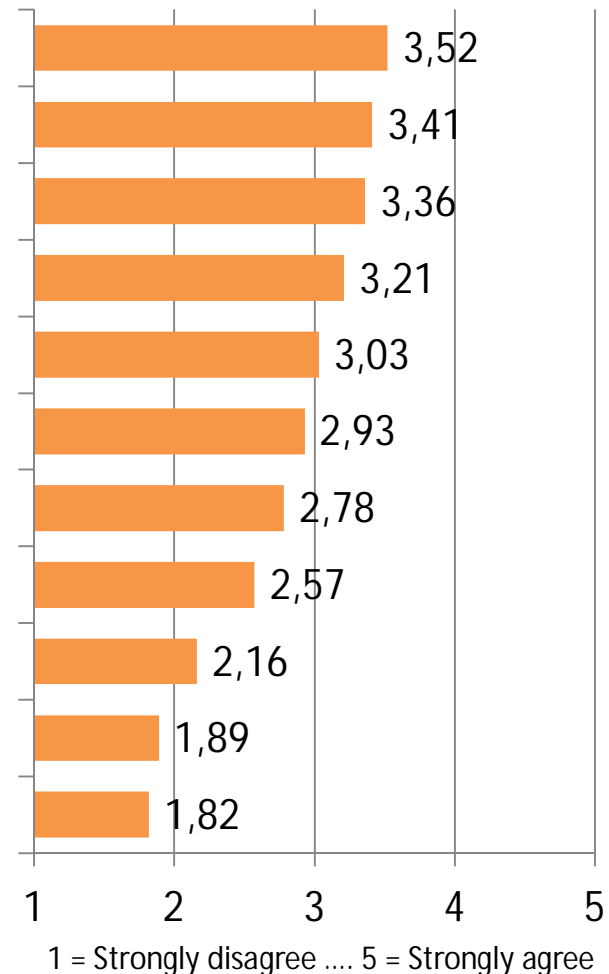
It is customer-oriented.

It has obscure division of responsibility.

It is too lightly organised.

It is more international than national.

It has small administration.



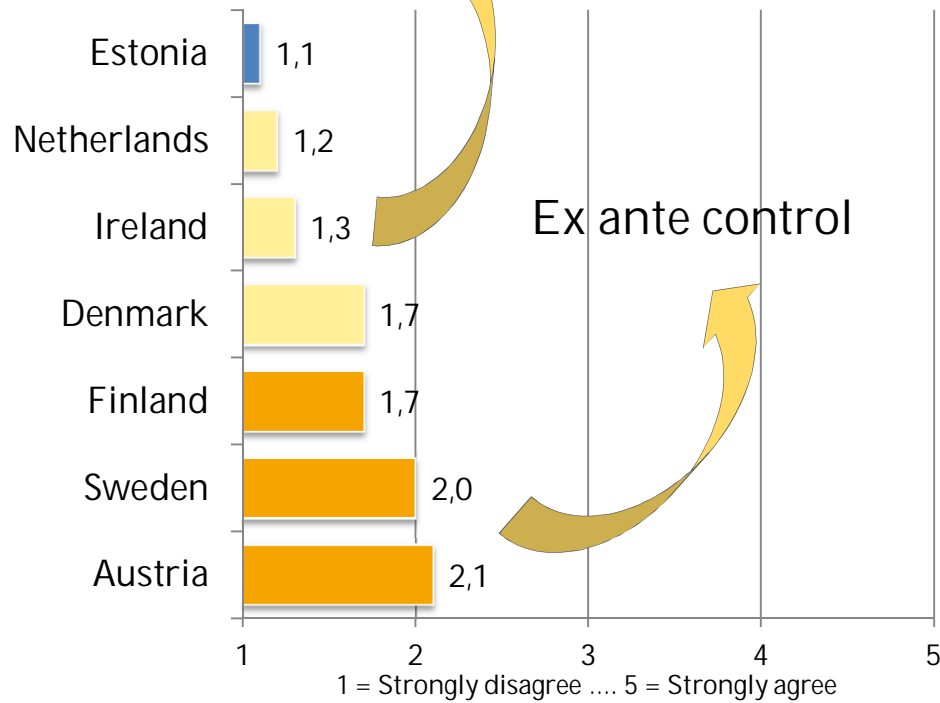
Particular Challenges

Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contrived definitions of rural regions and cities• A high turnover of workers at the Managing Authority
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Managing Authority has introduced a lot of national regulations• To react on economic crisis has required an establishment of bigger projects which are expected to lead instant effects on economical aspects/situation
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very small LAGs (½ person, or a common LAG manager)• Farming-focused, national projects are implemented (top-down manner) with a high priority• A local level decision-making is significantly affected by the federation policies and constant bargains with local and federal levels
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very weak national monitoring system: "<i>it is like driving a T-Ford</i>"
Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constant bargaining with the ELY-centres
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulties to redefine responsibilities inside the LAGs (established LAGs)• Variations in the strategic planning
Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are a lot of administrative regulations and stipulations regarding the LAGs• A level of awareness about LEADER-actions and possibilities to develop countryside with the EU-funding

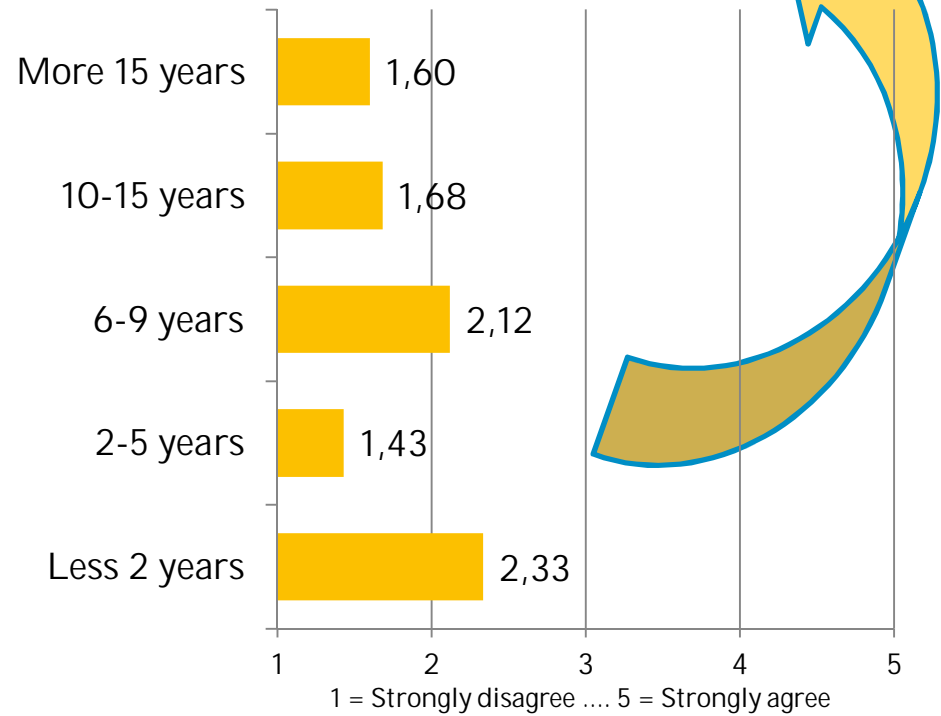


Factor: Leader has a light administration => responses against controlling & experience

Ex post control



'More experience you'll gain with LEADER, the less you feel that there is a sound management'



Common issues to streamline the administration

- To emphasize outcomes and effectiveness of the actions instead of monitoring indicators and financial data:
 - This partially emphasizes that there are willingness to change a role of the LAGs: from public official towards developer and facilitator
 - To avoid "receipt rhumba"
- To increase co-operative actions and partnerships:
 - To increase synergy and delegate responsibilities between partners
 - To foster co-operation between LAGs (informing, communication)
- To move apart from "own" projects to a fixed resources (allocated to whole program period)

To what LAGs want to invest in?

- To foster strategic development = Strategic goal + integration of local needs
- To better notification/elaboration of the needs of "Front-end users"
- To "catch and turn the creative/fresh ideas of ordinary people to innovative projects"
- To analyze the outcomes, processes, and life cycles of the implemented projects => benchmarking, learning, and further development
- To accelerate the start of the funded projects
- To invest in long-term development: "the investments and the funding are to facilitate immediate impacts (e.g. renovation of village house), but we should invest more on long-term economic effects and the creation of positive grounds on the economic competitiveness"

What we should regard in development of the LAGs and LEADER?

- To keep pace with the regional government and the local government reforms
 - There are tendency towards a bigger communities and the government administrations withdraws from the regions => how to fight back that LAGs are not left as a partner/adaptors without a voice?
- There are constant pressures to maintain openness and publicity
 - If LAG operates as an association, openness is the key!
- If reporting responsibilities will be reduced, how to ensure that we have increase in developmental actions?
 - What is level of ability to move on with development actions and conduct a really demanding development?
- To maintain a good level of cooperative actions and cooperation partners requires resources
 - A basic question: how many of your trusted partners will be interested to implement a new project?
 - What tools there are to activate/participate new partners/persons?



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Thank you for
Your attention!

If you have any further questions,
do not hesitate to contact me!

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